

**NATIVES**  
UNDER THE  
**TRANSVAAL FLAG**

BY THE  
**REV. JOHN H. BOVILL**

Rector of the Cathedral Church, Lourenço Marques,  
sometime H.B.M. Acting Consul,  
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WITH  
**ILLUSTRATIONS**

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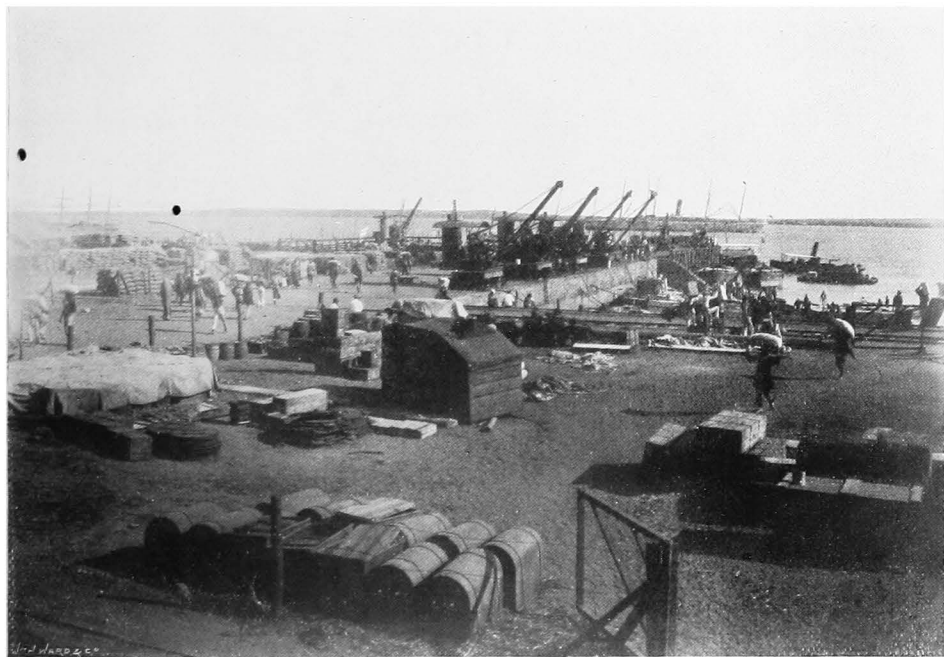
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NATIVES UNDER THE  
TRANSVAAL FLAG.



LANDING JETTY, DELAGOA BAY.

# NATIVES UNDER THE TRANSVAAL FLAG

BY

THE REV. JOHN H. BOVILL,

RECTOR OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH, LOURENÇO MARQUES,  
SOMETIME H.B.M. ACTING CONSUL,  
LOURENÇO MARQUES.

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*Subscribed by*

THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM EDMUND

LORD BISHOP OF LEBOMBO,

WITH WHOM I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO WORK

FOR OVER FIVE YEARS,

AND WHOSE LABOUR OF LOVE FOR THE WELFARE OF  
THE COUNTLESS INDIGENOUS RACES IS WELL KNOWN.

## PREFACE.

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THE extracts from the Native Pass Law and the Native Liquor Law are taken from the Transvaal Commercial Guide and Handbook by Mr. Geo. Dunbar.

The quotations from the Transvaal Grondwet and the London Convention are from the translation by Mr. Papenfus.

Two photographs of Lourenço Marques are by Mr. Lee, of that town.

To each of these the Author acknowledges his indebtedness.

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The MARQUIS OF SALISBURY said :

“ With regard to the future—there must be no doubt that the Sovereign Power of England is paramount ; there must be no doubt that the white races will be put upon an equality, and that *due precaution will be taken for the philanthropic and kindly improving treatment of those countless indigenous races, of whose destiny I fear we have been too forgetful.*” (‘Hear, hear.’) Those things must be insisted upon in the future.”—Extract from a Speech in the House of Lords, *Times*, October 18th, 1899.

The BISHOP OF ST. JOHN'S, KAFFRARIA, writes :

“ It may be, I cannot but feel, a holy war. Many as our sins and shortcomings may be, it is a war resting on the broad question, Are these natives of South Africa to be looked upon as beasts of burden or human beings ? ”

## INTRODUCTION.

---

ANOTHER book on the Transvaal! Why?

