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VOLUME VI

SOUTH AFRICA

1486-1913

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THE ENGLISH PEOPLE OVERSEAS

VOLUME VI

SOUTH AFRICA

1486-1913

BY

A. WYATT TILBY

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The nineteenth century, in short, had settled the position of the two white peoples in their relations to each other but not to the blacks; the twentieth century was to settle the more momentous question of the relations of the whites with the blacks in a country which both could claim to possess.

THE END

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ing of the Empire, unless he undertook the wholesale suppression of names of pioneers, explorers, traders, missionaries, and governors from Dunedin to Nova Scotia. But one rather curious and significant fact emerges from these studies. Not one Scottish colonial enterprise succeeded before the Union with England in 1707; few indeed have failed since the Union.)

The six volumes now completed treat in the main of the founding of the English type of civilisation; the remaining volumes will be engaged with the development of that type. They may on that account lose something of variety and picturesque incident, for they will be less concerned with pioneering and adventure than their predecessors; but unless the fruits of the tree are held to be less important than the roots, the growth of the English people overseas will be not less worthy of study than their original establishment.

But in the meantime the completion of these chapters on South Africa provides the weary traveller, author and reader alike—if any readers have patiently toiled with me so far—with a convenient halting-place, a kind of half-way house, like the Cape itself in older days, where one may rest and refresh awhile before adventuring forth again. These first six volumes have given, however crudely, the history of the founding of every English-speaking colony or possession throughout the world, from Virginia and Newfoundland under Elizabeth to Rhodesia and Nyasa under Victoria. In a work of this length there must be errors of judgment, errors of fact, omissions, imperfections, and mistakes, authorities I have overlooked, documents I have not seen; but in excuse for these shortcomings I would plead that where the activities of so many human beings had to be judged one human being is

certain to stumble from time to time, and that where so large a mass of material had to be sifted the book would never have been written at all had I waited until every document was available.

One may perhaps claim as a virtue, what at least one critic has imputed as a vice, that the book shows little party spirit and reflects neither Whig nor Tory doctrine; and for another fault I remain obstinately unrepentant—the fact that while I have attempted to picture the social life of the people of every colony, and have given numerous and occasionally trivial details of their habits, houses, occupations and the cost of living, I have omitted mention of many unimportant governors and refused to cumber these pages with the quarrels of provincial Cabinets or the intrigues of provincial Premiers.

Against these omissions or mistakes I may perhaps claim that the wandering annals of the British Empire have been placed in proper perspective, that the brief and broken records of some forgotten failures in colonising have been rescued from the complete oblivion which was their natural fate, and that to the history of some successful colonies I have added new and not uninteresting details. It has been my reward for many weary hours wasted over incredibly stupid writers to have added some points to Nova Scotian history which Parkman overlooked, some items of Canadian settlement of which Kingsford was not aware, some materials to Australian annals which Rusden forgot, some relics of old New Zealand which were new to Pember Reeves, some settlements in the tropics which are not in Lucas, some incidents in South Africa which even the multitudinous Theal has failed to see; and that I have discovered some overseas variants of the British constitution which might have interested May and

Bagehot. The constitutional development of Pitcairn and other South Sea islands, the Anglo-Zulu senate of old Natal, the missionary parliament of Namaqualand may be trivial beside the greater institutions of Commonwealth and Dominions, but the smaller consequences of our political ideas nevertheless deserve a footnote in history. It is my hope, too, that the full comparative studies of the various constitutions of the Empire and the analyses I have given of the swing and play of opposing forces which have made them may also be of use.

I am far from suggesting that these points excuse the obvious imperfections of a work which has taken ten years to write, but I think they may be urged in mitigation of the heavy sentence which should be passed on any author who inflicts six substantial volumes on his fellow-men.

It is a graceful custom of the day to thank in a preface those who have rendered assistance to the author. I have preferred to discharge my gratitude in occasional footnotes; but I may here properly acknowledge the chief debt of all, to one whose constant encouragement during a period of not always easy work has largely helped me to draw this labour to its present conclusion. I mean my wife.

A. WYATT TILBY.

December 13, 1913.

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THE ENGLISH PEOPLE OVERSEAS

Book XXIII

TO THE CAPE AND BEYOND: 1486-1856

CHAPTER I

A LAND OF NO SOJOURNING: 1486-1608

The fate or the fortune of nineteenth-century Britain led her to lay the foundations of three new nations in the southern hemisphere, as in an earlier age she had likewise laid the foundations of two new English nations in the west. But marked as was the contrast between the two English nations in North America —the one a republic that repudiated its allegiance to the mother country after a war which split the Empire, the other a loyal dominion that resisted every attempt to wean it from the old allegiance—the contrasts that distinguished Australia and New Zealand from South Africa, and coloured all their annals with the encompassment of divergent circumstance, were still more marked.

Difference between South Africa and Australia.

Against the superficial likenesses between South Africa and Australia—seasons the reverse of Europe, a dry sunny climate, a shortage of water and deserts that needed irrigation before cultivation—these essential differences stand out through all their history.

Australia and New Zealand were isolated and therefore exclusive, the path to nowhere, the very end of the world. Discovered and lost and discovered again before they were

colonised by white men, those who went there stayed there; they seldom came back and they could not go forward, since to go forward was but to come back on the full circle of the globe. But the position of South Africa, on the other hand, made it for centuries a half-way house between east and west, north and south, between Europe and India, Britain and Australasia, a place to which men often went and seldom stayed, a place of coming and going but not of long sojourning. An Australian port was the world's terminus; a South African port was a hostel where men put in and rested awhile from the toils of an ocean voyage. The very essentials of the first European settlements in Australia were that they should be colonies from which exiled men could not return; the very essentials of the first European settlements in South Africa were that they were not in fact settlements at all, but convenient stations on the long road to the Orient.

The Cape of Good Hope.

Even in its name the corner of South Africa that was first known to Europeans betrays the thought that upheld its discoverers. The Good Hope which attached to the chief cape of the country was not the hope of permanent settlement in a pleasant land, but of speedy passage beyond; it was named for a purpose, and the name has clung long after the purpose has passed.

Its Discovery, 1486.

It was the great Portuguese mariner Bartholomew Diaz, when doggedly pursuing that search for an ocean route to India which had engaged two previous generations of his countrymen, who first of all Europeans reached at length in the year 1486 the extreme south-westerly point of the African continent. Thus far he had outdistanced all his predecessors in the long quest of West for East; but the further progress of his frail vessel was now barred by the fierce winds which sweep across the lonely southern ocean. Diaz named the spot at which his hopes were foiled the Cape of Storms—*Cabo dos Tormentos*—and turned his vessel's head again towards Europe; but his

master the King of Portugal, with instant realisation of the vast importance of the discovery, renamed it the Cape of Good Hope—*Cabo de boa Esperanza*. And by that title it has since been known.

A few years later the Cape was rounded by Vasco da Gama, India was discovered, and the new ocean road to the East was free. The good hope had been fulfilled; but the Cape of Good Hope was henceforth neglected by its discoverers, and none but its discoverers had ventured yet so far. The Portuguese engaged in strife and trade with the Indies; great viceroys of that nation conquered and ruled in Asia, great apostles of the Christian faith spread their creed among its alien peoples: but to South Africa, and particularly to the south-western extremity of Africa, they gave but little heed. The southern half of the dark continent was to them no more than an immovable obstacle on the route which all must pass, and on immovable obstacles men do not waste their energies when there are other worlds to conquer and convert.

And Neglect.

For the first century that it was known to Europe the Cape of Good Hope had therefore no real history. Nominally it belonged to Portugal; and since the Portuguese had as yet no rivals in Africa and Asia, they were undisturbed in their claim to its possession. But such attention as they could spare from India to their other oversea dominions was given, not to the Cape but to the moist warm regions of Mozambique and the fertile if unhealthy eastern shores of Africa.

Here in Sofala—the lowlands of the eastern coasts in the Arab tongue—and all along the shores of eastern Africa the Portuguese were active in the hundred years after their discovery of the new route to the Indies. Often they did battle with the Arabs of Mombasa and Zanzibar, in a religious and commercial war against the old monopoly of Islám; and while the Cape of Good Hope

The Portuguese in East Africa.

was neglected and indeed avoided by these crusading traders of the new Latin invasion of the East, outposts of the Portuguese Empire were established here and there along the Indian Ocean, fortresses were planned and built, fights were won and lost, governors and soldiers came and went, and some at least among these warriors and rulers left their mark on Mozambique and other tropic lands beyond.

A brave if credulous folk, old legends and tradition encouraged or misled them all. One traveller heard and perhaps believed that Prester John, that mythical monarch of mediæval wonder-story, held sway near by in Central Africa, his residence being reported 'far in the interior and to be reached only on the backs of camels'; [1] others made expedition up the great Zambesi for the fabled mines of Ophir and the wondrous wealth of Sheba.[2] These explorers failed in the first European hunt for African treasure; but another traveller of the time, if he found no gold, brought back new legends for old, telling of the murder of a Jesuit father in the back lands of the continent, and how his body, clad in black and bound across a log of wood, came floating down the river, till the very beasts and birds, seeing it, had proved more kind than cruel men; for they had stopped and brought the corpse ashore, loosing it from the beam on which it lay, and ever after reverencing and watching over the sainted remains of the holy martyr of God.

These and other like adventures, and a century of traffic and discovery in eastern Africa gave the Portuguese a hold on Mozambique and Zambesia from which no rivals of a later day could oust them; [3] but the Cape of Good Hope itself was no

[1] If this tradition had any basis of truth at all—which is very doubtful—it probably referred to the Kingdom of Abyssinia.

Many of the earlier legends of mediæval Europe placed Prester John in China, but the traditions varied from age to age.

[2] For some notice of the Ophir tradition, see vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. i.

Milton lends some countenance to the theory that Ophir was in South-East Africa, *Paradise Lost*, xi. 399: 'Sofala, thought Ophir.'

[3] See chapter vi. of this book.

advantage to, and derived no advantage from, its discoverers. And only a few Portuguese names along the southern coasts —Cape Agulhas, Saldanha Bay, Cape Infanta, and Natal— have survived to show that the whole of southern Africa was once claimed by the Portuguese.

Their Disasters in South Africa.

Even those few names were not of pleasant omen; for Portuguese remembrance of the Cape, and the terrific storms which sweep around that austral headland, was full of evil. Shipwreck and disaster were all its story for the Latin traders to the East; many a fair ship richly laden was cast ashore, its silk and spices lost, its sailors haply saved, but driven to grub for fish and roots along the untilled shores, often 'in want of arms, clothes, and money, and having no longer the semblance of human beings,' as one old writer tells; always fearful of attack from natives or wild beasts, and in great dread of death from hunger. In one such catastrophe the chronicler states simply that the captain who had lost his vessel was 'suffering in his brain from constant watching,' in another a viceroy and more than fifty of his people were slain in a terrible fight at Table Bay 'by bestial negroes, the most brutal of all that coast.' And a third and more moving tragedy even than this wholesale massacre tells how a Portuguese lady who was cast ashore by shipwreck with her husband and two children was forced to strip herself before the natives. Half-dead with shame, the unhappy woman 'cast herself upon the ground, and covered herself with her hair, which was very long, while she made a pit in the sand in which she buried herself to the waist, and never rose from that spot' before she died. One of the children also died beside her, the other lived; and the father now returning from a search for food, sat down by his dead lady 'with his face supported on one hand, not weeping or saying a single word, but sitting thus with his eyes fixed upon her, and taking no account of the child.' After a space he dug a grave in the sand for her and the little

one; and then the poor broken man disappeared into the thickets, and was never heard of more.[1]

Truly the Portuguese had good reason for their hatred of the Cape and Table Bay when such memories of evil haunted them. But later visitors of other nations were at first no wiser. To Thomas Stevens, indeed, the first Englishman who rounded South Africa on his way to India in the year 1579, the Cape of Good Hope was nothing more than a place that was 'famous and feared of all men.' Cape Agulhas, further east, was even more terrible and dangerous, being 'a land full of tigers, and people that are savage and killers of all strangers.' Such was the earliest brief comment on South Africa by an Englishman, and it did but echo the opinion of the Portuguese in whose company he sailed; the report of Francis Drake, who passed the Cape in the opposite direction a few months after Stevens in June 1580 on his homeward voyage round the world, was more favourable and more accurate. He declared the great headland to be 'a most stately thing, and the fairest cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth'; the belief, too, that it was always encompassed with intolerable storms was stated to be false.

The First English Visitors, 1579-91.

Neither Drake nor Stevens set foot on South African soil; and a dozen years more had passed before an English vessel put in at the Cape for water and provisions. But on 1st August 1591 the eastward-bound expedition under the two captains Raymond and Lancaster cast anchor in Saldanha Bay, and a party from the vessels went ashore. They reported the bay to be commodious, and although the natives were 'black savages very brutish,' they were not unfriendly; but after a stay of about a month, during which many antelopes 'and other great beasts unknowen' were observed in the interior, the travellers departed for the Indies.

[1] For these early days of the Portuguese in South Africa, see Theal's *Records of South-Eastern Africa*; and the delightful book by my friend Ian D. Colvin, *The Cape of Adventure*.

Others came and went in following years. From time to time, and more often every season, a vessel would put in at Table Bay to water or repair; but those who now began to use the place were mostly new competitors of Portugal, not the Portuguese themselves. And the fact that upstart rivals whom the proud monopolists of Lisbon would have branded as heretics and pirates frequented Table Bay hardly made the place more welcome to the descendants of Diaz and Da Gama.

And others frequent the Cape.

The traders of England and Holland, ambitious of a share in the profitable traffic with the Indies, embarked on mercantile adventures to the Orient as the sixteenth century neared its close; and in course of time it was these men who occupied the country which the Portuguese had discovered and neglected, and it was these men who founded there a European settlement that was destined to spread far into the remote interior of the continent, and outdistance the decaying Empire of the Latins on the fever-haunted coasts of Mozambique.

But for many years neither Dutch nor English had any more idea of colonising South Africa than the Portuguese themselves. It was the fate of the whole continent to be misjudged alike by its discoverers and by those later travellers who sailed around its long low shores. They judged, as men will judge of men and things, merely by the outward view; and Africa shares with Australia the concealment of its beauties and resources from the superficial eye of the casual wayfarer.[1] It had no such attraction of profit and adventure as was promised by the Indies and the isles of the Eastern Seas. Its climate was maligned, judged only by the fevers of Sofala and Mozambique. Its people were condemned, and not without good cause, as cruel and barbarous. Its riches were unknown and unsuspected; and after the failure of the Latins to locate the

They hold South Africa of little value.

[1] For the low esteem in which Australia was held, see vol. v. bk. xvii. chs. i. and ii.

wealth of Ophir, the gold and gems which lay hidden beneath the soil of Africa were overlooked for nearly four centuries by the eager seekers after wealth elsewhere.

And in those beautiful isles of the Indian Ocean, which Nature has blessed with a soil of superlative fertility, the nations of Europe found for long a greater attraction than was offered by the more sombre shores of South Africa. The conquest of Madagascar was the subject of many an ambitious project before there was any thought of founding a colony at Cape Town.[1] Mauritius was occupied by the Dutch fifty years before they established themselves at Table Bay. And the wealth of Java and Sumatra [2] was sought for and fought for a century and more before it was realised that the vast territories south of the Zambesi could support anything more than a few debased and ignorant savages.

The splendour of the tropics outshone the less gorgeous lands of the temperate south, as a woman of seductive beauty will divert the errant attentions of man from more estimable but plainer sisters; but only for awhile. The one attracted many rivals from many nations, the other found but one faithful claimant in two centuries; yet while the one inspired the passion for possession, and took due toll of life and health from those who yielded to the warm embrace, the other gave a permanent home, that was not abandoned by the children of its founders.

CHAPTER II

ABANDONED CLAIM AND RIVAL SETTLEMENT: 1608-1758

As a port of call on the road to India, Table Bay had permanent advantages and occasional dangers; but while the Eastern Seas remained a monopoly of Portugal, it was unlikely

[1] For Madagascar and Mauritius, see vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv.
[2] Vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. ii. for the Malay Archipelago.

to be much used. For the Portuguese maintained their stations further east, at Mozambique and Sofala; and it was not until other European nations began to compete with and surpass the Latins in the outer world that the Cape of Good Hope became a place of regular resort.

A Port of call at Table Bay.

But when Dutch and English merchantmen began to fight the Portuguese and each other for the profitable trade in oriental fabrics and spices, they soon found the advantage of a permanent port of call; and whatever the risk of storm and sudden shipwreck at certain seasons of the year in Table Bay,[1] it had advantages that easily offset those dangers. It lay almost exactly halfway on the long ocean road to and from the Indies. Its noble headland stood out boldly, so that none could miss it, and it had a continual supply of fresh running water that incoming vessels could store against the remainder of the voyage.[2] For these excellent reasons Table Bay became the port of call for English and Dutch traders in the early sixteenth century—a place where skippers outward bound for Java and Japan could leave letters reporting their progress thus far on the voyage for returning vessels to carry back to Amsterdam or London; a place where men might rest awhile after long tedious weeks in tropic waters, and exchange the views and gossip of the high seas with other comers from afar. In this wise Table Bay became a centre of recourse, and in due time—since skippers and sailors are convivial souls—achieved a reputation as a tavern of the Eastern Seas, where high carousal was often held by mariners of mark from broad Thames and broader Maas.

And there now grew up a traffic between these travellers and

[1] It was from May to September, when the north-west gales blow in full strength, that the ill-protected Table Bay was the terror of seamen, and the Cape deserved its name of the Cape of Storms. For the other half of the year it was safe.

[2] It was the good fresh water of Table Bay that made it a place of more resort for seamen than Saldanha, which was less well provided.

the barbarous natives of the Cape, who supplied the merchantmen with cattle and such green stuffs as the country could produce, in exchange for 'iron hoopes, which is the best money which they doe esteeme,'[1] and such odd trifles of the ships. Fresh meat and vegetables were the best restoratives to health for the scurvy-stricken crews of the old East Indiamen;[2] but care was needed in the conduct of this early commerce. Neither Dutch nor English had forgotten the massacre of the Portuguese by the natives a century before; and the treacherous character of the 'Kafirs or Atheists, the accursed progeny of Cham,' as an English traveller of the early sixteenth century called them in disgust,[3] made caution and the presence if not actually the use of force a necessary prudence in such barterings.

For some years these two European nations used the Cape and Table Bay in common, with no thought of founding colonies or advancing any claim to their exclusive possession. But rivalry between the two grew keen. Englishman and Hollander pressed hard on each other's heels in the East, intrigued and denounced the other's intrigues in the Courts of Asia, and waged a merchants' war of prices in the West. On the high seas hard words were answered with harder blows; bloody fights were waged in the East Indies, and presently the peaceful meeting-ground half-way between Europe and India became an object of desire.

What, if any, views of settlement and conquest in South Africa passed through the brains of Dutch skippers to the Indies are unrecorded or lost in old Dutch archives; but their

[1] John Jourdain. His *Journal* has been printed by the Hakluyt Society.

[2] Many of the vessels of these days arrived in port after a long voyage with half their crews dead or hopelessly diseased with scurvy, unable to unfurl the sails, or even to bring the ship into harbour. I have given some instances of the ravages of scurvy in the footnote on vol. ii. p. 25.

[3] Sir Thomas Herbert, *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique* (1638). His remark that most of the Kafir men were said to be semi-eunuchs shows him a poor observer.

rivals were less reticent. In the year 1608 the English captain, John Jourdain, chancing to be detained awhile at Saldanha Bay, and 'having little business there,' he wrote, 'for recreation myself with other of the merchants would take our walk to the top of the hill called the Table.' From that broad eminence, which commands a wide view of the neighbouring country, ambition spoke to Jourdain; his constructive faculties as a European revolted at the waste uncultivated land, and he meditated the founding of a plantation that 'would bear anything that should be sown or planted, as for all kind of grain, wheat, barley, besides all kind of fruit, as oranges, lemons, limes, and grapes. If this country were inhabited by a civil nation, having a castle or fort for defence against the outrage of heathenish people and to withstand any foreign force, in short time,' predicted the sailor, 'it might be brought to some civility, and within few years able of itself to furnish all ships refreshing,' while he did not despair that in due course even the barbarous natives might 'be brought to know God, and understand our language.'

An English Colony projected, 1608.

Such was Jourdain's vision of the future; but like most prophets, he was not to see his hopes fulfilled. A few years later the gallant captain met his end in a sea-fight with the Dutch in East Indian waters; and by that time the one unworthy attempt to carry out his views had failed as it deserved.

In the year 1614, perhaps with Jourdain's scheme in mind, and with some idea of advantaging their growing trade, the directors of the English East India Company determined to plant a station at the Cape. They had already some experience of such matters in the East; but the materials they chose for this South African enterprise were as evil as their methods were unhappy.

The First English Settlement, 1614.

It happened that ten men had been condemned to death at the Old Bailey sessions in London for certain serious crimes;

and the East India Company entreated that these men should be respited of their sentence, and banished to the Cape, to found an English colony at Table Bay. The application was received with favour, being looked upon as 'a very charitable deed, and a means to bring the criminals to God by giving them time for repentance, to crave pardon for their sins'; the request was granted, the wretched men were released from the hangman's rope, and presently sent forth upon their travels.

A Convict Colony.

The scheme was foredoomed to failure. Two of the involuntary colonists were not landed at the Cape at all, but by accident or favour were taken on to India. The fate of one of these is unknown; the other, being in time brought back to England, made a shabby return for the kindness of his patron, the great Sir Thomas Roe,[1] by stealing his plate. Probably the gallows now claimed their prey; but the other eight convicts were left on Robben Island, a barren place with neither tree nor shade, fresh water nor corn.[2] Their leader, one Cross, who had been a Yeoman of the Guard at the Court of James I., was killed almost at once in a brawl with the aborigines; the remainder were soon in desperate plight. They had been provided with a boat, some ammunition, and provisions; but they had not the means, nor probably the capacity, to raise anything for themselves on their bare island. Soon they had nothing but dry biscuit left, and not too much of that, says the chronicler of the affair,[3] living indeed as best they might 'with hungry bellies for six months'; and when next an English ship put in along that coast they made shift to reach her in what remained of their boat, whose timbers were now split and

Its dismal Failure.

[1] For Sir Thomas Roe and his embassy to the Court of the Mughál Emperor in 1614, in which this condemned rogue accompanied him, see vol. ii. bk. vi. ch. iii.

[2] In those days it was called Penguin Island.

[3] The whole story has been given by Edward Terry in his *Voyage to East India*, published in 1665. Terry was chaplain to Roe on his embassy to the Mughál.

rotten. Four were drowned in the attempt, the three that remained alive were rescued; but these soon showed that hardships had not reformed their character. They were a source of serious trouble on the homeward voyage, and immediately the ship arrived in England they escaped ashore and stole a purse. For this they were condemned as incorrigible rogues, as in truth it seems they were; and 'their very foul story being related to the Lord Chief Justice,' he ordered their immediate execution.

So ended the first English attempt at sovereignty in South Africa; the second, if more honourable, was hardly more successful.

In the month of June 1620, some officers of the English East India fleet, who chanced to meet and, as their custom was, to discuss affairs in friendly fashion with their fellows of the Dutch East India vessels while in Table Bay, learned with some surprise that the Dutch proposed to found a settlement in Table Valley in the following year. Probably the secret leaked out of an indiscreet bottle; but a few days later the Hollanders sailed for the East, leaving this unpleasant news behind them; the English remained awhile in harbour and debated the thing among themselves. Debate was but the preliminary to action; the two English commodores, Andrew Shillinge and Humphrey Fitzherbert, determined to forestall their rivals by taking immediate possession of the Cape in the name of the King of England.

British Sovereignty proclaimed, 1620.

Their reasons for this step, which they were careful to place on record, were not without force. They stated that only a few men would be necessary to hold Table Valley, that a plantation there would be of great use for the refreshment of the fleet, that the soil was fruitful and the climate pleasant, that the natives would become willing subjects of the king and perhaps also servants of God, that the whale fishery would be profitable; and that above all, it was more fitting that the

Dutch should be subjects of England than that the English should be subjects of the Dutch or of anybody else.

The last excellent reason may perhaps be regarded as the one which determined the two gallant commodores; and a fact which may also have been not without weight in their minds was that the six English vessels at that moment in Table Bay were more than a match for the one Dutchman who happened to be anchored there.

On 3rd July the proclamation of sovereignty was read, and the English flag hoisted on Table Mountain. No objection was made by the aborigines to a ceremony which they did not understand; and the solitary Dutch captain who viewed the scene was either too phlegmatic or too prudent to protest. Or he may have had a vision of the future which restrained him.

The occasion was in one sense more noteworthy than either Shillinge or Fitzherbert realised, for it marked the first formal claim by Britain to the soil of a continent which she has since so largely dominated. But in its practical result the proclamation was of no significance whatever. The English vessels sailed for the Orient, where Shillinge died fighting and Fitzherbert died drinking; and neither the king nor the East India Company of England recognised the existence of a possession which they did not desire.

And forgotten.

The Dutch project of founding a colony at the Cape was likewise abandoned. For some years more the two nations concentrated all their efforts on the oriental trade, in whose pursuit both found a common enemy in the monopoly claimed by Portugal; and the sailors of England and Holland met and gossiped freely and on equal terms in Table Bay, which continued to serve as a half-way house and port of call for both.

The Hollanders, whose first appearance in India dates from 1595, a few years later than the English, were spending their energies in continual but unsuccessful attacks on the Portuguese colony of Mozambique; and although the directors

of the East India Company of Holland resolved in 1616 that henceforth their ships should always put in at Table Bay, they claimed no rights there above the East India Company of England, nor did they seem likely to claim any.

It was in fact an accident which had nearly added another disaster to the dreary annals of the Cape of Storms that led to the founding of a Dutch colony at Table Bay; and the unforeseen consequences of that accident decided the political destinies of the Cape for a hundred and fifty years, and influenced the destinies of South Africa for all time.

An Involuntary Dutch Settlement, 1648.

During the year 1648 the *Haarlem*, a vessel of the Dutch East India Company's fleet, was driven ashore and wrecked on the South African coast. The sailors succeeded in saving their lives and the cargo; and they made their way to the Table Valley, where they determined to await, since they could do nothing else, the arrival of the next Dutch vessel. Unlike some previous refugees, they found the natives friendly and hospitable; the soil was fertile, and the seeds they planted throve; game and fish were likewise plentiful. The involuntary settlers therefore formed a highly favourable opinion of their unexpected home; and when they were rescued six months later they advised the directors of the Dutch East India Company that the acquisition of the Cape would be highly advantageous to that great corporation. They also expressed their surprise that the foreign rivals of the Company had not already seized so excellent a country.

The directors were impressed by the memorial, and after debating the project for eighteen months, they determined to establish an outpost at Table Bay. Three vessels from the Company's fleet—the *Dromedaris*, the *Reiger*, and the *Goede Hoop*—were told off to carry the seventy men who were to form the new settlement: on the Christmas Eve of the year 1651 the anchors were weighed, and the expedition stood out to sea.

A permanent Dutch Outpost, 1651.

The voyage was prosperous, and rapid for a period in which a year was often consumed by the journey from Europe to India. On 7th April 1652 the emigrants landed at the Cape, and Jan Van Riebeeck, who had been appointed Commander of the colony, proceeded to look for a convenient and healthy spot on which to build a fort.

It is highly improbable that any of the dutiful servants of the Honourable Company realised the full importance of their mission as they stepped ashore. It certainly never entered the heads of the first settlers at the Cape that gold and diamonds equal to all the riches of the Orient were to be found in a region that report peopled only with wild beasts and savages;[1] while the idea that they were laying the foundation of a new nation would have been regarded both by the servants of the Company and by the Company itself as an opinion dangerously near rebellion. Yet from this small seed, that was planted in the southern autumn of 1652, sprang part of the United South Africa of the twentieth century.

The Founding of Cape Town, 1652.

On 8th April, the day after the vessels cast anchor in Table Bay, a meeting of the Council—the commander and the three captains of the expedition—was held aboard the *Dromedaris*; the same week the site of the settlement was determined. The building of a fortress was at once begun, a square castle being decided on, with a flat roof, from which it would be easy to fire down on any enemy who attacked the place. The fort was to be surrounded by a moat to strengthen the defence; a wooden house and store-shed were included in the plan, and a workshop, hospital, and barracks were added.[2]

[1] Half a century later Swift wrote:

> 'So geographers in Afric maps
> With savage pictures fill their gaps,
> And o'er unhabitable downs
> Place elephants instead of towns.'

A glance at some of the old maps shows that Swift by no means exceeded the bounds of poetic licence in these lines; see the examples cited in the footnote on pages 149-50.

[2] It stood behind the modern post-office of Cape Town

It was the close of the dry season when the Dutchmen landed, and the soil was bare with drought; but in a few weeks, and before the first buildings were completed, the winter rains set in. The settlement was now in some danger, for dysentery came with the rains; half the colony was down with sickness, medical appliances were lacking, and scurvy was soon added to the other misfortunes. Neither fresh meat nor vegetables, the sovereign cure for the scurvy, were to be had; the vessels that put in at Table Bay were in the same plight as the garrison; and the first winter at the Cape was in truth but a miserable time for its new occupants.

Early Difficulties of the Settlement.

But presently a marvellous change was seen. The heavy rains which had brought sickness to man brought new life to the parched earth; grasses and plants began to show, and shot up quickly as the settlers from the north watched the unaccustomed spectacle of antipodean spring in September; the seeds that had been brought from Europe were planted, and it was found that radishes, lettuces, and other green stuffs from Holland flourished on the virgin soil.

Its Prospects improve.

Heavy storms and floods uprooted and destroyed some of the plants, but in this, as in other matters, experience taught the settlers wisdom; and the second winter there was no such scarcity of food as had marred the first.

From that time the colony at the Cape began to take firm root, and there was never a thought of abandoning a place which its owners described, picturesquely but not inaccurately, as the frontier fortress of India.

The frontier fortress of the Dutch East Indies indeed, and a port of call and ever-open tavern of the Eastern Seas, Cape Town remained during the century and a half it was under the rule of the Dutch East India Company. And it was the steady aim of that great Company that it should be neither more nor less

The Frontier Fortress of India.

than a frontier fortress and a port of call where their ships could provision and water. If it was anything less it was useless for their purpose; if anything more it would outgrow its founders' intentions and policy.

The latter objection lay far in the future; the former defect was quickly rectified. The first temporary defences of the place were hardly very formidable, but in the second year of the settlement, when England was at war with Holland,[1] the castle was strengthened and rebuilt; the fear of a French attack twenty years later caused another addition to the fortifications of Table Bay.

But in neither case was the fear of attack justified by the event. The East India Company of England, which had established its own port of call at St. Helena in the same year that the Dutch had determined on the colony at Table Bay,[2] had no wish for territory at the Cape; the great French dream of empire in the East embraced the isles of the Indian Ocean in its gorgeous vision of dominion, but stopped short of annexation in South Africa.[3] The Dutch were therefore left undisturbed in their new possession.

It is true that French and English trading vessels put in at Table Bay from time to time. They came for shelter and refreshment, not for conquest; and they were sometimes supplied at a price with the goods they required when their nations were at peace with Holland—although the local Dutch commander once excused this profitable hospitality to his jealous superiors at Amsterdam by remarking that the meat he sold the English was unsound—and they were occasionally seized as lawful prizes when first news of the outbreak of war had reached Cape Town.

[1] See vol. i. bk. ii. ch. iii. for Cromwell's war with Holland.

[2] See vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. v. for St. Helena. This island was captured by the Dutch twice about this time, but in each case they were driven out after a few months.

[3] For the French in the Indies, vol. ii. bk. vi. ch. iv.

In general the Dutch East India Company looked rather jealously on such alien intruders at Cape Town.[1] Officially it refused to supply them with anything but fresh water; and though the free Dutch burghers who settled on the shores of Table Bay in later years were permitted to do business with the foreigners, they were often restrained by a hint from their commandant against selling the produce of their farms to the rivals of their masters.

Policy of the Dutch E. I. Company.

The Dutch East India Company, in fact, pursued the same monopolistic policy at Cape Town as in the Eastern Seas;[2] the same policy characterised the Dutch West India Company in North America.[3] The directors argued forcibly as business men that the station at the Cape was founded for their benefit, and that to help their competitors in the trade with Asia was to hurt themselves. They did not see that in the end it hurt the colony they had founded by diminishing the demand for its products, and that here were all the elements of a direct conflict of interests between the colonists and themselves.

Like the English East India Company, they fought for trade and not dominion; and when circumstances compelled them to become territorial sovereigns as well as commercial men they attempted to limit their responsibilities. By doing so they created the same dissatisfaction among their own colonists in South Africa that had gone far to ruin the settlements of the Dutch West India Company at New Amsterdam; but like their great rivals in London, the merchants of Holland seem to have recognised that it was an anomaly for a commercial corporation in Europe to be a sovereign power in other continents, and to have had an uneasy consciousness

[1] It is worth notice that Van Riebeeck's original instructions forbade him to oppose or interfere with any other European settlement in South Africa. The Dutch may reasonably have held that those Europeans who wished to make regular use of Cape Town should build their own colony elsewhere along the coast.

[2] See vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. ii. for the Dutch in Java and the East.

[3] Vol. i. bk. iii. ch. iii. for the Dutch colonies in North America.

that the anomaly which they could not prevent would in the end prove their undoing. They were not far wrong in their belief; for British dominion in India survives the English East India Company, and the Dutch colonies in the Eastern Seas and the Dutch population in South Africa have long survived the Dutch East India Company which gave birth to both.

The population of Cape Town in these early years, however, grew but slowly, too slowly even for the Dutch East India Company. The directors had certainly no wish to found a powerful state in South Africa, since commerce, not dominion, was their aim; but they intended the Cape to furnish all their ships with food, and the population—which was only 134 all told in 1657—was not large enough to cultivate the soil.

The Free Burghers.

Efforts were therefore made to obtain recruits from Holland, and good terms were offered to intending settlers approved by the Company—free possession of their holdings for three years, and long credit for food, guns, powder, lead, and farming implements—but not many took advantage of the offer.[1] One of the conditions of acceptance was a pledge that the emigrant would sell all his produce to the Company, and remain twenty years in the colony; the terms were not unreasonable, but although the Dutchman of the time was used to wander all over the wide world, employment was too good in Holland, and opportunities too many elsewhere, for him to be prepared to tie himself to so long an exile with such uncertain prospects.

A few were neverthless tempted to try their fortunes in the new land; from time to time, and at varying intervals, a single family, or sometimes two or three together, would be brought over to the Cape by the trading ships bound for the eastern tropics, and take up their grant of land at some spot near Cape Town or beyond.

[1] The offer was limited to married men of good character and of Dutch or German birth.

Among these early settlers were many of good Dutch name and lineage, whose children were to play their part, and that a leading one, in the shaping of the white South Africa of the future. Such families as Brinkman, Cloete, Rietvelt, and Pretorius are found among the immigration records of these years, and they formed a new class of population in the colony. They were not merely the paid employees of the Dutch East India Company, contracted to serve and obey that mighty master for a term of years; they were free men, who were come out to make their own way in the world by their own exertions.

They recognised, somewhat grudgingly at times it is true, but still they recognised, the Dutch East India Company as the ruler of the country; they obeyed, at least for a time, its rules; but beyond admitting the authority of the Company in its own territories—and the extent of its dominions they were later to dispute—they owed it little thanks. Like their contemporaries and fellow-countrymen on the other side of the world, the Dutch burghers of New Amsterdam, they wished to enlarge their rights and privileges; the Company which had brought them out was determined to prevent them. The Company condemned the turbulence of the colonists who resisted and sometimes ignored its regulations, the colonists condemned the restrictions of the Company which refused their demands; and each chafed against and irritated the other in turn.

Nevertheless they prospered, despite the disagreements, the friction, and the restrictions. Some of these folk took up their abode on the outskirts of Cape Town, others settled in the part that became known as Hottentots Holland; some families crossed the Cape Peninsula, and set up house upon the mainland of the continent—whence they soon began to send out exploring parties towards the interior, and to speculate on the possibility of leaving the rule of the Dutch East India Company behind them altogether.

Their Prosperity.

A canal was projected in the very early days of the colony that would have separated the Cape Peninsula on which Cape Town stood from the mainland where these more distant parties had begun to settle. Its construction might have prevented them from going so far afield; the idea, however, was abandoned after matured consideration for good reasons. But there was more significance in the abandonment than the Governor and Council responsible for the decision realised. The cutting of a canal between Cape Town and the mainland would have strengthened the colony at Table Bay against the attacks of African aborigines; but it would also have tended to stereotype its original function as the frontier fortress of India, it would have prevented Cape Town from being the mother of Cape Colony, and it might have delayed the advance of European settlement in the interior.

The Huguenot Immigration, 1687.

But these Dutch families were not the only new arrivals at Cape Town. A revival of religious bigotry in France had expelled the industrious Huguenots from their homes in fair Provence and fruitful Burgundy and rich Languedoc; and some of those among the exiles who found refuge for their faith in Holland accepted the proposal of the Dutch East India Company that they should settle at the Cape. They were offered land and liberty, neither of which were theirs in France; and in return for land and liberty, they were expected to introduce the cultivation of the vine and olive and other useful industries and arts in South Africa.

The first parties of Huguenots arrived at Cape Town in 1687. They numbered about one hundred and seventy-six men, women, and children in all; and among them were the names, which afterwards shed lustre on the annals of South Africa, of de Villiers and Joubert and Malan. They had neither money nor other property on their arrival, but a fund was raised to help them over the first difficulties of their new

position in a strange land, and it was not long before they took firm root in the alien soil.

The Huguenots did not belie their well-won reputation for capacity and industry in their new homes, and within a few years they prospered like the Dutch; but, notwithstanding the many virtues of this admirable people, they were not altogether popular in South Africa. Not unnaturally the exiles wished to form a little separate community of French Protestants, distinguished by social customs, by the minor details of religious worship, and above all by the difference of national speech, from their neighbours—a little Gallic island in a sea of strange humanity; but the Dutch Governor at the Cape had no more intention of allowing the existence of a state within a state than Richelieu, who had checked the same tendency to exclusiveness among the Protestants of France some forty years before.[1]

Their Exclusiveness.

They want, said the elder Van der Stel, the Governor at the time of their arrival, 'not only their own church but their own magistrate and their own prince.' Neither Huguenot magistrate nor Huguenot prince would the Dutch Governor permit; the exiles were scattered here and there among the Dutch settlers as a means of reducing their influence and ultimately absorbing them among their neighbours; and, despite their protests and complaints, there was no remedy for their grievance. The religion for which they had suffered exile they might retain, since the Dutch were also of that faith; the nation which had cast them out they must in turn cast out, lest perchance a Protestant New France should ever rise to menace a Protestant New Holland in South Africa. Truly the lot of the exile is hard and bitter, and he who forsakes his country cuts out his heart.

[1] See vol. i. bk. iii. ch. ii. for Richelieu's description of his policy. Like the Dutch Governor, he allowed the Huguenots religious freedom, but checked their attempt to form a separate political party.

The policy of absorption was in the end successful. The older Huguenots might chafe at the division of their community; the younger immigrants were less concerned. They intermarried with the Dutch; and the Dutch being far more numerous than themselves,[1] and not having had their sense of nationality blunted by religious differences at home and exile abroad,[2] the stronger type prevailed. The children of these mixed unions sometimes spoke French, but they always spoke Dutch; and their children again spoke Dutch, and Dutch only.

They are absorbed by the Dutch.

Within a few years the two people were united in blood, and one in sympathy and speech. The Frenchman Le Vaillant, who visited South Africa in the eighteenth century, found no signs of French nationality among the descendants of the Huguenots save their dark hair and complexion, and the fact that they still baked their bread after the French fashion.[3] Another traveller of the nineteenth century found indeed, or thought he found, proof that the families of French ancestry in South Africa were more courteous in manner than the Dutch. But that may have been no more than the accidental chances of personal encounter, an opinion founded on the varying hospitality accorded to a stranger, or even a prejudice due to personal or political causes. At least no other visitors remarked a distinction which was not remarked by the colonists themselves; and the only other sign of Huguenot descent in the

[1] The Huguenots formed but a sixth part of the community.

[2] I have a theory, which admittedly I cannot prove, but which Richelieu's action in France rather supports, that the Huguenots were lacking in the ideas of French nationality which it was the business of French statesmen to encourage in the seventeenth century. It must have been rather difficult, in the religious passions of the time, for the same man to be a good Huguenot and a good Frenchman.

Women are said to be more conservative than men, and such small customs as the method of baking bread, being in the control of the women of the household, might remain unchanged for generations. Similarly in Pitcairn Island it was discovered that the descendants of Tahitian women who had married Englishmen still suckled their children after the Tahitian fashion (vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i). No doubt they do so to this day.

third generation was the family name, or so small and insignificant a survival as the use of some term or phrase or Gallic idiom of speech which had outlasted the French language in South Africa and been translated into the provincial dialect of the Cape Dutch.[1]

But not all the troubles of the early settlers were over when the Huguenots arrived. Occasional sicknesses broke out, and these were considered, after the fashion of the day, to be the penalty of sin, and cured—if they were cured—by prayer and fasting.[2] Generally, however, the place was healthy, and sufficient food was grown, or imported, or purchased by barter from the natives; but the settlers often found their cattle, and sometimes their own lives endangered by the wild animals of the country; lions came down at night, and leopards even ventured down by day, to the very walls of the colony; stock was seized, and several men were mauled and bitten, until the great beasts learned that man was too strong for them, and made off into the interior.

Further Difficulties of the Colonists.

Hitherto there had been no trouble with the aborigines. They were not numerous on the Cape Peninsula; they had been treated kindly by the earliest of the settlers, and food

[1] J. C. Voigt remarks the common use of the double negative at the Cape, which he considers a survival of the French *ne-pas*. It is not unusual for such verbalisms to be transmitted from one language to another by those who have abandoned their mother tongue. I think I have noticed instances of this in the books of Joseph Conrad, a Pole who has won fame as an English author; and the Germans in America, who have forgotten their own tongue, have occasionally given a Teutonic twist to English.

Indeed, I might quote myself as a collateral proof. The earlier chapters of the first volume of this work were written when I was living in Germany, and speaking little but German; and when I came to revise them a couple of years later in London I noticed, besides the cramped style of immaturity, a number of sentences built, as it were, on a German frame. The words were English, the construction German.

[2] The apparition of a comet in South Africa at this time caused a stricter observance of the Sabbath. It would take a good deal more than that to ensure repentance in the twentieth century; but at the bottom of our hearts we still have a great deal of respect for the hell-fire philosophy of a revengeful diety.

and presents given in exchange for native help in the building of the fort. But when they saw the Europeans replacing the first rough wooden houses of the settlement by brick buildings, and planning out great gardens and plantations on the Cape Peninsula and beyond, they knew the Dutch had come to stay, and the prospect of the invaders' domination vexed them. They were not indeed strong enough to expel the intruders; but they stole their cattle, murdered a lad in charge of the herds, and began a system of continual pilfering that no precautions or severity could check.

Neither the murder nor the outrages were revenged, the prudent Van Riebeeck being anxious not to embroil his little colony, which was still dependent for its meat on the Hottentot supplies, in a native war; and to avoid complications or the chance of further disagreements, the settlers were forbidden to have any intercourse with the natives, and all transactions and bartering for cattle were carried on by the commandant himself.

The regulation was a wise one, for the colony was still a weakly infant, and time was on the side of the Europeans; but not all intercourse between the two races could be stopped by the official order. Some Hottentot cattle found their way into private hands for fair consideration, despite Van Riebeeck's proclamation; some were stolen by the less scrupulous whites; and some of the less unattractive Hottentot women were enticed—they were not always unwilling—into Dutch households, where they served the lonely exiles at once as slaves and mistresses, while their offspring became in time a minor half-breed population that was sometimes bond and sometimes free, and was acknowledged or disowned by its European father as he chose.

Neither the lust for their women nor the purchase or theft of their cattle removed the fear of a Hottentot attack upon the European settlements; but the Dutch were steadily advancing towards the interior as their numbers grew, and

with each advance of the white man the natives fell back another stage inland. That advance and retreat of the two races was to be the basic factor underlying all South African politics for two centuries and more ahead: the existence of an ever-shifting frontier between European and native African; an advance, slow, irregular, but nevertheless certain, on the part of the European, a retreat, reluctant, rebellious, but continuous, on the part of the native African. The existence of that ever-shifting frontier is the real key to the history of European colonisation in South Africa.

The Settlement nevertheless advances steadily.

From the very early years of the settlement at Cape Town the beginnings of this advance were seen. In 1656, four years after the colony was planted, the first wheat and barley were grown at Rondebosch—*the round wood*—after the sowings nearer to the sea had failed. The following year the Groote Schuur—*the great barn*—was built to store the corn; maize was introduced in 1658, and the culture of the vine; and a number of experiments in crops and produce were now tried, both by the government in the great garden of the East India Company and by the private settlers themselves.[1]

Each new farm and every successful experiment meant an enlargement of the colony; each new plant and domestic animal that was imported and thrived in the hitherto barren lands of the Cape strengthened the position of those who brought them in. And during the next few years seeds, slips, and cuttings of fruits and flowers were sent over to the Cape from Holland, strawberries and blackberries from the gardens of the Rhine[2]; young oaks and fir-trees in pots and tubs were shipped from Europe, and acorns planted by the

[1] Stringent laws were adopted for the protection of the farms and orchards. A proclamation of the Government announced that the penalty for meddling with a fruit-tree was forfeiture of liberty and goods.

[2] Hops were also tried, but these failed to strike root time after time, and were eventually given up.

thousand in South Africa. Horses, too, were imported from Java, and pigs, sheep, dogs, and rabbits from the Netherlands; and season after season the acreage in crop and under pasture grew.

It was this steady industry of the white man, this sowing, planting, reaping year by year that won the land from the black.

Nor was Nature unresponsive to those who wooed her with such stubborn perseverance. Ten years after the colony was founded Van Riebeeck's farm contained over a thousand orange, lemon, and citron trees, besides a few bananas, olives, walnuts, and other fruit-trees and some thousands of vines; and his success was eclipsed by a later and greater Governor, the elder Van der Stel. His name lives in the village, which he founded in 1679, of Stellenbosch; the local records of the time reveal him as a tireless planter of seeds and saplings. Twelve thousand oaks were planted by him on the slopes of Table Mountain; the apes devoured four thousand of the tender and slow-growing trees, but the rest survived. And the long avenues of oaks and the great orchards and vineyards which he planted in his own village of Stellenbosch gave the place its beauty and secured its fame beyond South Africa; the great farm and vineyard of his own estate at Constantia, which gave a name to a brand of wine that attained to some repute in Europe, was planted six years after Stellenbosch.

Other settlements further inland showed the continued progress of the colony. The village district of the Paarl, said to be founded by the less successful farmers of Stellenbosch; Drakenstein, at the foot of the mountains which formed a barrier between these early colonists and the wild unknown interior; Fransche Hoek, the *French Hook*, where some Huguenots were congregated—all bore witness to the advance of colonisation.

It was under the two Governors Van der Stel, father and son, who ruled the colony at the Cape from 1679 to 1707, that

this advance took place. They were indeed the real builders of the colony, as Van Riebeeck was its founder; but they were more than that. They not only enlarged the settlement, they put it on a new basis altogether. Men of big visage and long views, shrewd farmers who profited themselves and others by their schemes,[1] they turned their faces to the interior, and from their day Cape Town was no longer a mere port of call on the way to the Indies, it was the gateway to the interior of Africa. When the elder Van der Stel was appointed Governor, the Cape Colony had as yet hardly burst its first bounds on the Cape Peninsula; when the younger Van der Stel ended his official career, the road to the uplands of the interior—a road which ought surely to have been called in gratitude the Weg Van der Stel—was discovered, marked out across the mountains, and well trodden.

And meanwhile Cape Town was growing steadily. Its trade increased with every season, and with its trade its wealth and reputation as a port and place of business. Simon's Bay on the other side the Cape Peninsula, which takes its name from Governor Simon Van der Stel, had, it is true, been used as a winter anchorage for ships since 1722, owing to its freedom from the storms that sweep down on Table Bay: Simon's Town in consequence became a pleasant, busy little place, but it could never rival the older city on Table Bay while the seat of government was at Cape Town; and there was no intention of removing the administration and the fortress of the Dutch East India Company from the old quarters under the shadow of Table Mountain.

Growth of Cape Town.

[1] The Van der Stels became wealthy, as indeed they deserved; but their too great success caused envious tongues to wag, jealous minds to plot, bitter tongues to slander; the younger Van der Stel was accused by his enemies at the Cape before the directors of the Dutch East India Company, and reduced from his position. He was too big a man for the place, and he paid the penalty of greatness.

But that dismal story lies outside the compass of this short summary of old Dutch rule.

The public buildings of the capital were modest, but they were not unworthy of their situation and their purpose. The Governor's house was described in 1685 as a large pile of two stories, surrounded by a terrace, paved with stone and flanked by a railed verandah;[1] not far off was the great garden of the Company, whose fame had reached and even attracted botanists from Europe, and whose pleasant walks and groves of oranges and apricots, pomegranates and other fruit were at once the admiration of the people of Cape Town and the wonder of every visitor to the colony.

The private buildings of the place were not less pleasant. The old one-storied houses thatched with reeds, which had been put up in Van Riebeeck's day, were not yet superseded; but they had been enlarged and more solidly built, decked with the beautiful tiles that were the pride of Holland, sometimes enriched with curious treasures from the Indies, and bearing other clear evidence of prosperity among their owners. By 1738 Cape Town had two hundred houses, many of which were very stately in appearance and surrounded by large gardens[2]; some of these houses regularly accommodated visitors from Europe and the Indies, serving in the purpose of hotels; but the majority were owned by private residents, the merchants or officials of the capital. And their number was increasing year by year.

The streets of the town, which had grown on the site and after the plan laid down by its founder, Van Riebeeck, ran in straight symmetrical lines. Some of the thoroughfares were watered by canals, after the inevitable fashion of the Dutch;[3] and most were planted with chestnut-trees, whose broad leaves

[1] Father Guy Tachard, *Voyage de Siam.*

[2] Kolbe's *Good Hope.* Kolbe was not a very trustworthy person, although he lived some time in South Africa; but in this matter he should be reasonably accurate.

[3] Even at Colombo in Ceylon the Dutch merchants cut a canal. I believe that Dutch theologians have been inclined to locate paradise in the planet Mars, on account of its canals. But this is not an article of faith.

and thick foliage sheltered both passers-by and the housewives within from the too ardent southern sun.[1] In these respects the Dutch capital in South Africa reminded the traveller of old Dutch towns at home, whose leafy avenues and placid waterways never fail to charm the tired eye of the wayfarer; and in other things besides their language and appearance the citizens at Table Bay recalled their countrymen in Europe. Life in Cape Town was always comfortable and easy; food and drink were plentiful and good; and according to the French author Saint-Pierre, who stayed some time at the Cape, the excellent Dutch colonists, like the well-fed Hollanders on the North Sea, were occupied in eating from morning till night.[2]

The Dutch colony at Table Bay was a century old when Saint-Pierre enjoyed its hospitality, and praised its simple happy people; and this little outpost of Europe in the antipodes had by then become firmly rooted on South African soil. Its early difficulties had vanished; the days of hardships and short rations were long since over. Its burghers no longer feared the attacks of the aborigines, the wild beasts that had sometimes menaced the first settlers at Cape Town were now driven far into the interior; trade was flourishing, nor had the merchants of the place any fear of diminishing prosperity, since their stores and live-stock were in regular demand from the vessels engaged in the steadily growing commerce with the East Indies.

Nevertheless a great change was slowly coming over the position which Cape Town had made for itself, both in its own little local world and in its relation to the larger world beyond South Africa. It had been founded by a powerful corporation of traders who aspired to the monopoly of the traffic with the Indies.

Cape Town outgrows its Origin.

[1] Saint Pierre, *Voyage à l'Ile de France*, 1773.

[2] Saint Pierre again. He stayed there on his way to Mauritius, which he immortalised as the scene of *Paul et Virginie*.

That monopoly the Dutch East India Company had failed to engross into its own hands; other nations, and above all the old British rivals of Holland in the Eastern Seas, had competed successfully for commerce and dominion in Asia. The fortunes of the Dutch East India Company began to decline about the middle of the eighteenth century; but the interests of Cape Town, which had been subordinated by its founders to their oriental trade, had outgrown its early destiny as the supply station of the great Dutch Company, and the decay of the Company had only profited the city. The old barriers of exclusiveness which the Company had set up could no longer be maintained by a declining corporation, and Cape Town now supplied the ships of every nation indifferently. Established as the depot of a single Company, it was becoming in effect a free port.

And while this change marked the relation of Cape Town to the outer world, another and not less notable change had begun to mark an alteration of its position in South Africa. The city which Van Riebeeck had founded a century before had grown and prospered; but not the city only. For the settlement of Europeans had begun to spread inland two generations since, and that settlement, once begun, had continued to spread itself steadily further and further through the interior.

The colony at Table Bay was no longer merely a port of call for passing ships, an isolated outpost and convenience of civilisation in a savage land; it was becoming the capital of a province, and that province, which a century before had been a barren waste, was now dotted with peaceful industrious farms, with church and homestead, with heavy vines and fruit and flowers, and rich fields and grazing cattle.

No longer was the Cape of Good Hope a land of no sojourning; the vision which had come to old John Jourdain as he looked inland from the top of Table Mountain, the prophecy of a country 'inhabited by a civil nation, and bearing any-

thing that should be sown or planted,' was no longer a mirage of the mind, the idle dream of a busy man, but an accomplished fact.

CHAPTER III

DUTCH EXPANSION AND ENGLISH CONQUEST: 1700-1815

In the very early days of Van Riebeeck's rule at Cape Town a rumour reached that infant settlement of a race of men dwelling far to the north, whose skins were white as the white man's, who wore clothing like them and grew their hair long as was the fashion among some civilised people at that period.[1] And it was said that this strange people lived in stone houses, that the manual work of their country was performed by slaves, and that their form of religious worship resembled the church-going of Christians. Another rumour reached the curious Dutch colonists of a people in the north, perhaps identical with this white-skinned tribe, whose country contained a vast amount of gold and precious stones. Namaqualand.

The traditions of savages are untrustworthy in every age and every country;[2] but every age and every country gives

[1] Besides these rumours of white men, many strange stories reached Cape Town, and were passed on to Europe, from time to time, of the existence of cannibals and human beings with tails in the interior of South Africa. The existence of cannibals, and cannibals from choice, not from scarcity of food, was proved by Livingstone on his last journey in 1868 north of Lake Tanganyika; but as to the tailed men, when he asked a question out of curiosity, he received the unexpected but baffling answer: 'We have always understood that monstrosities are met with only among you sea-going people.' Each had placed the marvel in the unknown.

[2] Aborigines had misled the French and English explorers in Canada in much the same fashion as they misled the Dutch, with stories of white men and great wealth far away; see vol. iii. bk. x. ch. iii. And something of the same kind occurred in Australia, when one traveller after another was misled by reports of a great inland sea; vol. v. bk. xix. ch. i.

Apart from the untrustworthiness of the reports of savages, it is of

them credence when they tell of wealth and an unknown land. Van Riebeeck and his people inclined to believe the Hottentot reports; Namaqualand, the land of which they heard, became an object of desire; and there were some who even wondered whether this country would not prove the fabulous Empire of Monomotapa of which old legends told, or that great realm of Ophir which Portuguese explorers sought in vain.[1]

A Land of Disappointment.

One expedition after another started from Cape Town to verify the native tales, but desert and disappointment was the lot of all. The explorers discovered indeed wild beasts and savages, great mountains and the report of a large river away to the north; but they discovered little more. The river was the Orange, and here report spoke true;[2] but none yet reached so far; and Namaqualand, the supposed home of the white man, was found nothing but a dreary barren waste, and its nomad people knew no vestige of civilisation.

Twenty years later, in 1681, some of these barbarians showed Simon Van der Stel specimens of copper from their country, and interest again revived; exploring parties once more set out for the north-west. Once more they were disillusioned; there was indeed much copper in the land, but it could not be located, and henceforth the country of the Namaquas was left alone. Here was neither profit nor home, nor even bare subsistence for the European.

course possible that the white men misinterpreted their statements, and that the wish was in these cases sometimes father to the thought. And the savage would generally pitch his story to the white man's taste if there was the prospect of a present at the end of it.

[1] The Portuguese had reached some distance inland in their search for the gold of Ophir. When the British occupied Rhodesia (bk. xxiv., ch. v.) a Portuguese cannon was found in the Matopo hills, in the very region of the fabled Monomotapa.

[2] The river Orange was named, after the ruling house of Holland, in 1777. Previously it had been called the Groote Rivier, the *great water* of the Hottentot idiom.

Had Namaqualand been as fertile as rumour held and its first explorers hoped, the tide of settlement from Table Bay might have spread along the coast towards the north when the little Dutch settlement at the Cape began to grow beyond its early bounds. But sailors and overland pioneers alike retreated from those inhospitable shores, where was neither anchorage without nor pasturage within; and each step forward of the burghers at the Cape broke fresh ground further inland.

The Inland Road.

The lie of the land and the look of the soil were their main guides, and both led ever inland: the road to leafy Stellenbosch and onwards to the Paarl and Drakenstein, was the beginning of a path that was to lead in time across the great plains of the Karoo, over the Orange River, and right onwards to the tropics. That path took two centuries in the making, and its making was the making of a nation.

Northwards and eastwards lay the way; but for a time the barriers of the Drakenstein Mountains stopped the movement onwards.[1] Yet not for long. The colony needed more cattle and more pasturage, and all the available land around the Cape itself was already occupied. Insistent efforts were made to pass the Drakenstein; and in the year 1700 the younger Van der Stel at last passed through a cleft in the mountains on to the great inner ridge of the sub-continent.