Since coming to England I have found that most people have little or no idea of anything respecting the condition of the native races in the Transvaal.

To throw a little light on this subject at the present moment would no doubt be appreciated by a large number. For the last five years I have worked in South Africa, in a district from which a large number of natives are drawn for work in the Transvaal, and I have gone to the Transvaal from time to time, and have seen the natives on the mines living and working under different conditions to those to which they have been accustomed in their kraals.

I have been able to view the native question from the native's point of view as well as from the Boer's. I am well acquainted with Boers of all

classes, members of the Volksraad, commandants, and the average Boer, but in each and all (with only one or two exceptions) their prejudices will not allow them to give the natives even bare justice.

The questions I deal with are but elementary. The natives are not asking for a Franchise law or anything pertaining to a voice in the Government of the land, but merely asking for laws to regulate the civil life of their community. The will of the Native Location Superintendent, or of the Executive, or of anyone appointed by them is the Transvaal Native Law at present.

Article 9 of the Grondwet is not only adhered to, but is exaggerated in its application, viz. :—  
“The people shall not permit any equality of coloured persons with white inhabitants, neither in the Church, nor in the State.” This to an ordinary Boer means that the natives shall not be permitted to have an acknowledged civil status in the Transvaal.

(1) He must not own fixed property.

(2) He must not marry by civil or ecclesiastical process.

(3) He must not be allowed access to civil courts in any action against a white man.

These three principles are so firmly fixed in the

mind of an average Boer that we can never expect to see anything done by the Volksraad for the natives in these particulars. In Natal we have laws for the natives, founded more or less on native customs, stipulating for and regulating the civil status of the natives in that Colony. Why the Transvaal cannot or will not formulate a similar code of laws it is difficult to understand, unless it be prejudice or interest.

It appears inconceivable that a Government making any pretence of being a civilised power, at the end of the nineteenth century, should be so completely ignorant of the most elementary principles of good government for such a large number of its subjects.

Three years ago, when rinderpest and famine were rampant in the north-east portion of the Transvaal, I was in that district for two months, just after my first attack of Delagoa Bay fever. I met several Boer officials and talked with them respecting the state of the natives in that part of the Transvaal. Each of them seemed to look at it from one point only, and that was how they could profit financially by it. Subscriptions were raised in Johannesburg for the purchase of mealies, etc., to be given to the starving natives. The Government at Pretoria sent food-stuffs for them,

many private firms contributing, and yet the natives declare that the Government officials *sold* the food at exorbitant prices! Personally, from my experience amongst the Boers at that time, I can believe the native reports.

A Landdrost, whom I know well, taking advantage of the famine, discharged all his natives who were getting £3 a month, and sent a labour agent to get them replaced by natives from the famine district for 10s. a month. If they had been engaged in an honest and fair manner, no one could complain, but to get them by refusing them food, or by placing prohibitive prices on the food sent to relieve them is not at all honest.

Moreover, they consented to work on the usual terms, and the labour agent said he would arrange terms when they saw the Landdrost. They came six days' journey to the Landdrost, and were offered 10s. a month, and if they did not take it they had to refund the cost of bringing them, for which 30s. was claimed from each. They were without money or food, and so had to accept any terms.

When a native once accepts work from a Boer he is practically bound to remain with him, unless his master wishes to release him. Runaway servants are lashed.

The present chaotic state of the Transvaal natives is due to want of recognition by law of the elementary principles governing life and property.

How the Pretorian Government has regarded the clauses in the Convention respecting the native races in the Transvaal may prove instructive reading. That the 19th Clause has not been observed, as it was intended, for the "betterment" of the natives in the Transvaal, is very apparent.

The Native Liquor Law is the only good piece of legislation done for the native, but still the stubborn and insane disregard for native marriage laws and customs prevails in official as well as in unofficial circles. The "coloured person" of any nationality, the coloured "Cape boy" whose intelligence and education is equal to that of the average Boer, is denied the civil rights of marriage, because he is "coloured." This premium put on vice is a constant source of trouble among the coloured population of the Transvaal.

The Native Labour Question, too, is one which affects a very large number of people, both white and black.

If the Industry is hampered and hindered by useless restrictions affecting the liberty of the greater bulk of its labourers, and of all the



unskilled labour, it must greatly affect its development.