Through the Drakenstein, 1700.

He found himself in a strange new land, cut off from the outer world—a land which one who loved it[2] in later years described as a country of mountains without summits, of rivers without water, of trees without shade, of pasture without verdure. It was a hard land, a bare and even at first sight a forbidding land; nevertheless it was a land where men could live and build their houses and drive their

[1] A similar but more troublesome barrier obstructed the English pastoralists in Australia a century later. See vol. v. bk. xix. ch. i.

[2] J. C. Voigt, of Cape Colony.

cattle; and many men now passed through the Drakenstein Mountains to the upland plains beyond.

They sought for pastures and wide acres, and they found them; but here also they found a fuller freedom than before.

Settlement in the Interior of Cape Colony, 1700-95.

For the rule of the Dutch East India Company hardly reached across the mountains; and these new settlers in a new land were in effect independent of the world they left behind. They had passed beyond the frontier of civilisation and civilised government; they were frontiersmen, and they made their own frontiers and defended them, extending their bounds at will, northwards and eastwards over the broad tablelands of the interior, each new generation pushing further afield into fresh country, and building new homes in the waste as it needed them.

They had to provide their own defence against the savages whom they were dispossessing—for the Company could not have defended them, even if it would—but they were strong, broad-shouldered men who pioneered this land, men who neither shirked nor feared the work they took upon themselves to do. And they were strong enough to hold the land they took, to subdue and rule and often to enslave its people; and here, too, they could set at naught the Company's regulations against intercourse with the natives. For the Dutch East India Company, watchful of its interests in Java and the outlying isles of the East, knew little and cared little of the doings of the farmers who owed it nominal allegiance in the wild uplands of South Africa.

Its Independent Character.

These frontiersmen therefore took upon themselves the business of their own defence; but with the responsibilities of freedom they obtained likewise, as their due, its privileges. Seldom indeed in the history of the world have men had fuller freedom than in this virgin land; its settlers were uncontrolled, save by those eternal elemental forces of environment and circumstance which hem men in with the invisible but

impassable mesh of earthly bondage; but here environment and circumstance were not unkind.

This windswept, sunburnt land was healthy; and its new masters gained a sense of sheer physical spaciousness of outlook in their new homes that was far to seek in old Holland or even in the farms around Cape Town.[1] They were unlettered, but life taught them much that lettered men can seldom know; and their children had endurance and a strength of limb, a keenness of vision and, not least, a reliance on their own resources that had come from the taming of the wilderness—qualities which left their mark deep on the shaping of the new European people of South Africa.

Some isolated tragedies, of slow failure on bad land or sudden disaster from black savage or wild beast, splashed this forward movement here and there with blood, or smirched it with a touch of squalor. One traveller tells of an upland farm whose sorrowful name of Alles Verloren—*all is lost*—confesses something of the grimmer side of colonisation in the Cape interior; others saw poverty and dirt in many places, the unkempt witnesses of the less efficient frontier settlers, who had lost in their new abodes the cleanliness and neatness that custom made traditional in Holland.

But in general they prospered; great farms grew heavy with their stocks and crops, large rambling houses and outbuildings housed the family and slaves; and patriarchal rule, the primitive governance of man by man, of serf or slave by sovereign employer, held its own in this primitive country.

Of the written history of this spreading settlement but

[1] More than one South African writer has commented on this change of outlook. I quote John Runcie, a Cape poet:

> 'By narrow laws we judge the farmer people
> Whose large outlook we would fain gainsay,
> Even as we fain would coop beneath a steeple
> The God to whom we pray.'

A somewhat too exalted comparison.

little now survives. The Cape Dutch pioneer—the Boer or farmer as he was distinctively called—was no narrator of the events in which he played a part; and his lonely life among his flocks knew no other chronicler. The annals of this people are little more than undated records of the building of new homes, or the wearing of new tracks—there were no roads—across the veldt, of fresh names upon the map betokening a new advance, or the formation of a loose organisation of society in a far-stretching district or sub-province.

Such was Swellendam, towards the east of the colony, which dates its origin from 1740; further afield from the base at Cape Town was Graaff Reynet, the mark of the next generation's advance. Founded in 1786, the double name of this district commemorates the Governor Van der Graaff and his wife Reynet; still further south was Uitenhage. By 1778 the pastoralist pioneers had pushed their way east to the Great Fish River and come to a land no longer dry and bare, but a spreading fertile country of fine streams and gorgeous flowers and great forests; and here, on the boundaries of the Kafir territories, for a while they stayed. The Great Fish River was to be a notable dividing-line in the future years of European expansion in South Africa, and many wars were fought with this Kafir people—a stronger type than the miserable Hottentots around Cape Town—before their power was broken by the Europeans.

The Dutch East India Company did nothing to advance this forward movement; indeed it misliked it, and forbade it, not once but many times. But the prohibition of the directors of the Company in Europe was as futile to stay the free burghers who pressed onward to the open veldt as the proclamation of the Governors at Cape Town; neither could check the advance of the pastoralists in the interior. And the loose allegiance which the latter owed to Holland was little more than nominal when they had passed beyond the Drakenstein. They had formed the habit of independence

in their wanderings, and the nomadic life in quest of pasture for their flocks and herds confirmed them in their love of liberty.

As time went on and settlement became closer with the natural growth of population—and the Cape Dutch were a prolific race—a more highly organised form of government would have been evolved. The advance guard were little more than nomads in the wilderness, living in tents or their great travelling wagons for months on end, squatters where they pleased or the soil proved suitable. But the children of these first comers built themselves more permanent abodes, sometimes mere rough huts that were hardly better than comfortless ill-ventilated barns, but still an advance on tent or wagon; the third generation had begun to achieve something of the solid prosperous air and generous accommodation that marked the older breed of Stellenbosch, the stately sleepy homes and mellow ease of old Constantia.

The pioneers suffered, it is true, from thievish Bushmen, who stole their cattle and their goods by night; the Kafirs, too, were not more scrupulous in their dealings with the white invaders; and wild animals, droughts and floods in turn, the pest and other chances of disaster faced them then and now; but these could be fought against, and in the end controlled.

This slow but steady process, the taming of aboriginal man and of Nature in the interior of Cape Colony, was continuous throughout the eighteenth century. It was the beginning of a settled order of life in a vast unsettled [1] district; and with the establishment of a settled order on these frontier regions a settled government would have developed of itself or been imported from without: but for the moment all the farmer folk beyond the Drakenstein required was to live their own lives and to be free of taxes and control. Largely they achieved their aim, for the now decaying and reluctant Dutch East India Company could not follow them.

[1] It is sometimes forgotten that the word *settlement*, in its sense of colonisation, connotes civilisation.

But before this settled order was evolved from within a new order was imposed from without, and the upland farmers whose passion had been independence of Cape Town found they were not really independent of Cape Town, and that the distant revolutions of Europe still had power to change the allegiance of the South African veldt. They had escaped the rule of the Dutch East India Company, to fall in the end under the rule of Britain.

The First British Conquest, 1795-1803.

About the time that Swellendam was founded the power of the great Dutch trading corporation had begun to decline; by the time that Graaff Reynet was founded its star had sunk far below that of the English East India Company. The Cape Dutch farmers had few regrets at the decay of a Company which they had no great reason to love, but its decay was in fact the doom of the independence they had so long enjoyed. Had Holland remained the mighty power of the middle seventeenth century the Dutch control of South Africa would never have been jeopardised; but Holland, no longer able to hold its own in India since the victories of Clive,[1] was no longer able to hold the frontier fortress of India at the Cape.

Or even to hold its own in Europe. The Netherlands were overrun by French troops in 1793; the Prince of Orange fled to England, and the cherished liberty and national independence which Holland had successfully maintained a century before against the greatest of French kings vanished, in a dream of equality and fraternity enforced by the sword, before the generals of the French Revolution.

Grave fears at once arose for the safety of the Dutch possessions overseas when the motherland was in the hands of enemies. France still had visions of conquest in India, and the capture of Cape Town, the frontier fortress of India, might yet appeal to her ambition.

But if its conquest by the French would be a fatal blow

[1] Vol. ii. bk. vii. ch. i.

to the colonial empire of Holland, it would also be a serious danger to the English, whose ships now used Table Bay as a regular port of call, and whose East India Company had no longer any fear of the Dutch outvying them in the Orient. Britain was the ally of Holland in the war with France, and for these reasons it was determined that a British squadron should be sent to Table Bay to protect Cape Town against the French; and the commander of this squadron was provided with an order from the refugee Prince of Orange to the Dutch Governor of the Cape, enjoining him to 'admit into the Fort such troops as might be sent on the part of His Britannic Majesty, to receive in Table and False Bays and other harbours and place where ships could remain with safety all ships of war, frigates or armed vessels that might be sent from his said Majesty, and to look upon them as troops and ships of a power in friendship and alliance, and come to prevent the colony from being invaded by the French.'[1]

The seven British ships of war ordered on this service under Admiral Elphinstone,[2] and carrying troops under the command of General Craig, sailed into False Bay[3] on 11th June 1795. Their arrival was totally unexpected; the news they brought was still more novel and unwelcome. For some months past nothing had been heard from Europe, and the sudden order to place the Cape in the hands of the British put the Governor and his Council in a position of great embarrassment. They could not be certain that the command from the Prince of Orange was genuine. If it was genuine they had to determine whether they should continue to recog-

[1] Order given at Kew, 7th February 1795; published in Theal's invaluable *Records of the Cape Colony*.

Another account of the British capture of the Cape in 1795 appears in the *Cape Monthly Magazine*, 1858, with a long private letter from a member of the Court of Policy at Cape Town. In addition to Theal's *Records*, the short British occupation may be studied in *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard*.

[2] Afterwards Lord Keith.

[3] Table Bay was not safe for shipping at this time of year; hence the choice of False Bay.

nise the authority of an exiled ruler; if a forgery they had to prepare their resistance.

The British on their side were not in too easy a position. They were not sure of their ability to take the Cape by force, and were fully prepared to negotiate at some length while the chance remained that the negotiations would succeed. For some weeks the matter hung uncertain; but during this period of suspense an American trading-ship was seized, and found to carry a proclamation addressed by the French Republic to all the colonies of Holland, assuring them of the friendship of France, and the triumph of the new revolutionary principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity; and enjoining them on no account to enter into friendly relations with those common enemies of mankind, the British.

That illuminating document somewhat hastened things to a decision. It showed the Cape Dutch that both French and British were ready to take their country, the latter on the honest ground of common advantage against a common enemy, the former on the more specious pretext of universal humanity; and it showed the British that they must act, and act quickly.

In September 1795 the troops were landed at False Bay; the passage of Muizenberg, on the road to Cape Town, was forced by General Craig; and after some slight skirmishes, in which a few men were killed and wounded, the Dutch Governor and Council agreed on articles of surrender.[1] For

[1] They were greatly blamed in some quarters for making so feeble a resistance. Undoubtedly they could have done more; but, faced as they were by the Prince of Orange's orders, and the possibility of an attack from France, they were in a very awkward position. The weak always are.

Elphinstone complained that he found the Dutch Governor 'a cold and undecided person,' and was met with 'nothing but chicane and duplicity' —the typical resource of those who cannot make up their minds to definite action.

But one excellent reason for the speedy surrender of the Dutch was the unexpected arrival of British reinforcements, to the extent of fifteen English ships, at the very moment of the attack.

the second time since its discovery by Europeans, the Cape of Good Hope was a British possession.

A proclamation by Elphinstone before the surrender of Cape Town had bound the British not to change the laws and to respect the customs of the country, to impose no new taxes and to permit trade with the English East Indies; and during the eight years of their occupation they fulfilled their pledge. On both sides it was felt that the situation was a temporary one, and when Holland recovered her independence after the Treaty of Amiens, Cape Colony was restored in 1803 to its old owners. The British abandoned South Africa without reluctance, the Cape Dutch saw them go without regret.

But no treaty could restore the fallen majesty of the Dutch Empire; and when the European war broke out again, and Holland was involved once more, the British decided almost instinctively to secure the route to India by the recapture of the Cape. On 4th January 1806, two months after Trafalgar was fought and won, a great British fleet sailed into Table Bay. In command was Sir David Baird, a fine Scots soldier who had fought his way under Wellington in the Mysore War;[1] with him was one of the reckless Irish breed of Beresford, and Sir Home Popham—a gallant adventurer who had travelled the world round, and was indeed already dreaming of that sudden descent on Buenos Ayres which had a brief success and quick failure a few months later[2]—and many others of like mettle, a splendid force for the capture of the Cape.

The Second British Conquest, 1806.

[1] See vol. ii. bk. vii. ch. iv. At one of the battles in Mysore, when Baird was taken prisoner and confined in the gaol of Seringapatam, he received two sabre wounds in the head, a bullet in the thigh, and a cut from a pike on the arm, but recovered.

An immortal anecdote hangs to his imprisonment in Mysore. His mother, a good Scots lady who knew her son's high spirit, was told that he was chained to a brother officer. Her unexpected comment was, 'God help the man who 's chained to our Davie.'

A *Life of Baird* has been written by Captain W. H. Wilkin (1912.)

[2] Vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. i.

The Dutch Governor was worthy of his opponents. A man of sterner stuff than his predecessor who had capitulated to Elphinstone and Baird eleven years before, General Janssens was well aware that victory against so large a force as that which now faced him was impossible; but like the fine soldier that he was, he was prepared to fight for 'the honour of the Fatherland, whatever the result might be.'

His task was indeed a hopeless one. The troops at his command were largely mercenaries, 'all languages and nationalities,' as Janssens himself admitted, 'from the other hemisphere, with the most respectable children of the colony, and even Eastern and Mozambique slaves.' Among this motley force were soldiers from Waldeck, that petty German state which lived by hiring out its manhood to other states at war,[1] some French refugees who had run into Table Bay to escape capture by the English, a Hottentot brigade, and a stiffening of hard Dutch burghers from the backlands, who, if they had but little love for their own Government, had still less for the British invaders.

Brave Janssens did his best to encourage his troops as the enemy came on. He 'threw himself among them, conjuring them by their former renown, the honour of Germany and of Waldeck, their beloved Prince, and whatever more he was able to adduce, to remain firm, and to show that they were soldiers worthy of the name. But neither this nor the request of their officers availed the least. They did not retreat but shamefully fled, and had Janssens remained longer among them they might have dragged him along in their flight. Therefore he left the cowards and joined the braver French, who still maintained their ground; but seeing, to his soul's distress, the left wing of the 22nd battalion giving way, he called on them also to stand firm, and they both heard and obeyed. But the disorder had become too general to restore

[1] Waldeck mercenaries had also fought for the British in the Imperial Civil War thirty years before (vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iii.).

the line, and the French, deserted right and left, were finally also compelled to retreat with heavy loss. But riding further straight along the line, Janssens found the Grenadiers and Chasseurs also retreating, but not flying. The dragoons had formed together, and upon his order marched off. He sent the Adjutant-General Rancke, and later Colonel Henry, in advance to the Reit Vlei, in order to rally the retreating troops, and to form a new position there, whilst, with the officers who were round him, he kept in the rear of the retreating columns.'[1]

The day was lost. Baird marched forward to Cape Town, which had no stomach for more fighting; and Janssens, honourably defeated, retired to Hottentots Holland. There terms were arranged,[2] the courtesies of war exchanged between brave victor and not less brave vanquished; and with that the Dutch dominion in South Africa was ended. The possession of Cape Colony was confirmed to England in 1814, a payment of three million pounds sterling being accepted by Holland in full settlement of all claim on Cape Colony and those provinces of Guiana in South America which had been taken by the British at the same time as the Cape.[3]

The Beginning of British South Africa.

The colony of the Cape of Good Hope, or, as it was more often called for short, Cape Colony, was now permanently a British possession; but for long this new addition to the British Empire was held in low esteem by its new owners. 'The importance of the Cape with regard to ourselves,' said one of the directors of the English East India Company before the first conquest in 1795, 'consists more from the detriment which

[1] This spirited description of the fight is Janssen's own account, slightly shortened.

[2] There is a story—which should be true—that while Baird and Janssens were arranging terms at the village of Papendorp a British regimental band struck up 'God save the King.' Baird, with the considerate thoughtfulness of a true gentleman, stopped the tune at once, to spare his opponent's feelings.

[3] For Guiana, see vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. i.

would result to us if it was in the hands of France than from any advantage we can possibly derive from it as a colony. . . . As such it would be rather dangerous, as there is too much encouragement for settlers, and we have already too many drains upon our population.'[1] From that negative standpoint the Cape was regarded for many years, until it became a proverbial complaint that the colony was a despised Cinderella among the colonial children of Britain.

Cape Town was still the frontier fortress of India, and as such its importance was recognised. But it was now also the open gateway of South Africa, and its conquerors knew it not.

The Cape Dutch desire Independence.

Yet if the British cared little for Cape Colony, the people of Cape Colony cared equally little for them, and from very early days this fact was borne in upon the new rulers. They were certainly as popular as the Dutch East India Company which they had superseded; that great corporation, which even in its dotage had been grasping, and attempted tyranny when it no longer had the power to tyrannise, had few defenders save its own officials; the British at least had some friends among the merchants of Cape Town, who hoped to profit by their coming. But there were many, even in the capital, who would have preferred French rule to British; and even before the first conquest of 1795 the leaders of the Elphinstone-Craig expedition discovered to their amazement that by far the greater number of the inhabitants desired absolute independence of European control. Almost all the people of the back-country, indeed, the Boers beyond the Drakenstein, had adopted this 'chimerical idea.'[2]

[1] Letters in *Records of the Cape Colony*. There was some excuse for this attitude, however. A Cape Dutchman, in an official memorandum in the same records, wrote in 1795 that Cape Colony 'had for several years been on the decline, and rapidly approaching annihilation.' He justly ascribed its evils to the 'intolerable shackles laid on trade' by the Dutch East India Company.

[2] Craig to Dundas, 16th June 1795, in Theal's *Records*.

But embarrassing as it was to the invader, this desire for independence was but a natural outcome of the frontier settlers' circumstance and past. The up-country colonists had been, in fact, independent for many years already when the British came. They had refused to pay taxes to the Dutch East India Company; and the Company, which had done nothing for their defence on the frontier, had been impotent to compel them to pay.[1] The colonists had known no ruler save necessity, and they wished for none.

These first crude stirrings of Dutch South African separatism had already found vent in the proclamation of the short-lived republics of Graaff Reynet and Swellendam a few weeks before the first British conquest. The burghers of Graaff Reynet on the eastern frontiers of Cape Colony, with some dim notion of founding themselves on the example of the French Revolution and the rebel English colonies in America, had proclaimed their own sovereign Assembly—which they called, after the fashion of the times, a National Convention—and announced their views to a mildly interested world. It was the first of many Dutch republics in South Africa.

Republic proclaimed at Graaff Reynet, 1795.

They would have no more concern, they stated, with the Dutch East India Company, but would ally themselves with Holland; they would receive no more commissioners from the Company or the colony, or recognise their authority; and to emphasise their decision they expelled their own Governor, and drew up a constitution for themselves on strictly democratic principles—as democracy was understood in Graaff Reynet. They claimed full freedom of trade, and liberty to sell their products where they would; they refused to pay taxes; they announced that henceforth they would treat the natives as they chose,

Its Constitution.

[1] Sometimes, however, the Company got even with the recalcitrants. The up-country farmers occasionally found it necessary to come down to Cape Town to barter their produce for European goods; and on these visits they were made to pay up some of the arrears of taxes.

no longer allowing the Hottentots the use of firearms, regarding all prisoners of war as their own slaves and property, and forbidding the Moravian missionaries who had visited them from preaching Christianity to the natives.[1]

This preposterous hybrid of modern rebellious democracy and ancient paternal despotism was the natural consequence of the colonists' position, a people with the traditions of freedom in their very marrow living among savages whom they were forced to rule. The honest citizens of Graaff Reynet were too ignorant to disguise their intentions in a cloud of words; they were transparently sincere in their desire to do what they liked themselves and what they chose with others. Liberty is not always altruistic: freedom for oneself and slavery for others is a very human cry.

Preposterous as it was, the constitution of Graaff Reynet had at least this compliment paid it, that it found imitators.

It is imitated.

Its neighbour Swellendam quickly followed suit; and the older settlement at Stellenbosch was on the point of doing the same when the British troops arrived in Cape Colony.

This unexpected intervention necessarily made some difference, even in a country with so low a political organisation as South Africa. If the English on their side were surprised to find a travesty of the French Revolution in so remote a corner of the earth as Graaff Reynet, the burghers who had so recently proclaimed their independence of European control were not less disconcerted to discover that their country could be easily invaded and controlled by a foreign power.

On the whole, both sides acted with discretion at this awkward moment. The citizens of Graaff Reynet sent a statement of their grievances to Cape Town, in which they did not insist too strongly on their independent and democratic principles; the British Governor, by a miracle of tact,

[1] For the Moravian missions in South Africa, see bk. xxiv. ch. ii.

answered them in semi-republican fashion as 'good friends,'[1] and made no more than casual reference to the questions of allegiance. At that moment, he could hardly have enforced allegiance even if he would.

But the trouble was postponed, and not averted, and twenty years later the new British Government in South Africa had an indication of the wild independence of the interior in the baneful episode of Slachter's Nek, which left a memory of discord as evil as its name.[2]

Slachter's Nek, 1815.

On the lawless eastern frontier of the colony dwelt a farmer, as wild and lawless as the land itself, one Frederick Bezuidenhout. Like every other farmer of the district he employed several Hottentot dependents, whom he kept, as did his neighbours, in the condition of slaves. One of these dependents complained to the magistrate, the Landrost Andries Stockenstrom, of ill-treatment by his master; the magistrate, a Cape Dutchman of upright character, summoned, as was his duty, Bezuidenhout to answer the charge before him. He refused; his arrest was ordered; the Dutch field-cornet was required to bring him to the court. A small body of Hottentot soldiers was sent, according to custom,[3] to assist in the arrest should resistance be attempted.

They arrived at Bezuidenhout's farm. Again he refused to come when called on to surrender, and fired several shots at the police before retreating to a cave; here the accused and two companions, armed with guns, loudly cursed the attackers and put themselves in a posture of resistance.

[1] Craig to the Burgher Officers of Graaff Reynet, 23rd November 1795; in Theal's *Records*.

[2] The name Slachter's Nek—the pass of slaughter—derives from a massacre of the Dutch settlers by the natives before the British occupation.

[3] The Hottentots had been trained to serve as soldiers under the Dutch East India Company many years before, and a Hottentot brigade had assisted in the defence of the Cape against the British attack in 1806. The British merely continued the practice. Under European leaders they made excellent, brave and faithful military servants. (*Account of the Cape of Good Hope*, 1819.)

It was impossible to ignore their attitude, or to return without the accused man, lest all respect for law should vanish from the colony. A rush was made for the cave, a shot was fired, and Bezuidenhout fell dead.

Here was surely no matter for martyrdom, since the headstrong man had brought his death upon himself, by resisting a summons on a not very serious charge, and firing at the representatives of law. But he had rebelled, and met his end in rebellion; and that was enough, in that country and among that people, to make a hero.

Crowds attended the funeral, and some desperate spirits at the graveside swore to revenge the dead man on the Government that had dared to assert its authority. An oath was taken, by frontier farmers as impatient of control as Frederick Bezuidenhout, 'to remove these Godforgotten tyrants from the land'; open rebellion was planned, and an armed rising against the magistrate and the Government was preached at every farm throughout the district. The upholders of revolt found ready sympathy and encouragement from those who had never yet obeyed a Government; and among the originators and leaders of the plot was Johannes Bezuidenhout, a brother of the dead man, and as desperate a character as he.

A Rebellion planned.

The movement rapidly progressed, until it became a public danger. A letter that was intercepted by the Deputy-Landrost at Cradock, Van der Graaff, revealed the seriousness of the position to the authorities, who were already becoming suspicious: but this was by no means all. In their hatred of the Government the rebels were prepared to seek the aid of savages; communications were opened with Gaika, a great Kafir chief across the frontier, asking his alliance and help in a combined attack on all the military posts in a single night. As their reward for the work the Kafirs were to retain the cattle belonging to the troops and the loyal Dutch

The Rebels propose Alliance with the Kafirs.

burghers who refused to join the movement, and to receive back the Zuurveld, a large district of which they had been deprived a few years since by the whites; the rebels on their part were to obtain a strip of Kafir territory across the colonial boundary as a place of refuge for themselves.

Many of the lawless burghers joined the movement; and to persuade those who hesitated to rebel, threats were used that any who refused would be murdered, with their wives and children, by the Kafirs—a terrifying argument to men who knew something of the realities of frontier warfare and savage usage in that country.

No more dangerous situation had ever arisen in the colony. The leaders of the rebels were clearly blinded by their passion, for otherwise no Boer would have called in the savage whom he hated against his own colour and his own people;[1] and their action threatened the whole country, not only with a colonial rebellion but with the horrors of a barbarian invasion. The rebels in their violence had not hesitated to commit the worst crime which a civilised man can commit against civilisation.

But news of this conspiracy had reached the Government, and prompt measures were determined on. They were indeed urgently necessary.

Hendrik Prinsloo, one of the ringleaders, was arrested and thrown into prison; preparations were made to secure the others who were implicated in the plot. But meantime a number of the rebels, desperate and in arms, hurried to the prison where Prinsloo was confined, and demanded his release with menaces. They were told by Captain Andrews, the commandant at the post, that their request could not be heard, and that they were but bringing trouble on themselves by their action; a Cape Dutch officer, one Nel, also warned

[1] It must be remembered that practically all the settlers in the district were Dutch. Apart from a few soldiers and officials the British were a negligible factor until after the establishment of Port Elizabeth a few years later.

them of the consequences, and assured them that if Prinsloo were innocent he would be released.

Warning and persuasion were alike useless. The Dutch officer was called upon to join the rebels; he refused, and a threat was made to shoot him. The leaders then formed into a ring and took solemn oath to stand by each other to the end.

During the next few days more messages were sent among the frontier settlers threatening murder by the Kafirs, until a feeling of terror and despair ran through many a startled household. It was time for the authorities to take stern action; but first they again tried persuasion. Colonel Cuyler sent to the rebels, reasoned with them, and urged them to abandon their conspiracy and return peaceably to their homes.

It was useless. The insurgents refused; and Cuyler, who had already called the loyal burghers of the countryside to arms, marched with the dragoons to arrest the rebels.

The two forces met at Slachter's Nek.

The rebels were clearly prepared to resist. They signalled to the loyal burghers to stand aside that they might engage with the dragoons—at that last moment some feeling of compunction for their neighbours may have seized them—but an unexpected blow now came. The Boer envoys from the Kafir chief returned, and they brought with them the staggering message that the barbarian would not join the white men in their fight against their own people.

Followed a panic in the rebel ranks; many of the farmers, who had been persuaded by the ringleaders against their will or frightened into joining, came down and sought forgiveness: the remainder fled.

Most of the fugitives were caught in the wild Winterbergs country, and surrendered to superior force; but Johannes Bezuidenhout, the last of the rebels, refused, and made a stand.

The Rebels crushed.

By the side of the desperate man were his wife and child. Both were wounded in the unequal fight; but his wife handed

him the loaded muskets one by one, which he fired in quick succession, till he fell.

The first and the last shots in the revolt were fired by the Bezuidenhout brothers; the death of the one began the rebellion, the death of the other ended it.

Thirty-nine prisoners in all were taken in the bloodless fight at Slachter's Nek; and on 16th December, before a Special Commission of Justice appointed by the Governor of Cape Colony, their trial began at Uitenhage. The judges were Pieter Diemel and W. Hiddingh; the prosecutor was Lieutenant-Colonel Cuyler, the secretary at the trial Beelaerts van Blokland. All these men were Cape Dutchmen.

The Trial.

The prisoners were examined separately one by one at considerable length,[1] and the trial of so many men necessarily engaged several weeks. The court sat over Christmas and well into the new year before all the evidence was taken and sentence could be pronounced; but on 22nd January 1816 the result of the trial was proclaimed. Six men, among whom was Hendrik Prinsloo, the prime leader, were condemned to death; they were to be hanged at Slachter's Nek. Martha Bezuidenhout, who had helped her husband in the last stand, was banished from the eastern district of the colony for life; the remaining thirty-two prisoners, who had taken a more or less active part in the revolt, were condemned to banishment, or to varying terms of imprisonment, or to pay fines, according to their complicity.

One of those condemned to death was afterwards reprieved; the remainder were hanged on 9th March 1816 at Slachter's Nek. When the day came three hundred British soldiers guarded that place of evil fame; a great crowd gathered round the gallows, and among the spectators were the thirty-two remaining prisoners, who

The Rebels are executed.

[1] The whole evidence has been printed by Leibbrandt in *The Cape of Good Hope Archives; Slachter's Nek Rebellion*, 1815. It occupies 979 large pages.

were ordered by the sentence of the court to watch the execution of their comrades. Some may have expected a reprieve, but none was forthcoming; the scaffold was already built, the condemned men pinioned and awaiting their doom. They craved permission to sing a hymn before they died; and leave was given. The end was even yet delayed a little; for the gallows, clumsily and loosely built, collapsed with its miserable burden. A painful scene now followed, as the superstitious crowd of onlookers cried that heaven had intervened to save the rebels; they pleaded for mercy, but they pleaded in vain. The gallows were again erected, and the horrid work was done.

The bodies were buried on the spot by the soldiers; but the next morning one who passed by the place of execution shudderingly observed the outstretched hand of one of the dead men protruding from the earth which covered it, and stretching out towards the sky. The limb had stiffened as it set in death, displacing the loose soil that had been thrown upon it; but to the superstitious of the time that outstretched hand was taken as a proof that the dead was reaching out to heaven for vengeance on his executioners.

So ended the rebellion of Slachter's Nek. On the evidence the court could have come to no other conclusion; the facts of the case were not in doubt. The crime was one no government could overlook; nor was the punishment excessive. Had the rebels succeeded they would have ruined their country; the punishment for such a crime was rightly death.

Unhappy Consequences of Slachter's Nek.

Yet by a strange and melancholy perversion of sentiment, the crime for which these rebels suffered was forgotten by their people, who could never have condoned it; and the conspirators against the safety of the frontier were exalted to the rank of heroes and martyrs for the part they played. The minor fact that they had rebelled against the British Government when it dared to assert its authority, was re-

membered and extolled; the major fact that they would have let loose savage war upon their neighbours was conveniently obscured.

The reason was a simple one. To the rebels, and those who held with them, the minor fact was the major one; the resistance to a government which had dared assert its authority was the cardinal point of Slachter's Nek, the calling in of savage aid a minor mistake in a struggle to maintain the old freedom to which they were accustomed. The view was a wrong one, but it was the natural view to men who had never yet obeyed a government.

Under the old government of the Dutch East India Company, which was no government at all, the conflict could never have arisen; under the new government of the British, which was a real government that exercised authority and maintained the law, the conflict was bound to occur. Unhappily it occurred in a manner which made for bad blood on both sides. The Cape Dutch settlers on the wild eastern frontier did little more than they would have done had the Dutch East India Company interfered in like manner; the British Government did no more than would have been considered necessary by any government with any power at all. Unfortunately the people with whom it dealt were a stubborn race, whom circumstances had accustomed to a government without authority; and the British had to pay in unpopularity for the sins of omission which their predecessors had committed. Slachter's Nek became a popular legend of racial discord, the traditional grievance of the Boer against the Briton, recalled with sadness and misgiving even by Cape Dutchmen who were loyal to the new government. 'We can never forget Slachter's Nek,' the old Boer colonists would often say among themselves;[1] the name had come to stand for the slaughter of their people by the new rulers.

First Conflict between Boers and British.

[1] Cloete, *Five Lectures*, an unimpeachable witness.

In such simple, tragic, and inevitable fashion was begun the century of conflict between the two white peoples of South Africa.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAPE UNDER BRITAIN: 1806-34[1]

ABOUT the time of the second and final cession of the Cape to Britain, the total white population of the colony, after rather more than a century and a half of occupation by the Dutch, was some forty thousand all told. Four years after the cession of 1814, at the period when the development of South Africa was first taken seriously in hand by its new masters, the census returns showed 21,513 males and 19,436 females of European descent.[2] Of these rather more than a thousand were servants; there was no white labouring class.

Population of Cape Colony.

The slaves and apprentices or coloured bond-servants who were employed by these forty thousand Europeans at the Cape numbered about fifty thousand, of whom thirty thousand odd were actual slaves of Malay or Madagascar descent, and the remainder Hottentots.

[1] The chief authorities for this chapter, apart from the *Official Records and Documents on Cape Government and Finance*, are *An Account of the Cape of Good Hope* (1819), a useful compilation; *The State of the Cape of Good Hope in* 1822, by a Civil Servant, fuller and more valuable; the files of the *Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette*, 1830-35, a wilderness of scissors and paste concealing an occasional gem; articles in the *Cape Monthly*, a store of useful information; *Gleanings in Africa* (1806), a poor gleaning indeed; Chase, *Cape of Good Hope and Algoa Bay* (1843), and Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa* (1835), admirable records both; *The Cape and its People*, by various writers (1869). The *Letters of Lady Anne Barnard* during the first occupation by Britain give a lively picture of the Cape at the time: Latrobe's *Visit to South Africa* (1818) may be consulted; also Holman's *Account of the Cape* (1834), Fawcett's *Eighteen Months' Residence*, and Moodie's *Record* (1838).

[2] The census returns for 1818, from which these figures are taken, are said—I know not with what truth—to have been more accurate than those of preceding or following years.

The total permanent population under British rule in Cape Colony at this time was therefore about ninety thousand, divided in the proportion of four Europeans to five of other races; and of the Europeans, the great majority were men born in the colony of Dutch descent, who spoke the Dutch tongue and no other. There were not as yet many Englishmen resident at the Cape apart from the new official class, and fewer Englishwomen; but already the British and Dutch had begun to intermarry. Only one Englishwoman was known to have given her hand to a Cape Dutchman; but several Cape Dutch girls had preferred the strangers from the British Isles above men of their own blood.

Apart, however, from the actual centre of government, the British had not yet made any great impression on South Africa; and if the capital had begun to assume a superficially English appearance in 1818, the interior of the country was emphatically Dutch in method and custom. Through the eighteenth century the Dutch had driven the roots of their civilisation deep into the soil; like trees that plant themselves in the slowly-filling moat of some old forgotten castle, the silent growth of a hundred years had passed unnoticed by the outer world, which only saw it when the work was largely done. Most of the trade and practically all the agriculture of the colony was in the hands of Hollanders who had settled at the Cape long before the British conquest; and for some years there seemed little likelihood that they would ever be disturbed, far less outnumbered by the new rulers, who had shown no signs of planting English settlers on the ample spaces of the country which was still rarely called the colony of British South Africa.

Preponderance of the Dutch.

The greater part of this not very large population lived inland by agriculture and farming; but the capital and the oldest settlement of the colony, Cape Town, was a small but gay city, whose inhabitants always had the advantage of their situation as a half-way house of

Cape Town.

the world's trade. They were kept alert and informed of current events by a constant flow of visitors and traffic from foreign lands; they heard the news of Europe months before it reached Asia, the news of Asia months before it reached Europe. And if any happenings of interest took place in the still more remote British colonies in Australia, if a governor was deposed, a notorious criminal executed, or if the discovery of a gold mine was rumoured in the far antipodes, the good people of Cape Town had the news long before it could reach Britain. Their own lives might be placid and unimportant, but with the shadows of the world's events before their doors they could not easily stagnate.

Like all seaports, Cape Town had a double population, its settled inhabitants and its migrants. Sailors came and went from the ends of the earth with rich cargoes, strange wares, and fickle hearts, some or all of which they occasionally left behind them in South Africa; dignitaries, grave governors and deputy-governors, soldiers and conquerors of provinces and territories in the East, passed through and rested there awhile on their way to Europe; but besides these passing travellers Cape Town was a city of some substantial merchants, who dealt in such produce as might come down from the interior or was imported from overseas; it had, too, its official class, who with the naval and military men stationed in or calling at the place, gave local society a distinction that commerce cannot always confer.

The prosperity of the merchants was reflected by the ample proportions of their houses and the gardens which surrounded them. The essentials of life were cheap, although prices were said to have risen since the English conquest,[1] but imported goods were dear. The people as a rule lived comfortably and entertained generously; they had a theatre in which amateurs performed dramatic pieces with as much success as

[1] Yet in 1819 butcher meat is stated to have cost only 2*d.* per lb., bread 1*d.* per lb., and a pint of Cape wine 3*d.*

amateurs usually have; they loved dancing and good cheer, and after the manner of Dutchmen the world over, they excelled in the concoction of strange seductive drinks.

On the whole there were many worse places for an exile from Europe than Cape Town. Its beautiful situation and plentiful supply of fresh water made the place popular with residents and visitors alike; but although the city was generally neat and clean, after the invariable fashion of the Hollanders' towns, its drainage was as primitive as that of most human habitations in the early nineteenth century.[1] Its streets were cleansed of refuse mainly by the eagle and the vulture; but notwithstanding this drawback, Table Bay was already noted as a health resort.[2] Many invalids, some of whom were almost at death's door, settled there in the hope of regaining their strength; and although numbers of these visitors came too late and died too soon after their arrival, the death-rate of the city was lower than that of most European capitals.

Cape Town was built on the plan laid down by Van Riebeeck, and many of the old houses, of one story and thatched with reeds, were standing at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time the capital was still regarded as more important than the colony itself; but there were already signs that the future might change the relative positions of the two. The growing stream of commercial and passenger

[1] In 1877, however, Sir Bartle Frere, while admitting the beauty of the environs of Cape Town, described the place itself as sleepy and slipshod, dirty and unwholesome. A somewhat too sweeping judgment.

[2] The older writers seem hardly to have noticed the absence of sanitation and its evil effects—a fact which speaks volumes for the standpoint of the early nineteenth century. But two epidemics, in 1840 and 1858, taught the inhabitants wisdom; see a paper on *The Sanitary State of Cape Town* (1877), by W. S. Black.

But Cape Town was no worse than any European city of the time; and indeed, ignorance of sanitation prevailed in the rural districts of England, the pioneer of sanitary reform, until the end of the nineteenth century, while in many parts of Europe (particularly in Spain, Russia, and the near East, as I can vouch from personal and often nauseating experience) its importance is still unrecognised.

traffic between Europe and the East showed a tendency to swing back to the old channel of the Red Sea many years before the Suez Canal was opened in 1869;[1] and every traveller and every bale of goods that went by way of Egypt was so much lost to the other end of Africa.

Agriculture in Cape Colony.

But meanwhile the agriculture of the colony itself was advancing. Corn was no longer difficult to grow; and where the first settlers had complained that the soil was so light that the wind blew the seed away, their descendants, who had overcome that difficulty, congratulated themselves that the same lightness of soil often made the use of the plough unnecessary. The yield, indeed, was good and the corn heavy in the grain; but irrigation was often necessary in the drier districts. Wheat, however, is a crop that needs little water if the farmer is content to forgo the straw; and much even of such straw as the South African farmers had was wasted.

Horse, sheep, and cattle breeding had made considerable progress; in 1819 the colony counted some forty-seven thousand horses, a quarter of a million horned cattle, and close on a million and a half sheep and goats. The sires of the horses had mostly been imported from Spain, and the stock had not deteriorated in South Africa;[2] the cattle, which were largely used for transport, were indigenous, and were remarkable for their high shoulders, long legs, and large horns;[3] and although most of the sheep were of a poor breed that produced much meat but little wool, some had been found of sufficiently good quality to be exported

[1] See vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv., for the Suez Canal.
The tonnage entered at Table Bay in 1821, exclusive of transports and men of war, was 56,447; and at Simon's Bay, 15,272 tons.

[2] Indeed, it had been improved since the coming of the English, who had started horse-races almost immediately after their arrival. The Englishman is the same everywhere; a race-course is one of the first distinctive marks of a British colony.

[3] An attempt was made to improve the breed of cattle a few years later in the Eastern Province, by importing Devon and Dutch bulls.

to New South Wales for the first of the great Australian squatters.[1]

The agriculturists were more prosperous and therefore more esteemed than the stock-farmers; but the most prosperous class in the colony were the wine-growers of the Stellenbosch district. It was reckoned that there were now thirteen million vines of muscatel grapes in Cape Colony, and the sweet wines of Constantia were becoming known and increasingly popular in England,[2] where their vogue continued until the middle of the century.

Brandies and liqueurs were also manufactured at the Cape, but these could by no means rival the products of the vineyards and monasteries of France. Often made of unripe grapes and distilled too quickly, the local substitute for the drink of heroes was sometimes condemned by superior travellers as poison; but by the less fastidious palate of the colonist the cognac of the Cape was appreciated readily enough.[3]

Isolation of the Colony.

At Cape Town intercourse with the outer world kept men abreast with European ideas; but the condition of society in the interior was primitive and even patriarchal. With an enormous territory awaiting occupation there was no need to limit the size of a farm, which would extend to six thousand or more acres, and each successive generation broke fresh ground and pushed further inland. Every man, or at least the head of every family

[1] See vol. v. bk. xvii. ch. iv.

[2] Jane Austen made one of her heroines drink Cape wine as a remedy for a broken heart, and the potion was declared to have a beneficial effect for that most distressing of the maladies of youth.

But I notice that in the more prosaic prospectus of a commercial corporation—the South Africa Company of 1840—Cape wines were condemned as poor, fiery and flavourless; and another writer declares their only recommendation to be that they did not turn sour in the stomach.

[3] Tobacco, much of which was grown in the country, was in constant request; the Dutchman, perhaps the most faithful devotee of nicotine in Europe, had not laid aside his pipe in South Africa. The soil was not unsuitable, but the crop, which always needs careful and skilled attention, was often rough and harsh to the tongue; but in this matter a notable improvement took place in the course of the nineteenth century.

and the proprietor of every estate—and the great majority of the farmers were their own proprietors—was a law to himself in the wilderness, and the Dutch pioneer did not dislike the full freedom which he bought at the price of solitude. There were no complaints here, as among some of the British settlers in Canada and Australia,[1] that the loneliness was greater than man could bear; nor was there any sign of that love of town life among the Dutch which was so conspicuous in the English colonies. Many of these people, indeed, had come to love their isolation and the slow even round of life,[2] untouched by outside influences or new fashions or ideas; they lived unchanging in a changing world, and they resented any interference. Had they lived in Australia instead of South Africa they might have preserved their isolation for many centuries; as it was, it became the peculiar tragedy of their lot that this folk, which had in effect severed itself from Europe, was settled in a land which could not be free of Europe, since it lay on the road to India. The Cape Dutch endeavoured for a century and more to shut themselves from the main currents of the world's traffic. From time to time it seemed they had succeeded; but ever the hum of the busy world was following them in their search for isolation, and even in their remotest haunts in the interior their pathetic desire for solitude was frustrated. Such is the fate of those who build their home unwittingly upon a highway, and hope for peace.

Save in the actual frontier settlements, where the sporadic irruptions of the natives necessitated constant vigilance against cattle-lifting or attacks on human life, the normal

[1] See vol. v. bk. xix. ch. ii.

[2] A South African poet has attempted to catch this attitude in verse:

'What do we know of the city's scorn, the hum of a world amaze,
Hot-foot haste, and the fevered dawn, and forgotten yesterdays?
For men may strain, and women may strive, in busier lands to-day,
But the pace of the ox is the pace to thrive in the land of the veldt and vlei.
CULLEN GOULDSBURY.

existence of the Dutch farmer was serene and placid. From time to time he met his fellow-farmers at the little church which was the centre of social intercourse; here he took the sacrament, saw his children married, heard his neighbours' news, and bought or sold or laid in such stores as he needed. For the rest, his slaves and dependents did the manual work of the estate and the establishment; he supervised and directed their toil. He treated his underlings kindly or not as he chose; his own family was sometimes subjected to almost the same severity or indulgence.

Early marriages and large families were the rule in this primitive community, whose buxom daughters ripened young; the mature bachelor, the withered spinster, and the childless couple were alike objects of contempt and suspicion. A dozen children was a not unusual brood; and it was remarked that the women bore their offspring easily, making a quick recovery after their confinement of everything but their figures, which became stout and shapeless before they were thirty under the strain of bearing and suckling. Nurses and doctors for these recurrent but continual occasions were lacking on the veldt, but their absence was not often serious in a healthy and fertile people; one ingenuous writer, indeed, suggested that the pains and danger of child-labour had been removed by a bountiful providence as a signal mark of favour to South Africa, so seldom did nature demand the sacrifice of the mother for the child.[1]

Even the ample family with which his lawful spouse endowed him did not always satisfy the lusty farmer, who was known to compel the perhaps not always unwilling embraces of his more comely female slaves. Thus there grew up a

[1] If the women did not die in childbirth, however, they very often died young—a sign that their constitutions were exhausted by too frequent labour. A most unusual proportion of the Cape men of middle age had married a second wife. The normal life of a woman is longer than that of a man, since she is protected from many dangers which he must face; but in South Africa at this time it seems to have been shorter.

small mulatto population, known as *bastaards* by the plain-spoken Dutch; and these were not exempt from the usual lot of the Ishmaelite in every age, the contempt of the whites and the jealous hatred of the blacks.[1]

Living remote from, and often ignorant of the world, the Dutch farmer had not nevertheless lost all his interest in human affairs. He showed an abundant and sometimes embarrassing curiosity in outside doings whenever a traveller entered his gates; in return for the hospitality which was never withheld, the host plied his guest with endless questions regarding events beyond his ken.

The hospitality was sometimes rude, and the fare rough, but it was nearly always the best the house could command; and those fastidious mortals who disliked a diet of mutton cooked in its own fat, and a bed or a room shared in company with others, should have remembered that the comforts of the old world were not always available in the new. In general the diet of South Africa was notable for quantity rather than quality. It is the general testimony of visitors to the veldt that their hosts had enormous appetites, that they indulged themselves freely, and that many of them in consequence became obese in appearance and heavy of head.[2]

The isolation of the settler in the interior of Cape Colony from the moving tide of the world's events and contemporary thought was perhaps as much to blame for his heavy

[1] The male *bastaards* were said to make excellent slaves; the females were well proportioned, smart, and excessively fond of dress (*Gleanings from the Cape*, 1806; and *State of the Cape in* 1822). They were not distinguished for chastity, and often importuned European men, who appear to have seldom denied them the expected boons. One writer, who remarks that they made excellent companions, could probably have told more had not discretion dried his pen.

These *bastaards* were the origin of the Griqua tribe across the Orange River (bk. xxiv. ch. ii.).

[2] One contemporary writer, whose medical competence I do not altogether trust, remarks that dropsy was excessively common among people of middle age throughout the colony, in consequence of their diet. But obesity is often confounded with dropsy.

lethargy as the coarse and too plentiful cooking for his table. And in this respect the South African farmer was indeed lonely; but he was contented to be lonely, to lie at peace in a backwater of life while others more active or at least more restless sought the main stream of human endeavour. For if society was lacking in the remoter districts of the colony, the Cape Dutchman showed little inclination to substitute the silent company of literature for the social intercourse which his solitary situation forbade. He had few books—they were dear, scarce, and difficult to obtain in South Africa—and no newspapers; he read the Bible regularly as a religious exercise, but he read hardly anything else. It is true that even in the most lonely part of the veldt the children of the more respectable farmers were taught by their parents to read[1]—schools could not exist in so scattered a community—in order that they should not grow up without a personal knowledge of the Christian scriptures; but writing was a much rarer accomplishment, and beyond that point literary education ceased altogether.

Beauty of the Homesteads.

In general these men were prosperous. Great wealth was not indeed their portion. But most gained more than a bare subsistence, and many were able to spend their surplus in improving their estates or beautifying and enlarging their great rambling houses. Labour, in the days of slaves and paternal rule, was cheap—the price of the labourer's food was his cost; and the Dutchman, one of the most domestic of human animals, often put his slaves to build, and spent an admirable care on the decoration of his home. The beauty of these old Dutch houses in Cape Colony, and their slumberous air of quiet ease, spoke of a homely, happy breed of men, who found their pleasures with their family and serving-folk at home.

[1] See the *Memoirs of Paul Kruger*. But when the British instituted the system of judicial circuits in 1811, it was discovered that a large number of the children in some of the remoter settlements could not read or write.

In Cape Town many of the residents, accustomed to associate with travellers of every nation, had a passable knowledge of two or three languages besides their own, and most people of any social standing in the capital of the colony could carry on a conversation in French or English without discredit; but in the interior, where the French tongue of the old Huguenot settlers had long been dead, and other European languages were entirely unknown, even Dutch had become a clipped, debased, enfeebled dialect that would have been disowned in Holland.

The Cape Dutch Dialect.

A century of isolation and intellectual stagnation had left its mark upon the speech of Cape Colony. Many words of classical Dutch had disappeared altogether from lack of use in the South African dialect; grammatical inflexions proper to the tongue were first disregarded and then dropped, and the language of Vondel was debased into a soft and easy but intellectually poor patois that was incapable of expressing the higher abstractions or of defining thoughts with accurate shades and distinctions of meaning.[1]

Every class and every nation has the machinery of language that its intellectual equipment requires; a peasant's vocabulary is less ample than that of a philosopher, the child of the philosopher in turn has a more restricted range of words than an adult peasant. And the atrophy that had come over the Dutch tongue in South Africa is a sufficient proof that the mental calibre of the colonists had fallen below that of the mother country. The Boers were happily unconscious of the deficiencies of the Taal, as their dialect was commonly called, until the British immigrants, with that preference for truth over tact which makes the English respected, if not loved, by other nations, began to laugh at the colloquial phraseology of South Africa as an antediluvian survival. The truth

[1] See the article by De Villiers, Chief Justice of Cape Colony, and an authority on this subject, in the *Cape Monthly*.

of the taunt was more readily admitted than its courtesy, and an attempt was made to restore the true speech of Holland by the foundation of a newspaper, the *Tydschrift*, and the teaching of the correct idiom. But unhappily for the reformers the process of degeneration had gone too far; the newspaper and the propaganda both failed, and English rather than correct Dutch became more and more the written literary and commercial language of South Africa.

Many of the English laughed at the unlettered Cape Dutchman or Boer, as he was commonly called,[1] whose ignorance was great, whose movements were slow, and whose farming was not always of the best. But the Boer had many considerable virtues to set against his very evident deficiencies, and both played a prominent part in the making of South Africa.

Whatever might be urged against the mental equipment of the Cape Dutch, their physical condition was sound. Despite defects of sanitation and a complete ignorance of the laws of hygiene the health of this people was generally good. They came of a sturdy stock; they were endowed with tough constitutions, and their pastoral life in a kindlier climate than that of Holland helped to keep them in good condition. Living in the vast distances and clear atmosphere of the veldt their eyesight acquired a keenness that was the envy of British soldiers,[2] and their accuracy at long range with the gun became proverbial.

And if the words of the Cape Dutchman were few they were generally weighty; if his movements were slow they were usually sure. If he was heavy and stolid he was also stubborn and strong; he knew what he wanted, and clung to his purpose with the same dogged tenacity and, when the need arose, with something of the dumb heroism that his ancestors in Holland had shown in the fight against Spain.

[1] Boer = farmer in the Dutch language, without the shade of contempt that its old English equivalent, *boor*, has now come to possess.

[2] Particularly was this remarked during the war of 1899-1902.

Chief among the forces that had animated the stubborn Hollander in that long fight against Spain was his religion. And chief among the forces that animated his descendant, the stubborn Boer of South Africa, was the same religion.

The Cape Dutch, like the French Canadians, were colonists who had lost their mother country; but like the French Canadians again,[1] they had not lost their creed with their country, and their creed was perhaps the dearer to them that they had lost their country. The ties of religion had proved more durable than those of politics; and the stern Calvinism of Holland, which the first Dutch emigrants had carried with them into the wilderness, was still the professed faith of the solitary Boer settler on the veldt. Those harsh, unlovely doctrines of predestination and fatalism brought comfort to his soul; the cold and rigid belief of Northern Europe which taught that the Christian deity was no longer the God of Love, but a judge denouncing doom upon his own creations, was not unsuited to the Dutchman who lived alone among his slaves and savages and the elemental facts of nature in South Africa, and to whom the irruptions of the one or the other may well have seemed the arbitrary judgments of an unseen power.

Religion of the Cape Dutch.

The Dutch Reformed Church had been solidly founded in Cape Colony, and its growth was as steady as that of the Dutch people themselves. It was severely strait and orthodox in its theology; no suspicion of heresy attached to any of its pastors, no hint of original thought or doubtful doctrine disturbed the solemn propriety of their sermons and the occasional devout slumbers of their congregations. They mapped out the path to heaven as Dutch engineers cut a canal through the soil—clean, direct, and narrow, with no great depth but a certain clearness of aim, a rigidity of touch, and an absence of beauty as distinctive marks of their work.

Some observers, misled by the lack of originality in the Calvinist pastors of South Africa, declared that the Dutch

[1] Vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iii.

Reformed Church was stagnant. They had misjudged; for as the Dutchman is bound by conventions at home yet is daring on the high seas, so were the Dutch pastors in Cape Colony timid in their own proper sphere of religion and more courageous and powerful when they interfered, as they did in later days, with politics.

The religion of the Boer found no place within its communion for the aborigines of South Africa. Like most of the Protestant creeds of Europe, it aimed primarily at securing the personal salvation of its own adherents, and propaganda engaged a very low place among its activities. Unlike the Catholics, whose very name professed the universality of their aim, and whose missionaries proceeded from Rome to the ends of the earth, the Reformed Churches made little effort to extend their sphere of operations among non-European races.[1] And if the Boer did not formally deny the possibility of converting the coloured races of mankind—indeed he could not deny it so long as he relied upon the Bible for his rule of life—he made in practice hardly any attempt to convert them, and looked askance at any efforts to enlarge what he considered the natural sphere of Christianity.

The South African aborigines and the South African slaves were beyond the pale of South African Christianity as interpreted by the Dutch; and that narrow and illiberal attitude was a fruitful source of friction in the years to come, when it found itself confronted by the active propagandist spirit of British missionaries.

The aborigines were the frequent menace, the slaves the solid basis, of the Cape Dutch farmers' industry; and it was in connection with these two fundamental aspects of South African life that trouble first arose with the new British rulers. The native problem, as in time it was commonly called, raised issues that were still open and uncertain when the nineteenth century closed; the slave-

The Native Problem.

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. ii.; and bk. xxv. The Moravians are a conspicuous exception.

trade and slave emancipation brought a short, sharp crisis that led directly to one of the decisive actions in South African history.

The first open rupture between the British and the Boers had been at Slachter's Nek. That was a white man's quarrel, which fired angry passions that sank in time to sullen memories; but the recollection of Slachter's Nek might shortly have grown dim, even in stubborn and resentful Cape Dutch minds, had not the real cleavage between the new rulers of the land and the old already begun to show. That cleavage was in the treatment of the natives of the country and their labour; and it revealed a fundamental difference that left its mark on the whole of South Africa.

In South Africa, as in other countries of the outer world, there existed an aboriginal population before the coming of the European. But in many other countries which the European had invaded and in time possessed, in North America, in Australia, and New Zealand,[1] the aborigines had diminished, and in the end almost disappeared before the European invasion; in South Africa they had not. Here, therefore, was a new colonial problem; South Africa became a semi-white man's country, a land in which white men could establish themselves and propagate their race, as they could not in those tropical colonies where coloured native or imported labour was required;[2] but the persistence of the native population in South Africa limited the opportunities and sensibly modified the position of the white.

The old Dutch colonists had solved the problem in the way it had been solved many times before by conquering invaders —they took the natives' land, they enslaved the natives and made them labour. The Dutch East India Company, it is true, protested and forbade the enslavement of the Hottentot,

[1] For the diminution of the aborigines in North America, vol. i. bk. iv. ch. v.; in Australia, vol. v. bks. xviii. and xx.; and in New Zealand, vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. iii.

[2] Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iv.

not on ethical grounds, but because it had no wish to enlarge its responsibilities at the Cape; but its protests and prohibitions were of little effect. In the Cape Town district, where the Company could make its will obeyed, slaves were imported from Portuguese East Africa and the East Indies; in the interior, where the Company had little or no power, the aborigines were themselves enslaved, when the Dutch burst through the Drakenstein and occupied their land. Broadly therefore it was true that the aborigines became the workers, and the Dutch became the rulers, in a semi-white man's country. Such was the fundamental character of South African civilisation before the British conquest.

A century earlier this solution of the question would have seemed simple and natural to the British themselves; for they were the leaders in the slave-trade, and the owners of many colonies based upon this principle of European ascendency and coloured slavery or subjection. Had the British annexed Cape Colony in 1715 instead of 1815, there would probably have been no difference in this matter of the aborigines between the British and the Dutch.

Cleavage between British and Dutch on the Native Question.

But in the later eighteenth century a change of thought passed over England. The New Humanity had made its way among all classes;[1] a belief in the responsibility of the British rulers for the welfare of the subject races of the Empire had been accepted as an axiom of statecraft—in Burke's gorgeous phrase, the Imperial Parliament had now assumed 'an imperial character in which, as from the throne of heaven, she superintended all the several inferior legislatures, and guided and controlled them all.' The doctrine of the rights of man was largely held in England;[2] and that doctrine was

[1] For the New Humanity, vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. i.

[2] That doctrine was implied in the Puritan theory of seventeenth-century England; it appeared also in contemporary English philosophy, *vide* Locke. Pushed much further by the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, it crossed the Atlantic and was embodied in the

the philosophic basis, not only of the long and in the end successful agitation against slavery,[1] but of the whole movement for protecting the subject peoples under European government throughout the world.