The Mining on the Rand is a settled Industry and will last for a great many years. To get settled and regular labourers causes, at present, the greatest anxiety to those who are responsible to the shareholders of the mines. Labourers ought not to be scarce, and would not be, if a native could only feel that he had not to sacrifice every vestige of liberty. I do not mean to say that a native is fond of work for the work's sake, any more than is any white man. He works on the mines because he likes the money paid him. What I do assert is, that if he were not so hampered by Boer officialism, he would remain on the Rand for a much longer time than he does at present. Those who are interested in the Mining Industry would do well to bear this in mind, before the settlement of Rand affairs are entered upon by our Government. So far the Mining Industry has been to the Transvaal Government the hen that has laid the golden eggs. That Government has kept it penned up, endeavoured to cripple it, stolen the eggs; and now that many Boers have well replenished themselves, and waxed fat, with hands upheld sanctimoniously call it the "curse of the country."

Leave them alone to follow their "peaceful pursuits" say some of our wiseacres, who have never seen Africa or a Boer. Of course we all agree with such a sentiment, although their "peaceful pursuits" when followed amount to about that followed by a third rate squatter of some twenty morgen. It is only when those "peaceful pursuits" are left, and the squatter tries his hand at legislating against his "brother" that we object. If he would only go back to his "peaceful pursuits" and "pastoral life" "my brother Boer" would be left alone. Their capabilities as farmers far exceed their capabilities as legislators for either black or white.

But now we find ourselves at war with this Transvaal State. "Do you think our cause is a just one?" has been asked of me many times. My invariable answer is, that I do.

For three reasons :—

(1) Their unwarranted oppression of all Europeans.

(2) The undue taxation of British and Foreign capital to arm themselves, and to supply arms to the political Africander Bond—amongst whom are many Dutch British subjects—to arm the Orange Free State, and to endeavour to drive British supremacy out of South Africa.

(3) Their total incompetency to govern the coloured races on humane principles.

(1) It is scarcely three years ~~ago~~ since every European was ordered to take out his pass, similar to that of a native, in spite of Article 14 of the London Convention. It was only when our Government threatened to take extreme measures for a breach of the Convention that they agreed to withdraw the operation of this law. If South Africa should become under Boer rule, this law will be once again in operation, and Englishmen especially will be treated with scant courtesy under the provisions of the pass law system.

(2) That the Mining Industry was exorbitantly taxed over and above what was required for legitimate purposes is only too apparent in our present conflict with the Boers. Arms and ammunition have been served out without stint all over the Free State and parts of Cape Colony. The schemes of the Africander Bond for a United South Africa, under Dutch supremacy, have been practically developed by the taxation of the Mining Industry. Every day brings fresh evidence of this fact.

(3) Of their incompetence to govern the natives of South Africa, or any "coloured people" on humane principles, you will be able to judge for yourself after reading these pages.

If ever a war could be justified it is the one we are at present engaged in.

England might have left the Mining Industry to have taken care of itself, yet the war would have taken place. She might have closed her eyes to the injustice and oppression of her subjects, the injustice would have been aggravated, and the oppression increased, until the Africander Bond had ousted British supremacy from South Africa.

We have now to reconquer parts of our Colony as well as the Free State and the Transvaal. Can anyone doubt but that the scheme was to get Africa for the Africander? No one who knows the Dutch politician can doubt it.

More than once have I seen in Lourenço Marques, the Dutch hero of Dundee—a political factionist and Boer Commandant—at dinner propose the toast, “The prosperity of United South Africa.” He thought he was *slim*,\* but all present were not “verneuked”† by him. The seriousness of the situation was well known over twelve months ago in South Africa, if not in England. Kruger is but a figure-head in the great scheme. The British demands for justice, or the massing of troops more than 100 miles from the border of the Transvaal

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\* Slim = sly, cunning.

† Verneuked = cheated.

were only used as pretexts to carry out the scheme before we were prepared to offer much resistance.

To think that the present war is over political rights and the Franchise law is to make a very serious blunder. Granting it was so, our cause would be just ; and tenfold more so is it just, when the object of the enemy is to supplant British supremacy by that of a half-civilised Dutch rule.

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READY SHORTLY.

# DELAGOA BAY,

ITS PAST, PRESENT, AND PROSPECTIVE  
FUTURE

(WITH ILLUSTRATIONS)

By THE SAME AUTHOR.

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