But no echo of the New Humanity or the rights of man had ever reached the placid homesteads of Cape Colony before the British came; the practical Dutch farmer, like the practical English planter in the tropics, was neither idealist nor sentimentalist, and he took things as he found them. It was enough that he, as the stronger man, should conquer the land and possess it; in the struggle to secure himself against thievish Bushman and cattle-lifting Kafir the Cape Dutchman had no room for the rights of man. The only right he knew or cared for was the right of the invader to the soil he occupied, the right of the strong to rule the weak. A religious man, he compared himself with the Israelites of old who had driven out the heathen from the land of promise; he, too, drove out the heathen or enslaved them, and made their land a goodly land, and a land of plenty.[2]

But now came the British Government to protect the heathen by law and statute; and soon after came the British missionary to convert them to a religion of which, in the Cape Dutchman's view, they were unworthy, and even incapable of understanding: and from that time was

windy phrases of the Declaration of Independence; and it returned to England again, appearing as the New Humanity. The English colonists in America added equality to the rights of man—and forgot to liberate their slaves; the English at home had no such belief in equality, but they did abolish slavery in the British Empire.

[1] For the struggle against slavery, see vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. iii.

[2] The comparison with the Israelites was a natural one; it occurred independently to a British chaplain in the Matabili War (bk. xxiv. ch. v.), who would surely not have sympathised with the Dutch attitude towards the aborigines when he left England to become a missionary in South Africa. It was the environment that made the opinion; the British colonists at the Cape hardly differed from the Boer view of the native problem, changing the ideas they had accepted without question at home; and the British planter in the West Indies would have had a perfect understanding of the Cape Dutch attitude.

strife between the British and the Dutch. The visible and inevitable result of the New Humanity, the belief in the rights of man, and the preaching of the Gospel, was the cleavage between the two white peoples of South Africa over the treatment of the natives.

British Missionaries embitter the Situation.

The Cape Dutch had founded themselves on the practical principle of the ascendency of one race over another; the British missionary took his stand on the theoretical principle of race-equality.[1] Each pressed his view too far, for the Cape Dutchman would hardly allow that the aborigines were human beings, while the British missionary claimed that they should be treated as the equal of the European.[2] Both views

[1] In practice, however, he did not always carry out his principle, for which some folk in Britain had good reason to be grateful. It is stated in the *Cape Monthly* (1859) that the drunken heir of a Scots peerage would have married an abandoned Hottentot woman, but the missionary refused to solemnise the union. And there were other scandals of the kind.

Yet logically the missionary who stood for racial equality of white and black would have seen no objection in such a match. Indeed, there are cases on record of missionaries who married their black converts.

[2] Dr. Philip, for many years the chief of the British Mission staff in South Africa, took his stand directly on the rights of man. 'Independent of printed statutes,' he wrote, 'there are certain rights which human beings possess, and of which they cannot be deprived but by manifest injustice—the inalienable rights conferred upon them by their Creator.' This is the doctrine of the American Declaration of Independence in a more pious form.

In many ways Philip was the typical missionary of the time, as honest and bigoted as Paton in the Pacific Islands (vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.). Sincere and fervent in his faith—he hurried one day to tell a dying woman the news of the fall of idolatry in Tahiti—he was extremely narrow and dogmatic, a violent Protestant who would hardly admit that a Catholic was a fellow-Christian; it is amusing to notice that in his *Researches* he ascribes the extension of printing to the Protestant Reformation, but conveniently forgets to credit the invention to a Catholic age. Such views would have pleased the Calvinistic Dutch had not his advocacy of the native cause offended them still more.

There is a *Memorial of the late Dr. Philip* (1851), written in the most nauseating style of religious literature; and Philip's *Researches in South Africa* are indispensable for the mission standpoint of the time. After reading his book, one understands why the colonists hated him. But after the Kafir War of 1846 Philip was convinced of the error of his views, and took no further part in politics. Unfortunately it was near the end of his life, and the harm was done.

were absurd and untenable; both were on that account maintained the more firmly, as is usual in a stubborn controversy. And each disputant took pains to oppose, annoy, and often to insult his opponent. 'You might as well preach to the baboons,' said a Boer to a British missionary who wished to evangelise the Hottentots;[1] the missionaries in turn accused the Boers of corrupting and degrading the savages,[2] and suggested that the Kafir and the Hottentot were but imitating the example of the white man when they thieved and went to war, a theory which had not the least basis of fact.[3]

The British missionaries were strongly prejudiced against the Boers and the few British settlers in South Africa, whose every action they traduced, and whose motives they frequently maligned. But they were not opposed to the Boers as Boers, any more than they were opposed to the English planter in Jamaica as an Englishman: the missionary opposed both on the same ground—that they had done nothing to elevate the coloured people whom they ruled. Of those coloured people the missionary now constituted himself the champion, and of their rights he considered himself the trustee.[4]

[1] *Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat.* Livingstone records much the same experience; the phrase was perhaps proverbial.

[2] Dr. Philip, the head of the English missionaries in Cape Colony, refers to a golden age of the Hottentots—before the Dutch came—and directly accuses the Dutch of corrupting them. He concludes that 'the vices of the Hottentots are the vices of their condition,' and ascribes their condition to the Dutch. (Philip's *Researches in South Africa*, 1828.)

Neither the golden age nor the degeneration were true. But Philip had not much regard for truth.

[3] Livingstone, a more level-headed judge, allowed that all over Africa there had been 'periodical outbreaks of war, which seem to have occurred from time immemorial, for the possession of cattle.' One sentence by Livingstone is worth all that Philip ever wrote, and most of what he stole from other writers.

[4] The missionaries of the West Indies were often criticised in England by the West Indian planter interest at home. But there was no similar South African commercial interest in England; West Indian criticisms seldom reached Cape Colony; and the missionaries were there all the time.

The Cape Dutch feeling against the missionaries existed, however, before the arrival of the British; one of the articles of the Graaff Reynet

In the abstract the missionary's attitude was sound, and his ideal was a high one; in practice neither was so sound. For the missionaries had their shortcomings as well as the Boers and the natives: all men are imperfect in an imperfect world. Most, but by no means all, the missionaries were good and honest men after their lights. But their views, if sincere, were narrow; they were prejudiced, bitter, and intolerant, quarrelsome and vindictive among themselves, and even more ready to spread scandal and false reports about their neighbours.[1] Undoubtedly they meant well: but too often they succeeded in doing evil instead of good. The very zeal of the propagandist to prove his case against his opponent led him to overstate it, sometimes even to invent the evidence that was to shock the English audience at home with horrid stories of colonial cruelty; and sometimes the desire to prove the white man a brutal tyrant was more prominent than the desire to serve the interests of the coloured. Charges were made that could not be sustained;[2] and it is unfortunately

republican constitution of 1795 was that the Moravian missionaries should be expelled. It was a conflict of first principles that happened to take a racial twist.

[1] There were some scandals and many innuendoes among the early evangelists in South Africa, jealousies and quarrels among the elect; and intellectual honesty in mission circles, like female virtue in other and less estimable quarters, was sometimes valued because it was so scarce.

On this point the testimony of David Livingstone, the greatest of missionaries, is emphatic. In 1840 he wrote, 'the missionaries are in a sad state. Every man's hand is against his neighbour; the present state of feeling is disgraceful: they hate their brethren in the colony, and there exists a considerable amount of floating scandal.'

Livingstone's remarks applied only to the missionaries located south of the Orange River. Those further north, the pioneers in Bechuanaland and Nyasa (bk. xxiv. ch. ii.), were better men.

[2] Philip, for instance, recounts the well-known story of eight charges of cruelty brought by the missionaries against the inhabitants of Uitenhage. The charges were declared to be false by the resident magistrate who inquired into them. Philip says he afterwards found evidence that the charges were true. But he did not produce the evidence in his book.

Many other missionary charges against the whites also broke down on examination, such as those brought by Van der Kemp, a Hollander, and Read, in 1811, to the number of nearly a hundred against the colonists. Nearly all failed of proof, but the session was remembered for years as the Black Circuit.

true that the historian must always hesitate to accept the evidence of a missionary against a colonist unless independent corroboration can be obtained.[1]

The Imperial Government accepts the Missionary Standpoint.

But it happened that the British Government at Cape Town and the Imperial Government in London were both ready to accept the statements, and to adopt the standpoint of the missionaries, and often without independent corroboration. The Government acted, indeed, from the high and laudable motive of protecting the natives against the undoubted aggressions of the white man, whether Boer or British; and it occupied an extremely delicate and difficult position in the attempt to assume that high responsibility of a Christian Empire. But in doing so it committed many grave mistakes; it continued to alienate the old Cape Dutch, and many also of the new British pioneers who in time began to push the frontiers of Cape Colony further to the east and north.

The British Government's acceptance of the missionary standpoint shows indeed in many of the official despatches of the time. In any racial trouble, there was always a tendency to condemn the European colonist as the aggressor, to pity the native as the innocent victim of the white man's tyranny;[2] in any frontier dispute, there was always a tend-

[1] 'The murders by Kafirs,' said the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, an organ which reflected missionary opinion, 'are to be found only on the lips of lying men; the alarms have no foundation—clamour raised for the purpose of concealing frauds practised by the whites.' This was before the Kafir rising of 1834; in that rising 456 farmhouses were burnt and many white settlers murdered, a sufficient refutation.

Pringle, in one of his poems, has a couplet on frontier settlement which comes nearer to the truth.

'It is a strife
Between the black-skinned bandit and the white.'

There were undoubtedly murders and raids on both sides; see the account of the Kafir War in the next chapter.

[2] See, for example, Lord John Russell to the Governor of the Cape, 17th April 1841: 'It will be your policy to draw closer the connection between the colony and the Kafir tribes, to influence the latter by means of the missionaries and resident agents, and to punish any colonist who

ency to accept the missionary's view that European settlement was in itself an evil, and that the best end to pursue was to discourage secular colonisation altogether, leaving the natives to the care of the missionaries, who would watch over them, convert them, educate them, and rule them for their good. The frontiers of Christianity, in short, were to be enlarged; the frontiers of the Empire were to be restrained.[1]

The worst enemy of the missionaries will admit that there was something noble in their aim; the best friend of the missionaries must concede that it was impossible of realisation, and that their methods hardly tended to make it more easy of achievement. Apart from their mistakes and prejudices —and these were many—the missionaries were few, and the work of converting the savage to civilisation and Christianity a long and difficult task which must take several generations; while the colonists were many, and their aims far more simple and easy. Even with the support of the Imperial Government, the missionaries could make but little impression on the savage Kafirs, and none at all upon the Zulus;[2] even with the active opposition of the Imperial Government, the

may do them injury, so that they may look up to the British power as their friend and protector.'

Again, Lord Stanley to the Governor of the Cape, 10th April 1842: H. M. Govt. 'cannot regard without lively indignation the slaughter and oppressions to which (the Boer emigrants in Natal), in the prosecution of their enterprise, have subjected the native tribes.' The Boers had emigrated to Natal, which was not then a British colony; they were attacked by the natives, whereupon they naturally retaliated (bk. xxiv. ch. i.) Whatever their record in the Transvaal, in Natal it was clean; it is no wonder that the Boer Council of the People, assembled at Pieter Maritzburg on 7th April 1841, had issued a protest 'against hasty judgments on inadequate information of their dealings with the natives.'

The most emphatic example of the Imperial Government's attitude, Lord Glenelg's despatch on the Kafir War, is quoted and discussed in the text.

[1] It must not be forgotten that the missionary desire to limit the spread of colonisation was heartily supported by the anti-imperial school of Cobden in England itself (vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.). But most of the missionaries also disliked the advent of the British trader among the natives, although they did lip-service to the benefits of expanding commerce in their books and sermons. As a fact, the trader was often a more disreputable person than the colonist.

[2] For the missions to the Kafirs and Zulus, see bk. xxiv. ch. ii.

European settlers in South Africa, both British and Dutch, were able to enlarge the frontier of their possessions over the whole vast territory south of the Zambesi within the lifetime of a single man. The whole weight of the British Government, the British philanthropy, and the British sentiment of the day, was thrown upon the side of the Kafirs and against the advancing tide of European colonisation; and the European colonists prevailed.

A Contradictory Policy.

The real weakness of the Imperial Government's policy, indeed, was not that it was wrong—for many wrong policies are successful—but that it was impossible of achievement because it was a contradictory policy. Its whole intent was to protect the natives against the Europeans; but it endeavoured to carry out that intention by two different means which directly contradicted each other. At one time it would repudiate a legitimate conquest of the native territories, and restore to the Kafirs the land which they had forfeited and the property which they had stolen; at another it would proclaim a protectorate over a native territory which it had neither conquered nor obtained by treaty, in order to protect the natives against the aggression of the whites. In each case the intention was admirable, and the consequence absurd.

Alternate Advance and Retreat.

In 1837, for instance, after the Kafir War of 1835, in which the Kafirs had invaded the eastern province of Cape Colony,[1] Lord Glenelg, that weakest of all Colonial secretaries who have ever served the British Government,[2] wrote a despatch to the Governor of the Cape which became notorious. 'Through a long series of

[1] For the Kafir War of 1835, see the next chapter.

[2] Lord Glenelg's record at the Colonial Office was an unhappy one. He blundered in Canada (vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iv.), in Australia (vol. v. bk. xviii. ch. iii.), and New Zealand (vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. ii.), as well as in South Africa. If Paradise had been, what some imperialists think it ought to be, a British possession, Glenelg would have driven even the angels to the verge of rebellion.

Glenelg was a prominent member of the Clapham sect which included Wilberforce and the Macaulays.

years,' he announced, 'the Kafirs had an ample justification of war. They had to resent, and endeavoured justly, though impotently, to avenge a series of encroachments. They had a perfect right to hazard the experiment, however hopeless, of extorting by force that legal redress which they could not otherwise obtain; and the original justice is on the side of the conquered, and not the victorious party.'[1] The treaty of peace which had been concluded with the Kafirs by the British Government in South Africa was therefore cancelled, and all cessions since the year 1817 were revoked, to the disgust of the colonists, British and Boer alike, who realised that in this action a civilised government had unwittingly allied itself with barbarism.

Such might be the views of the Imperial Government in 1837; but in 1845 the Imperial Government proclaimed Natal a British colony, not because of the interests of its own people in those parts, but in order to protect the natives—who were not entirely unable to protect themselves—against the Boers; and in subsequent years it pursued a similar policy towards the north, again in order to protect the tribes against the Boers. A government which repudiates its own conquests and a few years later claims lands it has not conquered is doomed to impotence; nor need it be surprised if its intentions are derided as absurd, or accused as insincere.

It was truly from a sense of duty to the native that the British Government and the British missionary followed the native along the coast and into the interior of South Africa; but it was a sense of duty that was likely to be misinterpreted, since it brought territorial aggrandisement in its train; and when the aggrandisement was permanent and profitable, few believed the purity of the original motive. Yet the sincerity of the Imperial Government in these matters cannot be denied.

[1] Despatch dated 26th December 1835. The Governor of Cape Colony, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, one of the best loved of British officials in South Africa, was subsequently dismissed.

The contrary policy of retreat which Glenelg had inaugurated was an unmitigated failure, admitted by the wiser missionaries themselves in the next generation as well as by the colonists. 'It was no real kindness to the Kafirs,' said a Wesleyan evangelist who laboured many years in their country, nor did he admit that the native attacks on the whites were the result of any generally oppressive conduct by the European settlers.[1] And another missionary remarked, with still more force and directness, that 'the Glenelg system had a very fine appearance on paper; but unfortunately there was more paper than anything else about it. It was a benevolent dream; its reality was its sad results. It was founded on the groundless belief that the Kafir chiefs were either willing or able to restrain their people from plunder.'[2]

Its Failure.

The natives, as a fact, were tempted by the colonists' great flocks and herds of sheep and cattle, vastly superior in quality and breed to their own; these were temptations neither chief nor man could resist. 'The Kafirs are slaves of cattle, the Hottentots of brandy, the English of money,' remarked an old Kafir with a turn for epigram at this time; nor was any truer word spoken in this controversy.

But the British Government, like the Dutch Government before it, was no more able to restrain the expansion of its people in South Africa than the Kafirs to refrain from raiding their white neighbours' stock. Ethically Glenelg may have been right in attempting to restore to the Kafirs the territory they had lost; but the statesman is not concerned only with ethics, but with the actual facts of the present and the certainties of the future. And the present fact in South Africa demonstrated that the European as the stronger man would in time control the weaker aborigines and rule their country; all history—even the past history of the Kafirs themselves,

[1] *The Story of my Mission*, by the Rev. W. Shaw (of Wesleyville, 1860).
[2] Calderwood, *Cafres and Caffre Missions* (1857).

who had dispossessed other tribes as the Europeans were now dispossessing them—would have shown that in these matters might is apt to be the only right.

The external policy of the British Government therefore failed, and the changing map of South Africa was a witness to its failure. Its internal policy in Cape Colony was based on the same principle of protecting the weaker race against the stronger; but here the British Government succeeded. Yet it bought success at an even higher price than failure when it abolished slavery; the price, however, which it paid was largely owing to its own mistakes.

Slavery was still recognised in the British Empire, if not in Britain, at the time when Cape Colony passed from Holland to England;[1] and although the slave-trade was prohibited after 1807—a prohibition in which the Cape Dutch acquiesced with good grace—the economic basis of South African labour was not disturbed by its new masters for a quarter of a century.

Slavery in South Africa.

There were three classes of slaves in the colony: Malays, Malagasies, and the *bastaards*, descendants of white men and coloured women. Of these the half-breeds were considered the most intelligent and valuable, and were often treated more like privileged servants than slaves; the Malagasies were the least esteemed and the most numerous. In addition the Hottentot 'apprentices' occupied a position which could hardly be distinguished from that of the slave.

In general each class of slave appears to have been reasonably well treated by most masters. Undoubted cases of brutality have certainly been recorded on good evidence; examples of the frequent use of the sjambok, of regular torture, of occasional outrage are not unknown or even very unusual: and sometimes the exasperated slaves rebelled against a bad owner. An instance

Treatment of the Slaves.

[1] For the general history of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves, see vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. iii.

is mentioned in which a traveller sat up all night with a farmer and his sons in a locked and barricaded room with guns loaded, fearing an attack by the slaves who had threatened to kill their master, in revenge for some ill-treatment or cruelty.

But it is not suggested that these were typical of the system, and it seems likely that if the Cape Dutchman was often rough he was seldom brutal to his dependents. Barrow, an English witness by no means prejudiced in favour of the colonists, and one who knew the Cape better than most men, admitted that in spite of several instances of cruelty which he recorded, the slaves of South Africa were better clothed, better fed, and infinitely more comfortable than any of the peasantry of Europe; and neither the statistics nor the laws of the Cape reveal such ugly secrets as those of the West Indies and America. The slaves were sometimes given their freedom by generous masters; the natural increase in their numbers was not disproportionate to the community as a whole; and the death-rate was no greater than among white men at that age.[1]

Nevertheless slavery was doomed in South Africa. The Imperial Government was determined to abolish the system throughout the British Empire; and Cape Colony could not be excepted from the law that was to affect the more important interests of all the tropical plantations in the West Indies and British Guiana.

Their Emancipation, 1834.

Unfortunately the most magnificent ideals are often marred by mistakes in their practical application. The West Indian planters were exasperated by the suggestion, which was put forward by the advocates of emancipation, that every slave-owner was a brutal and tyrannical master; the pro-

[1] See *State of the Cape in* 1822. The total slave population in that year was 33,841, of whom 20,098 were males—a disproportion of the sexes that must be taken into account in comparing the statistics. In that year there were 1085 births; and 597 deaths and manumissions.

Dr. Philip (*Researches in South Africa*, 1828) is less favourable to the slave owners than Barrow. He is also less trustworthy as a witness.

prietors at the Cape were equally offended by the libel, diligently propagated by the British missionaries who had recently come among them and readily believed in England, that the cruelties which could undoubtedly be charged against individuals were typical of every owner. The statement was a lie, and those who made it knew it was a lie; perhaps those excellent persons comforted their tender consciences by the reflection that the dangerous principle which they repudiated in others, of doing evil that good should result, was justified in their own peculiar case.

In any event, the cause they fought for triumphed, and it was well for humanity as a whole that it did triumph. But smaller evils are often allied with the greater good, the tares are not always separated from the wheat; and the evil consequences incidental to the manner in which the Abolitionists did their work are writ large over the subsequent history of South Africa.

The Cape Dutch, as human beings with an eye to their own interests, did not welcome the prospect of emancipation for their slaves. But neither did they rebel, nor even deliver themselves of such violent language against the Abolitionists as some of the Jamaica planters had done when threatened with the loss of their human property. They took the more sensible course of suggesting a plan of gradual emancipation when they saw that emancipation was inevitable.

Their scheme had many merits, apart from the great advantage that it would have secured by consent what must otherwise be secured by compulsion. It would have achieved the freeing of the slaves; it would also have ensured that the industries of the Cape, which had been built up on slave labour, should not be unduly disturbed by the transition from force to freedom.

But that scheme by no means suited the Abolitionists, whose admirable enthusiasm for the slave never allowed them to see any good in the slave-owner. They believed him

to be their unalterable enemy, and the course of action which they pursued went far to make him one.

The local scheme was therefore rejected, and other steps were taken to secure the end in view. In 1826 an official Guardian of the Slaves was introduced. His services may sometimes have been useful and often necessary, but his duty, which always and inevitably took the form of interference between master and man, and on the side of the slave and against his owner, quickly made him the most unpopular man in the colony. Four years later a punishment order-book was directed to be kept, but this was soon after abandoned as useless. In 1828, however, an Ordinance was promulgated granting to the Hottentots and other free persons of colour every right to which other British subjects were entitled—a measure of equality before the law, which, in excellent in itself, was a revolutionary innovation to the conservative Cape Dutch.

Finally, on 1st December 1834, slavery was abolished by Act of the Imperial Parliament; but the slaves were bound as apprentices for four years more; and on 1st December 1838 the slave or apprentice was to be declared a freeman.

He took prompt advantage of his freedom; for on the earlier date he laid down his tools and refused to re-engage with his master. And it was now found that the Imperial Government, with an entire disregard of seasons and conditions at the Cape, had fixed the day of emancipation in the very middle of the wheat harvest, with the result that on a large number of farms the freed slaves deserted their work, and the farmers saw themselves left, at the busiest time of the agricultural year, to cut and stack and thresh their corn themselves.

Unfortunate Consequences of Emancipation.

The slaves need not be blamed for hastening to enjoy their new-found freedom. But if the Imperial Parliament had delayed the boon a few weeks it would not have made the gift less valuable, and it would have done something to reconcile

the owners to a change which, as it was, caused them much loss and inconvenience.

No other labour was to be had within the colony. The Cape Dutch agriculturist had long since complained that the free Hottentots preferred the easy life of the English mission schools to hard work on the farms. And there were no free white labourers within the colony, for the white labourer cannot exist in a slave-owning community.[1]

And no attempt had been made to supply other labour to replace the slaves from without the colony.[2] There were many unemployed men in England at the time, but few of these had sufficient private resources to go to South Africa, and none were assisted to emigrate by the State or by private associations. The farmers of Cape Colony were indeed offered convict labour from the English prisons for their farms. But they had seen too many of the convict ships destined for New South Wales put in at Cape Town, and they knew too much of the human refuse which those vessels carried, to accept the dubious gift.

The immediate consequence of emancipation was therefore that the essential work of the colony which should have been done was not done, and that those who should have done the work were idle. Some of the emancipated and now unemployed slaves interpreted their freedom to mean freedom to break the laws and steal the property of their late masters: a great increase of vagrancy was noticed in almost every part of the colony, and it was a matter of general complaint that the Government did nothing to suppress the wandering and occasionally criminal population that roamed at large from one district to another.

[1] White labour had been originally tried in the British colonies in the West Indies, Virginia and Georgia; in each case it was driven out by slave labour. See vol. i. bk. iv. ch. iii., and vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. iii.

[2] The Abolitionists seem to have assumed that the freed slaves would re-engage for work with their old masters. They forgot that the slave who had worked so long for others preferred idleness, if only by way of a change; and his wants being few, he could easily supply them, without the need of regular labour.

But these were in fact only the minor difficulties consequent on emancipation. The real trouble arose out of the question of compensation.

It is easy to be virtuous at the expense of others; and it would not have been impossible for the British Government to declare that slavery must be abolished throughout the British Empire, without compensating the colonial slave-owners for the loss of their slaves.[1] To have taken that course would probably not have roused much more enmity among many of the proprietors in the West Indies than the actual course which the Government took, of compensating the planters affected; for no sum would have satisfied some proprietors, and no compensation could really make good the destruction of the economic basis on which their industry rested. But the British Government was not hypocritical. It proposed to pay the slave-owners for the loss of their slaves; it set aside the enormous sum of twenty millions sterling for the purpose of compensation; and it did in fact pay the West Indian slave-owners an amount which was probably largely in excess of the sum which they had originally paid for their slaves. It could not, of course, pay contingent damages, and it could not altogether accept the planters' valuation of their property. But on the whole it struck a fair bargain with the owners in the West Indies, in British Guiana, and British Honduras.

Scurvy Treatment of the Slave-owners.

But in South Africa its policy was far less happy. It proposed to pay the slave-owners compensation for the loss of their slaves in Cape Colony as elsewhere; and it appointed official commissioners to appraise the value of those slaves. These officials appear to have done their work fairly enough, and they named a sum as compensation which all save the extremists among the proprietors would probably have admitted to be

[1] The slave-trade, which had been abolished in 1807, was not compensated for its prohibition by law.

adequate if not generous. The British Government thereupon repudiated the award of its own commissioners, cut down the award by half, reduced it again by a quarter of a million sterling, deducted a further sum of two and a half per cent. commission on the amount, deducted a still further sum for stamps and postage, and then directed that the compensation money due to the farmers in South Africa was to be paid in England.

The actual figures may be given. There were 35,745 slaves in Cape Colony whose owners were to be compensated for the loss of their human property. These included headmen, slaves engaged in trade for their masters' benefit, field labourers, domestic slaves, children, and aged retainers too old to work. The British Commissioners declared the total value of these slaves to be £3,041,290, an average per head of £85, 1s. 7¾d. The British Government at once reduced the total value to £1,247,401, 1s. 2d., and the average value to £34, 17s. 11¼d. From this amount it deducted a sum of £31,185 as commission; and another sum of £10,722 for postage, which reduced the total amount of compensation to £1,205,494.

The Cape Dutch farmers had naturally anticipated, as anybody else would have anticipated, that they were to receive the sum fixed by the commissioners; and they complained loudly that the British Government had cheated them by its successive reductions and deductions. But even the lesser sum awarded did not reach them in full, for the British Government did not trouble to remit the amount to South Africa, but made it payable in London. The result was that the payees had to accept a settlement of their claims through Cape Town merchants, who charged a commission of from five to twenty and even thirty per cent. on the transaction. And these hungry traders, not satisfied even with that exorbitant profit on a piece of business over which they risked no possibility of loss whatever, insisted that part of the com-

pensation money should be taken out in goods supplied at an equally exorbitant profit by themselves.

There is no reason to wonder that some of the disgusted farmers declared that the now so shrunken compensation money was not worth the trouble and expense of a journey into Cape Town, and abandoned their claims altogether—a proceeding which the hard-headed intermediaries possibly anticipated, and against which they certainly made no protest. A very considerable proportion of the compensation money for the South African slave-owners certainly stuck to the capacious pockets of the agents; but not a few of those once prosperous agriculturists who had been so foolish as to put their faith in the fair dealing of an Imperial Government were brought near to ruin.

Such was the insensate folly of the British Government in this transaction that it lost the goodwill of the whole Dutch population at the Cape for an unjust economy of a million pounds; such was the almost incredible meanness of this administration that it stooped to charge a forced commission on its own sharp practice, and to deduct the very postage stamps—which it had not used[1]—before it would consent to pay the compensation it had promised. And even then it had not exhausted the range of its stupidity, for it allowed the middleman, the broker, and the rascally commission agent to step in between itself and those whom it had already mulcted of a large commission, and to snatch a large part of what remained.

The price of that folly, that meanness, and that stupidity was very many times the million odd pounds which was saved to the British Treasury. From that time the Boers believed that the British Government was not to be trusted to deal fairly with them; and there was some foundation for their belief.

But other signs of British rule had appeared in South Africa before the emancipation of the slaves. It was ordered that

[1] Government correspondence was free.

the English language should be used in all judicial proceedings after 1823; and judicial circuits after the English fashion had been instituted throughout Cape Colony in 1811. The introduction of an organised and regular administration of the law[1] did much to stop the old patriarchal and individual methods which had hitherto existed, under which the farmer in the remote interior had meted out such rough justice as he chose to his dependents; the innovation was not popular with the less reputable elements of society, and even the respectable Boer may have grumbled at the limitation on his liberty of action; but the more responsible colonists seem to have admitted, perhaps rather grudgingly, that regular justice had long been overdue.

English Judicial System introduced.

Many other changes had been introduced by the new rulers. The Cape had stagnated during the last feeble years of the Dutch East India Company, thanks largely to the restrictions on trade, the maintenance of monopolies, and the existence of a depreciated paper currency.[2] All these things were swept away by British rule, and a sensible improvement and advance was seen in the first thirty years of the new control, which was checked, but not entirely stopped, by the fundamental economic change caused by the emancipation of the slaves. As in Java during the brief period of English rule,[3] a strong new wine was poured into the somewhat musty bottle of the old Dutch colonial system.

Prosperity under the British, 1806-34.

But the new rule had limits to its innovations. By a curious reversal of their ordinary practice, the British, who are usually so ready to confer their institutions on their neighbours, and to advocate the British constitution as a sovereign cure for every political disease, were slow in setting up a parliament at the Cape. This departure

The Cape Constitution, 1835-72.

[1] The law itself remained as before, the old Roman-Dutch law of the Dutch East India Company period.

[2] Memorandum by F. Kersteins, 1795, Theal's *Records*.

[3] Vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. ii.

from the old tradition of the Empire may probably be ascribed to the conservatism which held full sway in England itself for the forty years after the French Revolution;[1] but it remains the fact that the Cape had no constitution until a nominated Legislative Council was set up in 1835. Both Dutch and British colonists in South Africa complained with some reason of arbitrary rule; the British immigrants protested strongly against this reluctance to create a parliament such as they had known at home; the Cape Dutch, who had known no parliament in the old days of the Dutch East India Company, began to feel the need of one now that the executive government was no longer ineffective. Not until 1854, however, were representative institutions granted; another eighteen years and a long agitation followed before full self-government after the Canadian and Australian model was attained in 1872.

The language of this parliament was English; but long before the existence of a constitution at the Cape, the English language had begun to spread independently of its legal and official use. Its rival, the Cape Dutch dialect, still held its ground as the speech of the bulk of the people; but English became more and more the language of administration, of commerce, and of such literature as South Africa could boast.

The English Language spreads.

The Cape Dutch settler of the eighteenth century had been content to live with little news of the outer world, and his descendants had not outgrown the mental habits of their ancestors. Few books were known in the Boer's household save the Bible—it is true that he knew that best of all books

[1] I have studied with some care and, as at least one critic has reminded me, with occasional irreverence, every constitution of the English people overseas; and I have noticed that the least fertile period of such constitutions were the years 1800-40. The fact is, I believe, to be ascribed largely to the conservative reaction after the French Revolution, just as the quick growth of constitutional government in the British colonies after 1850 may be set down, in much smaller degree, partly to the revolutionary year 1848 in Europe.

thoroughly—and of the existence of newspapers and magazines he was entirely ignorant. The English settler of the nineteenth century was less incurious; a fair number of books were written about the resources, the sport, and the natural features of the colony by its new rulers; and several of these showed considerable faculty for observation and some gift of description.

The English Press in South Africa.

The first English newspaper—the *South African Commercial Advertiser*—made its appearance in 1824, under the part direction of Thomas Pringle, a Scottish immigrant who played a prominent part in the colonisation of Algoa Bay.[1] Pringle was not without literary ability to qualify him for his task; he wrote a pleasant prose style, and produced a good book of travels, besides some second-rate verses whose easy flowing couplets were mistaken by kindly friends and partial critics for true poetry.[2] But his journalistic enterprise was frowned on from the first by the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, whose conception of the functions of the press was limited to approval of the dreary but innocuous records of a Government Gazette; and when the editor ventured to criticise not only the method of administration in Cape Colony, but the head of the administration himself, the august representative of authority promptly intervened. The infant freedom of the press and the pocket of its sole representative in South Africa suffered a cruel blow when Somerset suppressed the *Commercial Advertiser* after eighteen numbers had been issued;[3] but neither the slaughter of the babe nor the angry protests of the outraged parent moved the stony heart of the relentless Governor. For some time longer the colonists were denied the priceless advantage of seeing their rulers attacked in print; but a few years later a less irascible Governor and a more reasonable editor reached agreement on the point, and

[1] See chapter v.

[2] Pringle's poems have been collected and published, and some of them still survive in anthologies.

[3] A detailed account of the affair is given in Meurant's *Sixty Years Ago*.

before the middle of the nineteenth century the liberty of the press was assured.

Several respectable newspapers were founded at Cape Town and in any centre where British settlers became numerous; an occasional magazine was started, flourished or at least survived some years, and then died. But the number of South African readers was too small to provide a living for author, printer, and publisher; and although the literary product of local brains was by no means always contemptible, it was not strong enough to compete against the great masters of Victorian literature in England, whose works were reviewed and read with considerable interest in the colonies.

South African Literature.

During the whole of the nineteenth century, indeed, South Africa was to produce a vast amount of gold, but nothing that was golden in literature. One or two historical writers of the second rank may be mentioned, of more conspicuous diligence than ability; Leibbrandt and Theal, sound scholars both, were the leading annalists of the Cape; Olive Schreiner was a novelist whose name was known and respected, and one at least of whose books—*The Story of an African Farm*—won some reputation in every civilised country; and of another character were several volumes of travels, memoirs, and reminiscences. In this department the works of Moffat, Livingstone, and Barrow became classics; but most of the remaining publications in South Africa were of interest only to special students of a particular subject, and usually sank into the oblivion of the library cellar when the contemporary political or social controversy which had brought them into existence was at an end.

Its Poetry.

A few second or third-rate dramas were written in South Africa, but none of sufficient merit to be staged outside the colony. Many authors tried their hands at poetry, and a few succeeded in producing tolerable verse; but no native writer of any real talent appeared in the highest form of literature. The Dutch language, which

has been the vehicle of one considerable and several minor poets in Europe, produced nothing of this kind in South Africa; among the numerous English writers, much was imitated from classic or contemporary British models; but though the versification was often facile the thought was nearly always commonplace. There were the inevitable love-songs, so bad that they were addressed, it may be hoped, to imaginary lovers;[1] a few patriotic poems, no better if no worse than the average of such performances elsewhere; an occasional platitude of morality perpetrated in pedestrian verse, thoughts on immortality obviously destined to speedy death, cries to the infinite too feeble to raise even a finite echo; attempts at self-revelation that revealed nothing but poverty of poetic equipment; sonnets that the world has willingly and even hastily let die; longer poems in which nothing is lacking save inspiration: these are the bulk of South African poetry. An occasional happy line of natural description[2] or a felicitous phrase[3] was the utmost achievement of the poets of the Cape.

[1] 'Sweet is my love as new-mown hay,' cried one distracted Cape poet. Hay-fever.

[2] Such as the following, by H. H. Dugmore:

> 'Wilderness lands of brake and glen
> The wolf's and the panther's gloomy den;
> Wilderness plains where the springbok bounds,
> And the lion's voice from the hills resounds.'

Not very great stuff, to be sure; but readable.

But if South Africa could not boast of the quality of her verse, she might be proud of the quantity. As early as 1830 I notice the editor of the *Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette* remarking that he had poetry enough to build a wall round Parnassus; and in one of the early missionary magazines of Nyasaland is a sonnet to the Lake.

[3] As, for instance, these lines by W. E. Hunter, on the nightingale (the inevitable victim of every poet):

> 'Singing, for the world's delight,
> The cantata, she by right
> Should have sung in heaven to-night.'

By far the best South African verse I have read are the fugitive pieces by my old friend Ian D. Colvin. But he was not a native of South Africa, and his genius was happily destined to be exhibited on a larger and more prominent stage.

If the literature of South Africa was imitative and commonplace, its people had, according to Paderewski, the famous pianist, 'no idea of art, no sentiment for it, and no desire for it.'[1] The artist who pronounced this sweeping judgment was suffering from an unprovoked insult in the country he condemned; but the justice of his criticism was not seriously challenged by South Africans themselves.

Art and Music.

During the early years of the nineteenth century, when the discontent of the Dutch against their new rulers was growing the actual British population in South Africa remained a small and numerically insignificant minority. Many Anglo-Indians from the three presidencies of British India, it is true, used the Cape from time to time as a health resort; some of them liked the climate, which was warmer than that of their native country and less warm than that of their adopted country, and took up their abode there altogether. There are old Anglo-Indian names to this day in Cape Colony, and the tombs in the churchyards of Cape Town bear witness to the Anglo-India strain of settlement in South Africa.

British Settlement in Cape Colony.

Besides these chance western immigrants from the East a few British colonists made their way to the Cape directly from the British Isles in the early years of the British occupation. But the main tide of emigration from England and Scotland in the first half of the nineteenth century was to Canada and Australia; and apart from the one considerable enterprise at Algoa Bay,[2] which gave the eastern part of Cape Colony a distinctly English character, no scheme of organised settlement on a large scale was undertaken by the British Government in South Africa.

Nevertheless, some signs of the British conquest, if hardly yet of British settlement, were beginning to appear in the English words that gradually mingled with the old Dutch names on the maps of the colony. The little city of George,

[1] *Cape Times*, April 1912.

[2] See the next chapter.

founded in 1811 in the south of the colony, is one of the earliest settlements of distinctly British origin in South Africa. It took its commonplace name from the commonplace monarch who reigned at that time in England; for here as elsewhere the names of the third George and his children have been scattered in various strange quarters up and down the British Empire[1] by settlers whose loyalty to the throne was more marked than their originality.[2] The fourth George of England left no mark upon the map of South Africa; but King William's Town, named from his successor, dates its existence from 1834; his consort gave her name to Adelaide, founded at the same time, but long since eclipsed by its Australian rival.[3] The districts of Victoria East and West, which were established in 1847, Queenstown, founded in 1853, and Prince Albert, derive their names from the Queen and her consort; Port Alfred and Alice, the capital of Victoria East, from a son and daughter.

The village of Caledon, which dates from 1807, the second year of the British occupation, can claim a slightly longer ancestry and a more active, if less majestic, patron than Georgetown. The oldest of all the English settlements in South Africa, its name is that of the English Governor of the colony at the time of its foundation; and many another Governor in after years strove to perpetuate his memory among a more or less grateful people by the same easy means of founding a town of his own name. Cradock, called after Sir John Cradock, an early Governor of Cape Colony, may perhaps remind some of its inhabitants of the traditional descent of its founder from the ancient British chief, Carac-

[1] A round dozen or more cities in Ontario were named after George III. and his children by the United Empire Loyalists.

[2] In 1819 Georgetown contained one hundred houses, a church, a parsonage, and a school (*Account of the Cape in* 1819). Its subsequent growth has not been rapid.

[3] King William's Town was hardly worthy its exalted title; for some years it consisted only of a church, a mission-house, and a garden in the wilderness.

tacus;[1] Somerset East and West and Beaufort owe their names to the great Somerset family of England, one of whose members was an irascible Governor at the Cape for several years; Colesberg, founded in 1830, likewise acknowledges a Governor for its parent; Wodehouse, Malmesbury, and Richmond took their names from the nobility of England, who were officially connected with the colony at the time of their foundation; and one or two places were named by the British missionaries who had come to convert the natives of South Africa to Christianity soon after the conquest. The village of Maclean near East London commemorates one of the early Scottish evangelists; Wesleyville and Theopolis tell their own tale of propagandist zeal. But the maps of the still unknown interior north of the Orange River were in time to show more signs of the messengers of God, at Moffat's station of Kuruman, at Livingstonia and Blantyre; in these early days there was nothing but the little pioneer station of Griqua Town north of the colonial boundary.[2]

Not many independent British settlers made their homes in South Africa before the discovery of diamonds and gold in the second half of the nineteenth century; but the few there were carried the name at least of the old home to the new.[3] The existence of a Cambridge and a Bedford at the Cape tell of emigrants from the peaceful pastures of the laggard Ouse; a Waterford speaks of an exodus from southern Ireland; and the mention of a South African Aberdeen[4] proves, what indeed

[1] The authenticity of the Cradock descent is, I believe, a question of justification by faith rather than of actual proof.

[2] See bk. xxiv. ch. ii.

[3] As did also a few German settlers, who founded the townships of Berlin, Potsdam, and Braunschweig in Cape Colony. These men came from the Anglo-German legion which was disbanded after the Crimean War.

[4] I had a conversation some years ago with Miss Jean Graham, the courteous secretary of the Scottish branch of the South African Colonisation Society. This lady told me that most of her clients came from the district between Aberdeen, Inverness, and the Lowlands, and that the people of Aberdeen had usually more grit, and therefore more success in colonisation, than others. They were mostly of two classes—rural labourers, forced out of employment by the creation of deer enclosures; and town millworkers in search of better wages.

scarcely needed proving, that the hardy sons of the toughest breed in Scotland had not neglected the chance of finding fortune in this or in any other part of the British Empire.[1]

One place of greater importance than the rest was founded by the British in these early days of their rule at the Cape. There had been trouble along the shifting indefinite eastern frontier of the colony between the advance guard of the Dutch settlers and the native Kafir tribes for many years before the British conquest; and these frontier troubles had quickly forced themselves upon the new rulers of South Africa. During the first brief occupation of Cape Colony by the British a Kafir war had engaged the English forces, and both the wild bush country in which they operated and the aptness of the native tribes in cattle raids and their bravery in open combat had sometimes disconcerted commanders accustomed to the more regular methods of European warfare. Early in the second and permanent British occupation of the colony the same question presented itself; and after some natural hesitation and delay the Government at Cape Town determined to maintain the eastern frontier of the European settlements along the Great Fish River, the same line of frontier that had been fixed by the old Cape Dutch Government in 1778; and, in order to safeguard the isolated Dutch settlements of the Zuurberg and Zuurveld in the interior from Algoa Bay, it was decided to found a frontier fortress as a garrison centre and city of refuge.

The Founding of Grahamstown, 1812.

[1] In almost any part of the outer world, wherever one finds a European there is a two to one chance he is a Britisher. If he is a successful and prosperous citizen, there is a two to one chance he comes from the north of England or Scotland; if he is a Scot there is more than a two to one chance he is from Aberdeen. If he is wealthy one can write him down a Yorkshireman or an Aberdonian without further question.

The only exception to this rule, so far as England is concerned, is Devonshire, which has given far more than the average of pioneers to the Empire, from the days of Drake downwards. But Devon, apart from its other excellences—among which good cider and junket shall not be counted the least—has indeed received this unfair advantage from the Almighty over other English counties, that it has two sea-coasts.

Colonel John Graham, of the 59th regiment, an officer who had taken part in the attack on Cape Town in 1806, and who had since gained much experience of Kafir warfare, was placed in charge of the work; and on 3rd May 1812 he fixed the site of a city on the spot where stood the remains of the abandoned Dutch farm called Noutoe.[1] Three days later the Cape Regiment was moved thither, and building operations were begun; but after a few weeks' work, on the recommendation of the Dutch ensign Stockenstrom, who knew the country better than Colonel Graham, the settlement was moved to a high spot then known as Rand Kop, which commanded a wider view of the surrounding country than Noutoe; and here, in the early days of June, the city of Grahamstown was founded. The original foundation at Noutoe was discontinued; the deserted farmhouse of one Lukas Meyer, which stood on the Rand Kop, was roofed in, repaired, and used as an officers' mess; eighteen temporary huts, in three rows of six each, were fitted up as quarters for the troops; and a small garrison was installed to keep the frontier.

A Frontier Fortress and City of Refuge.

Such was the beginning of Grahamstown as a frontier fortress and, in case of need, a city of refuge. The place grew very slowly, for it had at first no citizens but soldiers, no industry but drill; but within a few years, when British settlers and Boer farmers began to cultivate the country around the little town, it became a city of refuge indeed for terror-stricken women and children fleeing from a frontier raid and a cruel native war.[2]

Grahamstown was never taken by the enemy, and thus it justified its founder and the choice of site;[3] but the frontier itself was less defensible. The line of the Great Fish River

[1] Since called Table Farm.

[2] See the following chapter.

[3] It justifies its founder in another way. The health statistics of the British regiments at Grahamstown showed a lower percentage of sickness and death than any other troop station in the world.

was condemned by another soldier as 'all in favour of the Kafirs; a dense jungle, the medium breadth of which was about five miles, torn and intersected by deep ravines, a great part of it impenetrable, except to Kafirs and wild beasts, occupying about a hundred miles of frontier along the Great Fish River. The whole British army would be insufficient to guard it.'[1]

The justice of these words was to be proved by the Kafir War of 1835.

CHAPTER V

THE ENGLISH IMMIGRATION: 1820-42

THE thirty years after the close of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 saw Britain faced with a prolonged industrial and social crisis. Many an honest man in those years found no work to his hand; many was without a roof to his head or a bed for his wife or bread for his child. Distrust of the present and despair of the future drove hundreds to outrage and crime. Side by side with the wealth that made the presence of poverty more grim by contrast, utter destitution stalked the land; and so threatening was the outlook at times, that there were some who even feared that nineteenth-century England might suffer the fate of eighteenth-century France, and see the very foundations of society dissolve under the stress of those for whom society seemed to have no recognised place within its ranks. Distress in England.

From that untoward fate the conservative and constructive forces of England saved the country after some years of misery and disorder. But it is at such times of stress that

[1] Major Charters, quoted in Chase's *Natal*.
Even the excellent Pringle, who, it is true, was no soldier, saw that the frontier could not be effectually defended.

quiet unprogressive men, who see no prospect for themselves at home, are forced to imitate the wanderers and adventurous of every age, and to look abroad for the career that is denied them in their own country. Thousands of labourers, artisans, mechanics, and shopmen left England to seek employment in her colonies during the years after the battle of Waterloo; and few of those who settled overseas ever saw England again.

Emigration as a Solution.

Some took advantage of their new opportunity, flourished in the new lands, and rose to high position in the state; many prospered quietly after an early struggle in an unfamiliar environment; a certain number failed in the colonies as they had failed in England, as they would have failed anywhere. But nearly all except these last took firm root in the new soil, for they were mostly of the solid, steady type that takes firm root where it can, and deviates from the parent stock as little as it may under other skies and a different climate; and, unconscious of the work they were doing, they and their children were laying the foundations of new English nations in virgin lands.

Very many, perhaps the greater number of these people, went to Canada, the nearest of the British colonies, where they settled in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces, and often drifted over the border—like human pollen driven by the wind of circumstance—to the United States.[1] A considerable number went to Australia[2] and New Zealand[3] under the Wakefield scheme of colonisation.[4] And a few went to South Africa.

[1] Vol. iii. bk. xi. chs. ii. iii. iv.
[2] Vol. v. bk. xviii. ch. ii.
[3] Vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. ii.
[4] Wakefield's theories had no influence on the colonisation of South Africa; but a curious rival project was adumbrated some years later by one Edward King, in a pamphlet entitled *The Advantages of a Triform Scheme System of Colonisation in South Africa, affording a gloriously splendid prospect for the next generation of Mankind* (1844). Unfortunately for King, his own generation would have nothing to do with it. His idea was to take the 'poor of the United Kingdom, the aborigines,

For many years Cape Colony was neglected or overlooked as a field for emigration. The extent of its resources had certainly been pointed out by those who knew the country,[1] and the British Cabinet itself was not without its own private information;[2] but it was not until 1819 that the Imperial Government decided to take any effective steps to ensure that the new British possession should have a considerable British population.

The Algoa Bay Colony, 1820.

In that year, however, the Imperial Government determined to expend a sum of £50,000 in planting a colony of four thousand British settlers in South Africa. The idea was favourably received by parliament and the public; and it may give some idea of the distress of the times when it is

and the exceedingly wretched of every part,' and to settle them in districts of equal size in South Africa. Labour and all duties were to be shared equitably—that pious hope of every idealist who ignores the imperfections of poor human nature—precedence and authority were to be regulated by seniority, and profits to be distributed according to age only, so 'as to leave no chance whatever for the influence of self-interest.' One-third of the produce was to be paid as rent to the Crown, one-third as profit to the settlers, and one-third as interest to the capitalists who were to advance the money for the project. They displayed no excessive anxiety to advance even a penny.

King advanced in his favour the suggestion that his scheme combined Christianity with colonisation; but this early socialist project, which was unconsciously imitated in some respects in Australia two generations later (vol. v. bk. xxii.), made no appeal to his own individualist age. Profit-sharing according to age is not a very hopeful basis for a young community's industry; but in practice it might lead to the painless extinction of the aged dotard—if there were any profits to divide when the motive of self-interest was eliminated.

Another extraordinary scheme was put forward by one Martin Boon, in *How to Colonise South Africa* (1883). The whole colonisation project he outlined was to be financed by paper money. The project remained, like the money—on paper. He produced two other equally mad books, *The Immortal History of South Africa*, and a *History of the Orange Free State*. I am of necessity a hardened reader of rubbish, but I admit that I failed to stomach this literary boon.

[1] See Fisher's *Importance of the Cape of Good Hope, independently of the Advantage it possesses as a Naval and Military Station* (1816). Incidentally he suggested that convicts should be substituted for slaves, an idea that appealed more to England than South Africa.

[2] There are one or two confidential manuscript reports on South Africa in the Colonial Office in London. Even after the lapse of a century their contents are still kept secret.

stated that although the number assisted to emigrate was limited to four thousand, over ninety thousand applications were received from those who desired to be of the party.

As it was, even four thousand were too many for South Africa to absorb at once. But it must be confessed that those who were finally chosen for the enterprise were of very mixed character, too often men whose previous occupations had not in the least suited them for the rough life of a frontier colony; and many of the subsequent difficulties of the new settlement sprang directly from this fact. The emigrants, who were banded in parties of ten under a head for each unit, appear in fact to have been chosen in the most haphazard fashion. Some of them were certainly excellent people, men whom no trials or misfortunes could discourage; but others were of very different calibre. An unkindly critic stated that numbers among them were 'tavern waiters, broken-down actors, attorneys' clerks, pianoforte makers, men and women milliners from Bond Street, and ladies' maids'; while one of the actual emigrants, and the most able member of the party, allowed that only about a third of the whole were people of real respectability or substance; the remainder being mostly persons who had long hung loose upon society, low in morals and desperate in circumstances, often idle, insolent, and drunken, if not mutinously disposed and inclined to discontent wherever they were placed.[1]

Character of the Settlers.

The destination of this motley army was not Cape Town or the older and more settled part of the colony, but the still unoccupied district around Algoa Bay, some days' sail to the east, in the country from which the Kafirs had lately been driven by Colonel Graham.

Boundless Hopes and Disappointment.

There were those among the emigrants so ignorant that they

[1] The less favourable estimate appeared in the *Quarterly Review*; the more favourable in Pringle's *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa*, the best account of the subject. Other contemporary authorities are Chase, *Cape of Good Hope and Algoa Bay*, 1822; and *The State of the Cape in* 1822, an admirable work by a civil servant.

expected to find a veritable land of plenty awaiting them,[1] with apricots and oranges growing wild on the sites of their new homes, and a life of ease and luxury ahead. They were speedily disillusioned. On landing at their destination early in 1820, they discovered a flat coastline, a monotonous belt of undulating lowlands by the shore, and a range of mountains in the interior. Of wild apricots there were no more sign than of civilisation. Only a few rough huts, a rude fort of British construction, and one or two miserable shelters hastily erected for the accommodation of the immigrants,[2] were to be seen. The whole country seemed virgin land; the nearest European settlements being the newly founded frontier post of Grahamstown far to the east—which had as yet but twenty-two houses[3]—Bathurst, a mere skeleton of an official plan,[4] the village of Somerset a considerable distance inland, which a disgusted traveller of the time described as a paltry collection of a couple of dozen huts set down in a swamp,[5] and the neat and picturesque township of Uitenhage, with its seven hundred Dutch families a few miles away.[6] There were no roads in this place, but a few rough tracks led to the interior; and along these tracks the settlers

[1] Many had been unintentionally misled by the British Government, which promised them that the 'Cape was suited to most of the productions of both temperate and warm climates, and the persons emigrating would soon find themselves comfortable.'—Chancellor of the Exchequer Vansittart's Speech in British House of Commons, 12th July 1819.

[2] The fort, which was called Fort Frederick, had been built by the British during the first occupation of Cape Colony in 1799 (*Records of Cape Colony*) after Admiral Pringle had examined the site two years before. A garrison of three hundred men was maintained there for a time.

A picture in Alberti's *Description Physique et Historique des Cafres* (Amsterdam, 1811) shows seven buildings at Algoa Bay besides the fort; but in a work published in the colony in 1835 it is stated that there were only four houses at the time of the 1820 settlement. Perhaps the other three blew down in the interval.

[3] The size of Grahamstown at this time is mentioned in *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the Irruption of the Kafir Hordes*, published at that place in 1835.

[4] Bathurst, like its namesake in New South Wales, was named from a member of the British Government of the time.

[5] Harris, *Wild Sports of Southern Africa* (1839).

[6] Harris again.

made their way by wagon to the lands allotted them, and those who were located far inland found that even the track would vanish before they reached their journey's end.

Some of the founders of the settlement had discussed the project of building a capital city of New Edinburgh for the new colony on the shores of the southern ocean. The scheme fell through, and the less ambitious Scots names of Cheviot Fells, Craig Rennie, Lyndoch, Glen Lynden, and Ettrick Forest in the interior are all that now mark the pronouncedly Scottish element among the colonists; the first town that was founded by the emigrants at Algoa Bay was named Port Elizabeth, in memory of the deceased wife of Sir Rufane Donkin, the Acting Governor. A later and perhaps too severe critic declared that it was planted on the least eligible site that could have been found;[1] but at least no time was lost in its establishment.

Port Elizabeth founded, 1820.

The first house of the new town began to rise from the ground on 6th June 1820, only a week or two after the pioneer company of immigrants had pitched its first tent on the shores of the bay; and the next few months were employed in the inevitable work of settling the locations of the various parties—a task that was not accomplished without several disputes, an ominous sign for the future—and the building of houses and huts along the coast and in the interior.

The Colonists build their Homes.

These first dwellings, which superseded the tents that had been in use since landing in South Africa, were merely slight frames of wood, hastily felled and thatched with reeds down to the ground. The floors were trodden earth, prepared after the manner which had been in vogue among the Dutch; the windows were nothing but a hole, covered at night and in bad weather with a cloth or sack or whatever offered to resist the passage of the air; and they had no chimney. A small circular shed of clay was erected outside the hut, where the

[1] The ubiquitous Harris once more.

cooking required by the family was done on wood fires; on cold days a pan of the embers from these fires would be brought into the dwelling-house for warmth. If plain and unattractive, the huts were said to be fairly comfortable; but any settler who had the good fortune to prosper soon made himself more commodious quarters, and degraded his original home to the service of a granary or cattle-shed.

Few of the immigrants had brought out furniture with them, and in most cases it had to be fashioned by men who were not carpenters by trade, and whose tools were as primitive as their fingers were unpractised at joinery. The making of a rough table, a shaky chair, and a plank bed that only the tired and healthy man could sleep on was the extreme limit of the ordinary settler's powers.

Seed was sown by the colonists, some of it brought from home, some purchased on the spot, or given, together with slips, cuttings, and graftings of fruit-trees, by kindly folk within the colony. After much anxious watching it was discovered that most of the English seeds had failed in the alien soil; only the potatoes imported from Europe did well. The local products were more successful; a good crop of vegetables was soon raised, and in many places the orchards that had been planted flourished. And here, beside the rosy apple and the sun-kissed peach which the settler knew at home, were other fruits that cheered his heart: the sight of the pale lemon, the rosy pomegranate, and even the drooping vine growing on his land comforted the farmer with the thought that his first high expectations of the country might not in the end prove extravagant.

And sow their Crops.

But a succession of unlooked-for disasters soon changed the reviving hopes of the people to misery and despair. Not all of them understood that the land on which they had settled was one in which irrigation was necessary; and the combined effects of a drought and a lack of sufficient capital exhausted the resources of the

Their Misfortunes, 1822.

young and inexperienced community within two years of its arrival.

Want and hunger quickly reigned where plenty had been predicted. A pathetic letter from a disillusioned colonist tells something of the horrors of that dreary time. 'My wheat, two months ago the most promising I ever saw in any country,' he wrote,[1] 'is now utterly destroyed by rust. My barley, from the drought and a grub which attacks the blade just under the surface, produced little more than I sowed. My Indian corn, very much injured by the caterpillar; cabbages destroyed by lice; beans scorched with hot winds, carrots run to seed; potatoes good, but a small quantity. Our cows are dry for want of grass; not the least appearance of verdure, nothing but one great wilderness of faded grass.'

Many of the people, indeed, were in pitiful condition; they had had no time to accommodate themselves to the severe conditions, or to accumulate provision against a season of adversity. A relief committee, appointed to administer a charitable fund subscribed in the other districts of Cape Colony, reported that not one person in twenty had money enough to buy shoes. All were short of clothes; some of the children ran about almost naked; and one poor woman was seen, whose dress consisted only of an old tent of rotten canvas.[2]

Their worst necessities were soon relieved; a number of

[1] *Report of the Committee of the Society for the Relief of Distressed Settlers* (1823).

[2] Some rather acrimonious disputes arose out of these troubles. One party of the settlers was accused of being radicals, which to be sure was not a very serious matter, and means little more than that they were discontented, and actually dared to say so. But there was a government squabble as well. Somerset and Donkin quarrelled; a Commission was appointed and reported, and correspondence was issued regarding the charges (*House of Commons Papers*, 21st May 1827); a Bishop published a *Reply to the Report* in 1826; Donkin defended himself in *A Letter on the Government of the Cape* in the following year, attacking Somerset; and a religious fanatic named Parker published *The Jesuits Unmasked*, attacking another official. When Jesuits are brought on the controversial field the wise man beats a hasty retreat.

the settlers, however, losing heart at their misfortunes, sold their small effects for what they would fetch—it must have been little enough at a time of general distress—and departed to pursue the compulsory gamble with fortune elsewhere. But those more courageous ones who stayed gradually recovered the ground they had lost. The seasons were henceforth more kindly, the soil more fruitful, the conditions of successful agriculture better understood; the farmers prospered on the land, trade flourished in the capital; a monthly fair was held at Grahamstown, at which the Kafirs bartered their ivory and elephants' teeth for European cloths and beads; and Bathurst grew into a pretty village, with houses built in the English style, surrounded by gardens stretching over its twin undulating hills.[1]

And Recovery, 1823-34.

For ten years and more good fortune continued unabated. Then the storm broke. But none had foreseen its coming; and when it came none foresaw its end.

On the first day of December 1834, the abolition of slavery in the British Empire was celebrated throughout South Africa. It was an occasion of general rejoicing and thanksgiving; hymns of praise were sung in the churches, and sermons preached on the glorious prospects of a free and enlightened community, in which white man and black should live and work together, both worshipping the same God, serving the same sovereign, and striving for the same ends.

The Kafir War, 1834-5.

Such was the universal dream of the idealist, the philanthropist, and the friend of liberty in that memorable year,[2] the hope alike of Christian England and her far dominions. And the eastern province of Cape Colony took its due share in these thanksgivings; there were idealists even in the little frontier settlement of Grahamstown, where the vanishment

[1] *Scenes and Occurrences in Albany*, 1828.

[2] For the abolition of slavery in the British dominions other than South Africa, see vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. iii.

of slavery was celebrated with enthusiasm, and the coming of a new age foretold with joy. In the parish church of St. George in that town the sermon was founded on the magnificent prophecy of the Hebrew seer, 'Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders.'[1] Within a month that church had seen a grim commentary on text and sermon.

As if to show the vanity of all human aspirations that church was used before the waning year was out as a fortress and a magazine of arms, and as a place of refuge for English women and children of the colony in a war of black against white.

A few days after the sermon of peace and goodwill had been delivered, strange rumours of strife and coming war began to circulate—rumours in direct opposition to the prevailing sentiment, as a storm comes up against the breeze. It was said that the Kafirs were in a state of dangerous excitement, that they spoke of outrages having been committed by the colonists along the frontier, and that they threatened to retaliate by sweeping the colony of its white men.

Few believed the rumour. In South Africa, as in New Zealand,[2] the early British settlers, who knew little of the country, disregarded the evidence of old travellers and experienced traders as to the character of the aborigines. The settlers had been assured by the missionaries who preceded them into the wilderness that the Kafir was not the sanguinary, vindictive, and ferocious savage of the books, but an interesting and manly innocent who was only too ready to appreciate the benefits of civilisation and the blessings of Christianity[3]; and they believed the missionaries' assurances.

[1] Isaiah lx. 18.

[2] Vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. iii.

[3] I have quoted this excellent and edifying sentence almost verbatim from *Scenes and Occurrences in Albany*, 1828—six years before the war. There are many similar remarks in the profuse missionary literature of the time.

But the missionaries were not the only Britons who believed in the

The colonists knew little of the past; many did not realise that they were living in territory from which the Kafirs had been driven out by force only a year or two before the settlers of 1820 had emigrated from England. Some of them had indeed seen from time to time the burnt and blackened ruins of old houses in the interior, a few perhaps realised that those gaunt walls must once have been human habitations, offshoots from old Dutch homes at Uitenhage; but none seem to have realised that these were evidences of past irruptions by the Kafirs, or that they might themselves be in danger of the same fate, should any cause impassionate the unstable and warlike native on their borders.

Few therefore believed the rumours. But as the days passed and Christmastide drew near more definite news came in to Grahamstown from the out-country. The accounts of a rising on the frontier were confirmed by men who had been among the Kafirs. It was stated that the cattle of one of the chiefs had been carried off by a young officer at Fort Beaufort, and that the chief and his fighting men had sworn vengeance. And it was said further that a Kafir had exclaimed to a colonist, 'The white men pretend to believe in peace with us, and you tell us they are friendly; but look! they murder our chiefs and our people. We can reckon forty-four of our men murdered in time of peace.'

There was some truth in these rumours. There had certainly been collisions between the white man and the native, and in those collisions the native was not always to blame. If the Kafir was the first to attack, the white man took his vengeance when and where he could, often careless of the identity of the offender and the sufferer. And the cattle

innocence of the Kafirs; Major Charters, in Chase's *Natal*, states that 'the frontier Kafirs were not always thieves; they were taught by their rather more civilized neighbours.' A very doubtful proposition; cattle-raiding was known in Africa centuries before the Europeans set foot there. Perhaps Charters was misled by Rousseau's absurd doctrine of savage innocence.

which the Kafir claimed were said to be cattle he had himself stolen from the whites. It was certain that he had stolen cattle; it was not certain that the cattle which the Europeans claimed were those which had been stolen, or even that they had been stolen at all.

Still few of the whites believed that there was any danger. But now men began to come into Grahamstown, whose scattered solitary homes had been attacked and fired; and worse, there were white women from the countryside whose menfolk had been waylaid and killed, widows bereft at once of husband and home.

Faced with the accounts of these refugees, Grahamstown at length believed in the reality of danger. The news came through that the whole frontier had been attacked, and the alarm spread that the Kafirs had sworn to destroy the city in the night. And it was now discovered that the place was almost defenceless, and a momentary panic ensued.

Two days before Christmas, and three weeks after it had been foretold that violence should cease from the earth, the parish church in which those words had been uttered was being used for a very different purpose than the celebration of an undying peace. The women and children of the town, and the widows and orphans from the countryside, had flocked within its walls; but not to worship the God of love, whose sanctuary it was, but to take refuge from a cruel, barbarous enemy that recognised no sanctuary and worshipped no Christian God. Some remembered with a shudder that the bloody, mutilated corpses of their men lay out upon the veldt, with the staring eyes of violent death upturned for vengeance towards the sky; some trembled lest their turn too should come, if the poor defences of an improvised civilian force should be overborne. . . .

And elsewhere in that church were strange doings. A council of war was being held by the pulpit which should have echoed with the Christmas message of peace and goodwill;

the chancel was piled high with old muskets and rusty bayonets, the hasty collection of an unprepared defence; arms and ammunition were being distributed before the holy altar where men had prayed.[1]

An urgent message had been sent along the coast for reinforcements from the Cape; but it was certain that many anxious days must pass before troops could arrive and the defence be organised. And meanwhile Bathurst had been almost deserted by its inhabitants, and six hundred refugees from that district had entered Grahamstown.

Fortunately the Governor of Cape Colony at that time, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, was a man of action, a soldier of the Peninsular War, and one whom experience had therefore taught to waste no time in an emergency. Fortunately, too, he had by his side a man of the same breed as himself, Colonel Harry Smith, who had led the storm of Badajoz and earned promotion in a dozen such desperate fights. Twenty years and more had passed since those days; but Harry Smith had lost none of the vigour of youth since he had come to South Africa.[2] Ordered to sail for Algoa in a warship, he preferred to ride the whole distance across veldt and desert—six hundred miles in high summer—to save time; and save time he did on that tremendous ride. Hardly for a minute was he out of the saddle, and going all the time at a gallop of fourteen miles to the hour. The first day he covered ninety miles, the second over seventy, a hundred the third, in a country without roads or at best with bad roads; the fifth day he rode into Uitenhage, the sixth he was in Grahamstown—as fresh as when he left Cape Town.

[1] *Abstract of Proceedings of the Board of Relief for the Destitute . . . with a view to Mitigate the Sufferings of the Frontier Inhabitants occasioned by the Irruption of the Cafir Tribes*, 1834-5; a valuable piece of contemporary evidence. Theal's *Kafir War of* 1835 is a reprint of many documents of the period. Like every other writer, Theal overlooks the forementioned pamphlet, and misses the dramatic contrast of the war.

[2] Smith has written his *Autobiography*—an admirable piece of work, as full of spirit as the man himself.

He found there some hundreds of soldiers assembled from the outskirts of the district and awaiting his lead, together with civilians bearing arms, but not all knowing how to use them,[1] and there was news of further reinforcements to come. The little town was barricaded against attack, but no idea of an advance against the Kafirs had entered the heads of the amateur garrison.

Mere defence was useless, and would never recover the country the Kafirs had overrun, or deliver the colonists from further depredations; but Smith organised an offensive move, and under D'Urban—who had arrived at the seat of war soon after his lieutenant—he carried it out. Quick marches were made into the heart of the Kafir country; the great chief Hintza, who was responsible for the war, saw his kraal burnt by the whites before his eyes; thousands of the cattle that had been raided from the colonists were recovered, and Hintza himself was taken. The savage tried to escape by a feint, but Smith pursued him alone almost to the enemy's encampment; and after a chase that recalled the personal conflicts of mediæval warfare in Europe, Hintza was shot dead.[2]

The war died down with the death of Hintza, and apparent security along the frontier was restored; but much damage had been done. It was calculated that 456 farm-houses had been burnt by the Kafirs, 350 more had been pillaged or gutted, 5715 horses and over a quarter of a million head of sheep and cattle had been stolen. Some of these could be restored, but there were losses which could not

End of the War, 1835.

[1] The civilians, however, Boer and Briton alike, proved themselves good material—'patient, industrious, and orderly people.'—D'Urban, *Despatch to Colonial Secretary*, 29th July 1837.

[2] A Court of Enquiry was held in August-September 1836 to determine the circumstances of Hintza's death. It was found that Hintza met his death in trying to escape, that Smith fired without effect, and then threw his pistol at the chief; he was fired at three times by George Southey (afterwards Sir George) and the last shot was fatal.

A copy of the evidence, printed at Cape Town in 1837, is in the British Museum, with a MS. appendix.

be restored. The land, wrote Harry Smith to the Governor at the Cape, 'was filled with the lamentations of the widow and the fatherless'; and for these poor stricken souls was neither redress nor relief.

But the full consequences of the Kafir irruption into the eastern province and the punitive campaign were yet to reveal themselves in unexpected and unwelcome fashion. For some time, however, those evil consequences remained unknown to the settlers, who could not conceive that a British Government would undo the work done by its own colonists in their own defence, support the Kafirs against its own people and give back to the natives the conquered territories. Yet such was the decision of the British Colonial Secretary two years later.[1]

Lands restored to Kafirs.

Once more the settlement took up its work when the peril of war was past; the farmer rebuilt his ruined home, planted and stocked his fields afresh; and this time he took care that he was not unarmed against the chances of future attack. Like the Dutchmen before them, the British colonists had learnt their lesson, the inevitable stern lesson that the governing minority must always learn in a savage land or perish; the lesson that rule in the last resort rests upon force, and that although benevolent justice may be the best method, there are moments in frontier life when the gun is the only argument.[2] After this

Peaceful Advance resumed. 1836-42.

[1] For Glenelg's decision and official despatch on this matter, see the previous chapter.

[2] The English colonists had learnt this lesson very quickly in America (vol. i. bk. i. ch. vi.). But Englishmen are quick to unlearn.

The remainder of Kafir frontier politics may be briefly summarised. In 1846 another war, similar in origin and character to that of 1835, broke out; the territories which Glenelg had restored to the Kafirs in 1837 were re-annexed to the Cape in 1847. In that war the Kafirs were so clearly the aggressors that even missionary Philip had to support the European cause.

Another frontier war disturbed the years 1850-3; but before the last war of 1877 an extraordinary incident occurred. In 1856 a Kafir prophetess persuaded the Amexosa tribe to destroy their grain and cattle,

Kafir War every British settler was armed in self-defence, knowing full well that the day might come without warning when his weapons would be the only thing between himself and death, his wife and outrage, his children and torture.

The menacing black cloud was not forgotten, but for the time at least the horizon had cleared; within a few years the scene of war had recovered all, and more than all it had lost. The land was everywhere rising in value; its advance led naturally to the growth of the towns. By 1842 Grahamstown was a place of seven hundred houses and a population of five thousand: at once the emporium and the fortress of the district, it could claim that its trade justified the local joint-stock bank and assurance society that had been recently founded. And it could boast its library, and its two weekly newspapers as evidences of the mental alertness of its people, its gaol as a sign of their other activities, its inns in proof of their good fellowship; and if it so chose, it could claim that the local chapels which had already been built in opposition to the episcopal church testified to the fact that its citizens were as prone to religious differences as other Christians elsewhere.[1]

Bathurst likewise had an inn, a church and a chapel for spirituous and spiritual refreshment; Port Elizabeth had become the recognised centre of the sea-borne trade, and a place of some importance and ambition.

And meanwhile a new generation was growing up, the first generation of British South Africans—the children of the first settlers, the fathers of the South African nation of the future.

promising them that if they did so they would be granted great victories and loot in the invasion of Cape Colony in the following year. The deluded people obeyed, but instead of a great victory thousands died of starvation, and it was twenty years before the Kafirs recovered the loss. It was suggested that the delusion of the prophetess was incited by the Europeans, but no proof of this was forthcoming. Had the prophecy fulfilled itself, and the famished natives thrown themselves across the European frontier, the consequences might have been extremely serious for Cape Colony.

[1] See *The Eastern Province in* 1842, a contemporary pamphlet.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOUNDING OF NATAL: 1823-56[1]

THREE years after the large British settlement had been founded at Algoa Bay in 1820, a young Englishman left Cape Town to visit a spot some four hundred miles further along the South African coast to the eastward than Port Elizabeth. His name was Lieutenant Farewell, and he was of that adventurous type which prefers the unknown chances of the wilds to the more regular career of civilisation. Others of like mettle were attracted to his side, and on his second journey to the same place a twelvemonth later, he was accompanied or followed by a few associates—Lieutenant King, Nathaniel Isaacs, Henry Fynn, and one or two more—who were destined to play a considerable part in this enterprise. Their purpose was not colonisation, but trade; and Farewell had taken care to provide himself with certain credentials from the Governor of Cape Colony to assist him in his object. But those credentials amounted to little more than a permission for Farewell to go about his business in a country with which Britain had no connection, and an implied warning that his success or failure was entirely his own concern.[2]

Some British Adventurers.

The place to which Farewell was bound had long been written on the maps as Port Natal; the country from which the port took its name was already known by repute to

[1] Bird's *Annals of Natal* is a complete record of all notices dealing with the colony, and a monument of diligent research. Holden's *History* is only less valuable. Gibson's *Story of the Zulus* is authoritative; Gardiner's *Zoolu Country* (1836) is a valuable contemporary record; Isaacs, *Travels in Eastern Africa* (1836) is a detailed account by one of the early traders in Natal of the remarkable adventures of the Farewell-Fynn party; it deserves to be regarded as a classic of pioneering, but is too little known outside South Africa.

[2] The Governor stated (*Papers relative to Condition and Treatment of Native Inhabitants*, 1835) that Farewell was satisfied with this evasive answer. The Governor certainly was.

captains and travellers engaged in the East India trade. It had first been seen by Europeans over three centuries before; for when the great Portuguese mariner, Vasco da Gama, sailed beyond the Cape on his pioneer voyage to the Indies, he had chanced to notice this land that lay on the upward bend of Africa towards the east, over against the tropics and the vast ocean which was now spread out before him. The voyage was not delayed, and the discoverer set not foot upon its shores; but in memory of the place and the day—it was the morning of Christmas, 1497—he gave it the auspicious name of Terra de Natal. From that time until the visit of Lieutenant Farewell in 1823, the country was neglected by Europeans; but the name bestowed in passing had never been forgotten. Natal it was to Vasco da Gama; Natal it has remained to this day.

At Port Natal, 1824.

None came thither from foreign lands save by some calamitous mischance of the seas, some fearful tempest of the Indian Ocean, which would drive the trader homeward-bound for Lisbon or London with a cargo of spices and drugs and rich oriental fabrics, sheer upon those unfrequented shores. Among such involuntary visitors are remembered the crew of the English vessel *Johanna*, wrecked about the year 1683 off Natal; part of the cargo was salved by the natives, and the refugees were kindly treated by their rescuers.[1] Another was a Dutch East Indiaman driven on the coast some four years later. Some of her people set out to tramp the long perilous journey to Cape Town across an unknown country; others who made their escape by boat found two Englishmen from the *Johanna* still in the land; and to their surprise they discovered later an old Portuguese sailor who had been shipwrecked in Natal full forty years before, and who, abandoning at last all hope of rescue or escape, had made his home among the natives. He was married to a woman of

Earlier European Visitors.

[1] Hamilton's *East Indies*.

the country, who had borne him many children; 'he had been circumcised,' reported the disapproving Dutch, 'and spoke only the African language, having forgotten everything, his God included.'[1] Yet perhaps at times the lonely exile thought on boyhood scenes and old loves far away. . . .

These unhappy mariners reported well of the fertility of the country; and the great Dutch Governor at the Cape, the elder Van der Stel, intent as usual on the expansion of his territories, informed his superiors in Holland that he had effected the purchase of Port Natal.[2] A payment of beads to the value of some £50 was made to a native chief in token of exchange; but the chief was never called on to fulfil his bargain. Van der Stel had looked too far ahead, and for another century again the only strangers on that coast were travellers in distress.

The Natives of Natal.

These first Europeans in Natal reported the aborigines to be a wild but kindly people grouped together in a number of communities under various chiefs. They were obedient to the authority of their rulers, whose barbaric sway appears to have been usually mild and easy; they had no arts, and there were indications that they had not long abandoned a nomadic life. They lived in rude huts made of branches, roofed with a thatch like that which covers the haystacks in Holland; they possessed pots and pans for cooking, and they understood the cultivation of the soil—which was the occupation of the women—and the herding and milking of cows, the peculiar engagement of the men. They baked their bread and brewed a kind of bitter beer; their manners, if primitive, were inoffensive, and they were compassionate and hospitable towards strangers in distress. And while they were friendly and open in their bearing, they were strongly built and not ignorant of the use of weapons.

Such was the first description given of the tribes that were subsequently welded into the great Zulu nation of warriors.

[1] Despatch of Van der Stel, 1689. [2] *Ibid.*, 1690.

Their real weakness was one common to many barbarians, the lack of a united political organisation; but since they had little fear of outside enemies or invasion, they needed no more efficient method of control.

Dingiswayo founds the Zulu Nation.

But some years before the arrival of the English traders in 1824 a revolution had occurred among the Zulu tribes. There had been born among them a child whose later name of Dingiswayo—*The Troubled One*—fitly described his restless active mind. He was suspected, probably not without cause, of a wish to usurp the authority of one of the chiefs. The punishment for so grave a treason against authority in almost every community is death; the natives of Natal were no exception. But Dingiswayo fled from justice, and in his wanderings among strange people he saw strange things, the memory of which fermented long in the thoughts of the exiled but still ambitious barbarian. He reached in time the European settlements of South Africa, and there was revealed to his astonished gaze the sight of soldiers drilling with automatic discipline at the word of command. He saw the secret of their strength, and quickly realised its import for himself. And when at length he returned to his own people, he was accompanied by a white man, a horse, and a gun; the compatriots of Dingiswayo, awed by these portents of power, submitted to his rule, and henceforth he devoted himself to drilling the tribes into regiments. Few resisted, and none successfully resisted, the conqueror who had found the secret of discipline and organisation; and the late exile was soon acknowledged the paramount chief of the natives of Natal.

After many years of triumphal war, Dingiswayo was captured by a rival chief. There are but two moves in the game of barbaric battle, life and death; and death was Dingiswayo's portion.[1]

[1] It is believed to have taken place in 1818; but certainty is impossible.

But the lessons he had taught were not forgotten. Another chieftain's star was rising; and the ambition and authority of his son Tshaka [1] soon excelled that of Dingiswayo as much as Dingiswayo had excelled his forgotten predecessors.

Tshaka's discipline was stern and harsh. He saw that the forward rush of his warriors was slowed by the weight of their numerous assegais,[2] and orders were given that each man was in future to carry no more than one weapon into battle. When the fight was over, each survivor was commanded to produce his assegai; if he failed to do so he was put to death for cowardice. The system was always cruel, and often unjust; but it was effective. Few men in Tshaka's armies failed to show bravery when death was the instant penalty.

Shortly after the English adventurers arrived in Natal, an attempt was made by a native malcontent to assassinate the Zulu king. It failed, and his wound was cured by Farewell and Fynn, who in return received a free permission to trade in the Zulu country. Their traffic, which was mainly in ivory, was mutually profitable; for ivory was a royal monopoly under Tshaka, and the English dealers found a never-failing demand at good prices in Europe.

The Zulus under Dingana.

But a second attempt was made by his subjects to murder Tshaka in 1828. It succeeded; and one of the conspirators obtained the reward of blood. The reign of Tshaka had been a reign of war; Dingana, his assassin and his heir, declared himself a man of peace. The first professions of new monarchs, however, are

[1] Very often spelt Chako in the old accounts, as Dingana is spelt Dingaan, and indeed, in many other ways by various writers.

It may be added that the paternity of Tshaka, like that of many another great man, is uncertain. Isaacs does not allow him to be the son of Dingiswayo. I have given legitimacy the benefit of the doubt.

I have read somewhere that a shipwrecked European sailor on the coast of Natal told Tshaka of the victories of Napoleon, and that his recital fired the savage king with the love of war. It may be so.

[2] The assegai was a short stabbing spear, which could either be thrown in a concerted attack, or used with deadly effect at close quarters.

The word is said by Pettmann (*Afrikanderisms*) to derive from a Portuguese form of an Arab word which the natives had adopted.

not always scrupulously observed; and the twelve years of Dingana's reign were among the most sanguinary that Natal had ever known. His cruelty was condemned as excessive even by those who remembered the savage outbursts of Dingiswayo and Tshaka; a casual visitor to his court observed with horror the mutilated bodies of eleven of Dingana's wives, and learnt that they had been put to death because they chanced to annoy their brutal master; and throughout Natal —which had been nearly depopulated by the wars of Dingana's predecessors—the terrified remainder of the aboriginal tribes took refuge in the forests from the dreadful Zulu warriors and their king.[1]

The European Invasion of Zululand.

But the fall of the Zulu empire was at hand. For centuries Natal had been neglected by the outer world; within the space of a few years it was now invaded from three different directions by three different types of Europeans on three different errands.

A Christian missionary from England, one of those heroic souls who are ready to brave danger and insult and death in the service of their Divine Master, took up his abode at the court of Dingana, and endeavoured without success to convert that savage monarch to the religion of love and peace. The teaching and the example of the evangelist were both in vain; he and his companions were accused of witchcraft, and they were often in instant peril from the brutalities which they deplored.

The Boers break the Zulu power.

But these were the least effective of the European invaders of Natal. In the north a large body of the Cape Dutch, the forerunners of the Great Trek which is one of the main dividing lines in South African history,[2] crossed the Drakensberg into Dingana's country in 1837. Their arrival aroused the enmity of the

[1] Both the wives and the refugees are vouched for in *Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Natives* (House of Commons Papers, 1835).

[2] For the detailed history of the Great Trek and the Boer settlement of Natal, see the next chapter.

Zulu king, a racial war followed, and much blood was shed on either side; but the Boer immigrants in time broke the power of Dingana and his warriors. The city of Pieter Maritzburg which they founded in the interior of Natal commemorates in its name the two chief pioneers of their successful immigration, Piet Retief and Gerrit Maritz; and if the independence which they sought was not to be, the site of the city was so well chosen that it remains to this day the capital of Natal.

In 1838 the Dutch settlement at Pieter Maritzburg contained no more than six huts and a number of wagons and tents; its British competitor on the coast, the city of Durban—which had been founded on 23rd July 1835, and named from the Governor of Cape Colony—could boast of little more. Each settlement was the centre of a petty independent community, owning allegiance to no European state, and holding its land by a precarious title from the native chiefs; each wished for protection from its motherland in Europe, the one from Holland, the other from England.

The British Traders on the Coast.

The little British colony at Durban, which was not recognised by the British Government, was the direct consequence of the trading venture of Lieutenant King twelve years before. He and his companions had prospered in their wild venture among the Zulus; they had driven a profitable trade with Tshaka and Dingana and other native chiefs in the interior; they had quarrelled at times among themselves, had often been in peril from the savages,[1] and some had lost their lives

[1] Once they were in serious danger because their Hottentot servants ravished the wife of a chief. The lady protested, her husband cursed, the servants fled; but the intrepid and diplomatic Briton settled the matter with a few tactful words.

At another time a great difficulty presented itself. Tshaka had been assured that the white man had invented a hair oil which would cure baldness; and he insisted on a bottle being procured. According to Isaacs, who is responsible for the story, none was obtainable, and the infuriated monarch was with difficulty prevailed upon to control his emotions and to bide his time.

from sickness or by massacre. One had tramped to Delagoa Bay and back in search of trade; others had been wrecked and built themselves a boat; and all were convinced that the country which they had adopted was destined for British rule.

The Anglo-Zulu Senate.

So far as they could, they had attempted to forestall destiny by ruling it themselves. A dozen men at most, they had secured a cession of land from the Zulu king at Port Natal; there they had built themselves huts—mere windowless wattle barns, with reed doors and thatched roofs [1]—and a fort which was called, from one of the members of the party, Fort Farewell. Those of the natives who dwelt within their little territory they governed as best they might, passing laws of their own devising, and even in time establishing a formal constitution, with a senate of twelve native members and political debates on the local questions of the day. That Anglo-Zulu Senate is perhaps the most amazing example that history records of British faith in British institutions.

Natal annexed by Britain, 1845.

They were a cheery party, these English pioneers in Natal; and they never relaxed their hold. For years the British Government ignored them and the Cape Government despised them; and when in 1845 the whole country they had occupied and the interior were at length annexed by the imperial authorities as a district of the Cape of Good Hope, it was clearly understood that that step had been taken more because the Boers in the interior had proclaimed their independence than because the British on the coast had professed their loyalty.[2]

Whatever the reasons for annexation, however, the fact of

[1] These huts, according to one traveller, often stank abominably. According to another, a missionary, they were the scenes of profligacy and drunkenness (Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria*). But both the stinks and the orgies were denied by the traders in Natal, and in any case the missionary only spoke from hearsay. Nevertheless, I do not wholly disbelieve him.

[2] For details of the annexation, see bk. xxiv. ch. i.

annexation remained: and Natal henceforth advanced slowly but fairly steadily as a British colony. Vines and wheat were both grown in the Maritzburg district, where the only drawback to existence was the occasional visit of a swarm of destructive locusts;[1] along the moist, warm coast plantations for semi-tropical produce were soon laid out, as Englishmen with capital were attracted by the prospects of success.

Advance of the Colony.

Between Cape Colony and Natal, however, was little communication and less sympathy, and eleven years after the latter had been attached to the Government at Cape Town it was again separated, becoming a Crown Colony under direct imperial control. Small as its population was, Natal had its own commercial and agricultural interests, which often conflicted with those of the Cape, and it was beginning to attain an individuality of its own; in every such community is always seen a move towards independence, and for the next fifty years Natal maintained its position as a separate colony, rejecting any proposals for reunion that were brought before it with an emphasis that bespoke the popular spirit of the place.[2]

Separated from Cape Colony, 1856.

At the time when the separation of Natal from its greater neighbour was accomplished, the infant city of Durban, with its harbour Port Natal, was still a small and insignificant place which hardly merited the name of town. It contained a few houses, a couple of passable inns—which were more like canteens than hotels—and a public library; and one colonist declared that when he first visited the town in the year 1850 he had crossed the market-place without realising its existence or its purpose.[3] The

Durban in 1856.

[1] Christopher's *Natal*.

[2] For such proposals, see bk. xxvi. ch. i.; for the reasons that ultimately overcame the objections of Natal to reunion, ch. iv. of that book.

[3] See Barter, *Six Months in Natal* (1853); an article in the *Cape Monthly* (1876); Henderson's *Durban: Fifty Years' Municipal History*; and Ingram's *Story of a South African Seaport*, and *Story of a South African City*.

trade and population nevertheless grew steadily with the advance of Natal, since the whole sea-borne trade of the colony was necessarily in the hands of the merchants of Durban, its one port; by 1876 the place was quietly prosperous, with many comfortable houses, and every house surrounded by a garden full of fruit and glorious flowers. Life was pleasant, and the city was not unhealthy; its condition in this respect, indeed, was steadily improving with better sanitation and a purer water supply. The only troubles of the seaport, in fact, were the ticks and mosquitoes which swarmed everywhere; but even these were a source of more annoyance to the casual stranger than to the regular inhabitant, accustomed and perhaps almost reconciled to the pests.

Pieter Maritzburg.

Durban was the centre for the British in Natal, Pieter Maritzburg, or Maritzburg, as it was often called for short, was the centre for the Dutch; and in the inevitable rivalry between the two the latter city had the advantage of being the capital to set off against the disadvantage of being inland. Its founders, who realised by bitter experience the necessity of a defensible position against native attack, had placed their town on a hillock which was almost surrounded by the Little Bush River; and with a foresight not always shown by the builders of cities, they had placed it on a slope to facilitate drainage. The streets were laid out regularly and at right angles; the houses were simple whitewashed buildings, plain, unpretending, and pleasing in appearance. Each house was surrounded, after the usual Dutch fashion, with a verandah and a garden, in which roses and the graceful weeping willow-tree were conspicuous; and the air of tranquil repose, which seems inseparable from Dutch centres in South Africa, enveloped the little town, whose pleasant hours were seldom troubled save by the occasional alarm of a native rising.[1]

[1] One writer remarks that Maritzburg was full of social cliques. But what little town is not?

Harrismith, named after the general—whose Spanish wife also is commemorated in Ladysmith—was the only other place considered worth mention in the colony or along its borders in 1850; but Harrismith owed such celebrity as it had to its name rather than its size. In those early days, in fact, its whole inventory was no more than one stone building, one wall, and one watercourse.[1]

Northwards from Natal along the Indian Ocean lay the old possessions of the Portuguese, in Mozambique and Sofala, now stagnant and decaying from their former power. Both southern and northern limits of this Latin territory were doubtful and obscure; the old arrogant claim to the whole of Africa had perforce been long abandoned, but at Mozambique were still Portuguese soldiers and officials; inland along the great Zambesi River were Portuguese settlements or their remains, decaying churches and forgotten trading stations,[2] and a few, a very few, effective occupants on Portugal's behalf. The coast was little known, the interior of this country was hardly known at all; and in 1822 the British Government, anxious for some knowledge of the place, despatched an expedition to chart the shores of eastern Africa.

The British Claim to Delagoa Bay, 1823.

Captain Owen was chosen for the work, and he performed his task with the usual accurate efficiency of a British naval officer. The whole of the following year was given to the charting of the eastern coasts of Africa, and his instructions were afterwards extended to Madagascar and the lesser islands of the Indian Ocean. Many strange adventures were encountered,[3] but the geographical mission had an unexpected

[1] By 1900, however, Harrismith could boast a race-course and a golf-links, and it struck a traveller at that time as a little Scots community (Nevinson's *Ladysmith*).

[2] See bk. xxiv. chs. ii. and vi.

[3] It is 'strange,' remarks the innocent compiler of Owen's *Voyages* (1833) 'how soon travellers became reconciled to the lack of (female) virtue.' Perhaps not so very strange, seeing that they were sailors.

This anxious moralist remarked, however, that many of the ladies

sequel. A native chief of the Delagoa Bay country, one Mazeta, declared himself desirous of British rule, and on 8th March 1823 a formal treaty was drawn up by which his possessions were declared a protectorate of England; a little later a second chief, Makasuni, professed the same desire. He had in fact already sent a message to the British at Bombay to that effect, and when no answer was returned, he opened out his mind to Owen, who granted his request with some demur. A second treaty was now drawn up, dated 23rd August 1823, between the British and Makasane, called king of Maputa, and the Portuguese authorities at Mozambique were at once acquainted of the facts by Captain Owen.

He had little reason to anticipate a protest, for although he knew from Makasane that the Portuguese had represented the English as 'a miserable people, who only lived in ships by robbing countries too weak to oppose them,' he had been told by the Mozambique officials that they had no authority over Delagoa Bay or its inhabitants, and that seemed in fact the case. The miserable and unhealthy settlement of Lourenço Marques,[1] named from an old Portuguese explorer, was practically abandoned and deserted; there were no signs of Portuguese control or suzerainty, and of effective occupation none.

Nevertheless the Portuguese protested strongly against these treaties as an invasion of their rights, and now declared that the native chiefs were under their control. The British

on this coast 'were remarkable for their constancy, except those of high rank, who, *as in other countries*, claimed a greater licence.' The italics are mine; but not the innuendo.

In Madagascar the British sailors were so popular that hundreds of the women would have come on board when the vessel sailed. But duty triumphed over love.

[1] Lourenço Marques had been founded in the seventeenth century, and abandoned shortly afterwards on account of its unhealthiness. The Dutch settled there in 1721, and abandoned the place for the same reason as the Portuguese. In 1776 an Austrian expedition under command of an Englishman erected a fort in the bay, but this also failed,

Government did nothing to enforce its claim, and the whole question lapsed indefinitely.

Some forty years went by; and in 1861 the British claim to the Elephant and Inyack Islands was suddenly revived. A British cruiser, the *Narcissus*, hoisted the Union Jack, but Portugal again protested, and the matter lapsed once more for several years. In 1870 the British Government might have purchased the whole of Delagoa Bay for a small consideration, the Portuguese Government at Lisbon being then hard pressed for money; but the Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, missed his opportunity. He preferred to rely on arbitration as to the old British claim; the matter was referred to the French President, MacMahon, and in 1875 he gave his decision wholly in favour of Portugal.

A grave mistake had been committed. The British claim was obviously a poor one, since it had never been enforced, and the Portuguese consistently opposed it; a fair bargain would have settled the matter once for all. But the opportunity had passed; and although the Portuguese now gave the British the first option of purchasing the whole of Delagoa Bay should they wish to sell at any time,[1] the occasion did not again arise.

At the close of the nineteenth century, indeed, the greatest English imperialist in South Africa offered to buy the territory himself from the Portuguese, in view of the expansion of British sovereignty over the interior; but while the Portuguese Government was willing and even anxious to part with its old possessions in exchange for cash, foreign pressure and

[1] Treaty of 17th June 1875; extended in 1891 to the whole Portuguese coast.

Details of these treaties and the whole controversy will be found in the official Blue Book (C. 1361) *Delagoa Bay: Correspondence Respecting the Claims of Her Majesty's Government*, 1875; Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*; Jessett, *The Key to South Africa*. Owen's *Voyages* are essential, and Maugham, *Portuguese East Africa*, gives a general account of the country, but his history is rather shaky.

the fear of popular resentment in Lisbon forbade the bargain.[1] Even Cecil Rhodes could not repair the opportunity which Kimberley had missed, and south-eastern Africa, like Panama and Java, the Congo and Hawaii, took its place as one of the lost opportunities of the British Empire.

[1] See Michell's *Life of Cecil Rhodes*. The price offered by Rhodes in 1893 is said by Le Sueur, his private secretary, to have been £1,300,000.

Book XXIV

TOWARDS THE NORTH: 1833-1900

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT TREK: 1833-52[1]

Around and along the shores of southern Africa the tide of British colonisation had swept steadily eastwards through Port Elizabeth and Durban during the thirty years after the conquest at Table Bay. But active as they were beside the seaboard, few settlers of English blood had yet appeared in the interior of Cape Colony. There solitary old Dutch homesteads still slumbered undisturbed in the summer sunshine on the veldt; the Dutch-colonial manners inherited from the past were still the fashion of the present, untouched by intrusive strangers of another tongue. An occasional hunter or trader of English speech came and went, was kindly entertained, and told his news of politics and the outside world; but these were rare and transient visitors, not unwelcome indeed, but men whose stay left the slow stream of local life still running in the same even channel through the same placid country to the same peaceful end.

[1] The materials for this chapter are in many scattered sources. A fair statement of the Boer grievances is in Cloete, *Five Lectures on the Emigration of the Dutch Farmers* (1856), an excellent study; F. Lion Cachet, *De Worstelstrijd der Transvalers* (1882, Amsterdam), is fuller but not more valuable. A *Journal of a Voortrekker* appears in the *Cape Monthly* of 1876. Bird's *Annals of Natal* and Gibson's *Story of the Zulus* are again useful; also the *Memoirs of Paul Kruger*. Voigt, *Fifty Years of the History of the Republic in South Africa* (1899), is extremely anti-British, but contains much information, although, like most partisan studies, it also suppresses a great deal. But it was written at a time when feeling was high. Hofstede, *Geschiedenis van den Oranje Vrijstaat*.

Nor was there any evident reason why a change should come. Emigration from Britain was regular and unceasing; but with the wide spaces of Canada and Australia waiting to be filled there was no popular movement in favour of colonising South Africa.[1] And the Imperial Government, after its one settlement at Algoa Bay, seemed to have exhausted its energies in that episode, and to be more desirous of limiting its possessions than enlarging them.[2] The Dutch-colonial farmer, too, was conservative in mind, lethargic in body, and prosperous in estate; his very house, solid and beautiful, built to outlast the passing of many generations, proclaimed his character, and the stability and tenacity of his tenure of the soil. He had no wish to move from his own acres or his own home; the British had clearly no wish to take either from him.

Yet there came a day when the Dutch farmer renounced his home and his possessions, and marched out silently into the wilderness ahead; and his renunciation is one of the great decisive facts in South African history—as decisive as the rejection of the Olive Branch in the Imperial Civil War[3] or the rejection of convict labour by the antipodean colonists[4] in the history of Australia.

From time to time since the first rude settlement at Cape Town in 1651 the Dutch colonists in South Africa had moved up from Table Bay through the valleys and drifts and passes into the interior. Sometimes it was an exploring expedition with no thought save of discovery and return that made its way inland, and came back in due course with good or ill report—or did not come back. Sometimes it was a farmer

[1] A large number of pamphlets was published between 1815 and 1850 advocating emigration to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. There were very few advocating British settlement in South Africa, but I have noticed several references in the ephemeral literature of the times describing the country as the Cinderella of the Empire.

[2] Apart from the instances given in this volume, see vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

[3] Vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv.

[4] Vol. v. bk. xviii. ch. i.

intent on establishing himself on new land; he succeeded or failed, according to his ability or his location, and if he succeeded in building his house and raising his produce, in due time his sons perhaps went further afield and followed his example. Such are the plain and simple annals of an infant colony, a turning of the wilderness into field and farm; it was the natural movement of a growing population that needed room across an invisible frontier.

But in all this there was no renunciation of the fruits of industry already won. The Great Trek which began in the year 1835 was a sheer renunciation for a definite end.

The position of the older white race in South Africa had been in some respects unfortunate since the conquest of Cape Colony by the British. The Dutch as a people are peculiarly tenacious of their own way of life; they are peculiarly jealous of the intrusion of foreigners in their affairs. The many campaigns in which they had defended Holland against the aggression of great European monarchs had shown how ready they were to fight for their liberties;[1] and the characteristics which distinguished the Hollander at home had not changed during two centuries of isolation in South Africa.

Discontent of the Cape Dutch.

Yet Cape Colony was no longer a Dutch possession, nor did it seem probable that it would ever revert to Holland. For Britain had now become the leading maritime, commercial, and colonising power of the world; while the Netherlands had fallen to the third rank among European states. And Britain showed no sign of decadence, but was becoming stronger every year at home and abroad. Holland, on the other hand, only retained her independence by a treaty whose maintenance was guaranteed by her more powerful neighbours.[2]

[1] Vol. i. bk. iii. ch. iii.

[2] Many of the Boers, however, whose knowledge of European politics was more ancestral than actual, still thought that Holland was the most powerful nation in Europe. The mistake caused them to indulge hopes of Dutch intervention in South Africa that were quite unfounded.

The Dutch in South Africa were therefore permanently divorced from their mother country, but they did not take kindly to their new rulers. They could not indeed dislodge the British, who for their part showed no sign whatever of withdrawing from Cape Colony; but equally little could they bear to live with them. It is true that the two people were in many things alike; but yet they could never agree. In those small social matters where sneers and criticism sting more than differences on graver issues the Boers had often been sneered at and criticised for dull ignorant peasants by the British.[1] Those sneers may have been justified, and that criticism may have been deserved; but neither was very wise. And both left irritation and heart-burnings between old Boer and new Briton which did not diminish as the years went on; on the contrary, both were complicated by graver issues in politics and religion, until the tension increased to breaking-point, and a large number of the Boers decided to quit a country that was too evidently no longer their own peculiar possession.

Some of the reasons which led to this decision were clearly set out in a manifesto issued on 22nd January 1837 by Piet Retief, one of the more prominent leaders of the Great Trek movement.[2]

Causes of the Great Trek.

The first cause cited was the prevalence of vagrancy in the colony—a direct consequence of the emancipation of the slaves.

The second complaint referred to the severe losses which the Boers had been forced to suffer by the emancipation of the

[1] The *Letters of Lady Anne Barnard*, as well as other contemporary chronicles mentioned in bk. xxiii. ch. iv., furnish sufficient instances of this. The arrogant Briton habitually treats the foreigner as an inferior; but when in addition he proceeds to preach the equality of white and black—as he did in South Africa—he can hardly be surprised if he becomes unpopular.

[2] The manifesto was published in the *Grahamstown Journal*, 2nd February 1837.

slaves, and the vexatious laws which had been enacted concerning them.[1]

The third paragraph instances the continual system of plunder which the colonists had endured from the Kafirs and other coloured people.

The fourth clause mentions the unjustifiable odium cast upon the Boers by 'interested and dishonest persons under the cloak of religion,'—a reference to the English missionaries in South Africa and their supporters in England.

The manifesto then declares the intentions of the Boers. 'We are resolved,' it proceeds, 'wherever we go, to uphold the first principles of liberty; but while we shall take care that no one shall he held in a state of slavery, it is our determination to maintain such regulations as may suppress crime, and preserve proper relations between master and servant. We solemnly declare that we leave this colony with a desire to enjoy a quieter life than we have hitherto had. We shall not molest any people, nor deprive them of the smallest property; but, if attacked, we shall consider ourselves fully justified in defending our persons and effects, to the utmost of our ability, against every enemy. We purpose, in the course of our journey, and on arriving in the country in which we shall permanently reside, to make known to the native tribes our intentions, and our desire to live at peace and in friendly intercourse with them.

'And we quit this colony under the full assurance that the English Government has nothing more to require of us, and will allow us to govern ourselves without interference in future.'

Each of the causes alleged in this manifesto, which was

[1] Voigt denies that emancipation was a cause of the Great Trek. Unfortunately for his contention, Piet Retief was one of the Trek leaders. It may be mentioned that Piet Retief came from the eastern province of Cape Colony, and that when the Algoa Bay settlement was formed he was noted for his kindness to the distressed English colonists. He was at one time considered the most opulent farmer in or around Grahamstown.

not without dignity or force, could have been justified by facts. It was true that vagrancy had increased since emancipation; it was equally true that the farmers had lost heavily by the freeing of their slaves. It was likewise true that the British Government had neglected the defence of the frontier against the Kafirs,[1] and that it had accepted what may be called the missionary standpoint in preference to that of colonial opinion as a whole.

There was, in fact, a fundamental conflict of ideals between Boer and Briton in this matter. The Boer, arguing from past experience and present obvious fact, wished to treat the native as an inferior, to compel his labour and enjoy the fruit of it. Many of the British, particularly among those who were similarly circumstanced, agreed with the Boer;[2] but the British Government, and the missionaries who had now so great an influence with the British Government, wished to treat the black man as an equal, and to leave him free to sell his labour when and where he would. Between two such opposed attitudes towards life could be nothing save opposition.

The Boers had in fact to adopt the British Government's view or to go. And they went.

But there were other reasons besides those advanced in the manifesto, which decided some of those who took part in the Great Trek. A number joined the movement because of private quarrels at home;[3] some who had not actually suffered in pocket or person joined because they wanted more land or better land, some because they desired adventure in the wild. Some left for the simple but sufficient reason that they

[1] This was admitted in the private official correspondence. See *Further Papers relating to the Administration of the Cape* (House of Commons, 21st May 1827) in which Somerset warns the Imperial Government of the danger. And there are other examples.

[2] In the West Indies, for example, where the British planters hated the missionaries and the Imperial Government which enforced emancipation at least as much as the Cape Dutch (see vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.).

[3] Cloete's *Five Lectures*.

objected to pay taxes; they would have objected as strongly had the government been Dutch instead of British. Others thought—and they were not much mistaken in their conclusion—that despite the repudiation of slavery in the manifesto, they would be able to introduce slavery in the interior, and every man would be his own master where organised government did not exist.

And with all alike the evil memory of Slachter's Nek, that miserable episode which had come to stand as the typical quarrel between Boer and Briton, was cherished as a silent justification of their action.[1]

For these various reasons a large number of the Boers determined to quit Cape Colony. A few families, who were afterwards known as the Voortrekkers, the advance guard of the movement, left their homes in 1833. Others followed; and early in the year 1835 the British Government, which was not as yet aware of the intentions of its Dutch subjects, observed with some anxiety that an unusual number of farms throughout the colony was in the market. There was no obvious cause, such as drought, a bad harvest, a sheep disease, or cattle-sickness, to account for these forced sales. And it was noticed, too, that the owners were selling at a far lower price than the actual values warranted. Yet the Boer was not usually ignorant of the value, nor superior to the love of money. Clearly then some strong motive-power was forcing these men, whose usual round of life was sluggish and almost stagnant, to take this action. A Boer whose farm had passed from father to son through three or four generations would not lightly abandon his property and the ties of a lifetime at a heavy loss to himself.

The Trek begins, 1833-5.

[1] A Bezuidenhout, a cousin of the central figure in the Slachter's Nek affair, was one of the trekkers into Natal. Probably the family left that country when the British Government annexed it; at least, a Bezuidenhout, a grandson of the rebel, was one of the chief opponents of British rule in the Transvaal in 1877. A sturdy breed.

The Government naturally attempted to stop a movement which must seriously weaken the colony if long persisted in. The clergy and the magistrates were used as official mouthpieces, and it was hinted broadcast that the sale of farms and the desertion of the colony by its inhabitants was against the law.

But that question was speedily forced to the issue. Lieutenant-Governor Stockenstrom was asked by some of those who contemplated leaving the province of Uitenhage whether their action was illegal; and when thus put to the test he answered, 'It is but candid to state at once that I am not aware of any law which prevents any of His Majesty's subjects from leaving his dominions and settling in another country; and such a law, if it did exist, would be tyrannical and oppressive.' From that time the movement progressed without a break, and the Government was powerless to stop it.

The remedy of wholesale emigration was simple and heroic, and for many years it was successful. The Boers chose to abandon their homes rather than abandon their methods of life; new homes may be built in new lands, but old methods and cherished traditions cannot be dropped and resumed at will.

And the Boer was well fitted to be a pioneer. The conditions of his life had made him hardy of physique, primitive in his wants and habits, and capable of enduring privation and fatigue; his religion also comforted him with the belief that he belonged to the chosen people of God, and that, like the Israelites of old in the desert of Sinai, the peculiar protection of heaven would guide his footsteps towards the promised land. It was well for him that his faith was so steadfast, for it helped him to secure the blessings he desired, while he thanked the unseen powers for bestowing the very gifts which his own perseverance had won. . . .

But whither should they go to escape British rule? Southwards was the sea and no more land; and the Boer was a

peasant-farmer who had lost the seafaring habits of his Dutch ancestors. Yet north-westwards, so far as it was known, were vast deserts where was neither feed for cattle nor rain for crops: the sand and stunted vegetation of the Griqua district was useless; and further west, where the great Orange River flowed towards the Atlantic, was Namaqualand, a land of deathful sleep and desolation.[1]

Whither?

Here was no home for the pastoralist; but in the north-east again the land was owned by savage tribes; in the south-east the barbarians were again strong. The Boer could not tame the desert; but his ancestors had tamed the savages of the Cape, and he might tame the savages of the northern and eastern uplands.

Towards North and East.

And thither they set out, in small parties or in large—single families with old household treasures stored in a roomy Cape wagon, the oxen of the farm drawing the vehicle in long teams across the veldt, or being driven on ahead; great companies of twenty or thirty or more families banded together with their flocks and herds under a general leader—all alike seeking a new land for their inheritance, and deserting old homes of many memories that had seen two or three generations born and die within their quiet walls and pass out silently at last to the little family grave without on the bare hillside. . . .

There were hundreds of deserted houses and neglected farms reverting to wilderness in Cape Colony, especially in the Eastern Province of the colony, in these years. For this

[1] Namaqualand is rather happily described by W. C. Scully, a South African poet, as

> 'A land of deathful sleep, where fitful dreams
> Of hurrying spring scarce wake swift fading flowers';

land on whose neglected shores

> 'The waves for ever roar a song of death,
> The shore they roar to is for ever dead.'

became in time a wholesale exodus, as of the Puritans from England two centuries before, to a new land.

Day after day the pilgrims travelled slowly onwards, halting nightly to rest the oxen and their drivers, pausing from time to time while on the march to inspect new country, to water the cattle where water could be found, or to shoot big game for sport or sustenance.

The removal of arms and ammunition from the colony had been forbidden by the British Government; but every party of Boers on trek carried their arms and ammunition nevertheless. Secrecy was necessary for safety; the guns and powder were therefore buried every day, unearthed and sent on ahead by night.[1]

The march was slow, but it progressed with a certain inevitable purpose and dogged persistence beyond the border to the north and east, day after day, week after week, month after month.

A slow monotony at first encompassed the journey as the emigrants passed through the settled districts of the Cape Colony. But when they pressed forward beyond the zone that the white man had conquered, many and terrible were the hardships and dangers they encountered as they marched through the wilderness. A few of the poorer parties had practically no clothes, and had to bear the heat by day and the intense cold by night; many of these perished from privation, and their bodies were left in roughly-dug graves where they died before the sorrow-stricken relatives again pushed forward. Fever, accident, and disease likewise claimed their victims; and medical resources, always primitive among the Boers, were few indeed so far afield. At times, too, the wanderers were short of food or water. Antelopes and the wild game of the country were shot when occasion allowed, but many came near starvation in barren lands. Sometimes also the country was on fire, set

Hardships and Dangers.

[1] Journal of a Voortrekker, *Cape Monthly*, 1876.

alight by the natives or ignited by the rays of the sun; and to other anxieties were then added fears lest the children, and the cattle, the most precious assets of the trekkers, should be burnt.

Often the women were far gone in pregnancy at the beginning of the journey, and their children were born in the wagons as they jolted over the veldt; but at times the way was too rough even for the solidly-built wagon to carry its owners, and expectant mothers and little children had to tramp for hours by its side over the rolling, uneven ridges of the uplands.

But the worst danger of all came from hostile native tribes, who resented the invasion of their territories by strangers. A surprise attack might overwhelm a family or a caravan; only an upturned wagon and a mutilated pile of corpses would mark the silent tragedy and warn those who followed on that path of perils on the morrow.

Or the natives might dissemble, welcoming the visitors with food and presents, a treaty of peace and deceptive professions of amity, to lull the trekkers' fears. And the same night or the next the drowsy travellers would be awakened by the howl of savages and a storm of assegais, and know that the hour for their last sleep had come upon them. Every man now sprang to the defence, and even women took a gun or served out ammunition; shots would cross the flight of spears, and perhaps a stern fight till dawn might see the white man victor.

But not always. In one terrible case 33 men, 95 women, and 200 children, members of a single Boer party, were killed in an encounter with savages;[1] nor was the loss without parallel. And many a catastrophe on a smaller scale wiped out a whole family or a group of families altogether; and no certain knowledge of their fate would ever reach their friends or relatives elsewhere. Only a long silence would at length turn sickening suspicion into the certainty of disaster. . .

[1] Journal in *Cape Monthly*, 1876.

And even a victory was sometimes worth but little, for the numbers of the enemy might be enormous by comparison with the invaders; they knew the country, too, and they could choose their own time for attack; while at each encounter the trekkers were almost certain to lose some of their diminishing band.

One party of thirty-one families had left Cape Colony in 1833, before the main body of the trekkers, for Delagoa Bay.

Death at Delagoa Bay.

They had heard good reports of the place; they journeyed long through the wilderness, and survived the peril of native war; but when at last they arrived at their destination, weak and exhausted, the promised land proved anything but a land of promise. They were given food, clothes, and medicines by the compassionate Portuguese; but the *tse-tse* fly destroyed their cattle, the fever that always haunts that fatal coast now attacked the enfeebled settlers themselves. The children, who had survived the hardships of a thousand miles' march through the untamed wilds, dropped daily one by one; the toil-spent mothers followed their infants to the grave. The men died last of all; but by the time disease had spent its energies only two members of all that company were left alive.

That experiment was not repeated. But the following year a prospecting party reported the advantages of Natal, as a

The Settlement in Natal, 1837.

fertile land where several districts were altogether destitute of native population; and forthwith large companies of emigrants set out for the south-east. The Boers did not know that Natal had been depopulated by the ambitious wars of its Zulu masters, nor did they suspect any possible danger for themselves; all unsuspiciously they crossed the Drakensberg, and journeyed down the ridges that separate the uplands of the interior from the land they sought.

In October 1837 Piet Retief, the author of the trekkers' manifesto and one of the leaders of this band of emigrants,

arrived at the Bay of Natal; in the following month he applied to the bloodthirsty native sovereign, Dingana, for permission to settle in his country.

Now Dingana hesitated awhile before he gave permission; and to gain time he accused the Boers of stealing some of his cattle. They had not done so; but they knew the culprit, a native chief with whom they had had dealings. From him they recovered Dingana's cattle; and Dingana thereupon ceded a large district to the Boers.

The immigrants appear to have thought that the whole of the negotiations were a mere formality; for before the cession was finally agreed upon in 1838, and while the treaty of peace was still delayed, a thousand or more Boer wagons, each containing a Boer family and its possessions, had crossed the Drakensberg and jolted down the rough descent into Natal.

The formidable character of this invasion startled and displeased the savage king; but as yet he gave no sign of fear. On the contrary, he dissembled, and so well did he conceal his aims that the Boers had no suspicion of the treachery ahead.

Piet Retief and several others were now bidden to a feast by Dingana, to celebrate the treaty between the two peoples. They went, not knowing that their doom was already decided; but at the beginning all seemed well. One warning, indeed, they received. There was an English missionary whose perilous and difficult errand it was to convert the Zulu tribes to Christianity. Living at the court of Dingana, he had heard something of the intended massacre, and he warned the unsuspecting Boers against treachery. And they disregarded the warning.

Massacred by the Zulus.

It was not long before they discovered their mistake—too late. After a short time spent in compliments, the Zulu warriors were ordered to dance; and suddenly the fatal surprise was sprung on the still unsuspecting guests. Din-

gana's face changed from a deceptive smile to severity; and quickly he gave the order, 'Seize them.' There was no escape for the wretched Boers; they were caught in a trap by the crafty enemy, and the penalty of the mistake was death. Most were overpowered at once; some attempted flight, but the pursuit was hot, and the Zulus knew the ground before them. One miserable fugitive ran fifteen miles without a halt before his enemies came up with him; but at the last he too was overtaken and slain. Only one of all that company survived to give warning to the distant trekkers of their danger; and one man could do little to warn the immigrants of the work ahead.

For the Boers had by now scattered themselves over the country, each family isolating itself from its neighbour after the manner of that space-loving people; and they were already busied with the building of their houses, the tilling of the land, and the planting of their farms. They knew nothing of the murder of their comrades; like them, they had no suspicion of any danger, and therefore no means of defending themselves against the foe.

Suddenly and without warning the storm of savagery broke upon them. One after another the scattered families were attacked, their cattle stolen, their farms or wagons fired.

A dozen Zulus would surround the farmer as he worked, and in a few moments his life bled out under a shower of assegais. Then the dependents would be destroyed—pregnant mothers, little children, the babe at the breast—all would perish, for the Zulu knew no mercy, and when he killed he slaughtered wholesale.

A smoking heap of ruins and a battered mass of dead were all that was left for friends to see when they rode over to hear the petty news of crops and pasture, the incidental details of pioneering settlement in a new land. Sometimes the skulls were split, the remains mutilated and unrecognisable; often the scavengers of heaven had been at work

upon the nameless horror left by man, and the bones were already picked clean by the birds of the air. . . .

At times, but very rarely, one or two survived by chance. Once upon a heap of corpses two children were found; these alone were living of those that had been attacked, and even these were nearly dead. When their quivering, wounded bodies were examined, it was found that one, Johanna ver der Merwe, had been stabbed nineteen times by assegais; the other, Catharina Margaretha Prinslo, was wounded in twenty-one places. By some miracle they had escaped vital injury, but all their relatives were slain.

Pitiful memories of these disasters yet haunt the map of Natal, like ghosts of the past whose horror none can banish. Such are the names of Moord Spruit (the River of Murder), and Weenen (the place of weeping), where men fought and died in a fight that lasted three full days, and women spilt their tears in vain. The sight at this latter place, said one who took part in the struggle, was unbearable. Another told in later years how he was wakened that night from his sleep by the barking of dogs and the whistle of assegais through the darkness; as he ran to get his gun he heard an old man groan 'O God' in sudden anguish. The voice came from his father, and the choking tone in which the old man moaned told the son that he was choked with blood. He had been struck in the gullet, and so died; the son himself had four assegais in his body, and only escaped by hiding among the cattle. In one wagon after that encounter fifty were found dead, and the blood was flowing out of every joint of the wagon into the soaking ground.

At first the Boers were quite defenceless against such attack. But as the news of the disasters spread they organised themselves to resist; permanent ties of interest and colour prevailed over temporary enmities, an alliance was made with the English settlers at Port Natal, and the united Europeans advanced against the natives. In the first en-

counter, at Italena, the assegai was equal to the gun; the advantage of the day rested with the Zulus, but their loss was heavy. But that was Dingana's last triumph.

Some of the immigrants now left the fatal country, crossing the Drakensberg again on the way to unknown perils in the north—for few returned to their old homes in Cape Colony—but others remained to fight the mastery of Natal with the Zulus, and these were joined by newcomers who were not yet daunted by the terrors of a savage war. If the settlers in Natal lost Hendrik Potgieter, one of the great trek leaders, they gained Andries Pretorius, who led them against the Zulus, and whose name and fame were yet to live in another country, in the capital city of Pretoria further to the north.

But the condition of the Boers in Natal was now desperate. Unable to tend their crops through stress of war, there was a famine in the land; aid was implored from the Cape, sympathy was evoked, and a general subscription relieved the immediate necessities of the trekkers. But security from the natives had yet to be won, revenge had yet to be sated, blood had still to wipe out blood. And all the efforts of the Europeans were now directed to a concentrated attack upon the Zulus.

Retribution.

After a period of preparation the foes came face to face. And before the great battle that was to decide the mastery of Natal was fought the Boers, like the Israelites of old, took solemn oath 'to the Lord their God that if He was with them and gave the enemy into their hands they would consecrate to the Lord the day in each year and keep it holy as a Sabbath Day.' It was the 16th December 1838 on which this oath was taken; and the vow was not forgotten.

The Blood River Battle, 1838.

Thirty-six regiments of Zulus, nine or ten thousand men in battle array, and under the strict discipline which Dingiswayo and Tshaka had introduced into the native ranks—this was the formidable force that threw itself upon the Boers

that day. But the Boers had posted themselves strongly in laager, their wagons fastened together, and with hides of oxen stretched across the wheels. For two hours the Zulus attacked and the Boers repelled a deadly fire; and then Andries Pretorius showed his ability as a leader. The solid wall of wagons opened, the Boers sallied out on horseback, and the massed ranks of the Zulus were caught between two fires, the guns of the camp and the mounted men. It was a daring move, and it won the day; for the Zulus dropped thick and fast under the deadly aim of the enemy, and soon hundreds of them 'lay on the ground,' in the words of one who fought there, 'like a fine crop of pumpkins.'

Some escaped for a time, but these, too, were doomed. For they dived into the river near by, floating under water 'with their noses out like hippopotami.' And as they floated the Boers stood beside the banks and shot them one by one, so that the waters of the stream turned red, and it and the battle were henceforth called the Blood River in memory of that terrible but decisive day.

Two of the brothers of Dingana were slain in the fight; Dingana himself had fled. But in his camp the pursuing Boers found the bleached bare bones of Piet Retief and his comrades who had been massacred. Their skulls were smashed, they were only recognised by some tattered shreds of clothing which hung on the remains, and the ghastly fragments were reverently collected together and given Christian burial before the avenging host pushed forward on the track of the Zulu king.

But now another disaster had nearly wiped out the fruits of victory. For the Boers were led forward by a decoy, and suddenly they found themselves in a trap similar to that which had caught Piet Retief. Only by rushing forward, swimming the river, and riding back to camp by a circuitous route of nearly forty miles did they escape; even then five of their number were killed in the flight.

But Dingana had been permanently weakened by the battle of the Blood River; his day of power was near an end. A rival now aspired to hold the proud position of great chief; civil war broke out soon afterwards. The Boers found it good policy to assist the rebels, and on 29th January 1840 a great battle was fought between the two native factions, in which Dingana was defeated.

The Zulu Power broken.

Captured by his opponent, he had now to submit to some of the torments he had so long inflicted on others. On the first day of his confinement he was pricked with assegais from head to foot. On the second he was bitten by dogs. On the third he was told to look his last upon the sun; his eyes were now bored out. The wretched man, who had been deprived of food by his conquerors since his defeat, was now nearly dead; and on the evening of that day he died.[1]

The civil war and the defeat of Dingana broke the power of the Zulu nation for twenty years. Not until the dreadful name of Cetewayo again rang through the land did the power of that warrior people revive;[2] but by that time the whites, both Boers and British, had too firm a hold on Natal to be dislodged.

But news of these troubles reached Cape Town; and the British Government, which had shown not the least anxiety to assume responsibility for Natal when its own people had gone thither fourteen years before,[3] at once decided that active intervention was necessary now that another body of men, whose only anxiety was to be quit of Britain and British rule, had

Conflict with the British in Natal, 1838-43.

[1] The Boers reached the field too late to take part in this battle, and they had no share in the torture of Dingana's last hours.

There were other stories current as to the conduct of the trekkers in Natal, and an old settler told an English missionary that he had heard a very different tale from that generally received (*Digest of S. P. G. Records*). Possibly; but either he forgot proofs and details, or it was too much even for the missionary to swallow.

[2] See bk. xxvi. ch. i.

[3] See the previous chapter.

settled in the country. It is true that the Boers were British subjects and that British subjects cannot repudiate their allegiance at will; but the action of the Government was hardly calculated to inspire those recalcitrant subjects with more goodwill towards England in Natal than in Cape Colony.

In any event the Boers in the interior of Natal ignored the British troops when they arrived upon the coast in December 1837. A little more than a year later the soldiers were withdrawn, after a treaty had been concluded with the Zulus which bound the latter to return the cattle they had stolen and not to pass over the Tugela River. The treaty was not worth the ink with which it was written, and its provisions were broken as soon as the troops embarked; but the next intervention of the British Government in the affairs of Natal was not to punish the Zulus for broken faith, but to remonstrate with the Boers for their dealings with the natives.

It happened that the Boers had been troubled by thefts of their cattle. The miserable Bushmen, of whom there was still a wretched remnant left in Natal, were the culprits; and old experience in Cape Colony had taught the trekkers a manner of dealing with that people. They shot the adults, they recovered their stolen cattle, and the children of the Bushmen they took as servants or slaves.

It was on behalf of the Bushmen that the British Government intervened in 1842. The Boers declared that they were now a free and independent republic, the British declared that they were still subjects of the Empire; a hasty word in the dispute precipitated a fight on 23rd May, in which the English captain who had come to enforce his authority lost seventeen men killed and thirty-one wounded, and in the end found himself unexpectedly besieged. More troops were sent in due course from Cape Colony; another skirmish followed. It became clear that the authorities at Cape Town were in earnest, and by the

The British prevail, 1843.

time that the British Commissioner arrived on 5th June 1843 the Boer trekkers into Natal had once more submitted under protest to British rule.[1] Two years later the whole country was annexed by the British Government, and proclaimed a part of Cape Colony.

Such were the fortunes of those emigrants from Cape Colony who crossed the Drakensberg into Natal. It was their purpose to escape from British rule, and British rule pursued them.

The Northward Trek, 1833-40.

But not all the trekkers crossed the Drakensberg; not all of those who crossed it remained in Natal. Some parties made their way northwards into the unknown interior, and here at least it seemed they might be safe from British rule; for on the far side of the Orange River no Europeans save an English missionary here and there had built their homes,[2] and few Europeans—hardly even an occasional hunter or explorer—had ever reached so far. Along the Orange River itself and in the islands that strewed its course were banditti and *bastaards*, the scum of the Cape and its white and coloured races;[3] further north were savages, barbaric states and empires, but scarcely any white men—for the English missionaries who had preceded the trekkers were few and feeble—to prevent the Boer from dealing with the savages as he thought fitting.

[1] In their protest—a very lengthy, but well-written and well-reasoned document,—the Boers made much of the point that they had thrown off their allegiance as British subjects in 1837, and that the British Government had taken no steps to compel them to resume that allegiance for several years subsequently. A good legal point; but I take it that in such matters legal points are often excuses but seldom reasons for action, and abstract right is generally suffered to remain in abstract regions. The plain facts were that the Boers desired independence and the British desired Natal, and the stronger party had its will.

It is true that the British Government declared on several occasions that it had neither the desire nor the intention to annex Natal, but it is also true that it annexed Natal.

[2] See the next chapter for the English missionaries who preceded the Boers north of the Orange River.

[3] See *Papers Relating to the Condition and Treatment of the Natives* (House of Commons Papers, 1st June 1835).

But here also were hardships by the way on the long march. Fever troubled the emigrants at times; cattle-sickness reduced their stock. And sometimes their flocks and herds would be stolen; yet the very children had to learn to drive the oxen forward, while their elders were engaged in deciding the way across the open veldt, in guarding against possible ambuscades by the natives, or the attacks of wild beasts. And nature built here on a grand scale: this was the land of the buffalo, the rhinoceros, and the giraffe which man was now invading; here was found the hippopotamus wallowing in the swamps, and the lion was heard by night and often seen by day. The Boers were good shots, and many of the hunters enjoyed the chase after great game; but sometimes a misfire lost a man his life and a family its head, and the widow was left to press on with her children alone.[1]

Nevertheless one party after another pushed on across the Orange River, across the Vaal, some as far north almost as the distant Limpopo, before they found the land to suit them. Months would pass on the journey, as the great ox-wagons rolled slowly forward through unknown country, or sometimes the trekkers would halt awhile, building them huts of grass and reeds, and then perhaps a more permanent home if the prospects pleased them.

It was an almost unknown land to which they came. The old maps of the sixteenth century marked the interior of the continent vaguely with the sources of the Nile, a conjectured lake, a hypothetical empire of the aborigines; the modern maps gave no such information, but frankly owned their ignorance.[2] It was a virgin soil to the European, save where Robert Moffat and one or two fellow-missionaries from Britain

[1] In these cases the widow soon married again. It was not good for a woman to be alone in that savage land.

[2] On a map by Diego Ribero dated 1529 in the British Museum the three sources of the Nile are marked parallel with the Zambesi, and the Mountains of the Moon south of the Nile. The rest of the map is scattered with elephants, birds, trees, and houses at random: the

had found their way and visited the country which the emigrant Cape Dutch proposed to occupy.

This great land which the trekkers took for their inheritance was thinly peopled; but as they went they saw the reason of its paucity of population. From time to time along their route they passed great heaps of human bones, thousands after thousands of heaped-up skeletons, picked clean by the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. As they passed these gruesome relics, even the horses on which they rode would shudder and shrink with the nameless horror of the dead; but the trekkers knew that these piles of human fragments were a sign that the land and its riches were theirs. Each pile marked a battle or a massacre; and continuous battle and massacre had almost depopulated the country of its savage owners.

But not quite. There were still chiefs of the Matabili, powerful rulers of a widespread numerous Zulu

Atlantic is Mare Ethiopicum, the Indian Ocean is Sinus Barbaricus. The island of Madagascar is correctly outlined.

A later English map (1663) also has the elephants and the Æthiopian Ocean and the Barbarian Gulfe; the Nile is made to rise in two lakes, 10′ south of the equator; between them lies the fabled city of Agag. Central South Africa is vaguely called Monomotapa.

Another map, apparently about 1709, makes all central Africa Ethiopia, adding candidly 'this country is wholly unknown to Europeans.' South of this lies Mono-emugi, through which flows the Zambesi; south of that again is Monomotapa, with Zimbaoe (Zimbabye). The Zaire (Congo) is marked, and great bogs or morasses conjectured in Ethiopia.

A French map of the same date marks the Royaume de Nimeamaie, separated by a great line of mountains (Lupata) from Monomotape; south are Les Cobonas Antropopages, Les Hancumquas, Henssaquas, Chainouques, Griquas, Odiquas, Ubiques. That Frenchman was a witty soul.

On a French map of 1722 a lake, unnamed, is on the site of Tanganyika; but no other lakes. Monomotapa now shifts to the coast near Sofala; northwards lies Monoemugi.

An English map of 1782 marks Monomotapa smaller, near Sofala, and adds that the kingdoms of Manica and Sofala and Sabia are 'dismembrings of the ancient empire of Monomotape.' Lake Tanganyika is marked, unnamed, but 'full of fish': Manoemoogi to the north in Griqua land is 'a town of robbers and Chinese Hottentots': otherwise the southern interior is blank.

I said in my haste, after wasting an afternoon on this rubbish, all geographers are liars.

people[1] that was to play a great part in the future relations with European invaders, both here and further north. For the time at least they offered no opposition to the immigrants, but rather welcomed them; treaties of friendship were drawn up, the land between the Vet and the Vaal Rivers was bartered in exchange for cattle, and here many of the Boers settled; some, however, had already stopped short and made their homes not very far from the border of Cape Colony, on the left banks of the great Orange River.

Treaties with the Matabili.

But not all the Boers asked permission of the Matabili, or bartered herds for land; not every party of the trekkers even knew that the natives claimed the country, so thinly was it populated. Occasional misunderstandings arose from this cause; other mistakes on either side were perhaps wilful errors, thefts of territory on the part of the invader, thefts of cattle or sheer joy of war on the part of the Matabili. Many a hard-fought skirmish took place between trekker and savage, here as in Natal; but nowhere did the immigrants find so formidable a foe as Dingana and his terrible Zulu braves. Their advance was checked at times, but they were seldom routed, and they were never beaten. And in the end they drove the Matabili out of the Transvaal country, far across the Limpopo to the north.[2]

And War.

And here, in the vast territories between the Orange and the Limpopo, bounded on the west by the waterless Kalahari desert and on the east by the ancient dominions of the Portuguese, the trekkers stayed. They had found the promised land—a land of wilderness indeed, but one that would blossom and bear fruit with industry and care, one, moreover, that was free from the British Government, the British

The Boers take possession of Orangia and Transvaal.

[1] More correctly Amandabili; but Lo Bengula, the next king of this folk, said when questioned, 'The proper name for my people is Zulu.'

[2] See chap. v. of this book.

tax-collector, and the British magistrate, the slave-emancipator and the philanthropist, and almost free from the British missionary.[1] Here the Boers could have the liberty which they desired.

The immigrants scattered themselves loosely and widely after their usual fashion, in farms of five thousand acres or more each; and they maintained, so far as the conditions of the country allowed, the style of building, the customs, and the form of society which had been in vogue in Cape Colony before the British had come to disturb the placid habits of the colonial Dutch.[2]

There was room for all in this almost vacant land, and each party was a law and a direction unto itself in this deserted country. One band travelled along a tributary of the Vaal River, at first with disappointment at its paucity of water; but later, when long reaches of clear crystal fringed by grey whispering willows burst upon the gaze of the explorers, their faces changed. The stream they had despised was now called Mooi, the beautiful; and here was founded Potchefstroom, the earliest successful settlement of the Boers in the Transvaal country.

A little colony next spread itself over the mountain ranges, and watered its cattle in the streams of Lydenburg; other towns or districts followed as fresh parties arrived month by month, and settlement expanded. Some were reminiscent of old Holland, such as Amersfoort, some indicative of the

[1] Not quite free, however, after the next few years from the inevitable Scot. One district in the Transvaal, that between Ermelo and Swaziland, was for many years known as New Scotland, and its capital was called Robburnia after the poet. But after the war of 1881 the Dutch changed the name to New Amsterdam.

[2] The son of Robert Moffat the missionary, who engaged in trade in the Transvaal, declared that the Boers were degenerating in their new abode; but Livingstone, a sounder judge, hardly bears this out. He states that the Boers were a shade darker than the Europeans at home, but otherwise they showed little change after two centuries of life in South Africa. I have met several Cape and Transvaal Boers in Holland, and they always seemed to me good Europeans of true Dutch build and character.

peace and quiet of pastoral life, such as that which grew up amid the wonderful fertility of Rustenberg—the hill of rest. But mostly the Boer settler named his homes, like the English puritan of two centuries before, from the book which was at once his religion and his only literature. New England across the Atlantic had its Providence, its Salem, its Canaan, its Babylon;[1] this New Holland in central South Africa had its Bethany and Bethlehem, its Bethesda and Beersheba, its Carmel and its Hebron.[2]

These and other Bible names marked the path and the stopping-places of the Boers over the country; and one party went still further north, to the great mountains and deep glades and thick tropical forests of Zoutpansberg by the Limpopo. It was the aim of Potgieter, the sturdy and unlettered farmer who led this band thus far to the north, to put as wide a space as possible between himself and British rule and British influence; and he saw in this distant district not only the prospect of eternal freedom from the hated English, but also the chance of a profitable trade with the Indian Ocean. And to this rough peasant-leader, whose boyhood had been passed at Cradock in Cape Colony, and who had seen hard fighting in later years in the Kafir wars on the frontier, the remembrance of a disaster that had already occurred among his folk in the Zoutspanberg was no deterrent.

For it was here that the earliest of all the trekkers had come, companions for the first months of their journey with those unfortunates who had died of fever at Delagoa Bay. The first party of voortrekkers had pushed on steadily northwards under Van Rensburg in 1833, across the Orange, across

[1] See vol. i. bk. ii. ch. v.

[2] One of the tributaries of the Limpopo was called the Nile by the trekkers who discovered it; the name has clung to the insignificant stream. From the fact that it flowed in a northerly direction, the Boers imagined it to be the origin of the true Nile.

They have been derided for their ignorance; but Livingstone made a similar error, in mistaking the source of the Congo for the Nile. And Christopher Colombus mistook America for the Indies.

the Vaal, and over the mountains of the Zoutpansberg. There in 1836 these earlier pioneers, a band of forty-eight in all, men, women, and children, had rested; and somewhere there, in the vast distances of that wonderful district, they had disappeared for ever from human ken. Some thought that they had been wiped out by the natives, and this may in fact have been their fate; but others held—and it was a pleasant belief—that the weary pilgrims had divorced themselves from their fellows and all other human society, and in some happy valley of the unknown wild concealed their homes, their children, and their cattle. Whatever their fate, they were lost in the wilderness, and no trace of them or their belongings, not the wheel of a wagon, nor a shred of clothing, nor yet a bone nor a tress of hair, not even a child's discarded plaything was ever found.[1]

Such are the inevitable accidents and unsolved mysteries of pioneering life; but the trekkers as a whole had better fortune.

It has been estimated that between the years 1833 and 1840, during which the trek movement rose and fell, some ten thousand of the Cape Dutch made their way across the frontier of the older colony. The bulk of emigration came from those eastern districts—Uitenhage, Graaff Reynet, and Swellendam—which had always been most strongly opposed to foreign rule, and which had suffered most heavily from the Kafir depredations; the bulk of it was directed across the Orange and the Vaal. There the trekkers found a quiet prosperity; there also they found—what their brethren in Natal had not found—the freedom they desired. And thus were laid the foundations of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic.

[1] It may be recalled that a great exploring expedition in central Australia disappeared in similar fashion (vol. v. bk. xix. ch. i.).

Probably the *tse-tse* settled the fate of this Boer expedition; but it is curious that no relics of their journey have been found. The *tse-tse* fly could not eat the wagons.

The Boers were a pastoral people, and their towns were only villages, their villages often no more than the casual junction of two or three great farms. For a highly organised form of government they had neither wish nor need; but some form of government is a necessity for the most primitive community, and the Boers were in no doubt as to the form of government they should adopt. They had not forgotten the Batavian Republic in Europe, the ill-fated republics at the Cape;[1] and in their new territories the loose and easy robes of a republic were sufficient to cover the essentials of a patriarchal rule. The Boer Republics.

The short-lived independence of the trekkers of Natal had seen the formation of a republic with a definite constitution and a regularly elected council[2] in session at Pieter Maritzburg, which was to exist until, or perhaps even after Holland had proclaimed the country a Dutch colony. That hope was vain; and the trekkers who settled in the interior no longer looked for the protection of the Netherlands.

The settlers to the north of the Orange River therefore proclaimed themselves a Free State in 1837, and a form of constitutional government was promulgated; across the Vaal a number of political organisations gradually evolved a separate existence. Each district, or each new settlement of invading Boers, formed its own independent republican community: one was at Lydenburg, a second in the Zoutpansberg, a third at Utrecht, the greatest was at Potchefstroom, so powerful indeed that it in time absorbed

[1] Bk. xxiii. ch. iii.

[2] I have seen it stated that the trekkers' republic in Natal was little better than a loosely organised anarchy. That was the partisan view of its British opponents, but singularly wide of the truth. I have looked through the articles of its constitution, which shows considerable political acumen; and the proceedings of its *Volksraad* were at least as sensible as the debates in many a small colonial parliament where English is the mother tongue. It is true that the members made some mistakes in policy and said some foolish things. But if we are to start condemning members of parliament on that ground, even the British House of Commons would not survive.

its fellows, and became the Transvaal or South African Republic.[1]

Others split off, or were added in later years as settlement spread, such as the republics—if indeed they could be said to deserve that honourable name—of Stellaland and Goshen on the Bechuana border;[2] but some of these primitive settlements were short-lived, too weak to maintain themselves against frontier warfare unaided, and therefore forced to seek alliance or absorption with more powerful neighbours. Their natural bent was to division and full independence of each other; but the perils of their position, and the danger of external attack from the hostile tribes around them and among them, made for cohesion.[3]

But each of these settlements was free in time—and for a time—of the British Government, as it desired.

The (British) Orange River Sovereignty, 1848-54.

At first, indeed, the British Government had followed its rebellious subjects across the Orange River, as it had followed them into Natal, reminding them that they could not thus throw off their allegiance to the sovereign power in South Africa. The land between the Orange and the Vaal was in consequence annexed to the Empire in 1848 as the Orange River Sovereignty; Bloemfontein, the little village capital of the Free State, was placed under a British Resident, and the emigrant Boers found themselves once more the

[1] The South African or Transvaal Republic was an amalgamation of four republics in all: hence the national flag, the 'Vierkleur,' or four-coloured flag.

[2] For Stellaland and Goshen, see ch. iv. of this book.

[3] The Boers in this respect resembled the English settlers overseas, each of whose new colonies in America, Australia and New Zealand, broke off from its neighbours and sternly maintained its independence of its brothers. Its self-sought isolation, even from its fellows, was a symptom of the desire to evolve its own individuality; in later years, when the individuality was fixed, or thought to be fixed, the desire for reunion became apparent, often because of an external danger. In this case Australia offers some parallel to the Dutch Republics of South Africa (vol. v. bk. xviii. ch. iii.; bk. xix. ch. ii. iii.).

subjects of a foreign power, not free self-governing citizens as they desired.

Another trek to the north, away from the hated Union Jack, might have followed—for independence was the leading passion of the Boer, and there was land to the north and to spare—had not an insurrection of the indignant trekkers proved successful. The British Resident was expelled by a burgher commando under Andries Pretorius, the old leader of the trekkers in Natal, and the Orange countries were once more the possession of the emigrant Boers.

Their victory, however, was too much for the authorities at Cape Town, and Sir Harry Smith, the hero of the Kafir War of 1835, marched against the rebels. The old soldier defeated the insurgent trekkers at Boomplaats, and the country was again annexed, under the title of the Orange River Sovereignty.

But England found that her servants in South Africa had pressed ahead too far and too fast for her convenience in this matter. Only with reluctance did the Imperial Government consent to this expansion of territory in the interior, and recognise an advance which committed her to new responsibilities, at the very time when the anti-imperial movement was at its height, and she was endeavouring rather to reduce than enlarge her colonial possessions.[1]

An unsuccessful native war with the Basutos, in the eastern part of the Sovereignty, a few years later helped to convince London that Cape Town had made a mistake in this advance across the Orange River; reasons were found for abandoning a country that was no longer wanted when it was found difficult to keep, and six years after the proclamation of the Sovereignty it was withdrawn. In 1854 a Convention was signed between a Special Commissioner of the

Independence of the Orange Free State recognised by Britain, 1854.

[1] See vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii. for the anti-imperial movement in England.

British Government and the leading Boers of the territory, the unwelcome protection or restraint of the imperial power was proclaimed at an end, and the Orange Free State, a Boer Republic under a Boer President, was again set up in its stead.[1]

The Sand River Convention, 1852.

It might have been well for England in the future had she retained her hold over the Orange River countries; but over the Transvaal she made no decided attempt to gain a hold at all. Those more distant Boers of Potchefstroom and Lydenburg had already attained their ends. They had reckoned rightly that the lands beyond the Vaal were a safe asylum from Britain, too far afield for pursuit to touch them. Grudgingly and reluctantly they were given their desire. Another convention, drawn up at the Sand River and signed on 16th January 1852 by representatives of Britain and the Dutch trekkers beyond the Vaal, defined their status. It declared that:

1. The Assistant Commissioners guarantee in the fullest manner, on the part of the British Government, to the emigrant farmers beyond the Vaal River, the right to manage their own affairs, and to govern themselves according to their own laws, without any interference on the part of the British Government; and that no encroachment shall be made by the said Government on the territory beyond, to the north of the Vaal River, with the further assurance that the warmest wish of the British Government is to promote peace, free trade, and friendly intercourse with the emigrant farmers now inhabiting, or who may inhabit that country; it being understood that this system of non-interference is binding upon both parties.

2. Should any misunderstanding hereafter arise as to the true meaning of the words, 'The Vaal River,' this question, in so far

[1] There was a considerable number of British residents in the Orange Free State. Their interests were entirely overlooked by the Imperial Government, which anticipated in this matter the principle laid down by that accomplished trifler, Augustine Birrell, in the Liberal Government of 1906, that 'minorities must suffer.' But some time afterwards £45,000 was awarded them as compensation for their losses.

as it regards the line from the source of that river, over the Drakensberg, shall be settled and adjusted by Commissioners chosen by both parties.

3. Her Majesty's Assistant Commissioners hereby disclaim all alliances whatever and with whomsoever of the coloured nations to the north of the Vaal River.

4. It is agreed that no slavery is, or shall be permitted or practised in the country to the north of the Vaal River by the emigrant farmers.

5. Mutual facilities and liberty shall be afforded to traders and travellers on both sides of the Vaal River; it being understood that every wagon containing firearms, coming from the south side of the Vaal River, shall produce a certificate signed by a British magistrate, or other functionary, duly authorized to grant such, and which shall state the quantities of such articles contained in said wagon to the nearest magistrate north of the Vaal River, who shall act in the case as the regulations of the emigrant farmers direct. It is agreed that no objections shall be made by any British authority against the emigrant Boers purchasing their supplies of ammunition in any of the British colonies and possessions of South Africa; it being mutually understood that all trade in ammunition with the native tribes is prohibited, both by the British Government and the emigrant farmers on both sides of the Vaal River.

6. It is agreed that, so far as possible, all criminals and other guilty parties who may fly from justice either way across the Vaal River shall be mutually delivered up, if such should be required; and that the British courts, as well as those of the emigrant farmers, shall be mutually open to each other for all legitimate processes, and that summonses for witnesses sent either way across the Vaal River shall be backed by the magistrates on each side of the same respectively, to compel the attendance of such witnesses when required.

7. It is agreed that certificates of marriage issued by the proper authorities of the emigrant farmers shall be held valid and sufficient to entitle children of such marriages to receive portions accruing to them in any British colony or possession in South Africa.

8. It is agreed that any and every person now in possession of land, and residing in British territory, shall have free right and power to sell his said property, and remove unmolested across the Vaal River, and *vice versâ*; it being distinctly understood that this arrangement does not comprehend criminals or debtors without providing for the payment of their just and lawful debts.

Such was the Sand River Convention of 1852, which was rightly recognised as the final triumph and justification of the Great Trek movement, and which on that account became one of the milestones of South African history. The Convention withdrew, on the part of Britain, all claim to jurisdiction or authority over her revolted subjects—save only in regard to the institution of slavery—and it therefore recognised the qualified independence of the Transvaal Boers, acknowledging their full and perpetual right to the territories they had occupied, and their further right to govern themselves within those territories, save only for the limitation of the fourth clause.

It recognises qualified Independence of Transvaal.

The Convention was an honest attempt to make a permanent and final settlement in South African politics. But the time for a permanent and final settlement of the politics of a developing but still undeveloped country had not yet come, and the Sand River Convention was not a final settlement of the quarrel between Boer and Britain for three reasons: firstly, because both parties had in the end to live together in a country which neither would abandon; secondly, because it bound the Transvaal Boers as regards slavery in a manner which was frankly against their wishes, and which many of them made no attempt to observe; and thirdly, because it bound the British as regards territorial expansion to the north in a manner which they found excessively inconvenient, and which in the end would have forced them to break the Convention, had they not already broken it openly and directly by the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877.[1]

Both sides therefore broke the Convention, the Boers by the revival of a disguised and modified but still unmistakable form of slavery in the Transvaal,[2] the British by the expansion of their Empire.

[1] See bk. xxvi. ch. i.

[2] The revival of slavery among the trekkers was often alleged by the

The Sand River Convention, in short, bound both parties, but it could not bind the future.

CHAPTER II

THE MESSENGERS OF GOD: 1799-1876

THE stubborn stolid Boer who nightly bent his knee to the God of Israel in the wilderness, and thanked the Providence of his belief for past mercies and future blessings, was at heart more Jew than Christian. He looked upon his race as a chosen people, the heathen among whom he dwelt as outcasts to be enslaved or slaughtered.[1] His religion was self-centred and exclusive, and the thought that the light of his life, the light that should light himself to heaven, should spread among those others with whom he came in contact, troubled him not at all.

Many Englishmen of a previous century or even of his own age would have agreed with the attitude of the emigrant Boer towards the powers above and the heathen below. But there were exceptions, men to whom the last message of Christ to preach the gospel to all mankind was a command that

British, and as often indignantly denied by the Boers. Most of the allegations rested on the testimony of the British missionaries, whose word could not be implicitly trusted in this matter; but the fact was admitted by President Burgers of the Transvaal, whose statement is sufficient.

[1] The Boers defended their attitude by quoting Deuteronomy xx. 10-14: 'When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, thou shalt take unto thyself.'

The Matabili, whom the Boers drove out of the Transvaal, might have used the same argument—had they been Christians, instead of heathen—to justify their treatment of the Makalakas and Mashonas; see ch. v.

could not be denied; and these men had already been seen, and their influence widely felt, in South Africa. It was dislike of them and their methods that was largely responsible for the Great Trek from Cape Colony to the interior; yet even when the Boers went up to seek out a new land to the north, they found that here also the evangelist had gone ahead of them into the wilderness.

Early Catholic Missions to Africa.

They were far, indeed, from being the earliest evangelists in South Africa. Long before either British adventurer or Dutch trader to the Indies had ever set foot on South African soil, the Catholic Church—which to its honour has seldom ignored the universality of its work or neglected the final duty laid upon it by its Master—had sent its missionaries to the dark continent. Some accompanied the Portuguese on their earliest expeditions round the coast or through the interior—the Cross was indeed the very symbol of Latin advance; crosses were set up wherever the Portuguese explorers landed,[1] and the countries they claimed as their own were also claimed in the name of Christianity. And some of these earliest pioneers of religion at times outran the pioneers of European trade and conquest in their enthusiasm; some laid down their lives for their work, and the work survived both them and their Empire. A great Scots traveller,[2] making his way through the wilds of Central Africa, more than a century after the colonial power of the Portuguese had begun to decay, found in several places that the only sign of European civilisation having reached so far in the interior was a congregation of native Africans worshipping God after the rites of the Roman Catholic Church. They had neither priest nor missionary among them, nor had any white man visited their country for very many years;

[1] One of these crosses was discovered at Angra Pequeña, on the south-west coast of Africa, in 1824, by Captain Owen (*Voyages*). It was of marble, and had apparently been set up by Bartholomew Diaz. But the cross was broken, and the inscription almost effaced by time.

[2] Livingstone, *Journeys in South Africa*.

but they had not forgotten the creed which white men had taught their parents,[1] and they in turn were teaching their children and their neighbours the faith which old Portuguese evangelists had brought them across the seas.[2]

But the missions of the Catholic Church, faced with so vast a territory awaiting spiritual as well as temporal conquest, seldom reached beyond the limits of the Latin civil power. In that part of South Africa which was colonised by the Dutch, the older form of Christianity had never any hold; and the narrower faith of the sturdy Protestant pioneers at the Cape had no belief in the efficacy or need of Christian missions to the natives.

Here was, indeed, a root distinction of theory and practice and outlook between the two. To the Catholic, all mankind was equally entitled to the Gospel which was addressed to all mankind; all men were equal before God. To the Dutch Protestant, whose divergence from the older creed of Christendom had been sharpened by the long fight against Catholic Spain in Holland itself, not all mankind was equal or worthy of the creed which the Dutch themselves had only won after a terrible fight; certainly the

The Dutch neglect Mission Work.

[1] Forty years later, one of the priests of the Universities Mission of the Church of England heard some native boatmen on Lake Nyasa singing as a refrain:

'I have no mother,
I have no mother;
Thou art my Mother, Mary.'

The familiar words showed that a Catholic mission had been at work. But there was no mission nearer than Quilimane. The incident is related in the *Nyasa News*, the short-lived organ of the Likoma station.

[2] H. W. Nevinson, an able writer, notes in *Harper's Magazine* (June 1906) that the Catholic missions were often planted in admirably chosen spots: an establishment at Caconda in Angola, for instance, which had a tin-roofed church, gatehouse, cells for four fathers and five brothers, dormitories for a boarding-school, workshops, and a forge, stood in the middle of a large and well-cultivated garden. The visitor, who saw eighty male and female converts kneeling on the bare earthen floor of the chapel for the early service held at dawn, could not but remark that a feeling of beauty and calm seemed to brood over the whole mission.

Livingstone also comments on the well-chosen sites of the old Jesuit missions.

debased and savage Hottentots and Kafirs—whom he drove before him in South Africa as the Israelites drove the Canaanites from Palestine—had no part in a faith whose mysteries they could not understand.

'You might as well preach to the baboons,' said a Cape Dutchman, contemptuously, to a British missionary in later days, 'if you want a congregation of that sort; or let me call the apes from the mountains, or the dogs that lie before the door.' The missionary replied in scriptural phrase that 'even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the Master's table'; and the Boer, grudgingly convinced by his reasoning, answered, 'My friend, you took a hard hammer and you have broken a hard head; you shall have the Hottentots to preach to.'[1]

That attitude of contempt for the natives, which was largely based on experience, was typical of the older colonists of South Africa, and indeed it was shared at a later day by the English, who came with no such prepossessions.[2] No steps were taken by the Dutch East India Company in Holland, or its agents and rebellious subjects at the Cape, to evangelise the Hottentots or Kafirs. A trading company has no concern with the way to Heaven.[3]

Nevertheless, a few Protestant missions were founded at the Cape under the old Dutch rule. The Moravians, those

[1] *The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat*, by J. S. Moffat.

[2] Philip (*Researches in South Africa*, 1828) remarks that the English colonists at Algoa Bay, who had no feeling against the natives on their arrival in 1820, soon adopted the prejudices of the Dutch. Philip is himself too prejudiced a witness to be of much value without independent evidence, but the fact that the English settlers had their cattle raided by the Kafirs as often as their Dutch neighbours was sufficient to account for their changed opinion. Abstract benevolence seldom survives a heavy personal loss.

[3] The Dutch East India Company pursued the same policy in Java; only in Ceylon did it make any attempt to convert the natives to Christianity. But that unusual zeal was largely because the Protestant corporation discovered that its Portuguese predecessors in the island had left a large number of Catholic converts behind them, a fact which annoyed the excellent Dutch Governor at Colombo not a little. See vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. v.

devoted people whose zeal for their faith was such that they were even ready to be sold into slavery if they might preach to the negroes on the West Indian plantations, opened a few stations in South Africa in the eighteenth century. They laboured chiefly among the Hottentots, and, derided and opposed by the other Europeans of Cape Colony,[1] their measure of success was small; but some of their foundations became permanent outposts of Christianity in the wilderness that were destined in time, and often under other hands, to serve as the starting-point of that long march of pioneer evangelisation which ultimately reached to far Nyasa and the unknown north.

The Moravian Missions.

But South Africa was still almost virgin soil to the Christian missionary when Cape Colony passed to Britain in 1795. It happened, however, that that event coincided with a great wave of propagandist zeal in England; new societies were being founded to preach the Gospel to the heathen in every part of the world, devoted and enthusiastic men were forsaking home and country to convert those who had never before heard of Christianity or its promise of salvation, and many who perhaps cared little for the greatness of the British Empire cared much for the greatness of their creed. The first Protestant missions were founded in these years in India, where their jealous insults of a far older creed caused some trouble to the Protestant Governor-General at Calcutta;[2] some spent their lives to save the souls of others on the deadly West African coast;[3] others again set out for the isles of the Pacific

British Missionary Zeal.

[1] One of the conditions put forward by the short-lived Republic of Graaff Reynet was that the Moravian missionaries should be expelled—a clear proof that the Boers objected to missionaries on general principles, and not because the majority of missionaries were British. At that time there was not a single British missionary in South Africa.

[2] Vol. ii. bk. vi. ch. ii.

[3] Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. i.

and preached to cannibals and savages.[1] And in these multitudinous activities the natives of South Africa were not forgotten.

Van der Kemp, 1799.

The first evangelist sent by a British missionary society to South Africa was an extraordinary person, whose character and labours were both misjudged in his own lifetime, and the results of whose zeal were sometimes overlooked by his successors. Van der Kemp, a man of good family and education, had been both a soldier and a doctor of medicine in his native country of Holland, and seemingly had paid but little more attention to religious matters in his early manhood than the conventions of the time demanded. He had already reached the age of forty-three—a period of life at which men seldom alter the settled order of their careers save for great material advantage, or change their views except to harden them—when a sudden catastrophe revolutionised the whole manner of his being. His wife and child were drowned before his eyes; and that accident, depriving him at once of every human tie, turned his thoughts to such divine consolations as religion may bring to the afflicted. In the pious phrase, which long use has made familiar, he was converted; he determined to convert others. The London Missionary Society accepted his offer, and, in 1799, being then fifty-one years of age, he set out for South Africa.

The Foundation of Bethelsdorp, 1804.

The Cape Dutch laughed at the mission of the old Hollander, as they had laughed at the Moravians; but Kemp was a man not easily turned from his purpose. He preached to the natives, he learned their language, and in 1804 he founded a permanent mission station, at a place which he called Bethelsdorp, in memory of the covenant he had made with God in the day of his distress.[2] Here a native congregation gathered round him, and the work,

[1] Vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.

[2] Genesis xxxv. 3. 'And let us arise, and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress. . . .'

though slow and hard and often, as it seemed, of little use, went on.

The outstanding figure of the man, his earnestness, and not less his peculiarities and prejudices—which led him to bring charges against the Dutch settlers of the neighbourhood that he was unable to prove—became known by rumour and report throughout the land during the seven remaining years of his life. He died rather suddenly at Bethelsdorp in the midst of his work, in the year 1811.[1]

The eccentricities of Kemp's life were remembered by the whites; the excellence of his ministrations was not forgotten by the blacks. Many years later, when other missionaries followed in his steps, they found a lively recollection among the natives of the man, if not of the message he had brought.[2]

The establishment at Bethelsdorp continued when Kemp died. But with its founder gone its inspiration had departed, and it sank presently into a deplorable condition —a collection of some fifty miserable huts, inhabited by lean and ragged or almost naked natives, whose indolent and sleepy faces hardly convinced the passing traveller of the improvement said to be wrought by Christianity.[3] Here was indeed no encouragement for the evangelists; the seed of the new religion had fallen on evil ground. A few services were held from time to time at Bethelsdorp, a few trades or occupations nominally taught—

It decays after Kemp's Death.

[1] *A Memoir of the Rev. J. T. Van der Kemp* was published in 1812, a rare but poor book. Most of it is incorporated, word for word and without acknowledgment, in Philip's *Researches*. The admirable Philip apparently regarded literary theft in the same light that the Kafir looked on cattle-raiding or a Lovelace on seduction—as a venial offence of which no honest fellow need be ashamed.

[2] Kemp's peculiarities crop up in every book of travel; the blacks' remembrance of him is mentioned in Calderwood, *Caffres and Caffre Missions* (1857), an excellent and broad-minded work.

[3] Lichtenstein's *Travels*. Dr. Philip in his *Researches* accuses Lichtenstein of being prejudiced and inaccurate—an accusation to which Lichtenstein could have returned an effective *tu quoque*—but Philip himself admits that the condition of Bethelsdorp was deplorable when he visited it.

the blacksmith's craft, thatching, carpentry, and masonry[1] —and some of the people were dressed in European style; but these things apart, the place was no credit either to Christianity or civilisation.[2]

Other mission stations, which had been founded among the Hottentots and elsewhere since Bethelsdorp was planted, were in hardly better condition. Pacaltsdorp, founded in 1813 by the saintly evangelist Pacalt, was stagnant; a mission to the Bushmen at Toverberg, which had been opened in 1814, likewise showed little advance after ten years' work; at another station, which bore the Biblical name of Hepzibah, the soil was certainly cultivated, but as the place showed no other sign of progress it was presently abolished by the Government. Even Theopolis, whose name commemorated the noble aspiration that it should become a city of God, had done little for the elevation of man, for when visited by a missionary charged with its inspection, he admitted that education was neglected, and neither religion nor civilisation, in the ordinary meaning of the words, existed at all.[3]

Stagnation and Discouragement Elsewhere.

The natives generally remained indifferent, the white settlers remained hostile; but indifference and hostility did not discourage the missionaries. It was at this very time of failure within and enmity without, indeed, that fresh efforts

[1] In 1822, however, the natives of Bethelsdorp secured, against all comers, the government contract for transport-riding—a fact which proves they had some energy.

I owe this point, and several other items in the present and later chapters of this book, to information kindly furnished me by Mr. W. A. Elliott, of the London Missionary Society, from his own manuscripts.

It has been suggested that one reason for the failure at Bethelsdorp was the fact that it was founded on a barren stony hill, badly provided with water.—Report in *Records of Cape Colony*, 1812.

[2] Captain Owen in his *Voyages*, when visiting this part of South Africa, noticed the jealousy between the Dutch at Uitenhage and the mission station at Bethelsdorp. He remarked that the native converts were not well managed, and were denied both the rights of free men and the advantages of the slave—a sensible criticism.

That was in 1824, ten years before slavery was abolished.

[3] Philip, *Researches*.

were made and new stations were opened; and during the next few years the messengers of God, hitherto mainly occupied with the Hottentots, had pressed forward into the very heart of Kafraria. In this new campaign it was the fervent emotional Wesleyans and the harder, yet not more dogged, Scots Presbyterians who were in the forefront of what to many must have seemed a hopeless battle.

'Although I have made a reserve for the Church of England,' said Governor Cathcart to the Wesleyan missionary, William Shaw, 'I know you Methodists will be there first.' The Governor was right. Shaw himself, an earnest and broad-minded man, who was not the worse evangelist because he saw some faults in the natives and some virtues in the white colonists, founded the mission station of Wesleyville by the Keiskamma River in 1824; and there, he wrote, 'we lived in great peace and security,'[1] preaching and teaching among a small but earnest and sincere Kafir congregation.

The Advance into Kafraria, 1824-46.

Nor was encouragement lacking in the work—for a time. 'The truths of the Christian religion made a deep impression on many,' said Shaw some time later. 'The chiefs regularly attended divine worship; some of their children learned to read and write.'[2] For some years, indeed, all went well.

Unhappily the peace and security were as delusive as the drowsy calm before a thunderstorm. Wesleyville was attacked and destroyed in the Kafir War of 1834, and again twelve years later; and each time the missionaries had to flee for their lives through a burning and terror-stricken country to the British frontier fortress and city of refuge at Grahamstown. But each time Wesleyville was rebuilt by its undaunted founders, and its work was somewhat extended.

[1] Shaw, *Story of My Mission* (1860), an excellent book. See also his *Memorials of South Africa*.

[2] Shaw's evidence in *Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope* (House of Commons Papers, June 1, 1835).

The same fate had overwhelmed the Presbyterian mission at Old Lovedale, originally founded at the same time as Wesleyville, but here again the evangelists returned when the war was over, and carried on the work as before.[1]

The indomitable persistence of the missionaries in face of such disasters was not lost upon the natives, to whose savage inconstant natures the steadfast policy of the white man was a strange and novel apparition; and in time the work began to tell, as new mission stations were planted ever further afield in the untamed wilderness.

King William's Town, which eventually became the capital of British Kafraria, and a trading centre of some importance, was at its foundation in 1834 nothing more than a solitary mission station;[2] but other outposts of the faith soon followed and surrounded it, until in a few years something like a chain of Christian settlements stretched across the whole of the Kafir territories.[3]

Among the Zulus.

Further yet the Christian pioneers soon ventured in their search for souls. When Boer and Briton were struggling with each other for the possession of Natal, they found a missionary from England had already preceded the traders and trekkers of South Africa at the court of the terrible Zulu king. But here was no success for the brave evangelist; the stubborn fury of the Zulu braves would have none of the mild and gentle doctrines that won their way more easily elsewhere.

Against that solid wall of savagery the labour of the most active missionary recoiled in vain; the messengers of peace were accused of witchcraft by a people devoted to war,[4] and

[1] For an account of Lovedale, see Young, *African Wastes Reclaimed* (1902) and the official *Lovedale Past and Present: A Register* (1887).

[2] The first missionaries here were Brownlee and Jan Tzatzoe, of the London Missionary Society, in 1826; the town was named eight years later.

[3] For some details of the progress made in these settlements see bk. xxv.

[4] Gibson, *Story of the Zulus.*

for another generation Christianity found no footing among the Zulus.

Such was the first line of missionary advance in South Africa, around and along the coast from Cape Town to beyond Durban. There the evangelists stayed their progress for a time; for in the deadly fever-stricken air of Delagoa Bay they could do but little, and the long, low shores of Mozambique, where the shadow of Portuguese authority still slumbered in the tropic swamps, were hardly more propitious to their work.

It was thirty years and more before British Christianity won a firm foothold higher up the east African coast at Zanzibar; but the Christian church that was built on that island in 1873, after ten years' work among its trading Moslem people, was historically the child of the second line of missionary advance in South Africa.[1] That line ran through the interior of the country, across the Orange River, the Griqua desert, and Bechuanaland, and ever onwards in one long path to the blue waters of Nyasa, the great tropic lakes, and the sea. This was a more friendly if a longer path; and it was this ever-lengthening road that the greater missionaries trod. They were the forerunners of European civilisation as well as of Christianity, the very pioneers of light in darkness, unwitting and often unwilling pioneers of the British Empire as well as the self-sent messengers of God.

The Second Line of Missionary Advance.

It was the great London Missionary Society which led the way across the Orange River in the earliest days of British rule in South Africa, founding a station in 1803 in that wild and desolate country which borders on the desert and sometimes even takes on the character of the desert itself—a country of savage beasts and hardly less savage men. There, amid swamps and sandy strays and desert drifts, where lions and elephants roamed in packs,

Griqua Town, 1803.

[1] For the establishment of Christianity at Zanzibar, see vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. ii.

where the rhinoceros charged his prey and the hippopotamus wallowed in silent muddy pools, the two evangelists Anderson and Kramer pitched their camp, and founded a Christian centre in the wilderness.

Griquas peopled the country—a mixed tribe of half-castes, the progeny of Boer fathers and Hottentot or Bushmen mothers; and besides this bastard race were found other inhabitants of the desert, fugitive slaves from Cape Dutch farms, wandering vagabonds and outcasts, the very dregs and ullage of the thin civilisation of South Africa. To these men Anderson and his successors preached of Christianity and civilisation, teaching simple arts—the sowing of the soil and the reaping of the grain, the drainage of the swamps and the watering of the desert; and in the end, after many years of labour, they were not unrewarded. A community of some eight hundred people gathered round them; four square miles of land were covered with corn and barley, sufficient to feed the population of Griqua Town; and in the town itself were presently built a few brick and stone houses.[1]

Passing travellers noticed this little oasis of civilisation in the desert, and admitted its success; and in time the mission station at Griqua Town became a landmark for the occasional hunter or trader in the still unmapped interior, an inspiration for the evangelists to follow and extend their work through all that country.

And others followed in due course.

A mission station was opened at Warmbath on the Orange River in 1806. For the time it failed and was abandoned; but more fruitful soil was presently found in those bare and dreadful deserts of Namaqualand from which Cape Dutchmen seeking treasure had turned back in despair.[2] To Lilyfontein—one of those rare oases

Lilyfontein in Namaqualand, 1809.

[1] Thomson, in his *Travels*, remarks the progress of Griqua Town; another notice of the place is in Warren's *On the Veldt in the Seventies*.

[2] Bk. xxiii. ch. iii.

which relieve that dreary wilderness as the chance smile of a little child will light up a sunless solitary life with sudden joy—a missionary came in 1809; the wandering people of that savage inhospitable country gathered round and heard him; and within a few years more the work had been extended far afield, and the sacred names of Bethany and Bethesda, each the site of a new Christian settlement in the wilderness, marked the blank maps of the bleak Namaqua territories.[1]

Here Christianity flourished in the wild, and its success was of that emphatic kind which could not be denied even by the enemies of missions.

A great robber chief, Afrikaner by name, who had terrorised the country round, and robbed rich flocks of wandering Boers as well as the poorer cattle of the native tribes, suddenly professed his faith in Christianity, converted by the preachers of Namaqualand in 1816. His depredations ceased, and henceforth the land had rest; Afrikaner's Kraal, as the old stronghold of the tyrant had been called, was renamed the Mountain of Peace, in token of the change; and his willing aid was given in rebuilding the very mission station at Lilyfontein, which he had once destroyed on a wild raid in some fit of sudden passion.

The conversion of this notorious brigand caused amazement in Cape Colony, and was rightly claimed as a triumph for Christianity; but not less triumphal was the quiet progress of civilisation in these solitary stations of the wilderness.

For the messengers of God did not forget that they were also the standard-bearers of that high humanity which had sent them forth into the untamed places of the earth. At Lilyfontein and elsewhere the converts were taught to dig and sow, to reap and store, to build and roof their houses; famine was no more in the land which they had taken, and

[1] Bethesda was founded in 1808, Bethany in 1814, by the London Missionary Society; the Wesleyans were also active in these parts.

even the desert began to lose its terrors when irrigation enlarged the bounds of the little settlement.

In time this admirable work attracted the attention of the Cape Government, which professed a general authority that was not enforced over those bare regions. The methods of the missionaries could not but be warmly approved when such results of their labours were seen; and the chief evangelist at Lilyfontein, who had established his influence over the people he had converted, was entrusted with certain administrative powers. He was required by the Government to apportion the land for corn and gardens; to plan the houses and to see them built; and he had the right to expel the disobedient and unruly from the mission settlement—a weapon of no small weight where the settlement was no more than an oasis in the desert.

But the power so well obtained was not abused, nor did the missionaries refrain from inaugurating among their converts some of the political as well as the religious institutions of England. The pale shadow of the British Constitution fluttered over the wilds of Namaqualand, the elements of representative government were introduced, and a senate or council of twelve native members with a missionary president sat every month to discuss the affairs and decide the policy of the colony. Had the debates of that quaint experiment in hybrid Parliaments survived, one might have added a page of no mean interest to the varied annals of the constitutional history of the British Empire.

Its Native Senate.

In due course other mission stations were again founded in Namaqualand on similar lines. But the pioneer work of Christianity in this country was not to close without a tragedy and a martyrdom.

William Threlfall was a young and enthusiastic Christian, who had embraced with ardour the chance of becoming a missionary among the heathen. He had longed to visit Madagascar, whither many evangelists had already gone from

England to convert the Malagasies;[1] but when no opportunity came for work in that great island he accepted with thankfulness the occasion of settling at a mission station in South Africa. For some time he stayed at Delagoa Bay, a place which appealed to him 'because it was near Madagascar,' but that fever-haunted coast had nearly made an end of him, as of many another man. Stricken down with malignant disease and a delirium that almost closed in death, Threlfall did not forget or abandon his errand; 'I had such views of Christ as I seldom had before,' he cried in an ecstasy of fervour at the crisis of his fever, and when he was recovered he settled at Kamiesberg in Namaqualand, at a mission station founded there in 1817. Here he worked awhile with the resident evangelist, but it was still his wish to enlarge the sphere of Christian effort from one oasis in the desert to another, and in 1825 he set forth with two native converts to search the country for fresh opportunities.

Martyrdom of Threlfall, 1825.

The time was unhappily chosen. A famine gripped the thinly peopled land, and in the stress of hunger every stranger was an enemy. One wild night, as they rested at some rude shelter in the desert, Threlfall and his companions were set upon by Bushmen. They were defenceless—for the messengers of peace were seldom armed—and the three were slain. Wolves and vultures devoured their bodies, but the memory of the martyrs was a sacred heritage for the infant church in South Africa.[2]

This work in Namaqualand was but a branch from the main line of advance into the interior, and Griqua Town—the last station across the Orange River where the rudiments of Christianity and civilisation could be found—was still the starting-point

The Mission Road to the North.

[1] Vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv.

[2] For the missions in Namaqualand, see Broadbent's *Missionary Martyr of Namaqualand*; and Cheeseman's *Story of William Threlfall.*

for those who turned their faces towards the unknown north.

It was not long suffered to remain the last outpost in the wilderness. The steady advance of evangelistic effort made Griqua Town, within the bare lifetime of a single generation, the beginning, not the end, of the new road towards the north. This was indeed the heroic age of mission work, a time when great men engaged in the business of saving souls, when Christianity marched hand in hand with pioneering through the wilderness, and outran trader and colonist alike, preparing not only the way to heaven, but the road of earthly progress and material prosperity.

Other stations sprang up around and beyond Griqua Town almost year by year. Some evangelistic centres were founded, flourished for a time, and perished; yet many proved permanently successful. The controversial name of Dr. Philip lives in the mission and town of Philippopolis, which was founded in his honour in 1825, across the Orange River; and mostly those missionaries who pitched their tent in well-chosen spots, those who—like the monks of old and the Jesuits of a later day—found fertile and well-watered places for their settlements, saw their little gospel centre take on in time a larger character as a trading mart between new white traveller and native, or perhaps become a town with European population and the capital of some new province.[1]

[1] Once at least there was a scandal in this frontier work, which deserves to be remembered. One Stefanos, a Pole of Greek descent who had come out to the Cape in the days of the Dutch East India Company, took to forging banknotes, and was condemned to death; but he escaped from prison, and made his home with a missionary on the Sack River. The excellent evangelist gave him succour, but one night discovered that his guest was about to murder him. He forgave him, and sent him away, whereupon Stefanos settled among the Koras, and straightway proclaimed himself a prophet. 'He built a temple under the edge of a thick grove of mimosas; erected an altar, on which he encouraged these silly people to make their offerings selected from the best of their flocks and herds; with solemn mummery he burned part of the victim and appropriated the rest to himself; sometimes taking advantage of a thunderstorm, or the overflowing of a river, he was more exorbitant in his demands, and even

Many of the missionaries instinctively disliked and opposed these new developments—distrusting the trader who brought temptation with him in the wilderness, the colonist who took the land and mastered it and its people and perhaps paid but scant heed to its Christian pioneers; but the forces they had set in motion were too strong for them. For the evangelists sowed a double seed—of Christianity and civilisation; and while they reaped their due harvest of souls, others more masterful than they stepped in and took the material reward of mundane wealth and territory.

Immediately to the north and east of Griqua Town, the pleasant pastoral country that is now the Orange Free State was held in the early nineteenth century by various Bechuana tribes.[1] This was a widespread numerous people, less warlike than the Zulus, and less indifferent to persuasion than the Kafirs. Although filthy in their habits, and as destitute of godliness as cleanliness, they were a kindly, curious folk, not inhospitable to the stranger nor unwilling to hear new things.[2]

Among the Bechuanas, 1816.

found it expedient to require the young damsels to be brought to the temple.' Truly a pretty rogue. He had a debate with the shocked and scandalised missionary, when he 'insisted,' we are told, 'chiefly on the prophecy of Joel, and introduced many passages from the Revelations. His eyes rolled and flashed, his tongue moved with incessant volubility'; in short, he conveyed to the pious mind 'a striking idea of the Chief of Hell.'

But the false prophet hardly seems to have had the worst of the argument.

[1] The name Bechuana was unknown to the people themselves. It is believed to have come from the expression *Ba-chuana*, 'they are alike,' used by the natives to describe their neighbours, to indicate that all these tribes were of a common stock.

The first European travellers among these people were Truter and Somerville in 1801, closely followed by the more famous Lichtenstein two years later.

[2] Such was the general testimony of the missionaries. The hunter Selous gave them a much less favourable character fifty years later. He admits that all the Bechuanas wore European clothes, even to the top-hat, which he thought no improvement; but he described them generally as 'the stingiest, most begging, grasping and altogether disagreeable people it is possible to imagine. They expect a stranger to give them everything, but will not give him a drop of milk until he pays for it' (*A Hunter's Wanderings*). But in the meantime Bechuanaland had become a highroad for European traders, and the tribes had learnt the value of supplies; hence, probably, their changed character.

Among these people came two pioneer evangelists—Hamilton and Evans—in 1816, to preach the Christian faith and scriptures. Permission was at first withheld; but soon after, when consent was given by the native chief, Hamilton was left to do the work alone. His presence there was not without its influence; but more fruitful was the errand of the Wesleyan missionary, Broadbent, who carried Christianity across the Orange River to another tribe of Bechuanas—the Barolongs—in 1822. The natives heard him preaching, and some at least believed his words. 'In twelve months from the time of our settling at Maquassi,' wrote Broadbent, 'there was a quietness and stillness (on the Sunday) which served to remind us of the Lord's Day in our native land.'

Here it seemed that the work quickly prospered, and Broadbent, too, was more happily placed than many of his comrades in new countries. He built himself an ample wooden house, whose single story was divided into bedroom, general living-room, and store-room for food and books; the floor was made of powdered anthills, crushed and trodden flat, an art which his native pupils had taught their master; the doors and window-frames were built of packing-cases, the roof was covered with ox-hide and thatch, the wood walls filled with clay and white-washed—altogether a solid, serviceable dwelling in the wilderness.[1]

Robert Moffat at Kuruman, 1821.

A greater man than Broadbent, one indeed who ranks among the great evangelists of the world, was already working by his side among the Bechuanas. The honest, homely parents of Robert Moffat had been reluctant to let their son take up the work of a missionary among savage people, but after much searching of heart the old Scots couple decided with reluctance not to oppose the young man's wish, 'lest haply they should be

[1] See Broadbent, *Introduction of Christianity among the Barolongs* (1865).

found fighting against God's will'; the same stern, simple piety upheld their son and the wife who joined him in the wilderness. It was this sure conviction that he was doing the will of God which filled Moffat when he settled at Kuruman among the Bechuanas, 'a solitary missionary with little prospect of help. But how can we be faint or weary in well-doing,' he added, 'when we see immortal souls dying for lack of knowledge?'

His first experience might have disheartened the bravest, for five years of preaching and teaching brought no results whatever. If at one moment Moffat was able to report hopefully that 'in this corner of hell the dry bones begin to shake,' at another he was frankly discouraged. The little church which he had built was nearly always empty—'the natives seem to think they do us a favour by coming,' he wrote sadly—and the school which he had opened was equally neglected. And the Bechuanas stole the mission corn, the Bushmen stole the mission cattle; some weak-kneed Hottentot converts had become a shame to the infant church, and a native rain-maker who failed to dispel a drought blamed the white men for sorcery—an accusation that was readily believed.

His Discouragement.

But Moffat learned his lesson from adversity. The failure of the church and school was largely because he knew little of the Bechuana language; the failure of the unfriendly rain-maker taught him the need of irrigation.

Gradually he acquired the native tongue, reduced it to writing, and for years it was a labour of love in his leisure hours to translate the Christian scriptures into the vernacular, and to print, first the Gospels and the Psalms, then the whole Bible, in the Bechuana language. The task needed enormous persistence and industry, but the immediate cause of Moffat's success as a missionary was not the message of eternal life, but the bringing to this people of temporal salvation.

There came a year when famine gripped the land. Al around Kuruman men were starving in the droughty country pitiful gaunt spectres of humanity searching th parched, cracked earth for food—but at Kuruma alone was plenty. For Moffat had utilised the water fron the great spring at Kuruman to irrigate the country, the crop had still come up when no rain fell, and the people who hac listened to the native rain-maker when he told them of th white man's sorcery now saw the sorcery was to their own advantage. This work of Moffat's was indeed a miracle in their eyes, and he had his reward. The gospel was believec when the gospeller was so successful; in 1829, the year of th famine, Kuruman was suddenly converted to Christianity the religion which could save man from starvation in a drought

And Success.

From that day Christianity won its way steadily among the Bechuanas, spreading from tribe to tribe until a few con verts were found in almost every village. Moffat was a stern disciplinarian, but the people he had saved now loved him and invitations came from others who had heard of his great work that he should visit them.

But mostly he remained at Kuruman, founding his place deeper and deeper in the heart of the converts. A great church was built, replacing the old barn of wattle and daub where the first unattended services had been held ten years before; better schools were added, a handsome stone house superseded the original wooden hut of the missionary; and other signs of his work were presently seen in the country around. What had been alternately a morass and a desert before the coming of Moffat—roamed at one time by wild beasts and at another abandoned by every living creature save man—was now transformed into fields and gardens, bearing corn and flowers, whispering with grey willows and soft syringas—the eloquent tribute of Nature to the messenger of God in the wilderness that was wilderness no more.

Henceforth Kuruman and not Griqua Town was the out-

post of Christianity in South Africa. The line had been advanced a long stage into the interior by the work of Robert Moffat.[1]

Already, indeed, the way was preparing for a further advance to the north. In the year 1829 two white traders had ventured into the far interior to shoot elephants and barter with the natives, and these men, pushing their way beyond the utmost range of the Bechuana people, had found themselves in the Transvaal country among the wild and warlike Matabili—a Zulu tribe whose joy was battle and whose life the death of others.

Among the Matabili, 1829-54.

Grim proofs of their industry were everywhere apparent. The country round their settlements had once been thickly populated, as the scattered burnt remains of native villages and townships showed; but in some wild irruption of conquest the Matabili had overcome their weaker neighbours, and the place was now desolate. The few aborigines of the conquered race who survived that fearful orgy of slaughter hid their frightened faces from the casual stranger, fearing lest they should meet the death they had so hardly escaped; only the dreadful heaps of human bones picked clean told the story of this savage tragedy to the two white traders who passed through the land that the Matabili had conquered.

Yet Mosilikatsi, the great chief of this fearful people, received the white men kindly. He heard them out with interest when they spoke of Europe, and the savage monarch entertained them royally with honour in his court. The mention of Christian missions led to an account of Moffat and his work on the one side, the expression of a desire to see him on the other—and now the way seemed suddenly to open before the messengers of God into the very heart of Africa.

Moffat visited the savage king; new mission stations were opened in the wild country which lay between the Bechuanas

[1] See Moffat's *Journals, Scenes and Labours in South Africa*, and the *Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat*.

and the Matabili, and often the lone evangelists confessed that lions, jackals, and hyænas formed their only congregation: but almost before the opportunity seemed to open it had passed, like the sudden unexpected vision and quick vanishment of the sun among the racing clouds in a gale of spring. Mosilikatsi indeed still welcomed Robert Moffat at his court, but he would not adopt the white man's creed;[1] nor would his warrior people for a moment listen to the peaceful precepts of Christianity.

But many things had happened between the day when the first invitation came to Kuruman in 1829 and the last visit of Robert Moffat to his friend the Matabili king nearly thirty years later. The advance guard of the great Boer trek had meantime pushed across the Vaal into the Matabili country, and the first contact of armed Europeans with that fiery people had ended in attack and sudden bloodshed when the domains of Mosilikatsi were invaded.[2] The Matabili were defeated in a terrible fight, compelled to abandon their country to the invaders, and seek new homes north of the Limpopo; the enforced exodus did not dispose them to listen more readily to the new doctrines. In this case Christianity had brought not peace but a sword, not a friendly counsellor but a dangerous enemy, who had come to claim the country for his own, to enslave its people as he had enslaved the Hottentots. When one body of white men could do this thing, might not another do the same?

Against the stern determination of the Matabili to preserve their independence the missionaries henceforth strove in vain. A Christian station was indeed established at Inyati,

[1] Moffat's third and last visit to Mosilikatsi in 1854 is described by himself in vol. xxvi. of the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*. 'Your God has sent you to help me and heal me,' said the chief, who was suffering from dropsy; but the old savage would not change his creed for Christianity.

[2] Broadbent, *Introduction of Christianity among the Barolongs*, admits that the Matabili attacked the Boers first. The admission, coming from a missionary, is conclusive.

in their new territory between the Limpopo and the Zambesi, and some time later an evangelist settled at Hope Fountain near their capital of Buluwayo; but in neither case was the work of much, if any, effect. Only force could touch that savage people, and to force the messengers of peace could not appeal. Another generation passed before the civil power of Britain in South Africa reached as far as the evangelists on the northward road, and the Matabili who had refused the white man's creed were subdued by the white man's guns.[1]

The Boers attempt to close the Interior.

But with the coming of the migrant Boers into the Transvaal the future course of mission work and the way of the mission road in the interior was entirely changed. The old feud between Cape Dutch farmer and British evangelist[2] as to the treatment and rights of the aborigines at once revived. The missionaries wished every native to be their friend, and only the slave-raider was their enemy; but 'the Boers,' in the terrible words which a black used to a missionary, 'destroyed their enemies and made slaves of their friends.'[3]

They did more. They expelled the missionaries as well as the Matabili from the Transvaal,[4] and the great station and church which Robert Moffat had built at Kuruman was only saved because it lay on the border of the desert, beyond the main tide of the trekkers' advance. And they determined to shut up the whole interior against the British missionary, the British trader, the British colonist, and indeed against British influence altogether.

One man alone, the greatest of all the missionaries, perhaps the greatest of all Britons who wrote their names across

[1] For the conquest of the Matabili, see ch. v.
[2] See bk. xxiii. ch. iv., and bk. xxiv. ch. i.
[3] Livingstone's *Journeys in South Africa.*
[4] *Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat.*
The Boers allowed one or two German missionaries to preach in the Transvaal, but they would tolerate neither British nor American,

South Africa, foiled that aim, and maintained the open road to the interior of the continent.

That man was David Livingstone.[1]

David Livingstone, 1813-73.

David Livingstone, the second child of a large Scots family, was born on the second floor of a decent tenement-house at Blantyre, near Glasgow, on 19th March 1813. His mother was a capable household manager, and a woman withal of sweet and tolerant disposition; his father, who traced descent from the Highlanders of the Isle of Ulva, and one of whose forbears was slain on Culloden field fighting for the Stuart cause, was a small retail trader in tea, and a man moreover whose religious convictions coloured the whole tenor of his life. But neither the creed nor the industry of the elder Livingstone sufficed to lift the family from the poor circumstances into which it had fallen; and young David therefore, after surviving the usual domestic accidents of childhood, was sent to work at the age of ten in the cotton-spinning factory near his home, that his small earnings might relieve in some degree his mother's anxiety over the straining family budget.[2]

The hours of labour were long and tedious, from six in the morning till eight at night; and the lad, who had already shown a love of reading and an interest in science, seemed destined to become no more than one of the minor human cogs in the great wheel of Glasgow industry. Such a fate as this had crushed or soured the spirit of many a rising youth; but Livingstone, who was considered by his mates 'just a

[1] The life and work of Livingstone is almost a small literature in itself. There are biographies by Dr. Blaikie, Hughes and Johnston, all of which are valuable and based on original material; but Livingstone's own works are still the best record: the *Journeys in South Africa*, *The Zambesi and its Tributaries*, and the *Last Journals of Livingstone*, edited with care and knowledge by the Rev. Horace Waller, one of the original party of the Universities' Mission in Nyasa. To these may be added Stanley's *How I found Livingstone in Central Africa*.

[2] Several members of the Livingstone family emigrated to Canada, like many another Scot of the time. Had David likewise gone, how different might have been the destinies of Britain in Africa!

sulky, quiet, feckless boy,' was not to be denied of knowledge by adverse circumstances. With part of his first week's wages he bought a Latin grammar; by improvising a reading-desk on the spinning-jenny he attended he was able to read even during working hours; and when the day's dreary labour was done he attended evening classes, like other lads of similar energy and ambition, and often sat far into the night over his studies, until, as he records, his mother, fearful for his health, would discover him, and snatch the book from her son's weary hand.

But after 1836 the Blantyre factory knew Livingstone no more. Influenced, no doubt, by the monotony of the employment, he resolved to change his way of life; impressed probably by the religious atmosphere of his home, he decided to adopt the calling of a missionary. But although there could be no question of his sincerity he found the path of preparation for his career less easy than many a lesser man. He was burdened at the outset by too great abilities for the task in hand; he possessed many qualities not considered necessary to the professional evangelist, but in the familiar trappings of the conventional missionary of the day he was something wanting. He had none of the rather boisterous piety of the time; his delivery as a preacher was hesitating, and he lacked the unctuous fervency of prayer then considered fitting in those whose errand was the conversion of the heathen. For these reasons Livingstone was only accepted as a candidate with some demur by the London Missionary Society after he had taken a short course of general study at Glasgow University, and spent a term of theological reading and two years of medical training in London.

Yet this young man, who was destined to become the greatest of Protestant evangelists, was in truth much more than this; for beneath the sober mantle of the missionary beat the undaunted heart of the adventurer and explorer; beside the familiar phrases of the Christian advocate was the patient

seeking after knowledge of the man of science. He was to save poor savage souls from darkness and damnation, and minister to heathen bodies in sickness and distress; but beyond this he was to open up the road through Central Africa, and to be the forerunner, not of Christianity only, but of the British Empire and of European civilisation in those dark lands of ignorance which he made known to the world.

A broader, bigger man than his contemporary mission workers, an idealist who looked for the conversion of the whole world to Christianity, he realised that the world must be discovered before it could be converted, and that preaching was but part of the work before him; and he possessed not only the passion for knowledge inherent in the Scot but also a sturdy common sense and humour, in both which qualities too many of his missionary colleagues were notably deficient. Often in his travels was an awkward situation saved by a timely jest; and if Livingstone suffered many hard knocks at the hands of fate, he kept to the last his love of fun, which triumphed over the momentary irritation of an occasionally hasty nature; and with this went a kindly heart, and a broad and catholic sympathy with all things human.

Even when accepted as a missionary, however, Livingstone's future career still hung in an uncertain balance. At first he was inclined to work in China, and only the outbreak of war between that empire and Britain in 1839[1] prevented him from going to the Far East, and probably spending his life there. The West Indies were also suggested as a field for labour, and refused by the young probationer; it was a meeting in London with Robert Moffat of Kuruman that finally decided Livingstone in 1840, and late in the autumn of that year he sailed for the Cape. Almost at once he crossed the Orange River, the recognised boundary between the settled life of the colony and the wilder avocations of the pioneer; and it was not long before his thoughts turned to

[1] See vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. vi.

exploration. 'What do you say to my going up to Abyssinia?' he wrote to a friend at this time; 'I think one may be quite safe if alone and without anything to excite the cupidity of the natives. It might be six or seven years before I should return, but I could soon make known a little of the blessed plan of mercy to the different tribes on the way; and if I should never return, perhaps my life will be as profitably spent as a forerunner as in any other way. I thank God I have no desire to accumulate money. Whatever way my life can be best spent to promote the glory of our gracious God, I feel desirous to do it.' In those few sentences the whole future of Livingstone's life of missionary-exploration, even to its lonely end among the tropic swamps of Central Africa, seems to be revealed.

At this time he had no thought of marriage, and indeed he scoffed openly at the scant attractions of the ladies of the colony and particularly at the daughters of the missionaries, who in his opinion had 'miserably contracted minds'; but that kind of talk, in which every young man of marriageable age is apt to indulge, soon had its customary sequel. In 1844 Livingstone married Mary, the daughter of Robert Moffat, a capable woman whom her husband describes as 'not romantic, a matter-of-fact, little, thick, black-haired girl, sturdy and all I want.'

The union was one of quiet affection rather than deep passion; but in the end the wife had to pay the usual price of marrying a great man. She took the second place in his life, and saw herself supplanted by his work. It does not appear that she complained, and complaint would have led to his unhappiness—for he loved her—as well as hers; but in the long years of solitude that were to come she may have realised that fame is not won without some sacrifice.

At Mabotsa among the Bechuana people Livingstone built a house for his bride with his own hands; and here for five

years he stayed, preaching and teaching not without success among the natives of that country.[1]

It was his first, and indeed, his only permanent home, for soon his thoughts were turned again towards the north and exploration. Marriage had but delayed a little the great work of discovery to which his life was now to be dedicated; and in June 1849 Livingstone began his first expedition into the unknown interior, travelling northwards with two English sportsmen to test the truth of the native tales of a great lake whose name of Ngami was said to mark its curious resemblance to the shape of a giraffe.[2] The route thither lay through the barren dreary Kalahari country, a place that was almost desert,[3] a land of dry and glistening salt-pans, of the kind that had so often disappointed travellers in Australia with their evidence of desiccation.

His First Journey North, 1849.

In these desolate and forbidding territories few people lived; but two months of this dismal travel brought the party to the shores of Lake Ngami. Its waters were slightly brackish, save when the lake was full after the rainy season; there was clear evidence that its expanse had shrunk, and was indeed still shrinking; but still it remained a

[1] On one of Livingstone's journeys this house was raided and burnt by the Boers, and his library destroyed. Paul Kruger, afterwards President of the Transvaal Republic, was one of the raiding party. The excuse or the reason for the act, as given by Kruger in his *Memoirs*, was that Livingstone had supplied the native chief Sechele with arms.

[2] *Ngami* is the nearest equivalent of a Bushman word meaning giraffe; *Tlotle*, the Bechuana name of the lake, means the same. The resemblance in shape is rather fanciful, but the lake has shrunk considerably in size since the name was given.

[3] Livingstone noticed, however, when crossing it that the desert once had wells and water, and even yet had a good deal of insect life, while it was still a refuge for beaten tribes that had been driven by stronger races from more fertile countries.

Major Gibbons, who travelled through this country fifty years later, says it was wilderness rather than desert, some parts being well wooded and having good pasture fit for occupation.

The word Kalahari derives from the Sechuana tongue, meaning *Saltpans*.

considerable sheet, and the human eye could nowhere see across its surface.[1]

After a short examination of its shores the explorers struck back homewards; but during the next five years Livingstone and his companions made other journeys to Ngami; and in time the conviction forced itself upon them that the lake was the head of a large river system, probably the southernmost of a considerable chain of inland seas of which some rumour had long since been heard. If that were so, it was clear that a new and better country lay beyond the Bechuana desert —a land of plenty and perhaps profusion, a fertile and well-watered territory reaching to the tropics.

Here was work for explorer and adventurer, and, since these lands were certainly peopled by more than the scanty population of Bechuana tribes, work too for the evangelist. In that conviction Livingstone went forward to search out the secrets of the interior; with those ends in view, he plunged into that new world.

He Visits Barotsi-land.

On one of these early journeys Livingstone and his companions greeted Sebituani, the great chief of the Makololo, who had established his power and one of the unstable native empires of Africa within the last few years over the Ngami countries and controlled the Barotsi valley of the upper Zambesi. A great conqueror, and a man of some administrative talent as well as military genius, he had made himself feared and respected even by his enemy and rival, Mosilikatsi of the terrible Matabili; but, unlike this mighty neighbour, Sebituani was famed for the kindness of his disposition and the lenity of his rule. He knew something of the white men by report,[2] and, since he

[1] In 1896 the traveller Passarge found that all the water on Ngami had disappeared, and only swamps and reeds remained. It may, of course, have been an exceptionally dry season.

[2] Livingstone found that white traders and hunters for ivory had already made their way to the north of Lake Ngami. He notes that they were able to purchase ten good large tusks at the price of a

desired to have converse and trade with them, he sent messages of friendship to these travellers in his country. Unhappily he died soon after their first visit, but his son, a lad of eighteen, who reigned in his father's stead,[1] was not less friendly.

Livingstone was now on the eve of his first great discovery. On the return journey from the court of Sebituani, in June 1851, he sighted the Zambesi River at Sesheke. The discovery was made at the end of the dry season, when the waters were at their lowest; yet even then the stream was from three to six hundred yards wide, and it was evident from this that the Zambesi, which had been thought to rise much farther to the eastward, was one of the great waterways of the world.

He crosses the Continent.

The discovery of the Zambesi led to the first of Livingstone's great journeys. With his friends the Makololo and a modest outfit of clothes and stores and goods for barter, he struck westward up the river, and right across Angola. 'We marched along with our father,' said his loyal native followers, 'believing what the ancients had always told us was true, that the world has no end; but all at once the world said to us, "I am finished; there is no more of me!"' It was the sea that lay before them, the broad Atlantic Ocean and the Portuguese capital of St. Paulo de Loanda.

A brief rest in Loanda, and Livingstone turned back with the Makololo to the Zambesi. An attack of rheumatic fever —the first serious illness he had had in Africa—delayed them awhile as they passed through the dense tropical forest; but after weeks of steady travel Livingstone at last led his party safely back to the Barotsi Valley and the Zambesi early in 1855. They were received as those that return from the

musket worth 13s., a rate which left ample profit, even when the heavy transport charges and the risks of the trade were taken into consideration.

[1] This lad only reigned till 1864, and at his death his father's empire fell to pieces, after the manner of all the unstable states of savages. See chap. vi. of this book.

dead, with joy and astonishment; but Livingstone would not stay with his friends the Makololo. He had determined to cross the continent from west to east—a feat no white man had yet performed.[1]

The journey began on 3rd November 1855, and for some time it lay through scenes so lovely that they must, said Livingstone, have been gazed upon by angels in their flight; and then, almost suddenly, they came upon the great falls of the Zambesi, where the black basalt bed in which the river runs is cracked and riven, and the whole stream takes a flying leap of three hundred feet downwards. Here, on one of the islands almost on the verge of the cataract, where the waters steady themselves for their fall through space, and their rising spray overspreads the air in a cloud that forms an unending rainbow, the native chiefs would come to worship; this stupendous chasm was the natural abode of their rude deities, and the eternal rainbow which circled above was called the pestle of the gods, the very emblem of supernatural power and mystery which none might touch.

Livingstone gazed long at the magnificent spectacle, which he named the Victoria Falls[2] in honour of his sovereign, before he proceeded downstream.

> The Lee-am-bye! Nobody knows
> Whither it comes and whither it goes,

ran the native canoe-song;[3] none had yet explored the full

[1] The Portuguese claimed to have done so, and even to have established a chain of communications between Angola and Mozambique. Had they done so they would have stayed the northward expansion of the British Empire in South Africa, and altered the whole course of African history. But Livingstone had no difficulty in disproving their claim.

[2] The more poetic native name was Mosio-a-tunga—'The place where smoke sounds.'

[3] The name Lee-am-bye was the Barotsi title for the Zambesi. The word signifies the Great River.

It must be noted that Livingstone did not discover the actual source of the Zambesi, which was unknown until Major Gibbons discovered it in 1898, in a black spongy bog, six miles from where the Congo takes its rise.

length of the Zambesi from source to mouth, and day by day Livingstone came upon new country and unknown people. His little expedition lived by hunting the big game which was found in plenty in the magnificent Zambesi Valley; permission was asked to hunt from the chieftains along the banks, and tribute was scrupulously paid by the offering of part of the prey to these local rulers, in accordance with the custom of the country. By these means Livingstone passed in safety, and gained for the English a good name in a barbarous but not unfriendly land.[1]

At length, after weeks of travel, they came upon the first sign of the Portuguese colonies of East Africa at Zumbo. It was no more than a few stone ruins, the remains of a church, and on one side a broken bell with the sacred letters I.H.S. stamped upon it with a cross—a melancholy record of abandonment and failure, of a decaying empire and a lost outpost of Christianity.[2] But even this abandoned outpost was a sign that the travellers were coming near to European settlement once more; a day or so later Livingstone chanced upon some native subjects of the Portuguese, and finally he fetched up in the old Portuguese colonial town of Tete on 3rd March 1856. The remaining course of the Zambesi to the sea was already generally known to the Portuguese traders, and these lower reaches of the river could have few surprises even for the

[1] That good name stood the English in good stead forty years later, when these Zambesi countries became part of the British Empire as Northern Rhodesia. See ch. vi.

[2] Livingstone was too great a man to cavil at a form of Christianity other than that which he professed. Unlike many of his fellow-missionaries of Protestantism, he recognised the value of the Jesuits' work in South Africa; and in one remarkable passage, written at Rio de Janeiro on his way out to South Africa, he said: 'The [Catholic] Church [here] is beautiful. If ever I join an establishment, it will not be the poor degenerate sisters at home, but the good mother herself in Brazil.'

He was not unrewarded for his tribute to the Jesuits. Many years afterwards, an English traveller found that the grave of Mrs. Livingstone at Shupanga was being carefully tended by that order. (Gibbons, *Africa from South to North*, 1904.)

stranger; and after resting for awhile at Tete, Livingstone proceeded in leisurely fashion to Quilimane, where he arrived two months later.

The great journey from west to east of the continent had added largely to geographical knowledge, and Livingstone's minute observations of natural conditions and of the human and animal inhabitants of these regions increased enormously the value of his discoveries; but the real importance of his work was far more even than this. By his journey from Angola to Quilimane, down the whole length of the Zambesi, if not actually along its whole course,[1] and through the heart of what is now the British colony of Rhodesia, he had changed the whole future of South Africa. For the great mission road from the Orange River to the north, which had been deflected from its course by the savage Matabili and menaced by the Transvaal Boers, was now again extended inland. The emigrant Cape Dutch reached no farther than the Limpopo on their northward trek, and the Matabili had never spread across the broad waters of the Zambesi, but Livingstone's journey from the old outpost of Robert Moffat at Kuruman to his own first home at Mabotsa, and onwards to Lake Ngami and the Zambesi, had outflanked both Boers and Matabili. From that day the mission road and the British road to the north reached as far as the great river that divides South Africa from the full tropics. And presently it reached even farther. For the fever of adventure and discovery still fired David Livingstone; and after a short visit to England—where he was received with the honour which was his due—he returned to South Africa to press into the very heart of the tropics, hoping perhaps even to decide that ancient riddle as to the sources of the Nile and to fulfil the boast of his young manhood,

[1] Livingstone made several short cuts in his journey, often leaving the stream to explore and joining it lower down. The first definite chart of the river was drawn up by Major Gibbons in 1899: see his book, *Africa from South to North*.

that he should reach Abyssinia. It was this riddle that in the end led him to his death.

Before starting on this journey Livingstone had severed his connection with the London Missionary Society, and entered the service of the British Government as Consul for Zambesia. For this change of employment he was criticised by some of those miserable, petty-minded people whose jaundiced pleasure it is to vent their spleen upon great men; but Livingstone remained at heart a missionary as well as an explorer to the end of his days. None that have read the private entries of his last diaries can doubt the reality of his interest in religious propaganda; and his defence against detraction of this kind was both adequate and admirable in temper. 'Nowhere have I ever appeared,' he wrote, 'as anything else but a servant of God, who has simply followed the leadings of His Hand. My views of what is missionary duty are not so contracted as those whose ideal is a dumpy sort of man with a Bible under his arm. I have laboured in bricks and mortar, at the forge and carpenter's bench, as well as in preaching and medical practice. I am serving Christ when shooting a buffalo for my men, or taking an astronomical observation, or,' as he added with gentle sarcasm, 'writing to those who forget that charity which is eulogised as "thinking no evil."'

The Discovery of Nyasa, 1859.

Accompanied on this journey by his wife and a few chosen friends, Livingstone entered the Zambesi at its delta in May 1858. A steamer had been chartered—it proved a wretched failure for the work of river exploration—and it was Livingstone's intention to make his way up the Zambesi as far as the great tributary which he had noticed on his previous visit, and then to sail up that stream, which the Portuguese called the Shiré, until he should reach the great lake in which it rose, and of which several vague rumours had reached him on his previous travels. The work began, and soon Livingstone was on the very threshold of the marvellous country of Nyasa,

the country which was yet to bear his name; but for awhile it eluded search. The travellers had to return to the junction of the Shiré with the Zambesi, to quiet the suspicions of the hostile tribes along its banks, and finally to go back to the Portuguese town of Tete, where the previous transcontinental expedition had ended. On their way they passed the great cataracts of the Shiré River, naming them after the President of the English Royal Geographical Society, Sir Roderick Murchison, who had shown Livingstone much kindness; and in the March of 1859 they tried again.

Landing at Chibusa near Katanga (afterwards known as Port Blantyre) they left their wretched, leaking vessel here, and began the overland tramp in the direction where they supposed the lake to lie; but the great waters of Nyasa again escaped them. Instead they lighted on Lake Shirwa, a small and brackish sheet, but this was clearly not the vast inland sea they sought. Again they pressed onwards, through the beautiful and fertile country of the Shiré Highlands; and at length they halted for inquiries. But the natives whom they asked the way misunderstood, and denied all knowledge of the lake. They knew, they said, nothing more than the river, which was two moons' journey long, and which sprang from perpendicular rocks that reached almost to the skies. Further conversation made the matter clear; the native word for lake and river was the same, and the lake itself was but a few hours' distant. The march was at once resumed, and the following day, at noon on 16th September 1859, David Livingstone and his party stood on the shores of Lake Nyasa —the first Europeans to set eyes on that great sheet of water.

Little more was done on this first visit, for some members of the expedition had been left at Chibusa, and Livingstone was uncertain of their safety. He returned, and the remaining months of 1859 and the whole of 1860 were spent exploring the Shiré and Zambesi rivers, Livingstone pushing his way up the latter stream until

The Nyasa Mission, 1861.

he reached the Victoria Falls and revisited his old friends the Makololo of the Barotsi Valley. Not until 1861 was attention given again to Lake Nyasa; but by now new hopes had formed. A party of pioneer evangelists under Bishop Mackenzie of the Universities' Mission, an institution which had sprung from the enthusiasm roused by Livingstone's last visit home, had arrived on the Zambesi; and these devoted men prepared to spend their lives in planting Christianity among the tribes that dwelt by the shores of Lake Nyasa.[1]

Its Failure.

Hopes now ran high, enthusiasm knew no bounds; another great extension of the mission road to the north seemed certainly assured. To these first pioneers of their creed the splendid vision that all Central Africa should worship Christ appeared a promise of the immediate future: but disaster followed in the train of hope, as the clouds of evening will obscure the late declining sun of a summer day. The mission was planted in due course at Chibusa, and Livingstone went forward to explore the lake. He reached nearly to its northern limit, and then returned; but as he came back south fate struck two cruel blows. Mackenzie and his companion Burrup were both dead of fever at Chibusa; and Mary Livingstone, who had parted from her husband on his journey and had been joyfully awaiting his return, was likewise dead of fever at Shupanga on 27th April 1862. From that double loss, of wife and comrades, the great traveller never recovered.

The Last Journey, 1866.

The last lonely journey of Livingstone was a long-drawn tragedy, a seven years' solitary fight with danger and disease that ended but with death. Almost from the start from Zanzibar in 1866 misfortunes came; luck seemed now to have turned her back upon the old explorer, as against one who sought too large a share of the traveller's renown. The Sikhs who had been brought

[1] For the Universities' Mission, see also vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. ii.; and ch. vi. of this book.

from India to accompany Livingstone into the interior proved unsatisfactory and insubordinate. They disliked the country, were lazy on the march, they would not work, and in the end deserted, returning to the coast and spreading far a lying story of their master's death so circumstantial that many believed, and that indeed was only disproved after a relief expedition had gained certain tidings of his movements. The African native boys who served with Livingstone were better servants; but a more serious disaster than the desertion of his followers soon touched him. The medicine-chest, the only refuge of the traveller against the fevers that haunt the swamps of the interior, was lost; but Livingstone, instead of turning back to renew his stock of drugs, plunged on with Scottish doggedness into the unknown, facing the risk, which amounted almost to a certainty, of illness with no remedies at hand. It was not long before insulted Nature claimed revenge for the old pioneer's neglect of proper precautions. Soon indeed he fell ill of fever, aggravated by hæmorrhoids, and from that illness his tough but now overtaxed constitution never quite recovered. Travelling became a dreadful toil: Livingstone grew so weak that he could hardly walk; at times he had to let his men carry him in a rough litter, and occasionally, when the least motion was too painful to be borne, to lie up for days and weeks together. Fretting at the enforced delay, the impatient traveller spent the time as best he could in making scientific and natural observations, in studying the Bible—he read the whole of both Testaments through from beginning to end four times in one of these lonely years—and in thinking of retirement to his native Scotland when the work of this last journey was finished.

The work was to be left unfinished at the end; but that last tragedy of a great career was mercifully hidden from him as he mused of quiet years and the evening of life's restless day ahead. It was largely this thought of returning home that upheld him in recurrent sickness, but a nobler motive

was not lacking. 'The sweat of one's brow is no longer a curse when one works for God,' wrote the tired wanderer in the wilderness, finely and with truth. With the fancy of a dying man his thoughts turned to his birthplace; but sometimes the over-weary traveller would hope for rest at once and where he stood. 'I felt as if dying on my feet,' he said after one dreary march; another time he cried in utter exhaustion, 'I should like to lie here in the still, still forest, and no hand ever disturb my bones.' Yet there were days when that indomitable spirit seemed as fresh and young as ever, the only anxiety whether health and life would remain while the great journey was completed. 'May God Almighty help me to finish my work this year for Christ's sake,' was written in his diary one New Year's Day; it was but one of several like prayers.

But the slowly lengthening shadow of approaching death lay over all this journey. Again and again he was weak with fever, and once even that brave spirit records that he was frightened at his own emaciation; at times the sensation of singing in his ears was almost unbearable, so persistent that he could not hear the loud tick of the chronometers. Nothing but copious bleeding from the hæmorrhoids gave relief, and even this was only temporary. The unhappy man was slowly bleeding to death—but still he prayed for life and strength to complete his task. 'May the Good Lord of all help me to show myself one of His stout-hearted servants, an honour to my children and perhaps to my country and race,' cried Livingstone towards the end. That prayer at least was answered before ever it was made.

From the start, too, this last journey was a sad one. Old memories of sorrow and bereavement were awakened in Nyasa: 'Many hopes have been disappointed here,' wrote Livingstone as he passed through that country. 'Far down on the right bank of the Zambesi lies the dust of her whose death changed all my future prospects'—in such tender

phrase did the old traveller refer to the wife he had lost years before; and later in the journey is one brief pathetic entry in the homely Scots dialect of his youth: 'Poor Mary lies on Shupanga Brae, and beeks forment the sun.' Very soon now the husband was to follow.

Here too lay other hopes entombed. 'Good Bishop Mackenzie sleeps far down the Shiré River, and with him all hope of the Gospel being introduced in Central Africa.' Had Livingstone seen twenty years ahead, he would have found that Christianity, after this first disaster in Nyasa, had begun to spread and flourish in that country; but the results of the work were hidden from its author, and the untimely death of poor Mackenzie in the first flush of enthusiasm made a wound that was hard to heal.

In other ways the journey was a sad one. The appalling miseries of the African people, and the horrors of the slave-trade—'the open sore of the world,' as Livingstone called it in a phrase that has become historic—likewise touched him deeply; his utter helplessness to relieve those whom he saw suffering day by day preyed hard on that compassionate spirit. The horrors which he witnessed were indeed enough to move a heart of stone to tears. Village after village was empty and deserted, and a whole countryside would be devoid of population; sometimes nothing but the remains of broken pottery showed where men had lived; in other places hundreds of grinning skulls and unburied bones lay scattered in confusion, where native war or alien slave-raiders had turned a fertile land to ruin. Or they would cross the route of an Arab caravan, and find the bodies of slaves but lately dead—'a woman tied by the neck to a tree and dead; the people of the country explained that she had been unable to keep up with the other slaves in a gang. We saw others tied up in similar manner, and one lying in the path shot or stabbed.'

Misery of Central Africa.

Day after day these ghastly sights were seen; at other times

it might be a slave-market, where the captives stood around in rows, their teeth examined by prospective purchasers, the cloth around the loins lifted to prove the lower limbs, and a stick thrown to a distance for the slave to fetch and thus show his paces.[1]

Slavery and the hand of the slave-raider were indeed everywhere in Nyasa; the whole country was rotten with slavery. And the memory of these sights, of a fair country given over to human devils, burnt and scarred itself on Livingstone's memory: in the last year of his life he would start up from sleep at night, affrighted by the nightmare of some cruel deed he had seen long since. 'I am heartsore, and sick of human blood,' he cried wearily near the end.

But far beyond Nyasa was found the Arab slaver. Livingstone pressed onwards to the north, and in time, on 31st March 1867, he stood upon the shores of Tanganyika, the great lake lying still and peaceful in a scene of surpassing tropic beauty;[2] but here, too, the slave-hunt was in vogue—the grip of the Arab hand was everywhere. And when Livingstone turned westward, sore in spirit, to explore those great forests in the heart of Africa where the Congo takes its rise, he found another curse upon the people. Here the horrid rites of cannibalism were in vogue; in a land of natural plenty men boasted openly that they lived on human flesh and loved its flavour.[3] There seemed indeed no end to the iniquities of Africa.

Livingstone discovers Tanganyika, 1867.

[1] If the slave was a woman, Livingstone noticed that she was taken into a hut to be examined closely.

[2] The waters of Tanganyika are shrinking, as are those of other African lakes, but it is still a great sheet of water. 'It is extremely probable,' says J. E. S. Moore in *The Tanganyika Problem*, an admirable book, 'that the shrinkage of the upper waters of the Nile, which is recorded in history, is still going on, and is directly due to recent changes in the modern volcanic dam between Kivu and the Albert Edward Nyanza.'

Major Gibbons (*Africa from South to North*) suggests that Tanganyika was sinking at the rapid rate of six inches every year.

[3] Livingstone records the native opinion that 'human flesh was saltish, and needed little condiment.' The cannibals of the Pacific Islands, on the

Through all these scenes and disappointments Livingstone was upheld by the iron spirit of his race and that unquenchable love of knowledge which made his now shaking and unsteady hand note the tiniest scrap of information on some poor diary made of torn newspaper, storing it for safety in the battered old tin trunk that accompanied him on every march. Nor did he lose the sense of humour[1] and the great sympathy with humanity which made him loved among all these people. 'She is somebody's bairn,' was the excuse for a kindness to some ebony daughter of Africa, with a parent's thought of his children at home; and once he recorded, with a touch of the tenderness that lurked in that stout heart, a dainty vision of happiness among these scenes of blood. One day the expedition halted to inquire the way; and as they stayed the march they saw a newly-married couple looking on, 'with arms around each other very lovingly, and no one joked or poked fun at them'—a little gem of silent bliss in a vast barbaric setting.

Month after month Livingstone pursued his way, hoping still to light upon the sources of the Nile, and to float down its broad waters towards the north, past Abyssinia—the waking dream of early days—and on through the slave-ridden Sudan to Egypt. The quest was vain. He did not know, although the horrid fear at times beset him, that the great River Lualaba, which he reached, would lead him to the Congo,

other hand, held that it was sweet, and refused to touch the European because they found, by experience, that he was both tough and salt. *Tot homines.* . . . But it is said that the unfortunate Pacific Islanders were misled as to the succulence of the white man because they forgot to remove the Wellington boots from one of their captives, and the stout leather leggings were too much even for barbaric stomachs.

[1] Livingstone comments in his diary on the fact that the Ptolemaic map of Africa classified people according to their food—Elephantophagi, Anthropophagi, etc. 'If we followed the same classification,' he laughs, 'our definition would be the tribe of stout-guzzlers, the roaring potheen-fuddlers, the whisky fishoid drinkers, the vin-ordinaire bibbers, the lager-beer swillers, and an outlying tribe of the brandy-cocktail persuasion.'

not the Nile; that life's last hope was no great truth to be discovered, but a mocking and delusive mirage that was leading him to death. An attempt was made to turn him from his course: Henry Morton Stanley headed an expedition to search for and relieve the old traveller, who seemed to have been lost for years in Central Africa, and for whose safety grave concern was now felt in England. He both found and relieved Livingstone; but no persuasion availed to make him quit his work; and once more he pressed forward, spent and weary, emaciated by persistent fever and continual bleeding, in the belief that he should find the sources of the Nile in the network of lakes and swamps where the Congo takes its rise.

Perhaps it was well he stayed in Africa. Had he returned to Europe, he would have chafed and fretted at thought of the unfinished task; in Africa he could but die at his post like a gallant man who has shouldered too heavy a burden. And death was now hastening her steps towards him. 'By 1874 I shall complete my task and return,' he wrote hopefully in his diary; but by 1874 he was already dead.

Early in 1873 his strength began to fail very rapidly. The poison of continuous fever was eating steadily into his vitality; and the expedition had now come to a land which would have tried the most vigorous health. Persistent rains had made the Lualaba and the great Lake Bangweolo overflow their banks for miles; the whole country was one vast spreading swamp, an unending sponge from which the travellers could not escape. In April Livingstone reached the southern shores—if shores they could be called, when land and water joined in one enormous swamp—of Bangweolo. Here he camped at the village, called after its chief, Chitambo, and here he rested. He was pitiably weak—'knocked up quite,' as the last feeble entry in his diary, on 27th April, reluctantly admits. His native servants were

His Death in Central Africa, 1873.

alarmed, and they did what they could to relieve him; but he was now past relief.

The great traveller had made his last earthly journey. On the evening of 30th April he managed, with assistance, to wind his watch. A little later, in the early hours of 1st May, one of the servants entered his hut and found his master risen from his bed. He was kneeling, the hands were clasped beneath the head, the body bent forward in an attitude of prayer. The servant paused a moment, unwilling to disturb his master's communion with the unseen powers. Then he came forward, and reverently touched his cheek. It was cold: the end had come.

David Livingstone was dead. In the words of a great Elizabethan dramatist, his wearied outworn body 'was but giving over of a game that must be lost'; [1] but he had played the game with zest, and lost at last with honour.

The faithful frightened servants, as loyal to their master in his death as during life, now held a consultation. They determined to restore the body of the great white traveller to his own people, to carry the remains overland to Zanzibar, together with all the personal belongings, the instruments, and notebooks of their late leader. First they embalmed the corpse by drying it in the sun and anointing it with brandy —the remains were hardly more than skin and bone, the mere shell of the man that had been—then to avert suspicion they concealed the body in the hollowed trunk of a tree, and carried it down to the coast in this wise. Thence it was borne to England, and, the native servants still attending, buried with all honour in Westminster Abbey.

But the heart of the man who had so loved Africa that he gave his whole life to Africa they rightly claimed for Africa, burying it where he died, at Chitambo's village on the southern shores of Bangweolo. And there it rests for ever.

[1] *Philaster*, by Ben Jonson.

Livingstone died with his work broken and incomplete; the vision of a highway through the continent, from Cape Town to Cairo, which had been his waking dream as it was to be that of Cecil Rhodes, was not accomplished fact. But he had opened the unknown interior to the evangelist and trader; Tanganyika and Nyasa and the great Zambesi were now clearly marked upon the maps; a new world was added to the old, a world of which its people were unworthy, and which quickly passed to other rulers. And Livingstone had not only discovered this new world; he had fired his countrymen with the desire to possess it. He had been the pathfinder alike for Christianity and the British Empire, and others now followed in his steps. Less than a generation after he had died, the evangelisation and colonisation of Central Africa by white men had begun.

Results of his Work.

'The end of the geographical feat,' said Livingstone in a definitive sentence, 'is the beginning of the missionary enterprise'; and never was missionary enterprise more needed than in these lands he had discovered, whose savage people were terrorised by the bloody raids of Arab slavers. The whole Nyasa country indeed was 'completely disorganised,' wrote its discoverer; 'we counted thirty-two dead bodies floating down the Shiré River, and scarcely a soul was to be seen in the lower Shiré valley. Where last year we could purchase any amount of provisions at the cheapest rates, we could (now) see but a few starving wretches, fishing and collecting the seeds of grass. I have never witnessed such a change. It is a desert, and dead bodies lie everywhere.'

'A new system must be introduced with a strong hand,' added Livingstone; but while Khama's country of the Bamangwato was evangelised,[1] the miserable people of Nyasa had to wait another twenty years after those words were written before the strong hand came to rescue them.

[1] See bk. xxv.

Yet the death of Livingstone had brought this matter to decision; his death, indeed, was the source of new life to Nyasa. The first mission of Mackenzie had failed, and many still doubted of success; but to the Free Church of Scotland, the denomination to which Livingstone had belonged, it was nothing short of a sacred duty to carry on his work.

Nor was the spirit lacking for the task. 'Let us plant, as the truest memorial,' said one of the leaders of that Church in council, 'an institution at once industrial and educational, to teach the truths of the Gospel and the arts of civilised life; let us place it on a carefully selected and commanding spot in Central Africa, where, from its position and capabilities, it might grow into a town, and afterwards into a city, and become a centre of commerce, civilisation, and Christianity. And this place we shall call Livingstonia.'

The Founding of Livingstonia, 1875.

It was a noble and inspiring vision, the only adequate memorial to David Livingstone. All Scotland rose with enthusiasm to the opportunity, funds were subscribed in plenty, evangelists offered and were chosen; and within two years of the explorer's death these followers of Livingstone had started on their long journey to raise their permanent memorial on the shores of Lake Nyasa.

The way through Central Africa was still uncertain, the navigation of the Zambesi and the swifter-flowing Shiré River was no easy work, and the reception which awaited them unknown; but the expedition pushed on steadily towards its goal. A little steamer, the *Ilala*, had been provided for the work; and at last, at sunrise on the 12th October 1875, the mission vessel pushed its way from the river out into the broad, deep waters of the Lake Nyasa.

Here, on the white sandy beach of Cape Maclear,[1] a beautiful spot at the southern end of the lake, the expedition stayed;

[1] The name had been given by Livingstone, after his friend the astronomer-royal at Cape Town.

and here, under the direction of Dr. Robert Laws, no unworthy follower of Livingstone, the work began. From that memorable day Christianity never lost its hold on Nyasa.

A few months after this first European settlement was founded at the foot of Lake Nyasa, another Christian mission came; and here again its origin was Scotland, and its inspiration David Livingstone. The Established Church of Scotland, stirred like the Free Church by the example of the evangelist-explorer of Central Africa, had decided to plant a mission station in those wild majestic highlands through which the Shiré River flows on its hurried course from great Nyasa to Zambesi; and this station was to be called Blantyre, in memory of the old Scots home of Livingstone's boyhood. For once all rivalry between two Christian bodies was laid aside; the missionaries of the Established Church accompanied their brethren bound for Cape Maclear, and years after the settlement of this new Blantyre in the tropics was begun, communion between the two was close and cordial.

Blantyre in the Shiré Highlands, 1875.

The site of Blantyre proved admirably chosen, and in time this little mission station became the capital of a British colony;[1] but before that day Christianity had pushed its way still further forward through the interior. The Universities' Mission, whose first effort in Nyasa had so tragically failed, returned to the scene of its early labours; a Christian station was opened by its people at Newala in 1883, another at Likoma three years later; and after a terrible fight with the Arab slavers all along Lake Nyasa and beyond, the path which Livingstone had made was opened as a road for civilisation to Tanganyika and on to Zanzibar.

The Advance to Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

And through all these years of trial and struggle and occasional discouragement Robert Laws of Livingstonia had

[1] For the Nyasa mission and the founding of British Central Africa, see ch. vi. of this book.

stayed and striven for the mission he had founded, while friends and comrades in the work were stricken down by fever, returning home to die, or dying by his side at Lake Nyasa—for the infant church in Central Africa soon had its toll of dead. Laws was indeed the last great missionary pioneer of Central Africa; but he was the last, not because the breed of Moffat and Livingstone was extinct, but because the work of the pioneer in those parts was done.

Such were the missionaries and the mission work during three generations in South Africa. In that time they had spread from the coast to the far interior, from the southern ocean across river and desert and mountain to the great lakes in the middle of the continent and to the eastern ocean again; and they had left their mark upon the maps of Africa, on the history of its exploration, on its native polity, and on its European development.

The Open Road through Central Africa.

These were the actual pioneers of the northern interior—for the Boers who trekked to the central uplands did but follow the British missionary across the Orange and the Vaal—and it was the British, not the emigrant Cape Dutch, who went first and furthest on the great road towards the north.

'The Boers resolved to shut up the interior; and I,' wrote Livingstone, 'determined to open the country. We shall see who has been most successful.'

Within ten years after Livingstone's death that question had been settled for ever. The missionaries were still pushing onwards towards the north, but a vast army of traders and miners had entered the land they had disputed with the Boers, and in the hunt for its new-found wealth the stability of the little Dutch Republics had begun to fail.

The Boers had attempted to undo the messengers of God, but they were themselves undone by the seekers after mammon.

CHAPTER III

THE LUST OF MAMMON: 1867-95[1]

HARD upon the feet of the messengers of God came the seekers after Mammon. They came in two divisions, the diamond diggers and the gold-miners; sixteen years separated the two; but when they came and stayed they changed the future of South Africa. A field of carbon and a bed of quartz precipitated a revolution.

Belief in the Existence of Precious Metals in South Africa.

The belief that mineral wealth existed in South Africa was not indeed new. The fabled land of Monomotapa and the supposititious Ophir,[2] whose vast store of precious metals was rumoured to lie concealed somewhere in the far northern interior, had attracted many an expedition from Cape Town in the days of the old Dutch dominion. But the promised riches had ever eluded those who sought them; and one pioneer after another returned disillusioned from his excursion into the unknown.

[1] Original accounts of early Kimberley are numerous. The best is Boyle, *To the Cape for Diamonds* (1873); Algar's *Diamond Fields* (1872) is less full; Warren, *On the Veldt in the 'Seventies* (1902), a useful book. To these may be added Angove, *In the Early Days: Pioneer Life in the South African Diamond Fields* (1910); Payton, *The Diamond Diggings*; Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa*; and Streeter, *History of Diamonds*.

The literature of the goldfields is more ample. Among other works may be mentioned, Baines, *Gold Regions of South-East Africa*; Mather, *A Glimpse of the Gold Fields* (1884), and *Gold Fields of South Africa* (1887); Ingram, *The Land of Gold, Diamonds, and Ivory*; Langland, *The Golden Transvaal*, a valuable record; Strecker, *Auf den Diamante und Goldfelden Süd Afrikas* (1901); Goldman, *The Witwatersrand Gold Fields* (1892), states the capital and output of each mine, and I have to thank the author of that work, now M.P. for Falmouth, for some information of old Johannesburg.

The political results of the discovery of gold and diamonds are discussed in bk. xxvi. ch. i.

[2] I have read somewhere that on an old map of the middle eighteenth century the words, 'Here be diamonds,' are written across the Griqua country. A lucky guess, probably founded on a native report that, for

Notwithstanding these failures, single gems were picked up from time to time in the basin of the Vaal and Orange rivers, either by the natives or by stray European travellers; the agate, the onyx, the amethyst, and the garnet are mentioned as having been found; and one Dutchman not only discovered gold in Transvaal, but publicly proclaimed the fact, in the year 1854. But nothing came of the announcement; and for some time longer the gold and diamonds of South Africa remained undisturbed.

Accidental Discovery of Diamonds, 1867.

A mere chance led to the discovery of diamonds. Some children were seen playing with bright stones in the Hope Town district in the year 1867; they were quite ignorant of the fact that these brilliant pebbles were diamonds, perhaps they did not even know the excessive and indeed absurd value which men place upon those stones. In any case, they gave one of their playthings to a passer-by—who, to his honour, offered to pay, but payment for the bauble was refused—and the stone was found, when tested, to be a pure diamond, which was exhibited and sold for £500.

The Diamond Fever, 1870.

The event aroused some curiosity, and a few expectant parties of adventurers made their way up-country to try their fortune in searching for diamonds along the rivers, whose waters were supposed to have washed the gems downstream from their original beds.[1] They had some success, and in May 1870 a parcel of diamonds was brought into Maritzburg from the Vaal River, the value of which, in the market conditions of the day, was estimated

once in a way, happened to be correct, and the fact that an occasional diamond was brought down to Cape Town by the aborigines.

[1] A native superstition declared that snakes with diamonds on their heads sometimes went down to the Vaal River to bathe, and left the diamonds on the banks of the stream, where they were found by the aborigines and Europeans. The legend is mentioned in Warren's *On the Veldt in the 'Seventies*; it may be compared with the old English tradition, to which Shakespeare refers, that another reptile, the toad, wears a precious jewel in its head.

at from twelve to twenty thousands pounds sterling. There could no longer be any doubt that a rich field of diamonds was located somewhere to the north; and, despite the warnings of professional geologists and diamond experts from Europe, who had examined the ground and declared that no diamond-fields existed, sensible men preferred the evidence of their eyes above the reports of the professors.[1] A fever of diamond-hunting now broke out and spread: forthwith a rush of eager seekers after wealth began to flow northwards towards the Modder and the Vaal.

They hardly differed in character from the usual crowd of miners on similar adventures elsewhere. There were men of all trades and classes and of none,[2] expectant, rough and fearless, ready to face privation and danger in the hope of sudden fortune; and they knew that he whose luck was favourable was certain of great wealth, for the world's supply of diamonds had of late been unequal to the demand, and the price had risen rapidly on the European market.

The Founding of Kimberley, 1871.

At first they sought their sparkling prey along the river courses, and some secured considerable riches by this means. But soon a discovery was made that changed and enormously enlarged the whole prospects of the venture. Diamonds were found in vast quantities in the dry white earth some few miles away, and henceforth the petty spoil brought down by the rivers was neglected. The true goal of the miners was situated on a farm in the sterile highlands of the Griqua country; and here, on the undulating flats and ridges of a desert of drought and diamonds, they pitched their tents—if they had tents—and

[1] One of the experts roundly denied that diamonds existed in South Africa at all; another contented himself with proving, in the columns of the London *Times*, that diamond-mining could never pay expenses. Alas for prophecy!

[2] The Dean of Grahamstown wrote that he had lost his organist and the tenor voices of the choir, and the bricklayer who was working at the cathedral. Durban lost several of its tradesmen, and ships that put in there found part of their crews disappeared.

searched the blue-white soil that hid the precious seed of wealth. The site of the encampment was given the admirably descriptive name of the New Rush; later it was called Kimberley, from the Colonial Secretary in the Imperial Government of the day.

Many of the miners were rewarded with success beyond their wildest dreams. There were authentic cases of men who made hundreds of pounds in a day, thousands in a week or two; of others who struck a lucky spot, and sold out to an eager newcomer for anything up to fifteen thousand pounds; of land being offered, and finding ready purchasers at £20 the square foot. Some impecunious hangers-on of the regular crowd, unable to buy a claim for themselves, devoted their time to sifting the already roughly sifted earth for the small diamonds that the more ambitious or more hasty workers had overlooked; and not a few found respectable fortunes in these unconsidered trifles.

But the whole thing was a sheer gamble with luck, a gamble in which industry counted for little—although all worked feverishly hard—and chance for everything in this capricious toil. An instance was recorded of three brothers who bought claims side by side; the most persevering of the trio, who employed five natives to help him dig and sift the earth, only found diamonds worth £12 in a twelvemonth's labour, while the other two made £2000 each. Others who believed they had secured the wealth of a lifetime in a moment's lucky dive, were disillusioned when the huge diamond they found split into fragments and halved its value;[1] or an enormous stone that was thought to be a ruby, and therefore worth a king's ransom, turned out but a garnet after all. Such was the luck of Kimberley in its first year.

[1] The stories of diamonds that split, or 'exploded'—to use the phrase current at the diggings—were discredited at first by the dealers and jewellers of Europe. It seems to have been an unfortunate peculiarity of the South African gem.

The most extravagant expectations were entertained by the diggers; but periodical waves of depression swept across the settlement and reduced the volatile crowd to temporary despair. Sometimes a rumour that a new diamond-field had been discovered a few miles away would stampede the place, and another new rush would almost depopulate Kimberley for a week; but in a few days the disillusioned miners would be back at their old claims. Or it would be announced—and such rumours arose without the least foundation of truth—that a marvellous new diamond-field had been found in Brazil, and that henceforth the Kimberley product was valueless; or the dealers would fear that the market was becoming overstocked, and refuse to buy save at a nominal price. On such occasions a gem which would have fetched several hundred pounds the day before could hardly find a purchaser for the same number of shillings, and the digger in a fit of passionate disgust might scatter his whole fortune to the winds and the wilderness—where others more hopeful found and profited from his over-hasty action.

But confidence was restored as quickly as the original panic spread, and with no more definite reason; and digging and sifting would begin again with renewed vigour. Yet there were some who predicted that the diamondiferous earth would be exhausted within a twelvemonth, and that Kimberley would vanish from the maps on which it had so lately found a place; but those who held this view knew not that the deposits extended deep down into the earth. Even in those early days of extravagant individual expectations and occasional realisation men had no idea of the vast wealth concealed beneath their feet; but by the year 1889, less than twenty years after the discovery of diamonds in the Griqua country, the total output of precious stones from this field had reached the weight of six tons avoirdupois and the enormous value of thirty-nine million pounds sterling.

Long before then, however, Kimberley had grown out of

all recognition of its earlier self. Diamond-digging was no more the work of individuals but of a great corporation, which had swallowed all its smaller competitors, and which alone could afford the powerful machinery required to excavate the deeper soil, now that the surface deposits had been exhausted. And the town itself had advanced from a primitive collection of rough canvas tents, stationary wagons converted into huts, and the wood or galvanised iron buildings of its infancy, to a substantial city of fine streets and handsome buildings.

Early Days at the Diamond Diggings.

But the individuality of earlier days had vanished with the passing of the canvas tent and its single occupant engaged alone in his own venture. Those were the days when men made the long journey up-country from Cape Town to the diamond city by interminable stages in the tedious ox-wagon, when food was sometimes less plentiful in Kimberley than precious stones and always less plentiful than hope, and when all accommodation was of the simplest kind.

The cost of food was indeed a serious consideration to the poor miner in the earlier days at the diamond-fields. The meat supplied by the Boer farmers of the neighbouring districts was cheap enough, but, like much of the animal produce of South Africa, often inferior in quality; and vegetables were scarce enough to be rare luxuries even for the prosperous digger. A single cabbage might cost half-a-crown, and a cauliflower was so precious a prize that twenty-five shillings was once paid for the possession of one.

If victuals were scarce, water was still scarcer. There was no regular supply in Kimberley; and those who carried it from a distance extorted anything from threepence to five shillings a bucket for their goods. At such prices a bath became the rarest of pleasures or duties, a wash was a weekly festival, and a clean shirt a monthly luxury.[1]

[1] There is a story of a man who had a bath of soda-water at Kimberley during a drought. It would certainly have cleansed him.

The lack of water and the superfluity of dust was an excuse for the general indulgence in more potent liquors. The number of inns, restaurants, and hotels which grew up at Kimberley was enormous;[1] but not less remarkable than the amount of liquor consumed was its exceeding badness. Cape brandy at the best was an inferior beverage, but by the time it reached the diamond-fields and had been diluted on its way by various agents intent on snatching an extra profit it was an unfailing poison. Champagne, too, might be drunk out of a bucket by the extravagantly successful digger—but its vintage was such that there was an even chance of the bucket having its contents returned only slightly the worse from the throats of its nauseated victims.

Better accommodation and more palatable refreshment came with time; the less pressing needs of the community were also gradually supplied. The first place of worship, a Wesleyan chapel, was built in the first year of the settlement; an Anglican church followed soon afterwards. The seekers after earthly gems were not altogether forgetful of heavenly treasures in their leisure moments; nor were they ungenerous to the ministers of religion. One clergyman, in fact, who remarked on the extraordinary liberality of his congregation in almsgiving, felt impelled to utter the pious hope that the collecting bag was not an inadvertent receiver of stolen goods. For the theft of diamonds was a regular industry, and some at least of those who engaged in that particular trade may have salved such conscience as they possessed by endowing the church with some fraction of the tainted gold.

A hospital and the inevitable racecourse were founded in

[1] Some of these inns had extraordinary names, such as The Hard Times, The Perfect Cure, etc. But the wit, like the accommodation, was primitive; and I have seen more curious names in England: *e.g.* The World Turned Upside Down—an admirable name for a tippler's haunt—and The Silent Woman, with a picture of a headless woman. Probably the publican within had suffered more than he admitted to a stranger.

1872; the former institution at least was badly needed. For if the situation of Kimberley on the dry bracing Griqua uplands was healthy, its sanitation was altogether left to chance, and many were the cases of fever and other infectious diseases that derived from the decaying corpses of animals and refuse of all kinds that strewed its unpaved streets.[1] The multiplicity and strength of its evil smells was commented on by more than one traveller, but the older inhabitants are believed to have become accustomed to the dust, dirt, flies and fleas that were the notable by-products of Kimberley.

More interesting and not less varied in type than either the fleas or the flies of the diamond-sprinkled desert was the extraordinary congregation of humanity that the lust of mammon had drawn to Kimberley. But the character of those who had flocked to the Griqua fields was indeed so mixed as almost to defy analysis. Some were old diggers who had tempted fortune in vain, or had won and lost again, on the Californian and Australian goldmines, and had come to try their luck once more in Africa; hard men these and rough, ready with oath and fist if not with knife to defend their claim. Others were farmers from Cape Colony and Natal, whose estates had been none too prosperous in the recent years of agricultural depression; alert Englishmen, phlegmatic Boers, shifty adventurers from Europe, civil servants who had left their posts for a quicker road to wealth than the tedious routine of official advancement allows; traders who exchanged their stores for diamonds, reckless men who dealt in guns and ammunition with the natives, rogues who smelt an opportunity for plunder in the gem-laden wilds from afar, savage Kafirs attracted by the offer of high wages, and conspicuous among the rest a whole colony of Jews from every ghetto of the old world, whose keen brains

[1] 'The dust of the dry diggings,' said one old Kimberley man, 'is to be classed with plague, pestilence, and famine, and if there is anything worse with that also.'

and voluble bargainings often outwitted the slower Gentile mind.

There were not many women in the infant city, but the fame of its products soon attracted the attention of the fair. It must be conceded, however, that the slightly battered virtue of the Eves who flocked to Kimberley was seldom proof against temptation in this galvanised garden of Eden, and that the presence of diamonds led to the absence of the still more precious jewel of chastity. Yet perhaps there were few of these immigrant belles that sold themselves for diamonds who would not have sold themselves for gold elsewhere; and in any case it appears that if the comforts of home were somewhat to seek in Kimberley, the number of ladies ready to supply a temporary substitute was soon fully equal to the demand.

The Illicit Diamond Trade.

Honest and upright men there were in Kimberley, but many a fortune was made by crooked means, and the scandalous initials I.D.B.—illicit diamond buyer—were attached by rumour to the name of more than one millionaire. The small bulk and great value of the diamond made it easy to conceal, and well worth the risk of discovery, both to the native digger or sifter and the European dealer who purchased the stolen goods; and a lucrative and regular traffic grew up in this way, which not even the severe penalties of the local court,[1] or the regulating Diamond Trade Act passed by the Cape Colony Legislature in 1882, or the exertions of a large police detective department,[2]

[1] In 1878, for instance, a Kafir convicted of stealing diamonds was sentenced to fifty lashes and nine months' imprisonment—by no means an exceptionally heavy punishment.

The prison at Kimberley was built to hold four hundred persons, but sometimes it was necessary to accommodate nearly double the number—a sufficient indication of the local conditions. (Report on Kimberley Prison, in *Cape Parliamentary Papers*, 1882.)

[2] The detective department itself, however, was corrupt. It was admitted that the detectives often lived with other men's wives, and in return the complaisant husband was no doubt immune from the attentions of the police. (*Cape Parliamentary Correspondence*, 1885.)

availed altogether to stamp out. The most ingenious methods were discovered of outwitting the authorities, diamonds being sewn up in the saddles and bridles of the horses which conveyed the dealer over the frontier, or the wretched animal was sometimes even made to swallow his precious freight and deliver it again when a safe asylum from discovery was reached; and although the pursuit of a suspected I.D.B. was often hot and punishment for the offence was always swift and heavy, the profits of the trade were well worth its dangers.[1] So well did the traffic pay, indeed, that the dealer in illicit goods, that unclean vulture of the diamond trade, could never be quite suppressed, even by the great De Beers Corporation,[2] which absorbed the smaller honest dealers.

But Kimberley grew dull, and it was even reproached with growing almost respectable, when its industry was put on a steady basis by this powerful firm, which obtained a monopoly of the South African diamond trade, regulating output and prices in the interest of the producer, and preventing those wild fluctuations which had made the early days of individual search and sale a mixed game of chance and skill.[3]

[1] An amusing novel—*I.D.B., or the Adventures of Solomon Davis*—was published in 1887 by one who evidently had considerable knowledge of the illicit traffic.

More information, with much scandalous gossip of the diamond-fields and accusations against prominent men in Kimberley, will be found in Cohen's *Reminiscences of Kimberley*. The book was suppressed in 1911, in consequence of a libel action, but copies of it are still to be found. I am not persuaded that the author was altogether untrustworthy; indeed, he seems to me to have told too much of the truth.

[2] For the De Beers Corporation, see the next chapter.

[3] Native labour was largely employed, and the natives were well cared for by the De Beers Corporation. They lived in a compound, were given a school, a hospital, and goods were sold them at cost price. The shopkeepers naturally attacked the truck system, which deprived them of some profits; the drink-sellers opposed the effort to restrict the sale of alcohol, which caused most of the crimes in Kimberley and the need for a large police force (speech by Cecil Rhodes, 10th September 1883). Many also attacked the compound system on the ground that it was slavery, which it was not; the essence of slavery is that the slave is bought for life, and not paid for his work, whereas the native labourer contracted to serve for a period, he received wages for his labour, and a bonus for honesty.

The old claims were bought out, the old diggings superseded by machinery, the New Rush of a few years back was no more recognisable in the substantial town that grew up in its place; the pioneers and adventurers and gamblers looked elsewhere for excitement and the chance of wealth: and before Kimberley had quite degenerated into sober steadiness they found their opening.

Sixteen years after the great rush to the Griqua diamond-fields there was another and still greater race for wealth to the interior of Africa. But this time the magnet was gold, not diamonds; and the ultimate but unforeseen consequences of this second exodus were as much more important than the first as gold is more common and more universally used than diamonds.

Transvaal Gold discovered, 1883.

Thirty years before, in the early days of the Transvaal Republic, one Jan Marais had discovered gold at the high reef of the white waters, the Witwatersrand. His find realised some £500, and he made no attempt to conceal his good fortune. But the Australian goldmines were then at the height of their reputation, and the discovery in the interior of Africa excited little interest, and was soon forgotten for a generation.[1] Not until 1883, when one Fred Struben was passing over the same district, was any importance attached to the earlier find; but Struben was so convinced that the Witwatersrand was auriferous that he returned in January 1884 to explore the ground thoroughly.

He was trembling on the verge of a mighty discovery. On the second day of his search his hopes were justified, and gold was found; and for seven months more he continued his work at Sterkfontein, at the western end of the Witwatersrand

[1] Gold had also been found at Lydenburg in the eastern Transvaal in 1879, and Lord Wolseley wrote at that time that 'larger and still more valuable goldfields would sooner or later be discovered' in that country. It was also discovered in other parts of the Transvaal, and a few diggers, mostly British, went up to try their fortune, but with little success. The discoveries were too small, and the cost of transport too high, to yield much profit.

reef. Other men came and went on the same errand—for some rumour of the new goldfield had reached the outer world—with little success; but Struben was rewarded for his perseverance. On the 18th September he came across a gneiss vein of very rich gold which extended an indefinite distance.

On this spot a mill for crushing the gold from the rock was erected in the following year; a few houses or huts were built, and the beginnings of a town, which was not as yet honoured with a distinctive name, were presently seen.

While Struben had been searching for gold on the Witwatersrand, others also had sought and found elsewhere. In the same year 1884 the mineral was found at Barberton in quartz formation.[1] News of these discoveries was bruited abroad, a few men at first came to see and try their luck, and presently it became known that new goldfields, equal, if not superior to those which had been found in California and Australia, were awaiting development. The emigrant Boers who had trekked northwards into the interior of Africa a generation back to get clear of British rule had unwittingly founded their republic in a country abounding in gold. And before the passing of another generation the unsuspected riches of their virgin territory proved their undoing.

In all the world there is no withstanding a 'gold rush.' Men will fight for their creed, their country, their honour or good fame; but many men would forswear their creed, forget their country, and pawn their honour for the gold that will buy them all but honour and health and peace. In every age some men have spent their years in the vain hope of discovering a supposed transmutation of metals; the lust of gold was the magnet that drew them

The Gold Rush, 1885.

[1] The Barberton formation was of very old and highly metamorphosed slates and sandstones, with eruptive diorite, serpentine, and other greenstones. The gold seems to have been brought with the eruptive rocks to the surface, and afterwards concentrated in quartz reefs. (*Proceedings, Royal Geographical Society*, 1888.)

on. The mere expectation of gold that had no more existence than the transmutation of metals led men to risk and lose their lives in the search for a North-West Passage [1] and many another fruitless quest; the actual discovery of gold brought men in hot haste from the ends of the earth across the waterless deserts of western Australia, over the Rocky Mountains to California, and through the ice-cold streams of the Yukon Valley to fight for its possession. And human nature had not changed when the wealth of the Witwatersrand was exposed.

The Transvaal Government and its subjects were none too pleased at the sudden and unexpected fame of their country. Some may indeed have hoped great things from the new-found wealth, for the Boer is no more superior to the love of money than the rest of mankind. But many knew that the solitude they loved would no longer be respected by an avaricious world. The story of Kimberley was too recent and too near to be forgotten; and it was certain that a crowd of seekers after wealth, not more scrupulous than those who had invaded the Griqua desert, would soon invade the quiet farms across the Vaal River. And these would again be followed by their parasites, the owners of drinking-saloons and gambling hells, the female prostitute and those who maintained her. . . .

And some also among the Boers had a foreboding as to the dangers that await the weak whose dubious fortune it is to come into possession of great riches.[2] The union of wealth and weakness is as fatal to men as the union of poverty and beauty to women.

But whatever the feelings or forebodings of the little Boer community, no sign of coming trouble yet appeared. The Transvaal Government showed itself equal to the immediate occasion, and regulations were issued to ensure the maintenance

[1] See vol. iii. bk. x. ch. i.
[2] See bk. xxvi. ch. i. for Joubert's forebodings.

of order on the goldfields. On 18th July 1886, certain farms were thrown open to prospectors as proclaimed goldfields; on 20th September of the same year the site of a township was determined on, and its skeleton streets were planned out at regular intervals in straight lines and right angles. The town was named Johannesburg; the first sale of sites, on 8th December, realised £13,000. A second sale, a month later, fetched £19,921; a third, in April 1887, realised £20,000.

Johannesburg founded, 1886.

A few buildings, roughly made of old boxes and tin, had already been run up before the official regulations were issued; but these were found to cover a valuable gold-bearing property, and were speedily removed elsewhere. And Johannesburg now began to grow rapidly. For the first three or four years of its existence, indeed, it was nothing more than a rude mining-camp, rough shanties of galvanised iron and mud huts mingling promiscuously with tents and sheds and waste spaces along its straight streets; while some prospectors who had hurried across the veldt in their own wagons were content to make that substantial conveyance serve the purpose of a dwelling-house when arrived at the promised land of wealth. The first public building was a hotel; the second a prison. Both were soon full; and both were said to be equally uncomfortable.

But by 1890 something more substantial began to appear; the now prosperous Johannesburgers were sufficiently confident of the future to spend part of their new-found wealth on themselves and their city. It and its cosmopolitan and very miscellaneous population had necessarily much in common with other mining towns in the world; but the special character of the Witwatersrand goldfield gave Johannesburg a character of its own.

There was never any doubt from the moment of the discovery in 1883 that it would pay handsomely to extract the gold from its surroundings; but the formation of the mines

determined the character of the industry that grew up in the Rand. This was no place for the miner whose only capital was a pick and shovel, a strong arm and a stout heart. Vast fortunes were to be made, but they were for the organiser, the director, the heads of large companies, the speculator in lands and claims; they were not for the individual digger who spent his energies on a single allotment, and staked all upon the luck of his one claim. Capital was needed to develop the industry; and the fact that it was an industry and not a gamble differentiated the Witwatersrand from the goldfields of California and Australia. Whatever gambling there was, was in the purchase of sites from the original owners or those who had bought their concessions in the hope of a rise in value; and there was gambling in plenty in Europe, where many worthless mining companies were floated on the credit of the goldfields.

For some months after the first discoveries not much gold was extracted from the Witwatersrand reef. The metal was not scattered about in nuggets on or immediately under the surface, as had been the case in Australia;[1] it was distributed with other deposits in the earth, from which it had first to be mined, then crushed and refined before it could be put on the market. Fortunately large beds of coal near the Witwatersrand reef provided the power that was needed for the mills; machinery was imported from Europe to mine and crush the rock, and native labour under the direction of skilled white engineers sufficed to operate the mines and machinery cheaply and in most cases profitably.

The engineers who directed the work were lavishly paid; the few white workmen whom they employed earned wages far in excess of what they could have obtained at home, but a great part of their money was absorbed in the high cost of living. The bulk of the manual labour required for the mines was easily obtained from the

Profits of the Mines.

[1] See vol. v. bk. xviii. ch. iv

native population, the average payment offered being the considerable sum of from fifty to sixty shillings per month of four weeks, with board and lodging included—a wage which, if not spent, as it often was spent, as quickly as it was earned on alcohol, sufficed to make the native a man of wealth and importance when he returned to his own people after three or four years in the mines.[1]

Altogether some thirty-five thousand natives were employed in the goldmines in and around Johannesburg when the industry was at the height of production; the capital employed and the value of metal extracted rose steadily from year to year. In November 1887, the early days of the industry, 68 mining companies were registered, with a nominal capital of £3,063,000; by January 1890 there were 450 companies, with a total nominal capital of £11,000,000. In 1890 the total output of the mines for the year was 494,810 oz. of gold; in the following year this had risen to 729,233 oz.; by 1892 it was 1,210,865 oz., and year by year it increased thereafter.

The profits of a rich and well-managed mine were enormous. In 1892, for instance, the Ferreira mine paid its shareholders a dividend of 125 per cent. on its capital; other companies were only less successful, and with such results the value of the shares in London would mount to an extraordinary premium, and the profits of those who were lucky enough to sell their holding at the top of the speculative market might be equal to the dividend and the original capital invested together.

Unfortunately the success of these reputable companies encouraged less scrupulous men to prey on a gullible public; and in the wild mania of speculation which followed, and which gave the pirates of Throgmorton Street their chance, perhaps as much money was lost as gained.

[1] The native labourers were better paid at Johannesburg than at Kimberley. On the diamond-fields the average wage was 1s. weekly with food, or 15s. without food.

The rash investor, learning caution by experience, grew shy for awhile of South African mines, and blamed Johannesburg instead of London and his own imprudence; but the industry was founded on too solid a basis to be much affected by the disreputable parasites that clung to its golden skirts. There was in fact sixty miles and more of gold-bearing country in and around Johannesburg, and in places the deposits extended to great depths, while there was always the chance that more gold would yet be discovered further afield when the Witwatersrand mines showed signs of exhaustion.

The Growth of Johannesburg, 1890-5.

On these sound foundations Johannesburg was built, a golden city in the wilderness, an industrial paradox in a pastoral republic. Johannesburg, or as it was more commonly called for short Joburg, was practically an English city after the hasty American model, or some would have described it more accurately as a city of Anglo-Israelites—for the Hebrew became as conspicuous here as in Kimberley.[1] Many tongues were spoken in its streets, but the three newspapers published in 1892 were all English. Most of the shops were English; its horse-races were essentially English; there was a theatre, at which only English dramas were played. The music-halls and gambling-dens were English; even the Vigilance Society that was founded to watch the halls and dens for immorality was imitated from an English model.

Social intercourse in Johannesburg ran on much the same lines as in Kimberley: the general tone being fundamentally plutocratic, rather flashy and ostentatious, self-conscious of recent wealth and eagerly or blatantly materialist, thinking in terms of dividends, weighing a man by the size of his pockets, and reckoning even beauty as a commercial asset. Some men laid the foundation of large fortunes on a slender

[1] One of the old pioneers of Johannesburg told me that the Semitic influx only became pronounced in the third year. In the first few months there were not more than thirty to fifty Jews on the Rand.

basis; one who afterwards gained respect or envy as a titled millionaire began by peddling watches and jewellery in the streets until he could risk his profits on a share in a mine;[1] others showed the upstart insolence of sudden unaccustomed riches, flaunted it gaily for a few brief months, then lost their all in some financial hurricane, and quietly disappeared.[2] A few rose steadily by careful speculation or sound dealing, and one firm—Eckstein of the Corner House—achieved the same pre-eminence and power in Johannesburg as the De Beers Corporation in Kimberley.

All spent their money when they had it, or their credit when they had it not, on luxury and pleasure, giving the place a certain crude magnificence and vulgar splendour in sharp contrast to the staid farmer folk of the Transvaal Republic who were their neighbours. All around were Boer farms; not many miles from noisy Johannesburg was the quiet town, which indeed was then little more than village, of Pretoria, the seat of government of a purely pastoral state, now faced with entirely novel circumstances and an alien population. In the first five years of its existence Johannesburg had outdistanced the older cities of South Africa, and become the most important inland urban centre south of the Zambesi; but every phase of its existence, and in truth the very fact of its existence at all, was a paradox. It was a city of extravagant wealth in a country of homely peasants, a city of

Its sharp Contrast with the Pastoral Boers.

[1] This gentleman is happily still alive and prosperous, but I forbear to outrage his modesty by printing his name.

[2] Many of those who lost all and went bankrupt in Johannesburg disappeared, a number hiding their misfortunes in the new colonies further north. Finlason (*A Nobody in Mashonaland*) came across a man in Rhodesia who had had a fortune of £200,000 in the Transvaal and lost it all. At the height of his pride he had been heard to rate a waiter soundly for serving champagne in a misty glass in a Rand hotel; the next year he was in Mashonaland, dressed in a dirty flannel shirt, drinking muddy water out of a lobster tin, and eating rice which he dug out of a three-legged cooking-pot with a twig. Fortunately the unhappy man took the change of fortune philosophically.

mammon, of scrip and share and cash, in a country that reckoned its riches in flocks and herds, a community of company promoters among the patriarchs, a city of flash and glitter among a solid folk that hated show, a city of urgent haste in a land of abundant leisure, a city of foreigners who were mostly British in a country that hated every foreigner and hated the British most of all foreigners. The soil and the government belonged to the Boers; but the great wealth of the country was in the hands of the invaders, who soon outnumbered the older population. It was this financial and social paradox that precipitated a political revolution thirteen years after Johannesburg had sprung from the Witwatersrand gold reef.

The Boers for their part hated the immigration they could not restrain; and some were heard to speak of abandoning the country and making another trek to the north across the Limpopo. A few of their number did so;[1] and in ordinary circumstances and under a weak leadership of the Transvaal Republic a second Great Trek might have occurred as soon as the large alien population of the Rand outnumbered the native burghers.

The Boers propose another Trek.

But the circumstances were not ordinary, and the leadership of the Republic was not weak as it had often been in previous years. It happened that the President of the Transvaal at that time was by far the ablest man of European descent yet born in South Africa, a strong, stubborn man who was not without the element of greatness. He hated the influx of the aliens with all the intensity of a backveldt burgher, but he would by no means abandon the country to them; instead he set himself to use the unwelcome visitors to his own ends, to compel their reluctant aid in building a greater structure on the trembling basis of the now so unstable Republic. Even before the discovery of gold, and when his treasury was empty, he had conceived the idea of

[1] See ch. iv. of this book; and bk. xxvi. ch. iii.

enlarging the boundaries of the Transvaal, of making it the dominant and independent state in South Africa, and cutting off the British mission and trading route to the northern interior beyond his own dominions; now that his treasury was filling with the new-found wealth of his country, he calmly faced the danger of an alien population, and began to use the British immigrants whom he hated to further his ambitious dream of enlarging the independent Boer dominions.

Yet President Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger,[1] the most able and bitter enemy of the British and of British rule in South Africa, had been born a British subject.

President Kruger, 1825-1904.

His parents bore a name well known and not without esteem in Cape Colony; the original Krüger was one of those German emigrants who had gone out to South Africa in the very early days of the Dutch East India Company,[2] and his descendants, having settled in the colony and being blessed with many sons, in time found kinsmen in every district of the Cape from Stellenbosch to Uitenhage.

Farming was the traditional occupation of the Krugers, and Caspar Jan Hendrik Kruger, the father of Paul Kruger, was a farmer in the northern district of the eastern province of Cape Colony, at Vaalbank in the Colesberg region, a little south of the Orange River. Here Paul was born, on 10th October 1825, the third child of a large family; here he learned his first religious lessons from his mother, a farmer's daughter of the Zuurberg, and gained from his human environment, of white master and black slaves or servants, that

[1] The best biography of Kruger is the German work by Van Oordt. There is a poor account by Statham; Kruger's own *Memoirs* are not more honest than most autobiographies.

There are several other lives of the President, remarkable mainly for the fact that they were written before his death, at the climax of his career; interest evaporated in the last years of exile and seclusion.

The obituary notice in the London *Times* of 15th July 1904 is poor and rhetorical; the compiler clearly scamped his work.

[2] See bk. xxiii. ch. ii.

theory of race-ascendency, of a European superior whose plain duty was to command his African inferiors, which clung to every Boer through life.

His Early Life in Cape Colony.

In due course Paul Kruger should have become a farmer like his ancestors, moving a little when he grew up from his father's home, taking the share decreed by custom for a younger son of the family flocks and herds, claiming some unoccupied land for his own possession, building a house according to his means and taste, seeking out a wife among his people, and spending his days henceforth as a pastoral patriarch of the veldt, unknown beyond his own immediate circle but a little potentate within it. In such manner the Cape Dutch had spread across Cape Colony through the eighteenth century, and were still spreading in the nineteenth; but now came a break in the tradition. Slavery was abolished in 1834 by the British Government; the old order of life was suddenly changed; and the Great Trek began. Young Kruger's parents were among the emigrants across the Orange River; and Paul, who had already taken a hand in the day-work of the fields at home, and learned his duties as a cowherd, trekked north with his father and such of the family possessions as were not sold before they left Cape Colony. He was then between nine and ten years of age, and this uprooting of the family was a lasting memory with the lad. It was the first impulse to that hatred of the British which afterwards became the mastering passion of his life.

In the Transvaal.

After many wanderings, some perils, and a temporary sojourn for a time in the Orange River countries, the Krugers settled in the Transvaal. On the fertile pastures of Magaliesberg the lad was now again employed in tending the paternal flocks; but the dull monotony of the cowherd's days was often varied by long hunting expeditions or guerilla warfare with the natives on the borders. The life was rough and hard but very healthy, and in a few years

Paul Kruger grew into a strong and powerful man, setting up his farm at Waterkloof near by his father, and taking a wife early, as was the custom of his people and indeed of the peasant everywhere. At seventeen he was married, at twenty a widower—his first wife died in childbirth—and in another year or two he married again. By this second wife he had sixteen children.

The large family was typical of the peasant; the man indeed was a peasant to the core. In all this was nothing uncommon; young Kruger's life was the life of hundreds of his fellows. His skill and bravery as a hunter, his recklessness in attacking lion and elephant single-handed in the bush, was marked; but other young Boers were not less brave. He showed the same resource and daring in the warfare with the natives, in those continual campaigns against the Kafir and the Matabili which filled the early history of the Transvaal for several years; he would venture alone into a cave full of hostile natives, or ride fearlessly through a camp at open warfare with his people:[1] but other young Boers would do little less. These were the rude virtues of a peasantry whom necessity had taught to defend itself. The great physical strength of Paul Kruger, an iron constitution and an iron will, might be envied or admired by a lesser breed of men; but the Cape Dutch farmers were a folk of great strength, good physique, and rugged steadfastness, and Kruger was not more dogged than others of his race. Those who live close to the soil are seldom highly strung, for nerves are the prerogative of cities; and Kruger after a hunting accident which smashed his thumb hacked the broken joint off with a pocket-knife, afterwards paring away the mortifying flesh down to the raw wound by the same rough surgery. It was the rude, unconscious heroism of

His Daring.

[1] See his own *Memoirs*. In his youth Kruger had heard the shots fired in Natal at the massacre of Retief, and been present at the great fight with the Matabili in the Transvaal (bk. xxiv. ch. i.).

primitive man; but others among that people would have done the same.

Kruger's lack of learning, his rough plain-spokenness,[1] and hatred of shams—again typical of the peasant—and his religious creed—he held the most narrow and reactionary form of Cape Dutch Protestantism,[2] and he was devout enough to see the hand of God in everything he did, the hand of Satan in every action of his enemies—was that of the typical Transvaal Boer. The brute pluck and simple faith and crude wit of the man both smelt of the earth, and both stamped the peasant. He was a man of the people, a rough, masterful man of his own people.

Causes of his Influence.

But it was through this very likeness to his fellows that Kruger succeeded as President of the Republic, where his predecessor Burgers failed. He knew his people through and through, and they knew him—his rudeness in speech, his unctuous piety, his simple tastes, his doggedness, his failings and limitations, as well as his virtues. He was seldom far ahead of their ideas; his aim was their aim. His restricted outlook and anti-progressive views were after their own hearts; the only time his popularity was seriously affected, and he seemed in some danger of losing his hold on his countrymen, was after one of his visits to Europe, when he arranged to open up communication with the outer world by the construction of a railway from Transvaal to Delagoa Bay—a scheme that had cost Burgers dear. Much of Paul Kruger's

[1] In the hope of impressing Kruger with his importance, an English peer once enumerated the great offices he had held, and enlarged upon his noble ancestry. Thereupon Kruger said to the interpreter, 'Tell the gentleman that I was a cowherd and my father a farmer.'

[2] The Christian Reformed Church, which adhered strictly to the decrees of the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618. It differed little in doctrines, so far as outsiders could judge, from the other Dutch Reformed Churches; but its nickname of *Dopper*, or Canting, church gives the opinion of other Dutch Protestants. Kruger himself suggests that 'just as a *dop* extinguishes a candle, so the Doppers extinguished all new thoughts and opposed all progress.'

influence among the citizens of the Transvaal Republic was due to his steadfast opposition to the promotion of communications between Pretoria and the south, because the south was a British possession, and the independent Boers wished to isolate themselves from the British.

This was the man who had become President of the Transvaal in 1883; a man with an irreconcilable hatred of the British that dated from the Great Trek of his boyhood, and deepened later into the abiding passion of his life. His aim was a single and an honourable one—the independence of his people; and it carried with it, what he thought a necessary corollary, the exclusion of the British from South Africa. Before the discovery of gold in his dominions he had planned the expansion of the republic across Bechuanaland and north of the Limpopo, the cutting off of the British advance into the interior, the closing of the great mission path which Livingstone and his fellows had made. He had conceived this ambitious scheme, although his treasury was empty—for his burghers had not shaken off their hereditary dislike of taxes—but now that gold had been discovered his plans were both more easy and more difficult of realisation. Money was his in plenty, since the new alien population could be taxed, and were rightly taxed, for the wealth they gained from the Transvaal soil; but that new alien population, which in time outnumbered his own burghers, became his greatest danger.

His Ambition.

Nevertheless Paul Kruger might have succeeded in his aim, of enlarging the republic and closing the interior to the British, but for one thing. There were diamonds as well as gold in South Africa, and the diamonds of Kimberley were British as the gold of Johannesburg was Boer. And it happened that an Englishman had the same vision of expansion as the Boer, and while the Englishman was ready to finance a British advance to the north with the diamonds of Kimberley, as the Boer was ready to finance

His Chance of Success.

his own advance with the gold of Johannesburg, the Englishman was on all accounts the greater man.

Between those two was the struggle waged whether the interior of South Africa should be Boer and republican, or British and imperial, for the next twenty years.

CHAPTER IV

CECIL RHODES: 1871-90

AMONG the motley crowd of adventurers who gambled and drank, idled and stole, in the diamond-fields at Kimberley, was a youth who neither gambled nor drank, idled nor stole. He was of delicate, almost fragile appearance; his mien was grave and preoccupied, as of a dreamer who saw not as others see; but an officer of the British army who met him casually was astounded to find that this youth knew more of such practical affairs as boundary disputes and diamond digging than either Government emissary or the average miner. He was making, had indeed already made with rapidity and ease, a fortune sufficient for most men; but, in a place where most successful names were tarnished with suspicion of illicit deals, none spoke ill of him.

Yet few, perhaps none, in that congregation of adventurers understood what manner of man this was. Although rich, he was intent on becoming richer; yet he was not a mercenary man. A trader in diamonds, he was found studying theology in his leisure moments; a successful miner, he was intent on taking a degree at Oxford University; an authority on finance, he was learning by rote the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England; a promoter and director of a great commercial corporation, he was ready for an animated argument with the learned on the obscure and difficult doctrine of predestination.[1]

[1] Warren, *On the Veldt in the 'Seventies.*

The name of this extraordinary youth was Cecil John Rhodes.[1]

His father was the vicar of Bishop's Stortford in the county of Hertford in England; and in that quiet country town of millers and maltsters, which in those days was still untouched by the growth of outer London, Cecil Rhodes was born on 5th July 1853, to the uncertain prospects of the fifth son and seventh child in the family of eleven that was to be reared in that comfortable but by no means wealthy parsonage. Like his brothers, the lad was sent to the local grammar school for the rudiments of learning; like them also, he sat in the choir of his father's church, one of 'the seven angels of the seven churches,' as the good vicar fancifully called his seven sons; and in due course Cecil would have gone up to Oxford, probably to prepare for holy orders in the Church of England, had he not outgrown his strength. The doctors recommended a long sea voyage and the dry, bracing air of South Africa as the best tonic for a weakly constitution; and in June 1870 the lad sailed for Natal, where an elder brother had recently established a cotton plantation. Cecil Rhodes.

The hour of his arrival was propitious. All Africa soon began to talk of the new diamond deposits on the Orange River and the new diamond-fields in Griqualand; a few months afterwards Cecil Rhodes joined the crowd that was making its way up-country in the hope of wealth, carrying with him, we are told, 'a bucket and a spade, several volumes of the classics and a Greek lexicon.' That Rhodes at Kimberley.

[1] The *Life of the Right Hon. Cecil J. Rhodes* has been written by Sir Lewis Michell, a dull but useful work. A more lifelike portrait is *Cecil Rhodes: His Private Life by His Private Secretary*, Philip Jourdain. Another private secretary, Le Sueur, has also written an account, from a less worshipping angle, of Rhodes. Fuller's *Rhodes: A Monograph and a Reminiscence*, is good; Hensman's *Rhodes* is superseded. But by far the best view is in *Cecil Rhodes: His Political Life and Speeches*, by Vindex. Colvin's *Cecil Rhodes* is a lifelike sketch in small compass. Cook's *Life of Garrett* contains a few memories of Rhodes's career; Mortimer Menpes, *War Impressions* (1901), is also useful.

curious equipment of scholarship and action typified the next phase of this youth's life.

He read and dug, and two years afterwards, with health seemingly restored, returned home to matriculate at Oriel College, Oxford.

The academic calm of that ancient foundation contrasted strangely with the rough excitement of Kimberley, but both appealed in different ways to Cecil Rhodes. In few men have the far-sighted visions of the dreamer and the clear, practical brain of the financier and statesman been more happily united for effective action; it would be difficult to say whether Oriel or the ruder school at the diamond mines contributed more to the theory of life and duty which Rhodes built up for his personal guidance.

And at Oxford.

Had he followed the usual course of study at Oxford it is probable that his whole career would have been changed, and with it the trend of South African history. Rhodes might have forsaken the rugged paths of empire for the placid ruts of a conventional existence; and the useful but obscure avocations of a country parson, for which the excellent vicar of Stortford had intended his delicate son, might have occupied the man who made a huge personal fortune and helped to shape and enlarge the destinies of a people, within the short space of thirty years. Other men of equal abilities have been cramped on too small a stage; success and fame depend on circumstance as well as character.[1] In the case of Rhodes

[1] In the case of George Washington, for example (vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iii.).

Had Rhodes taken holy orders, and become in time Archbishop of Canterbury, his extraordinary financial ability might have led him to tackle the immensely difficult subject of Church of England finance, which was taken up by Archbishop Davidson some years later. His views as to the advantages of political union might in that case have become transformed into advocacy of the reunion of Christendom, and his vision of the expansion of England have found expression in encouragement of missionary effort in savage lands.

But these are idle speculations.

the luck was with him till his work was almost done, and by then his short life was nearly over.

The dual influence of university and mining camp divided the next few years; but the old weakness of the lung returned, as the result of a chill caught when rowing on the Isis; phthisis set in, and the doctors who ordered Rhodes away from England gave him only a year to live, even in the favourable climate of South Africa.

But the doctors were mistaken; Rhodes did not die. The dry southern air, more kindly than the fogs of Oxford, restored the damaged lung, and in a few years the pallid, weakly stripling grew into a burly man whom old associates could hardly recognise.

Rhodes returned to Kimberley, and worked hard, first as a digger, then as a dealer in claims. In time two partners joined him, and the firm of Rhodes, Rudd, and Alderson, after struggling through many difficulties, due to lack of capital and short credit with the banks —which needed to keep a sharp eye on accommodations to their customers in such a place as Kimberley—gradually attained a position of some importance and authority. Presently another partner was added, young Alfred Beit, a Jewish diamond-buyer from Hamburg, who possessed the peculiar financial instincts of his race in extraordinary degree; and with these men in combination, the first De Beers Mining Corporation was registered in 1880, with a capital of £200,000.

He makes a Fortune.

They were among the strongest, and certainly among the straightest, of the Kimberley diamond dealers. But they had a rival, and a rival of whom Rhodes confessed he was afraid—a cunning little Jew from Whitechapel. As Alfred Beit came from the aristocracy of German Jewry, Barney Barnato[1] sprang from the lowest slums of

His Rival, Barnato.

[1] An account of this extraordinary person has been written by Harry Raymond, *B. I. Barnato: A Memoir*. And a livelier record in the veracious *Reminiscences of Kimberley*, by Cohen.

the London ghetto; a Whitechapel brat who had picked up a gutter living as a child by buying the pass-out checks of playgoers at the Garrick Theatre in London and selling them for the precarious halfpence of chance late-comers, 'a little weakly sorrowful child,' as another memory tells, 'sitting crying on a doorstep' in Petticoat Lane, that amazing street of oriental life and colour and squalor and dirt, which the lower ranks of London Jews have made their own.

In these struggles for pence to live Barney's wits were sharpened, and then came his chance. He heard of Kimberley; he determined to go there. Somehow he reached the place, along with others of his type, and there he started the risky business of a diamond-dealer with a total capital of £30, and forty boxes of dubious cigars.

It was a hazardous chance, and a single mistake would have ruined him. But a Jew without capital is like a Scot without a job or a Frenchman without a mistress—the deficiency is so unnatural that it is quickly repaired. Impudent, assertive, shrewd—'he loved me better than any man,' said his early partner Cohen, 'and would have done anything for me in the world, bar lend me sixpence'—Barnato quickly made his way in Kimberley. In a few years the Yiddish guttersnipe was a man of wealth; men began to speak of him as one who might even outvie Rhodes and Beit; and in 1880, the year when the first De Beers Mining Company was formed, the Barnato Mining Company, its admitted rival, was also registered.

On the whole Barnato was reckoned the more powerful man by the quidnuncs of Kimberley. He was merely a financier whose whole mind was on his work; Rhodes was known as a visionary, a dreamer who had strange fits of abstraction and thoughtfulness; and by this time he had also entered Cape politics. This folly, said men who measured the rivals, must divide his energies in the fight with Barnato; and in nine cases out of ten they would have been right.

But this was the tenth case; Rhodes was an exception to every rule. If Barnato 'often gasped with mocking laughter as he spoke of Rhodes's crackpot schemes,'[1] his rival was more shrewd than he in business. Barnato would have run his diamonds against Rhodes's diamonds, and the cut-throat competition in selling a product for which as a luxury there could be no more than a limited demand would have brought prices down with a run, and gone far to ruin both. When this was pointed out to Barnato, he laughed and refused to change his course; when the folly of competition and the advantages of amalgamation were again impressed upon him, he still persisted; and Rhodes saw that the only way to deal with such a man was to beat him. He bought a large holding, £1,400,000, in Barnato's Company; and when Barnato and other shareholders objected, Rhodes bought still more. The price of Barnato stock rose absurdly in consequence; but Barnato's shareholders still sold to Rhodes, and Rhodes warned Barnato that he would soon find himself left alone in his own company. These daring tactics won the day, and saved the diamond industry. Barnato had to own himself beaten. Barnato's Company was no longer his when his rival had so large a holding; and the two men met to discuss terms. The negotiations lasted several days, the final settlement was debated from early one morning until four the next morning; and finally Barnato agreed that the Barnato Company should be absorbed by De Beers, which now became the practical controller of the South African diamond trade.[2]

Rhodes defeats Barnato.

[1] The amiable Cohen, *Reminiscences*.

[2] Barnato was made a life director of De Beers, but his power was gone. He came to England for a time, a very wealthy man, and built himself a house in Park Lane, the extraordinary bad taste of whose architecture made passers-by stare and gasp. He committed suicide by jumping off the steamer on his way from Cape Town to London in 1897. It was said that his mind had become affected by the threats of illicit diamond buyers to murder him.

The whole struggle between the two diamond interests is described by

That was in 1888; and from that day Cecil Rhodes had no longer any rival in Kimberley. But by that time Kimberley had no more the leading place in his thoughts. It had taken him seventeen years to make his fortune—he was now an extremely wealthy man—and to get the mastery of the diamond trade, and during these seventeen years the fragile English youth, who had come up to the New Rush with a bucket and a Greek lexicon for his capital, had grown into a sturdy man of thirty-five, and begun to play his part upon a wider stage than the little isolated world of Griqualand. He had, indeed, already changed the map of southern Africa; he was preparing to change it still more.

His great Wealth.

In his first ten years at Kimberley this strange youth was not only making money fast; he was also hammering out a gospel for himself, and planning a career.[1] His abstraction drew attention in that lively, easy-going crowd of diggers and drinkers and gamblers. 'I have many times seen him,' said an old Kimberley acquaintance, 'dressed in white flannels, leaning moodily with his hands in his pockets against a street wall'; often too he was noticed sitting on a down-turned

Rhodes in his speech to the De Beers shareholders at Kimberley, 31st March 1888.

It may be noted that there were still a few independent diamond mines left outside the combination. But they were of little importance, being described as 'too rich to abandon and too poor to pay.' Few ever paid a dividend, and none paid dividends regularly.

The capital of De Beers was £3,400,000 after the amalgamation, and the price of the shares rose from £10 to £64.

[1] W. T. Stead, the extraordinary journalist who edited the *Review of Reviews* and was for a time the friend of Rhodes, draws a picture of him thinking out his career at this time, choosing deliberately between finance, public life, 'a happy marriage,' etc. Rhodes must have known that no man could make certain of the latter; but I am not much impressed by this picture of the young man passing various possibilities before him, and choosing one of many. Every young man with any spark of original ambition does the same, I imagine, whether he intends to become parson or doctor or engineer or statesman. Few save the contemplative philosopher and the wastrel float haphazard down the stream of human circumstance—and even the philosopher sometimes runs up against a snag that shakes his contemplation into action.

bucket, pondering strange thoughts which none could penetrate.

His thought was of nothing less than the future of South Africa.

Many men, like Barnato, laughed at him—until they knew better; some loved him—for he had a large and charitable heart to the unfortunate,[1] and his munificence was a terror to his bankers[2]; and some had begun to fear him. But none understood him or his thoughts in that paradise of money-grubbers. Every other man in Kimberley, two perhaps excepted, Beit and Jameson—and these were influenced by Rhodes—looked on wealth as an end in itself; Rhodes knew it as the means to other ends. With their wealth the others could buy luxury and ease, a palace in London if they wished, perhaps even rank and place and titular honour—for our England is accommodating to successful sons and step-sons who bring wealth to her shrine. But these things were not for Rhodes. For money he cared nothing, save as means to an end; it was no more than the machinery of life, necessary for power, but otherwise useless.[3]

His View of Money.

[1] Fuller and Jourdain record many of his charities to poor men in distress. Women he would assist in the same manner, but he would not often see them personally, lest the sight of their misery should unman him. He could not bear to see a woman suffer.

[2] The worthy biographer Michell, himself a banker, and a man who looked on a bank ledger with the same reverence that a bishop looks on a bible, was clearly horrified by the reckless expenditure of Rhodes, which made large drafts on his balance.

For several years Rhodes had an income of a quarter of a million sterling a year, yet for nine months in every year he was largely overdrawn. But had he been more careful of his private affairs there would have been no Rhodesia.

[3] There is a story of Rhodes and General Gordon which gives his views exactly. Gordon told Rhodes that he had been offered a whole roomful of gold by the Chinese Government for his services in suppressing a rebellion. He refused it. 'I would have taken it,' said Rhodes, 'and as many more roomfuls as they would give me. It is no use to have big ideas if you have not the cash to carry them out.'

On the other hand, after he defeated Barnato, a shareholder in De Beers suggested a bonus of £10,000 to Rhodes for his services. He would have none of it. 'Every man has his own pleasure,' he said; 'my pleasure has been in beating them all round, and I want no sums of money.'

For luxury he cared less; while smaller men were spending unaccustomed wealth with the lavishness and proverbial bad taste of the parvenu, Rhodes lived simply and dressed shabbily. For rank or title he had no use; he rated the glint and baubles of life at their proper worth.

Rhodes therefore looked on wealth as the means to ends. But to what ends? Hereditary instinct guided his decision.

His Desire for Land.

He came, as he often pointed out, of farming stock, of men who had owned land, cultivated land, lived by the land and for the land; and it was for land that Rhodes went, all the land he could get.

The land indeed was there. North of Kimberley and the Griqua desert was land in plenty, unoccupied by Europeans, and in places even without native owners. The missionaries had discovered it, were still discovering it—even while Rhodes was at Kimberley Livingstone was making his last journey into the interior—but they had not claimed it for Britain, preferring indeed the native title and possession to any European annexation; but if they did not annex it there were others ready for the spoil. The Boers were enlarging their republics, for they, too, had the land-hunger of the farmer; the Germans were beginning to talk of African colonies; only the British Government, conscious already of its vast possessions overseas, was reluctant to add to its responsibilities.[1] The opportunity of expansion, of building up a great empire in South Africa, was there for Britain; if

[1] Rhodes had a conversation with Gladstone on this subject, and the two men amicably disagreed. 'Our burden is too great,' said Gladstone; 'as it is, I cannot find the people to govern all our dependencies. We have too much, Mr. Rhodes, to do. I don't blame you; you never give us any trouble. But we have too much of the world, and now these wretched missionaries are dragging us into Uganda' (Rhodes, speech at Cape Town, 25th October 1898). These were a rough version, apparently, of Gladstone's words; a slightly different account was given in a later speech, when Rhodes added that Gladstone relied on the principle of free trade, which made colonies useless (see vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.). To which Rhodes answered, 'In logic you are all right, but in practice you will be all wrong.' A cruel truth.

she delayed or refused, the opportunity would pass, and probably for ever. At that time it seemed clear that she would certainly delay and probably refuse.

On these matters Rhodes meditated long and earnestly during those first ten years at Kimberley when he was struggling upwards from a humble diamond-digger to a millionaire. And the outcome of his meditations decided his work in life. That work was to take the north of South Africa for Britain, and to unify the whole country south of the Zambesi under the control of one white government and the flag of the unwilling British Empire. That should have been task enough for one man's life, but in later years his vision enlarged even upon this, and saw an even greater work ahead; his mind's eye looked still further north, beyond the Zambesi to Tanganyika, Egypt, and the Mediterranean; and as David Livingstone forty years before had hungered to explore those countries and win them for Christ,[1] so Cecil Rhodes now dreamed of founding a great civilisation stretching through the whole continent from south to north, from Cape Town through to Cairo, and winning Africa for the British Empire.[2]

Rhodes determines to annex the North.

That stupendous vision took men's breath away when Rhodes expounded it to petty ears; its very hugeness made men hate him, deride him, and traduce him. He was opposed, of course, and misrepresented; lying scandal touched his name, and unnamed vices were ascribed by evil rumour to a man whose sexual life was as pure as his schemes were great.[3] Dogs will always be found to bark at men, and the

[1] See chapter ii. of this book for Livingstone's vision of exploring and converting the whole of Africa.

[2] 'We shall not relax our efforts, until by our civilisation and the efforts of our people we reach the shores of the Mediterranean.'—Speech by Rhodes at Cape Town, 25th October 1898.

[3] I need not refer in more detail to these unsavoury lies. There is a type of man who starts them, and a type of man which loves to believe anything against the great; even the saintly Livingstone was not exempt, and slander touched the very name of Christ Himself. But

bigger the man and the smaller the dog the louder it will bark.

In admiration or derision Rhodes was nicknamed the Colossus, the man who thought in continents and millions, by men who thought in parishes and pence. Other men, it is true, have had such visions, but yet have left no mark upon their age. But Rhodes had both the money and the will to carry out his schemes; and he used both with a prodigality that savoured of recklessness to more cautious minds. Had he depended on the Imperial Government for funds he would have been recalled in his first year; but he believed in himself and his work, and provided much of the money out of his own pocket, caring little what men said so long as he had his way. 'I do not care a jot,' he once remarked, 'who wears the peacock's feathers so long as the work is done.'[1] It is to the credit of the world that it gave him the credit for his work.[2]

In the twenty strenuous years that followed 1881 the greater part of the work he had planned, more indeed than he had actually planned in his musings on the down-turned bucket at the Kimberley diamond mine, was done. For the moment, however, expansion northward to the Zambesi seemed enough.

The first definite step towards the fulfilment of that vision was to enter South African politics; and on 7th April 1881 Rhodes took his seat for the first time in the Cape Parliament as member for the agricultural district of Barkly West, near Kimberley. He was then twenty-eight years of age.

He enters the Cape Parliament, 1881.

the testimony of Jameson and Jourdain to the purity of Rhodes is sufficient refutation.

Rhodes was reputed a woman-hater and a drunkard. He only drank in moderation; and his secretary, Le Sueur, records that he proposed marriage to a lady in Cape Colony several times, but she refused him, and married another man.

[1] Speech at Cape Town, 18th July 1899.

[2] Several novels were written in England at this time, in which the hero was a thinly disguised imitation of Rhodes. The least bad was Anthony Hope's *The God in the Car*.

The political atmosphere at Cape Town was not very hopeful for his schemes. The Cape Parliament had no definite division with two parties, such as prevailed at Westminster and Washington; its members voted mainly according to the economic interests of their constituents, and were practically classified as urban and commercial representatives from Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, or rural and agricultural from the country districts. But the interests of the two ports of the colony often clashed, and the representatives of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth were at variance; the rural members again were split up into agricultural, pastoral, or wine-growing representatives, and here once more was often a division of interests. The urban members were mainly British, the rural members mostly Dutch: but while no serious racial divisions had hitherto divided one from the other, the division between the various local interests was sharp enough. And this division naturally made for parochial and petty views of politics, short-sighted contradictory aims, and a local rather than a national patriotism.

The Cape Parliament was therefore fundamentally opposed at the start to Rhodes's ideas. But he had another difficulty ahead. He entered as an Englishman, proud of his country and his Empire; and it was then a dark hour for England in South Africa. The imperialist awakening in Britain had been succeeded by a sharp reaction against increased responsibilities;[1] a British Governor who had favoured expansion in South Africa had been recalled almost in disgrace; and the whole policy of expansion was suddenly reversed, to the grave detriment of British prestige at the Cape.[2] The British loyalists in South Africa were sullen and angry, the Dutch loyalists were perplexed and disheartened; and many now openly advocated, what had

Opposition to his Aims.

[1] See vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii. for the ebb and flow of imperial sentiment in the Victorian age.

[2] For the full details of these changes see bk. xxvi. ch. i.

till then been a dying cause, the independence of South Africa and the exclusion of the British from a country which the British Government did not seem to want. The very year after Rhodes entered the Cape Parliament the Afrikander Bond was founded to unite the Dutch against the British, and to advocate the foundation of a single Dutch Republic independent of the British Government in British territory and the countries which Rhodes proposed to annex to Britain.

Never did statesman start his political career at a more inauspicious moment. The British Government had sufficiently declared its opposition to the policy which Rhodes had determined on; and it was supported by a large Dutch party at the Cape, which had no wish to enlarge the boundaries of the colony beyond the Orange River, and which desired that the northern interior, if colonised at all by Europeans, should be colonised from the Transvaal, and, by falling under the control of the Transvaal Republic, come under Dutch independent and republican, and not imperial British rule.

Against this attitude, which would have isolated Cape Colony from the interior and minimised, if not actually cut its connection with the British Empire, Cecil Rhodes protested from the start. He was almost alone in his protest, but that deterred him not; he stated his broad view of things, that both Briton and Boer were in South Africa for all time, that both had an equal right to the country, and each must take his share in its development. There could, he argued, be no attempt at exclusion—and the first principle of the Transvaal Republic was its exclusiveness, as had been shown by its expulsion from its soil of British missionaries and traders,[1] and as was to be shown a year or two later in its dealings with foreigners within its boundaries and its own kinsmen without.

The idea of an independent South Africa, too, Rhodes roughly ridiculed. To be independent one must be strong;

[1] See ch. ii. of this book.

and South Africa, with its European states at variance and its black tribes still a constant danger, was anything but strong as yet. 'Are we a great and independent South Africa?' asked Rhodes in one of his early speeches, and answered his own question, 'No; we are only the population of a third-rate English city spread over a great country.'[1] South Africa could not have maintained her independence against a European power near the close of the nineteenth century much more effectually than when Britain reduced the Cape at the beginning of the century; therefore, said Rhodes, the British flag must remain. The alternative was not independence, but control by another European power.

Such reasoning was resented by the Bond, and Rhodes was burnt in effigy in towns where Bond views were paramount, for trying, as he put it, to defend English interests in South Africa. For a time, indeed, there was a danger that Rhodes should be looked on purely as an English politician; a cautious Cape Dutchman refused him his vote partly because he was too young, but mainly because 'he looked so damnably like an Englishman.'

This was a real danger, for Rhodes knew that he would be unable to carry out his policy were the Cape Dutch solidly against him. But that danger he avoided, partly by luck, partly by considered policy. Most of his personal friends happened to be Cape Dutchmen. His house, when he came to live near Cape Town, was named after that rambling and magnificent old Dutch mansion of East India days, Groote Schuur;[2] there open hospitality was dispensed to Dutch and Englishman alike. His practical interest in agriculture, and his boast that he came of farming stock, appealed to the bucolic mind of Cape Dutch farmers; his frank sympathy with many of their views, his not less frank opposition to them when he deemed them wrong, passed him as an honest man among them.

[1] Speech in Cape Parliament, 25th April 1881. [2] See bk. xxiii. ch. ii.

One disadvantage, it is true, he had, and it is extraordinary that he should not have remedied so obvious an obstacle. He could not speak the Dutch language, or its Cape variant, the Taal; yet neither tongue is difficult to learn, and he had acquired enough knowledge of the Kafir tongues in Kimberley to converse easily with natives. Yet the Kafir tongues are far less facile to a European than one variant of a Germanic language to the man who speaks another variant.

He wins Cape Dutch Support.

But this disability did not prevent him from winning the confidence and good-will of the Cape Dutch. With the Afrikander Bond, which thwarted him in his aims at northern expansion, he was still at issue for some years, until the Bond itself saw fit to modify its doctrines; with the men whom the Bond claimed to represent he had no quarrel. And not all the Cape Dutch were members of the Afrikander Bond; not all even of its members approved all its principles. For the Cape Dutchman was essentially a conservative, and the principle of the Bond, the ejection of the British from South Africa, implied a revolution far more serious than Rhodes's plans of expansion, plans which indeed were little more than a continuance and enlargement on a vaster scale of the traditional expansionist policy of the Dutch since they had settled in South Africa.

But circumstances also helped him in his design to secure Cape Dutch support. The old settler at the Cape naturally preferred his emigrant kinsman in the Transvaal above the Englishman, but his racial instincts were now thwarted by the fact that the ruling spirit in the Transvaal was as hostile to its kinsmen at the Cape as to the alien Englishman. A Customs Union between the colony and the republic, such as Rhodes advocated, would have been of great benefit to the colony; the republic would have none of it. A railway from Cape Town to Pretoria and Johannesburg would have facili-

tated trade, and have given the farmers of the Cape a larger market for their goods; the Transvaal opposed it. The employment of young Cape Dutchmen in the Transvaal civil service would have given the educated youth of the colony a new career, and helped to join colony and republic closer together; but the Transvaal authorities, unable or unwilling to supply their wants among their own people or their kinsmen in South Africa, chose to import their officials from Holland. Now the Hollanders were not popular in South Africa, where some memory of the Dutch East India Company's rule still lingered; a Dutch official is never popular even in his own country: and the importation of these men into the Transvaal was not welcomed at the Cape.

Against the exclusive spirit in the Transvaal, and its support by the Afrikander Bond, the Cape Dutch set the policy of Cecil Rhodes, and deliberately preferred it. If Rhodes advocated expansion, he also stood for equal rights and opportunities for all civilised men, whether Boer or Briton; and he did not commit that old error of the British, that fruitful source of estrangement and ill-feeling with the Dutch; he did not attempt to put the native on a footing of equality —which he could not in fact maintain—with the whites. He would have them ruled justly, but as children, under the control of the civilised whites of the country; if they showed themselves worthy they should have a vote and a share in the government of the country, but until then the inferiors must be ruled for their own good by the superior.[1] There could be no question of equality in theory until there was equality in fact.

This was a policy the Cape Dutch burgher could understand and approve—'My head is with the British if my heart

[1] Rhodes was an honest man. There are many in politics. He was also a brave man. There are few in politics. He told the Cape wine-growers that alcohol must be kept from the natives, although the sale of liquor to the natives was one of the main points which decided the wine-growing vote. I doubt if his candour lost him anything in the end.

is with the Boers,' was the quietly effective way in which one Cape Dutchman summed up the new position; and Rhodes's frank declaration that at bottom there was little difference between Boer and Briton,[1] that the two peoples should unite rather than quarrel, soon found an echo in their hearts. From being a bugbear, Rhodes became in time a hero with the Cape Dutch; and that position he maintained even after persistent misrepresentation of his aims and the one great catastrophe of his later years. The Jameson Raid, which made them distrust every other Englishman, diminished but destroyed not entirely their affection for Cecil Rhodes.

The basis of his policy, in politics as in finance, was union and amalgamation of interests, not division and perpetuation of differences.[2] Where fighting was necessary, that is, when the other side insisted on fighting, he would fight with the best and win, as he fought Barnato at Kimberley. But Rhodes knew that even the victor loses something; at any rate he must lose the energy expended on the fight, which might have been given to constructive work; and whenever it was possible he preferred peace and agreement, a transitory peace even and an agreement that might only be short and temporary with an opponent. The love of peace, and the belief in peace and an honest bargain, shows steadily through his career; sometimes indeed it led him into error. Thrice at least his own love of peace convinced him that the other man would never fight—and he was mistaken.[3]

Even with the Bond, the official enemy of his schemes, Rhodes was willing to call a truce. 'I offer to the opposite

[1] There are several such sayings in Rhodes's speeches. Perhaps the most neatly phrased is in the speech at Kimberley, 19th February 1900. 'We have no feeling against them. We have lived with them, shot with them, visited with them, and we find—owing, I suppose it is, to the race affinity—that there is not much between us.'

[2] His love of amalgamation led some one to say that if ever Rhodes got to heaven he would want to amalgamate it with the other place (Williams, *How I became a Governor*).

[3] Twice he believed that the Matabili would not fight, and they did; and once that Kruger would not fight, and he did.

benches the pomegranate,' he said in the Cape Parliament; 'I ask you to clear away all grievances between me and you. We have lived in the past under the mists of Table Mountain, and the politics of this House have somehow resembled the cloud that drifts around the mountain.' There were grievances and wrongs on both sides, and therefore 'we must let the grass grow over the past sometimes.'

He had not yet learned, what a knowledge of French-Canadian history would have told him, that a people which has lost its motherland has a long memory that broods upon the past while its rivals are looking to the future.[1] He found that for himself in later days, but for the moment his appeal was successful. The pact was made, under terms that dishonoured neither side; Rhodes and the Bond worked together for several years in South African politics. There were indeed some things in common between them. Each was interested in the progress of agriculture in Cape Colony. Each believed that white men must rule all South Africa. Each believed in federal union—but here was the one fundamental divergence between them. The Bond believed in national Dutch union without the British flag, while the retention of the British flag was the one absolute condition made by Rhodes.[2]

In the end Rhodes had his way. The Afrikander Bond modified, or professed to modify its policy; the article hinting that the British should be ousted from South Africa was deleted from its constitution, perhaps forgotten by some of its members; and Cecil Rhodes, the head of the British imperialists in Cape Colony, and Jan Hofmeyr, the leader of the

[1] See vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iii. and iv.

[2] He admitted, however, that there could be a federal union under various flags, by a reference to Bryce's *Impressions of South Africa*. Even in the case of a great racial upheaval—as with the Balkan League in 1912—such a union is a poor thing, as Rhodes well recognised; but he qualified his support of the project by the significant addition, 'One knows in the end what flag will fly.'—Speech, 20th July 1899.

Afrikander Bond, found themselves working together—for somewhat different ends.[1]

Never was a more curious alliance. Rhodes was plain-spoken to the verge of bluntness; often he merely thought aloud, uttering the frankness of what with others would have been unspoken thoughts. Hofmeyr, on the other hand, was no public speaker; he was reserved, secretive, shy; he loved intrigue; his nickname of 'the Mole' explained his methods,[2] and Rhodes at a later day, when the alliance was at an end, explained those methods in cruel detail. 'His duty was clearly to be in the House leading his party; but where was he? He was always to be found in the lavatories and the passages of the House bullying some poor member of his party, because he wanted to vote according to his feelings and not according to Hofmeyr's orders.'[3]

'A mole as a leader,' continued Rhodes, 'could never win, and no party would ever succeed if its leaders would not come

[1] The terms of the pact as arranged between Rhodes and Hofmeyr, the Bond leader, were simple. 'Hofmeyr was chiefly interested,' said Rhodes several years later, 'in withstanding Free Trade and upholding Protection on behalf of the Dutch, who were agriculturists and wine-growers. I had a policy of my own, to keep open the road to the north, to secure for British South Africa room for expansion, and to leave time and circumstances to bring about an inevitable federation. I therefore struck a bargain with him, by which I undertook to defend the Protective system in Cape Colony, and he pledged himself in the name of the Bond not to throw any obstacles in the way of northern expansion. He did not like this condition, but I am bound to say he loyally fulfilled it, thereby incurring the hatred of the Transvaal Boers, and to some extent losing the confidence of extreme members of the Afrikander Bond. That was the whole secret, which was no secret at all.' Rhodes forfeited nothing, for he was personally in favour of protection for agriculture.

[2] The name was given Hofmeyr by Merriman, himself somewhat of an enigma in Cape politics, a brilliant erratic man whose evident abilities lacked all constructive elements, and were entirely devoted to criticism. 'I call Hofmeyr the Mole,' Merriman explained, 'because you never see him, but you know he is somewhere near. There is a little heap of ground thrown up, which tells you he has been there, but you never see him.'

The missionary Mackenzie of Bechuanaland had almost as good a name for Hofmeyr. He called him 'the captain who never appeared on deck.'

[3] Speech by Rhodes, 26th August 1898.

into the open and argue questions with its opponents.' But for all that Hofmeyr's extraordinary if peculiar abilities underground were a match for Rhodes overground. Hofmeyr thought he could win Rhodes over to the Dutch independents if, as seemed probable, the Imperial Government discountenanced his imperial views; Rhodes thought he could win Hofmeyr over to the British view when he saw the futility of the Cape Colony under Transvaal domination. Each thought he used the other for his own ends, and when the alliance was finally broken Rhodes laughingly confessed that he did not know which was right. Certainly neither had succeeded.[1]

Rhodes was essentially a man of action, not of words;[2] his speeches were careless in form, rough-hewn, mostly unprepared. They have the same carelessness of construction, the same unbreakable force of character, as those of Cromwell to the Commonwealth;[3] sometimes the very soul of the man stood out in a single phrase. 'An honourable member told us we should have to do it,' he said in his first year in the Cape Parliament; 'I say, No; but we shall do it if we think it right.'[4] He could hit hard at times, but he had never the dexterous cut-and-thrust, the love of sham debating points, that marks the good party politician; his speeches were full

[1] Rhodes was the more nearly right of the two. His imperialism never changed or wavered; Hofmeyr at the British Colonial Conference in London in 1887 did some good imperial work, standing out for an imperial preferential tariff as a measure of imperial union.

[2] Even his physical attitude in the Cape Parliament seemed to show this. He was 'as restless in his seat as a spring doll,' said one observer of him.—Michell's *Rhodes*.

[3] A parallel quotation will best show the likeness. 'I have no feeling as to where a man was born; all I desire to know is whether he is a good man,—and then I want him,' said Rhodes in a speech on 23rd April 1891. 'Sir, the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that suffices,' said Cromwell. The same doctrine in substance, allowing for the difference of two centuries.

[4] Speech, 25th April 1881. The clean uprightness of the English parsonage had clearly not been muddied by ten years' residence at Kimberley.

of solid constructive thought, and that is the eloquence that tells on Germanic audiences such as Rhodes had to face all his life.

But Rhodes was a man of action, and in time the opportunity for action came in full measure. He aimed at the control of the north by Britain, and the securing of the road which British missionaries and traders had made through Bechuanaland; but unless the thing were done quickly it could not be done at all, for the independent Boers of the Transvaal had the same ambition for themselves as Rhodes—they, too, were aiming for the north, and had begun to take it.

The Bechuana Controversy, 1883.

The first chance came in Rhodes's third year of politics. On the uncertain boundaries of Griqualand West were two native chiefs, Mankaroane and Montsoia, whose lands the Transvaal Boers desired. Those lands were the key to the interior, and several settlers from the republic had emigrated thither under one Gerrit van Niekerk, and there proclaimed, on 6th August 1883, a new republic to be called Stellaland,[1] with its capital at Vryburg. Nothing tangible connected this movement with President Kruger and his government at Pretoria, but there was no doubt—it was afterwards admitted by Van Niekerk[2]—that they were acting in concert with that government, if not certainly by its express instructions. The plan was an ingenious one, for the Transvaal could disavow its pioneers until they were successful, and then, when opportunity arose, proclaim the country for its own.[2]

Some little while afterwards a similar squatting enterprise was begun further north at Rooi-Grond, which was presently proclaimed an independent republic under the title of Goshenland. With these two places under its control

[1] Stellaland = Stille, or peaceful, land. An official bluebook, which declares the name to be from Stella, a star, derived from the comet of 1882, is wrong.

[2] A similar plan was successfully employed in northern Zululand. See bk. xxvi. ch. i.

the Transvaal would hold the key to the interior, and Cape Colony and the British Empire would find their chances of expansion northwards at an end.

Rhodes saw the urgency of the occasion; the British Governor at the Cape, Sir Hercules Robinson, a man of long experience and wide views,[1] saw it also: but the Cape Dutch as a whole still believed that the northern interior was the inheritance of the Dutch alone and not of British and Dutch together, and therefore prepared to support the Transvaal claims rather than their own; the Imperial Government was apathetic.

Yet it was clear that Stellaland and Goshenland could not permanently stand alone; they must in the end be incorporated in the Transvaal or Cape Colony. To ensure that it should be the latter which obtained their allegiance, Rhodes went north in 1883, and talked with the chief Mankaroane, who willingly agreed to cede his lands to the Cape. Having thus, as he thought, secured the expansion of Britain over a large part of southern Bechuanaland, Rhodes went on to the Stellaland republic. This he found a settlement of some four hundred farms, under its own government, and equipped with its own proper Raad, or assembly, at its own capital of Vryburg, whose very name declared it a free town. Originally founded by Transvaal Boers, other settlers from Cape Colony had come in from time to time; but these squatters were aware that they had no proper title to their lands. That title they were anxious to secure, and their desire was Rhodes's opportunity. It was his principle that he cared not who had the land, so long as the Cape had the government; and on this basis a considerable number agreed to petition for annexation by the Cape, Van Niekerk himself, the head of the little republic, making no definite objection, although clearly inclined towards the Transvaal.

Boer Republics of Stellaland and Goshenland, 1883.

[1] Afterwards Lord Rosmead.

With this substantial result Rhodes returned to Cape Town. But to his intense disgust, he found his labour thrown away. The Imperial Government had done nothing, the Cape Ministry would do nothing, the Governor therefore could do nothing, and the whole matter was allowed to stand over indefinitely.

Germany annexes Namaqualand and Damaraland, 1884.

But events were now occurring which aroused even the slumberous Cape Colony. In that year a new European power descended on South Africa: Germany raised her flag at Angra Pequeña on the western coast, and in 1884 annexed Namaqualand and Damaraland, and attempted to occupy St. Lucia Bay in north Natal. The latter step, which would seriously affect the whole British position in South Africa, was too much even for the dilatory Granville, then Secretary of the British Foreign Office;[1] he protested that the Bay had been acquired by Britain in 1843 by virtue of a treaty with the Zulus, and Germany resigned her claim. But in Namaqualand and Damaraland she remained in permanence, proclaiming the whole territory a German protectorate under the style of German South-West Africa. She had profited from the indecision of the British and the slowness of the Dutch; for both Cape Colony and Britain had been urged by far-seeing men to annex those barren lands, but nothing had been done, on the dangerous assumption that nobody else would do anything. Only the land for a few miles round Walfish Bay, the one practicable harbour of Namaqualand, had been proclaimed British in 1878.

This sudden appearance of a new colonial power in southern Africa awoke both Britain and Cape Colony, and the late sluggards were kept awake by the fact that Germany was contemplating the establishment of other colonies in that continent and obtaining them elsewhere. Britain scented

[1] For Granville's dilatory methods elsewhere in Africa, see vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. i. and ch. iii.

a fresh rival to her Empire, and the possessions which to many had seemed so valueless suddenly became the objects of desire when another sought them.

But this was not the only danger. The eastern boundaries of the new German Protectorate in South-West Africa were undefined; the western boundaries of the Transvaal were likewise undefined. If the two countries came together, as there was some reason to fear, the great road to the interior would be shut, and the long work of British missionaries and traders would have been done in vain. The Imperial Government, in a sudden access of activity, recognised the fact to be important; by a Convention with the Transvaal in 1884, the western boundaries of the republic were fixed, and those boundaries left the British road to the north outside the Transvaal territories.[1] And a British Protectorate was at once proclaimed over Bechuanaland.

Bechuanaland annexed by Britain, 1884.

The work which Rhodes had done now seemed secure; but there remained the two petty republics of Stellaland and Goshenland, whose affairs must be arranged. And there remained also the Transvaal, whose true policy was now to be revealed.

The deputy-commissioner of the new Bechuanaland Protectorate was John Mackenzie, one of those admirable Scots evangelists who had spread Christianity and some elements of civilisation through the interior. No man had laboured more successfully, for to him was due the conversion of Khama and an amazing revolution in that great chief's terri-

[1] One of the Transvaal delegates at the 1884 Convention of London wrote afterwards that the Imperial Government 'were willing to concede everything and on every point, so they said from the outset, only upon this point they could not give in. They would keep the trade route to the north open.' (Du Toit, in *Rhodesia: Past and Present*, 1897.) Downing Street had been coached by the Governor at the Cape, but the fact that Gladstone held out on this fundamental point should be counted to him for righteousness by the imperialist. It is probably true that he held out in the interests of free trade rather than the British Empire.

tory; no man knew Bechuanaland so well.[1] But Mackenzie, like his fellows in the mission-field, had the defects of his qualities. He approved the British Protectorate over Bechuanaland, but he had no wish to see white men colonise the country, which he regarded as sacred to its native inhabitants; he had the inevitable missionary prejudice against the settler and the trader, and he disliked the Boer who seized the native's lands even more than he disliked the Briton.

There was much reason for his views: neither the British trader nor the Boer trekker cared much for the original owner of the soil, and Mackenzie's vision of a native Christian kingdom guided in the path of righteousness and civilisation under disinterested white control must necessarily fade if any and every white man were allowed in Bechuanaland.

His ideal was a high one, but in practice it was impossible of achievement. The British trader could not be kept out of the country, since it was the main road to the interior; the Boer farmer was already there. And, unfortunately, Mackenzie had at once to deal with the two Boer communities of Stellaland and Goshenland, which would not shift their ground for any missionary or deputy-commissioner. A deadlock soon occurred: Mackenzie refused to recognise that the Boers had any rights; the Boers refused to recognise that he had any authority. Each was unfortunately correct, for the Boers had no title to the lands they had taken, and it was clear that Mackenzie had no authority at the moment save his own word.[2]

[1] Mackenzie's general views are explained in the pamphlet, *Bechuanaland, The Transvaal, and England*; and in an article on *England and South Africa* in the *Contemporary Review*, 1884. See also his *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, an admirable book; and *Austral Africa: Losing It or Ruling It*; and bk. xxv. There is a useful life of Mackenzie by his son.

The controversy with Rhodes caused considerable ill-feeling between the two men, and some years later Mackenzie opposed the schemes of Rhodes in Mashonaland.

[2] Some years afterwards Rhodes described Mackenzie's aim as 'a pro-native, anti-Dutch policy, to cost nothing and to do everything.' A cruel but not inaccurate view.

Stellaland was coldly civil, at Goshenland he was openly defied, and the squatters of that miniature republic calmly pursued their main industry of raiding the native herds—a fact which rightly incensed still further the indignant missionary-commissioner. In his zeal for native interests, Mackenzie proclaimed that the whole land of the country was the property of the British Crown; but the Boers of Bechuanaland paid no heed. They believed that their possession was stronger than his proclamation; they knew, too, that they would be supported from the Transvaal, and they doubted if Mackenzie would be supported from the Cape.

They were right, but hardly in the manner they expected. Mackenzie was quietly recalled; but a stronger man came in his place. The Stellalanders had not forgotten Rhodes, and when matters went awry in Bechuanaland Rhodes had talked the question over with the Governor at the Cape. 'I am afraid Bechuanaland is gone,' said Robinson; 'those freebooters will take the country, and Kruger, of course, is behind it all.' Rhodes refused to believe that the whole interior was to be lost to Britain; and asked—to quote his own account of the conversation—'that I might be allowed to go up and look into things. The Governor said: "Oh, you can go up, but I can give you no force to back you up. You must use your own judgment." I replied, "Will you allow me to do what I like?" "Yes," said the Governor, "but if you make a mess of it, I shan't back you up." I said, "That is good enough for me."'

With this vague authority, and little to depend on save the straight force of his own character, Rhodes went north to see his old acquaintance of the Stellaland Republic. 'It seemed to me that the best thing to do,' he said long afterwards, 'was to go into the camp of my opponents, and so I went on a visit to Van Niekerk and De la Rey of the Transvaal. I shall never forget our meeting. When I spoke to De la Rey, his answer was, "Blood must flow," to which I remember

making the retort, "No, give me my breakfast, and then we can talk about blood." Well, I stayed with him a week, I became godfather to his grandchild, and we made a settlement. They got their farms, and I secured the government.'

With this happy ease and friendliness of manner his opponents were disarmed; at the very threshold of his public career Rhodes had learnt, or perhaps he knew by instinct, what some who have called themselves statesmen never seem to learn, the way to deal with men. But further north in Goshenland he had a more difficult task. Here was a republic of some 160 farms; here, too, was Piet Joubert, commandant-general of the Transvaal, and open war. In the very presence of Rhodes, and on the very night of his arrival, a Boer force set out from Rooi-Grond to attack the native chief Montsoia at Mafeking; Rhodes warned them that they were breaking the Convention of London, and virtually rebelling against the Queen; and having done this, and recognised that he could do no more, he left the country.

Controversy with the Transvaal.

This was on 25th August 1884; three weeks later, on 16th September, the equivocal position of the Goshenlanders was made clear. The *Official Gazette* of the Transvaal Republic contained a proclamation by President Kruger annexing the whole of Montsoia's lands, on which stood Rooi-Grond, 'in the interests of humanity'—a convenient euphemism for theft.

This flat defiance of the London Convention and the British Empire was too much even for the easy-going imperial authorities. An immediate protest was lodged—no less had been expected at Pretoria. But the Transvaal had not anticipated that the protest would be followed up by force; and it learned with some alarm that a large expedition of four thousand men was to be sent up under Sir Charles Warren to clear out the Boer marauders of Goshenland, reinstate the evicted natives around Mafeking, and restore order in Bechuanaland.

Clearly the attempt had failed. The Transvaal was in the wrong—not that that weighed for much at Pretoria—but it was also certain that the small outpost at Rooi-Grond would be helpless against so considerable an expedition; and the Transvaal, whose treasury was nearly empty, was alarmed to receive notification that it would be charged with the entire cost of the Warren force.

The Transvaal President had played a clever game of bluff; the Bond in Cape Colony had backed him up by hints and whispers rather than actual threats of rebellion: but for once the game had failed. President Kruger waited till the British force was on its way to Mafeking, and then, realising that he had lost the chance, he announced himself ready to meet Warren at Fourteen Streams on the border to discuss boundary questions in a friendly spirit.

The offer was accepted, and at that conference, which opened on 7th February 1885, Cecil Rhodes and Paul Kruger, the British leader and the Boer in the fight for the northern interior, met for the first time face to face. Each recognised a man; neither recognised his master.

Kruger protested that he had been powerless to check the burghers of Goshenland by any other means than annexation. The excuse deceived nobody, and Rhodes retorted with some heat, 'I blame only one man for the events that followed my arrival at Rooi-Grond, and that is Joubert. Why is he not here to answer for himself?' There was no answer, and Bechuanaland passed peacefully to Britain.

But all was not yet settled in this Bechuana business. Warren disallowed the titles of the Stellalanders to their holdings, and proclaimed that none but British would be allowed in that country; the act was denounced by Rhodes as a breach of faith, for as a representative of the Cape Government he had already settled with the Vryburg squatters that their holdings should be respected. 'I held to one cardinal axiom,' he explained, 'that no matter who held the land,

Cape Colony should have the government.' Warren's action made him look a fool whose promise could be dishonoured; and Rhodes promptly resigned his position, remarking that there were two cardinal axioms which explained the supremacy of England—first, that the word of the nation, once pledged, was never broken, and second, that when a man accepted citizenship of the British Empire there was no distinction of races. 'It has been my misfortune,' said Rhodes in stinging words, 'in one year to meet with the breach of the one and the proposed breach of the other.'[1]

In this matter Rhodes was right, both in his stand for high principle and his view that it would be well to make the Boer republicans contented; and his view prevailed.

The first long step on the great road to the north was won; and many men who were not opposed to the expansion of the British Empire thought that step was far enough. Not so Rhodes, to whom Bechuanaland was nothing more than the neck of the bottle—the simile was his own. There remained the bottle itself—the great lands between the Bechuana country and the Zambesi.

Rhodes prepares for another Expansion.

Rhodes has himself related the story of an interview about this time with the Governor at the Cape, who had cordially approved and aided in the expansion over Bechuanaland. 'We are now,' said Rhodes, 'at latitude 22°.' Sir Hercules Robinson answered him, 'And what a trouble it has been. Where do you mean to stop?' to which quick answer came, 'I will stop where the country has not been claimed.' The two men looked together at the map, and found that definition took them to the southern end of Tanganyika. At this, reported Rhodes,

[1] Unfortunately examples could have been found, and in South Africa too, of recent years, that the pledged word of Britain was not invariably sacred. Britain pledged herself to stand by the Orange River Sovereignty in 1848, and withdrew in 1854; and she pledged herself not to withdraw from the Transvaal in 1878, and withdrew three years later in ignominy. (Bk. xxiv. ch. i. and bk. xxvi. ch. i.)

Robinson 'was a little upset, and I said, "The powers at home marked the map and did nothing; let us mark the map, and we all know we shall do something." "Well," said Sir Hercules, "I think you should be satisfied with the Zambesi as a boundary." I replied, "Let us take a piece of notepaper, and measure from the Block House at Cape Town to the Vaal River; that is the individual effort of the people. Now let us measure what you have done in your temporary existence, and then we will finish up by measuring my imaginings." We took a piece of notepaper, and measured, and His Excellency said, "I will leave you alone."'

Within twelve years the imaginings of Cecil Rhodes were fact; the British Empire reached to Tanganyika.

This was indeed a Colossus that bestrode South Africa, a great man moving to great ends. 'It is inevitable fate,' said Rhodes, as he looked at the map of the continent, 'that all this should be changed, and I should like to be the agent of fate.' Such was his destiny; or rather one would say, since for a few brief splendid years he seemed above all human bounds, such he made his destiny.

He knew all that had been written, and most that had been said, concerning the interior north of the Limpopo; his faith in its prospects, as a country where white men could live and rear their children, was unbounded. 'Give me the centre of the continent,' said Rhodes privately, 'and let who will have the swamps which skirt the coast'; already in his third year in Cape politics he had referred in public to his project: 'I have been favoured with reports from Tati, and I have learned how great are the prospects of the territory beyond the Transvaal.'[1] That territory was the land of the Matabili, and the Nyasa countries, where the followers of David Livingstone were now at work.[2]

He turns to Matabililand.

Others also had been favoured in like manner; Rhodes

[1] Speech, 16th August 1883.

[2] See chap. ii.

stood not alone in his belief in the lands north of the Limpopo. Boer hunters and British traders had been there, and seen the richness of the country; concessions had been asked and granted from the Matabili,[1] Boer settlements had been proposed, there was the immediate prospect of a Transvaal trek to the north, and Rhodes knew that what he would do he must do quickly.

His Treaty with the Matabili, 1888.

Finally it was discovered in 1887 that the Transvaal Government had sent an emissary to Lo Bengula, the Matabili king, with the view of establishing permanent relations in that country; and it was clear to Rhodes that he must act at once, or be forestalled. A hurried visit to Sir Hercules Robinson showed that the High Commissioner had no power to proclaim a British protectorate, having indeed no instructions from the Imperial Government to do anything at all in Matabililand; but Rhodes found a way out of the difficulty by suggesting that an arrangement should be made with Lo Bengula, by which that ruler should bind himself not to enter into correspondence or treaty with any other state, or sell or countenance any sale of Matabili lands to any other state without the previous knowledge and sanction of the British High Commissioner. To this pale shadow of the coming annexation the High Commissioner readily agreed.

The luck as usual favoured Rhodes in carrying out his project. The Transvaal agent had the mischance to get killed; the messenger whom Rhodes sent, J. S. Moffat, went through in safety, the Matabili sovereign was not unwilling, and a treaty in the terms which Rhodes suggested was drawn up with Lo Bengula, and signed on 11th February 1888. The Transvaal Government, aware that it had been outdone,

[1] The concession-hunters bought their privileges with presents of guns, cartridges, and wines; it was said that the Matabili court had enough champagne to float a battleship. Some extraordinary things found their way into the Matabili country. When Lord Randolph Churchill was visiting South Africa a few years later he sent the savage king of that nation a bath-chair.

at once alleged a prior treaty of similar character with itself; but a few months later, on 12th November of the same year, Lo Bengula stated that his signature to the instrument had been obtained by fraud. He made no attempt to deny the validity or binding character of the British document.

Victorious over the Transvaal in this first move, it was now the aim of Rhodes to secure a more definite footing in the land. A second agent, a well-known hunter of the day, named Fry, was sent up to Buluwayo, the Matabili capital, but died on the journey; and a stronger party was soon despatched, composed of Rhodes's partner Rudd, Rochfort Maguire, who afterwards became a leading figure in Rhodesian affairs and a member of the British Parliament, and Frank Thompson, one of the big sportsmen of South Africa. These men reached the capital of Lo Bengula in safety, and had an audience with him, in which they proposed to purchase all the mineral rights of his country in return for a substantial monthly pension.

Further Negotiations for Mineral Rights.

Lo Bengula hesitated. He was attracted by the money, he had no great value for the minerals of his country—but he steadily set his face against any diminution of authority as a sovereign. Well aware that he was the last great native chief of South Africa—for his cousins the Zulus were broken by the whites, Kafirs and Bechuanas were subject peoples, and his neighbour Khama had accepted Christianity and the white man's civilisation—Lo Bengula had an uneasy feeling, which later grew to certainty, that for him also this was the beginning of the end. He could not take the white man's money without being in some measure under the white man's control; and once the white men got a footing in the country there would be no stopping their advance.

Lo Bengula knew this, his people knew it, and he knew that they knew it. But he did not break with the tempters who offered him certain gold for the chance that gold would be found in his countries.

From the standpoint of the visitors the negotiations were difficult, and not without danger. The Matabili people, as of old, hated the white men and mistrusted them; there were moments when a sudden outbreak that would have been fatal to the little embassy seemed probable, and the visitors had an uneasy memory of a similar party of Europeans who had mysteriously died of poison several years before in Lo Bengula's country.[1] Once, too, an awkward misadventure showed the temper of the Matabili warriors. One of the white men happened to clean his teeth on a certain morning with some carbolic powder, and the running stream in which he was washing turned red; he was at once seized, brought before Lo Bengula, and charged with bewitching the water. A word from the king, and the whole party would have been killed; but the word was not given, and the serious triviality was satisfactorily explained. Such episodes hardly helped the negotiations forward.

The Ungusa River Treaty, 1888.

At length, on 30th October 1888, the matter came to issue, and the British ambassadors met the Matabili sovereign and his chiefs in a great council or *indaba* on the Ungusa River, to decide the question of the purchase and the pension. It was a momentous scene. The proposed treaty lay on the table, the king and his retainers stood close by, the Matabili warriors were grouped around, and the white men were at a little distance. For a time none spoke for or against the treaty. The chiefs and their followers were mainly hostile, but dared not go against their autocratic master; Lo Bengula himself, so masterful at other times, sat silent, embarrassed, indecisive in this crisis of his reign. He knew better than his people that a massacre might succeed for the moment, but other white men would quickly follow to revenge their fellows; they were stronger

[1] Three white men were reported 'poisoned' in 1879; it was afterwards ascertained that they had been done to death, but no revenge was, or could be, taken. The story is told by Rider Haggard.

than he, and could no longer be refused. And money, too, was sweet. . . .

There was a long and awkward silence. Then suddenly, his mind made up, Lo Bengula rose, pushed forward to the table, and affixed his mark to the treaty. Unknowingly—or had he some prevision while he doubted what to do?—he had signed his doom, and sold the independence of his people and his country.

The treaty ran :—

'Know all men by these presents, that whereas Charles Dunell Rudd, of Kimberley; Rochfort Maguire, of London; and Francis Robert Thompson, of Kimberley, hereinafter called the grantees, have covenanted and agreed, and do hereby covenant and agree, to pay to me, my heirs and successors, the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, British currency, on the first day of every lunar month; and, further, to deliver at my royal kraal one thousand Martini-Henry breech-loading rifles, together with one hundred thousand rounds of suitable ball cartridge, five hundred of the said rifles and fifty thousand of the said cartridges to be ordered from England forthwith and delivered with reasonable despatch, and the remainder of the said rifles and cartridges to be delivered as soon as the said grantees shall have commenced to work mining machinery within my territory; and further, to deliver on the Zambesi River a steamboat with guns suitable for defensive purposes upon the same river, or, in lieu of the said steamboat, should I so select, to pay me the sum of five hundred pounds sterling, British currency. On the execution of these presents, I, Lo Bengula, King of Matabeleland, Mashonaland, and other adjoining territories, in exercise of my sovereign powers, and in the presence and with the consent of my council of indunas, do hereby grant and assign unto the said grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns, jointly and severally, the complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals situated and contained in my kingdoms, principalities, and dominions, together with full power to do all things that they may deem necessary to win and procure the same, and to hold, collect, and enjoy the profits and revenues, if any, derivable from the said metals and minerals, subject to the aforesaid payment; and whereas I have been much molested of late by divers persons seeking and desiring to obtain grants and concessions of land and mining rights in my territories, I do hereby authorise the said grantees, their

heirs, representatives, and assigns, to take all necessary and lawful steps to exclude from my kingdom, principalities, and dominions all persons seeking land, metals, minerals, or mining rights therein, and I do hereby undertake to render them all such needful assistance as they may from time to time require for the exclusion of such persons, and to grant no concessions of land or mining rights from and after this date without their consent and concurrence; provided that, if at any time the said monthly payment of one hundred pounds shall be in arrear for a period of three months, then this grant shall cease and determine from the date of the last made payment; and, further, provided, that nothing contained in these presents shall extend to or affect a grant made by me of certain mining rights in a portion of my territory south of the Ramaquaban River, which grant is commonly known as the Tati Concession. This, given under my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord, 1888, at my royal kraal.

Lo Bengula X his mark.
C. D. Rudd.
Rochfort Maguire.
F. R. Thompson.

Witnesses. Chas. D. Helm.
J. F. Dreyer.

With this precious document the Rudd party returned to the south, and on this treaty, whose conditions were faithfully observed by the British, Rhodes based his proposals to the Imperial Government for a royal charter in the following year.

He had already prepared the way to carry out his schemes in South Africa. On 13th March 1888 the final deal with Barnato at Kimberley was completed, the great corporation of De Beers Consolidated Mines came into existence, and it was a condition of the agreement that De Beers should finance the new mining and colonising enterprise to the extent of £200,000—the total capital of the original De Beers Company. On that point Barnato had fought Rhodes to the last, declaring that this was not business, but Rhodes prevailed.[1]

[1] Rhodes had, as already shown some pages previously, the advantage over Barnato from his large holding in Barnato's company. The promise of a seat in the Cape Parliament for Barnato was the final argument.

'You have a fancy for building an empire in the north,' said the distressed Barnato sorrowfully as he thought of good dividends thrown away on a dream of conquest, 'and I suppose you must have your way.'

Early in 1889 Rhodes came to England, leaving behind him the clear message that 'whatever state possesses Bechuanaland and Matabililand will possess South Africa'; [1] but the battle now had to be fought with those who already had, or asserted they had, claims upon the country. The concession-hunters, remarked Rhodes some time after,[2] were 'one of the greatest difficulties we had. They came like locusts; they followed us everywhere, but did nothing whatever, and whenever they found us in occupation of a district, they came with a piece of paper from some wretched petty native chief, and claimed the whole of our results.' Many of these irritating claims were not made until later, but the bigger opponents were dealt with summarily and at once. One concession for mining rights which had been given to Thomas Baines—'the good white man,' as Lo Bengula called that kindly companion of Livingstone's early journeys—so far back as 8th April 1870 had passed into other hands; it had never been used, and Rhodes bought the full rights from its owners for £10,000. Other and more formidable rivals were bought out for cash, and presently the road was fairly clear for Rhodes to discuss the whole situation with the British Government, and to raise the full capital required for the great enterprise that lay ahead.

Rhodes buys out Rival Concession-Holders.

The Colonial Office agreed to the general principle of the scheme, 'influenced by the consideration that if such a Company is incorporated by Royal Charter, its constitution, objects, and operations will become more directly subject to control by Her Majesty's Government than if it were left to

[1] Speech, 28th September 1888.
[2] Speech, 29th November 1892.

those gentlemen to incorporate themselves under the Joint Stock Companies Acts, as they often do. The example of the Imperial East Africa Company shows that such a body may, to some considerable extent, relieve Her Majesty's Government from diplomatic difficulties and heavy expenditure.' But the Colonial Office, although friendly to the scheme, wished to limit the soaring imagination of Rhodes and to confine the boundary of the British South Africa Company to the southern banks of the Zambesi. An official might as well have commanded the lark to limit its flight. Rhodes insisted, the Government in time gave way, and the northern boundaries of the British South Africa Company's dominions were left undefined.[1]

He founds the British South Africa Company, 1889.

On 29th October 1889 the Royal Charter was granted, to Rhodes and his associates for a period of twenty-five years. It was a year all but a day since the original treaty with Lo Bengula had been signed. The way was clear for the founding of the British colony that was to be called in time Rhodesia.

With the instinct born of his farming stock, Rhodes had gone for land, as much land as he could get; and he had got it in full measure. 'I have got a great piece of Africa,' he said to a Cape audience some time after, 'and whether you, the fathers, are for me or against me, I know that your children will be with me.'[2]

[1] In this respect the charter resembled the old charter for the colonisation of Carolina more than two centuries before, whose boundaries had also been left undefined, and might have been claimed as reaching through from the Atlantic to the Pacific. See vol. i. bk. iv. ch. iii.

[2] Speech, 26th August 1898.

In the same year that he secured Rhodesia, Rhodes realised another of his dreams. Like Warren Hastings, who had longed for years to buy back his old family estates at Daylesford, Rhodes had tried to purchase the lands which his people had once owned at Dalston, originally open country, now a dreary north London suburb. In 1888 the purchase was effected, and Rhodes became a landed proprietor on the bare veldt and in crowded London. This little incident is an additional proof of his craving for land.

CHAPTER V

THE FOUNDING OF RHODESIA: 1888-1900

'WHEN I was elected to the Cape Parliament in 1881,' said Cecil Rhodes to his constituents seventeen years later, 'I went down, thinking, in my practical way, I will go and take the north.' Four years after his election he had prepared the way by securing the road to the north through Bechuanaland; three years later he had taken the north itself, by treaty with its chiefs and native powers; and in 'his practical way' again, Rhodes at once began to secure and develop his new possession by planting British settlements and townships, and organising an administration in the wilderness.

It was a great country that he had secured for Britain, a territory that reached far into the tropics and the heart of Africa; a very paradise for sportsmen, a land where lion and elephant, buffalo and eland, giraffe and antelope were found in thousands; it was also a land of fertile pastures and open grassy flats, millions of virgin acres awaiting the white man's industry; and there were, moreover, rumours—some held them more than rumours—of gold and gems and precious stones.[1]

This great territory, which later ages were to call Rhodesia from the pioneer of its European settlement, was then peopled by the wild Matabili and their serfs, the gentler Mashonas. Until fifty years before the Mashonas[2] and their cousins the

[1] Apart from the great Zimbabwe ruins in Mashonaland (vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. i.), several old gold workings were found in Matabililand by British hunters before the annexation; and a few quills of gold-dust that had been washed out of river-sand were bought about 1875 by George Wood, whom Selous (*A Hunter's Wanderings*) calls the last of the professional elephant-hunters.

[2] The origin of the word Mashona is unknown; neither this nor any other general term was recognised by the people themselves, among whom each tribe or community had its individual name, as elsewhere in Africa—a proof in itself of their fatal lack of unity and common organisation.

Makalakas had had the country to themselves; but then the emigrant Cape Dutch, who drove the Matabili from the Transvaal north of the Limpopo, had unwittingly driven destruction on that peaceful people. Mosilikatsi, king of the Matabili, fled far from the Boers, and proposed to found a settlement north of the Zambesi; but some of his warriors and their people, liking the rich wooded country through which they passed on the way to the great river, stayed behind in the districts around the present capital of Buluwayo. Mosilikatsi himself soon found his path barred by the *tse-tse* fly, and his cattle dying by the hundred all along the banks of the Zambesi; he therefore retraced his steps to the more excellent country where his warriors had deserted him. These he slaughtered for their faithlessness—he might have spared them for their greater foresight—and the Matabili monarch established himself in this land, spreading his authority over a wide territory with little difficulty. Both the Mashonas and the Makalaka, the older inhabitants, lived in small settlements under petty chiefs, an industrious but stupid peasant folk, with little idea of war and less of combination against a common enemy; they had as much chance of staying the Matabili as the corn the wind. The Makalaka in these parts were utterly exterminated, only deserted hilltop villages and bleaching skulls around showing where their homes had been; the Mashonas were reduced to servitude, allowed to live and work so long as they paid tribute to their conquerors, and submitted to a yearly foray on their cattle, fields, and children.[1]

Rhodesia before Rhodes.

The reign of Mosilikatsi in the new Matabililand was long and not inglorious; and when he died in 1868, his people

[1] When the country was annexed by the British, there were signs that the Mashonas were becoming exhausted by these continual attacks. Their old houses were three times the size of their miserable huts at the time of the British invasion, and many parts of the country that had once been cultivated were reverting to wilderness. The mark of Zulu conquest was everywhere the same—desolation and destruction.

found that his successor, Lo Bengula, was likewise a man of action. Rival factions and contending parties for the throne were the inevitable accompaniments of a change of savage kings; but Lo Bengula's rival, Kuruman by name, was defeated in a tremendous battle in 1870 on the Bembees River at the native town of Zwang Indaba;[1] and from that time there were none to challenge the authority of the last king of the Matabili until the English came.[2]

Not very many white men had yet visited this savage country. From time to time a few Dutch hunters, brave and daring shots, had travelled north from their Transvaal farms, and shot elephants for ivory; and since this proved a profitable sport—for the price of ivory was rising on the European market—they came back year by year to the land of the Matabili and Mashonas, returning southwards with their trophies when the rains made further work impossible. Of such hardy breed were Viljoen, an annual pilgrim to the north, who kept his sight and steadiness of aim till nearly seventy, even recovering at that great age from the mauling of a lion that crunched a limb, and

European Hunters and Traders.

[1] So fierce was the fight that a missionary who passed over the field after the battle found in several cases two men lying dead together, each with the other's assegai through his heart.

[2] Some particulars of this considerable personage may be given. He is described by Selous as a man of 5 ft. 10 or 11 inches, strong, and in later years excessively stout, afflicted with gout or dropsy. At one time he affected European attire, but towards the close of his reign reverted to the national garb, partly perhaps to placate the anti-foreign views of his people. He was an autocrat, cruel and capricious to his subjects, who treated him with the most aggravated respect; but nevertheless there was always the chance that an ambitious rival might head a rebellion and secure his throne, and this doubtless accounted for much of what seemed wanton cruelty.

Lo Bengula did not, like his subjects, dislike white men on general principles, but allowed them to trade and preach and hunt in his dominions; nor did he break his plighted word to them, save in the last crisis of his reign.

His name is said by one writer to mean 'Driven by the Wind,' by another to mean 'The Defender,' and he assumed the usual magniloquent titles of royalty—The Stabber of the Sun, The Eater of Men, the Great Elephant, etc. But even civilisation is not exempt from these absurdities.

going to the chase again; Martin Swart, whose deeds and escapades were told over many a camp-fire of an evening, but who came to an untimely end, along with ten others of his family, from fever on the Matabili plains; John Lee, half Dutch, half British, who hunted and traded at Mangwe; and Schinderhutte, another hunter-trader, who drank himself mad on Cape brandy on his last trip, slew a Kafir boy in his delirium, and was himself killed by his servants, and his body thrown to the hyænas in revenge.

British hunter-traders also found their way north in quest of sport and profit in these years, and showed themselves the equal of the Boers. A few left names that were remembered for cool pluck or successful dealings: such were Jennings, Gifford, and George Wood, a trio of professional elephant-hunters who lived by their guns; Hartley and Phillips, both of whom shot over much of the country between 1864 and 1872; Fairbairn and Dawson, two young Scots traders, who established a store in savage Buluwayo, exchanging blankets, wagons and guns for ivory and ostrich feathers;[1] and George Westbeech, who opened a trade and engaged in sport along the Barotsi Valley to the left of the Matabili in 1871.

These and other hunters, traders, and an occasional missionary,[2] were the unrecognised and mostly forgotten pioneers of the country north of the Limpopo. Some left their bones on the veldt, lost wanderers in its immeasurable dis-

[1] Fairbairn built himself a house near Buluwayo, which he called the New Valhalla, a place where many a weary traveller was refreshed and entertained.

This was one of the earliest European houses in Matabililand, but I think not actually the earliest. The first appears to have been built by the English missionary at Inyati about 1859. But chronological precision in such matters is impossible.

[2] There were two mission stations among the Matabili before the conquest by Britain, the oldest at Inyati, the second at Hope Fountain, twelve miles from Buluwayo, founded about 1870. They were not very successful; and the main stream of missionary effort left the Matabili on one side, and passed on under Livingstone's direction to Nyasa (see ch. ii.).

tances,[1] or were killed by the wild beasts they had come to kill; some came home with trophies of the chase, and told admiring friends strange stories of sudden peril and quick decision; but only one made any permanent mark on the country.[2] That one was Frederick Courteney Selous, the mightiest hunter of them all.

In the year 1872 a young Englishman of nineteen had presented himself at the court of Lo Bengula, and asked permission to shoot the great game of the country. 'Go where you will,' the king answered him contemptuously, 'you are only a boy.' The boy went out to shoot, and the steady nerve and eye of young Selous—for it was he—soon made their mark. His first trip more than paid expenses by the ivory he secured; year by year thereafter he returned north of the Limpopo, sometimes going as far as the Zambesi and beyond in search of sport, sometimes touching the Barotsi Valley, but mostly camping in the territories of the Matabili and Mashonas. Each season had its share of wild adventures and hairbreadth escapes from lion or elephant that turned on their pursuer; each season had its hardships, lack of food at times or water, and its little feasts of elephant's heart, the greatest delicacy of the hunter's table in South Africa; and almost every season saw a heavy bag of ivory and trophies.[3]

Frederick Courteney Selous.

[1] Such was French, a companion of Selous, who lost his way, wandered round and round, and died of thirst and hunger. 'The sun killed him,' said his native attendant simply when found and questioned by Selous some days after the tragedy. Selous himself nearly lost his life on an earlier expedition from the same cause.

[2] Only four place-names of European origin survive from pre-annexation days. One was Beaconsfield Cataract on the Umniati River, named by some straying Tory in the wilderness; the second was the Hill of the Stump-Tailed Bull, named by Hartley from an elephant he shot in 1864; the third was Hartley Hill, seventy-seven miles from Salisbury, which takes its name from Hartley himself; the fourth was Mount Hampden.

[3] Selous had all the ingenuity of the civilised man in primitive surroundings. Once he needed a light, and the expedition had neither lamp nor candle. The leader made it out of marrow fat spread on a plate with a few shreds of blanket for a wick.

Selous has given an account of his experiences in *A Hunter's Wanderings*—one of the classics of sport.

It was to Selous that Rhodes came when the new province was to be occupied. He was no longer the stripling whom Lo Bengula had dismissed with a laugh and the contemptuous permission to go where he would; a strong man nearing forty, Selous had covered the whole of Mashonaland and Matabililand in his ten years' experience; no other white man knew those countries or their people half so well. He had no prevision of the great task which Rhodes invited him to undertake; but when the founder of the Chartered Company was making his final arrangements in London in 1889, the two men met, and Selous agreed to lead the pioneer British force into the new territories in the following year.

Leads the British Expedition into Rhodesia, 1890.

It was his advice that the first effective occupation should be in the country of the Mashonas, a people far less likely to resist than the Matabili, whom no treaty would restrain from an attack on the invader; and that the pioneers should avoid the Matabili territories and capital entirely, cutting a path for themselves far to the south of Buluwayo. To the soundness of that advice may largely be ascribed the initial success of the pioneering column.[1]

But before the pioneers could start new difficulties arose. It became known that Lo Bengula regretted the bargain he had made on the Ungusa River. His pension had been punctually paid, but as the time drew near for his dominions to be invaded by European miners the idea misliked him more and more. The few men

Lo Bengula regrets his Bargain.

[1] The original idea of Rhodes had been that the country should be entered by way of Tati and the Matopo Hills, which would have led into the heart of the Matabili country and inevitably have caused instant collision. The advice of Selous, to go by way of Tuli into Mashonaland, was so clearly wise that Rhodes deferred to it at once. He was far too great a man to be ashamed to learn from another's wider experience.

Once, indeed, some foolish person taunted him with changing his views rather hurriedly. 'Yes, as hurriedly as I could,' replied Rhodes, 'for I found I was wrong.'

among his people who had favoured the treaty were executed in proof of his displeasure; the agent of Rhodes at Buluwayo had to flee the country to save his life. For the time Rhodes could see no remedy, and his great project seemed like to go awry at the last; he could not himself visit Buluwayo to placate Lo Bengula, owing to the pressure of affairs at Kimberley and the Cape, and he knew not whom to send.

In this perplexity he confided the matter to his closest friend, Leander Starr Jameson, a young Scots doctor who had come to South Africa some years since, and had obtained a large and lucrative medical practice in Kimberley. The two men had long been intimate, living like college chums in rooms together, taking their meals together, and exchanging views on men and things.[1] Jameson was familiar with the plans of Rhodes, and when the difficulty was put before him he understood at once. 'I will go,' he said; and to the question, 'When will you start?' he answered, 'To-morrow morning.' He was a man of quick decision and self-sacrifice: a brilliant medical career was straightway abandoned, and henceforth Jameson was the right-hand man of Rhodes in the founding of the new colony.

Dr. Jameson goes North.

Once already he had encountered Lo Bengula, on a holiday trip to the north the previous year; but this time he meant business. Risking his life among the now restless and uneasy Matabili, he rode straight through to Buluwayo; fortunately for his mission, the king was suffering from an attack of gout—doubtless caused by too great indulgence in the wines that had been sent him by rival concession-hunters—and Jameson undertook to cure his royal host. He succeeded, and in reward was invested with the full insignia of a Matabili

[1] From a speech by Cecil Rhodes.

A *Life of Dr. Jameson* has been written by Seymour Fort, after the fashion of these days, which insists that a man shall have the chance of reading his own biography some years before his career is finished.

warrior, the ostrich plume, the shield, and assegai; but in the real purpose of his mission he seemed to make no progress, and Lo Bengula put him off or gave evasive answers when he talked of the fulfilment of the treaty and the opening of the road through the Matabili country.

At length time came to say farewell, and Jameson now warned the king in a last interview. 'As you will not confirm your promise and grant me the road,' said Jameson, 'I shall bring my white *impi*, and if need be, we shall fight.' The unwieldy mass of dark copper-coloured flesh which was the king moved restlessly to and fro in the dim light of the royal hut. 'I have never refused the road to you and your *impi*,' answered Lo Bengula. With that veiled permission Jameson returned, and the pioneer expedition was prepared for the march.

The route having been settled by Selous's advice, there remained the size of the expedition to be sent, and its equipment. And here were many diverse opinions. The Boers knew much about such enterprises, and it was remembered that the trek which the Zoutpansberg Boers had projected into Mashonaland two years before would have numbered at least fifteen hundred men, more probably two thousand. A British officer of some experience is said to have hazarded the opinion that a thousand men and a quarter of a million pounds would be required—a sum that would have crippled the British South Africa Company or, as it was more generally called for short, the Chartered Company at the very start of its enterprise.

The Pioneer Column of Invasion, 1890.

The actual work was done by a pioneer column of 179 men; a troop of Chartered Company's police; and a body of 150 natives, carriers, and drivers, who were not very satisfactory, and many of whom deserted; and the total cost to the Chartered Company was £89,285, 10s. For that sum, and with that number of men under the guidance of Selous, Major Frank Johnson contracted with Cecil Rhodes to recruit, arm,

equip, and pay a force of about two hundred men, to construct a good wagon road from the frontier to Mount Hampden in Mashonaland, to organise an expedition thither in a manner satisfactory both to the Imperial High Commissioner at Cape Town and to the Chartered Company, and to build certain forts in the new country for the protection of its settlers. No similar enterprise had ever been more cheaply planned; the event proved that none was ever more efficiently managed.[1]

The pioneers were all picked men, dressed in a uniform of brown corduroy, leather gaiters, stout army boots, a broad-brimmed hat with the brim pinned up on one side, and a heavy waterproof overcoat, and armed with the ordinary Service Martini-Henry rifle. The rank and file were paid seven shillings and sixpence a day; and at the close of the expedition each man was to select three thousand acres of land, and to have the right to fifteen gold claims in the new country.[2]

The invading force was first assembled at Kimberley, but the real start was from Mafeking. On the morning of 18th May 1890 the column left that dusty little village of the plain for the north, on an enterprise which those so minded might have compared with no great exaggeration to the great march of Cortes through Mexico. But the expedition had a significance apart from this. It was the last heroic undertaking of British colonisation, the last of the long series of English settlements which had spread from Virginia to Vancouver, from Sydney to the

The Start from Mafeking.

[1] The chief authority for the march is, of course, Selous, *Travel and Adventure in South-East Africa*; Hyatt's *The Northward Trek*, and Harvey Brown's *On the South African Frontier*, should also be consulted.

[2] Accompanying the expedition was also a small medical staff, organised by the Jesuit Fathers, an Anglican and a Roman chaplain, and a veterinary surgeon.

In all, the equipment took ninety wagons and four water-carts, and included a searchlight, a plant for electric light, a steam saw-mill, arms and ammunition, and four Maxim guns.

Australian desert, from Table Bay to the Zambesi.[1] Rhodesia was to be the last of the English commonwealths overseas; the pioneer work of the British Empire on a great scale was finished. The men indeed were ready for the work, but the work itself was nearly done; the earth had grown too small.

Some little confusion occurred at the start in marshalling the procession of wagons, cattle, horses, and troopers; and some murmuring was heard against the military discipline that was necessary on such an enterprise. After the first day, however, common sense prevailed, things were straightened out, and for the remainder of the journey there was unbroken good-comradeship between officers and men.

During the first three weeks the northward road was as uneventful as any journey by ox-wagon in the older settled districts of Cape Colony. On the twentieth day the force reached the Crocodile River at its junction with the Notwani; a day or two later, when passing the border of Khama's country, that Christianised ruler sent two hundred of his people to replace the Kafirs, who were now deserting daily.[2] The expedition, thus strengthened, then moved on to Macloutsie near the British frontier. Here the pioneers were joined by the Chartered Company's police, and the united party, after being drilled and inspected, made ready for the main march.

The British Frontier crossed.

On 27th June the frontier was crossed, and the dangerous part of the work began. Almost as they started a letter was received from Lo Bengula, warning them again that the only road in his country lay through Buluwayo, that he would permit no other road to be made, and that if the white men dared to cross the Tuli River they would meet with trouble.

[1] Both in Virginia, the oldest of English colonial enterprises, and in Rhodesia, the youngest, the situation was essentially the same—a settlement of white men among savages. In Virginia (vol. i. bk. i. ch. vi.) as in Rhodesia, a peaceful settlement was quickly followed by a racial war.

[2] Doubtless the excellent and godly Khama lent his men with the more willingness because he had often suffered from the raids of the heathen Matabili.

The whites then crossed the Tuli River.

Selous at once began to cut the road through this hazardous district. Here on the wooded lowlands the natives would have had every advantage in the attack. They knew the country better than the whites, could choose their own place and time for battle, the artillery and rifle fire of the invaders would have been hampered, and the Matabili assegai have done its worst.[1] **Selous cuts the Track.**

Such precautions as could be taken were taken. Scouts were thrown out in all directions by day, flanking parties and a rearguard were also told off to keep careful watch; and each night the camp was formed in a hollow square laager, a Maxim gun at every corner, and sentinels on the look-out against attack. Yet with all these precautions an attack in force by the Matabili would probably have wiped out the whole body of the invaders in ten minutes. But as yet no attack came. **Precaution against Attack.**

On 1st July the main force reached the Tuli River, and here a fort was built.[2] A small garrison was left at the place, and the column then marched on, along the road that had been cut a few days before by Selous and the advance guard. On 18th July they reached the Umshambetsi River without incident; from that time onwards, in order to quicken the march, a double road of two parallel tracks was cut through the bush. The work doubled the already arduous task of the road-makers under Selous, but it also doubled the speed of the expedition—and time was important if they were to get through safely.

About this stage of the journey, when Khama's party of natives was dismissed and allowed to return, nervous rumours

[1] To realise the disaster that might have occurred—if the simple word annihilation fails—one need only cite a parallel. Some parties of the Boers were utterly wiped out on the Great Trek (ch. i.), and the catastrophe which overwhelmed General Braddock in the Virginian backwoods when attacked by the redskins was another warning (vol. i. bk. v. ch. iii.).

[2] It was originally named Fort Selous, but afterwards called Fort Tuli.

ran through the camp of an approaching Matabili attack. Most of these reports were started by the miserable natives of the country, who lived in perpetual fear of Lo Bengula's warriors, but none had any basis of truth. Nevertheless, as an additional precaution for the safety of the camp, mines were laid every night around the laager, and the searchlight was kept playing steadily. But still no attack came.

A few days more, and the dangerous part of the journey was over. The low country was nearly crossed, and the pioneers were now at the foot of the high open veldt of Mashonaland. Once that was gained they would be able to see any hostile force several miles away, to prepare against its coming, and fight at a strong advantage.

But between the lowlands and the uplands lay a border country of rugged broken terraces, granite hills alternating with boulder-strewn valleys and green swamps and marshes, where the wagons might be stuck or overturned and the whole expedition wrecked. In that difficult country it was Selous's work to discover a pass through which the pioneers could make their way into the promised land.

It was an anxious moment for the great hunter who was finding the path. If the column was delayed, an attack by the Matabili was almost certain; and attack in such a place meant death.

On 2nd August Selous rode on ahead of the main body, accompanied by Lieutenant Nicholson, a Transvaal Boer named Borius, and two natives. The next morning he climbed one of the granite heights with which the country was strewn to survey the land. Only one opening appeared in the long range of hills; and that opening, as he knew by old experience, might end in a dead barrier and disappointment.

But all was well. The opening in the hills led directly to the high veldt of Mashonaland; the way was clear. 'A weight of responsibility, that had at times become unbearable,

fell from my shoulders,' wrote Selous afterwards of that morning; fitly he named the place the Providential Pass.

Still no attack came from the Matabili. By 13th August the whole column had travelled safely through the pass, and from that point the road was easy. The following day the first outpost was founded in Mashonaland, and named in loyalty to the sovereign, Fort Victoria;[1] here Sir John Willoughby, who had ridden after the pioneers with a troop of police, and whose aid might have been invaluable in the event of a Matabili attack, joined the party. The police were left as garrison in Fort Victoria, and the remainder of the column moved on, heading now straight for Mount Hampden and the journey's end.

The Pioneers enter Mashonaland.

A long but easy march still lay before them. The only difficulty, indeed, that they encountered was the shortage of cattle feed—it was the end of the dry season, and the Mashona grass was short and dry—but when the cattle lost their strength, the pioneers themselves lent a hand in pulling the heavy wagons. In this wise the column marched and pulled, and doubtless swore and sweated by the way, during the next three weeks.

At length, on the evening of 11th September 1890, this little force of conquering pioneers that had come to take the country for their own encamped on one of the many highlands in the territories of the Mashonas. They were still a dozen miles from Mount Hampden; but they were very weary with the march. The spot was healthy, thanks to a height of nearly five thousand feet above the sea, the nights were cool, although the land was in the tropics; the soil was fertile; and in this favoured place the invaders determined to plant their settlement.

Mashonaland annexed, 1890.

The march was at an end, and not a single life had been lost by accident or war. The roll-call was complete when the expedition was paraded on the following morning.

[1] Its site was afterwards moved a few miles away.

The force was now drawn up to hear a proclamation; and in the name of Queen Victoria, all the land in South Central Africa not claimed by any civilised power was declared annexed to the British Empire. The Union Jack was hoisted, prayer was offered, a salute of twenty-one guns fired into the startled wilderness, and three loud cheers rang out from the throats of the pioneers in possession.

On that eventful day, and with that simple but not unimpressive ritual, the retreat of the Boers into the interior was finally cut off, the vow which David Livingstone had made to open the country was fulfilled,[1] and the seeds of a new and alien civilisation were planted in a land which many centuries before had seen another alien civilisation invade its soil, and wax and wane and perish. That day, the twelfth of September 1890, was one of the decisive days in the history of South Africa.

Steady work at once began. In accordance with their contract, the pioneers were disbanded, many scattering themselves through the country to seek for gold, some remaining awhile at headquarters before taking up the land they had been promised.[2] Here a fort was built against a possible attack; it was named Fort Salisbury from the British Prime Minister of the day; and that fort soon afterwards became the city of Salisbury and the capital of the colony of Rhodesia. There was no opposition to this first European settlement in Mashonaland, and the new Salisbury in the South African wilderness looked for a time as though its destiny was that of a city of peace, like that far older Salisbury whose great cathedral spire rises nobly out of the placid Wiltshire plain by clear-flowing Avon in old England.

Salisbury founded, 1890.

The town was conceived on a spacious plan, by men who

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. ii.

[2] There was some dispute about these lands, the Chartered Company being bitterly attacked for not fulfilling its bargain with the pioneers.

had great visions of the future of Rhodesia, and over a mile square was allotted for the site. Two great roads, Second Street and Jameson Avenue, crossed each other at right angles at the centre, and around this spot the public and private buildings of the city presently began to spread. The earliest rude huts were of straw and mud; but before the town was two years old the first brick house, that universal sign of permanent possession, had been put up in Pioneer Street; by January 1893 the Anglican church of All Saints was opened for divine service; and in 1895 a school was added—a sure sign that some of the settlers who were now following the pioneers into the country had brought their children, and were prepared to make themselves new homes in the new land.

Almost from the start Salisbury prospered and grew slowly, with no great boom and no serious reverses. The first year, indeed, were hardships enough and to spare, privation and disease; but these matters in time righted themselves. In the middle of a gold-bearing district, the pioneer miners were often successful, and their success attracted others; and although the place lost some of its citizens when Matabililand was conquered, the new arrivals who came up week by week by coach from Pretoria and the south were numerous enough to prevent stagnation. In March 1899, two months before the railway to Beira was opened, Salisbury was proclaimed the capital of Rhodesia; a year or two later it could boast three banks, a stock exchange, a town hall, a post office, a hospital, four churches, the same number of hotels, and that invariable necessity of English civilisation, a racecourse.[1]

[1] For the founding of Salisbury, see Warner's *Salisbury* (1903); the first issue of the *Buluwayo Directory*; and Hyatt, *The Northward Trek* (1909). The latter, who was one of the pioneer force, and an eyewitness of the events he described with much life and vigour, was a severe critic of the site, the people, and the condition of Salisbury. He condemned the capital as 'a miserable little town in a miserable situation, a miscellaneous collection of buildings scattered over a dreary stretch of veldt; physically bad and geographically worse.' But most pioneer settle-

But Salisbury was not the only or even the oldest British settlement in Mashonaland. Further to the south, not many miles across the Rhodesian border from the Transvaal, lay Fort Tuli, the first outpost founded by the pioneering column on the road to Salisbury itself. Here much hope of gold was entertained, and eager miners hurried to the spot; for a few brief months in 1892 the little place was full of life, the two hotels that had been hastily run up were always crowded, and the talk was all of wealth—wealth that failed to come.

The Failure at Tuli, 1890-2.

The town that had been born of the hope of gold died when there was no longer any hope of gold; Tuli was a rising city in June, an expectant community in September, a dying city in December. Before the year was out the local newspaper, whose venturesome proprietor had been confident of success six months earlier, was lamenting that 'the production of gold was almost fatally slow,' and that the place had sunk to a torpid condition; a week or two later the offices of the ambitious but disillusioned *Rhodesia Chronicle and Mashonaland Advertiser* were removed from Tuli to Victoria, whither most of its customers and the bulk of the population had already gone. The city of Tuli, after less than one short year of fame, again became no more than a fort, and a place of call for the traveller in the wilderness.[1]

Victoria was the second post in the interior of Mashona-

ments have a half-baked appearance in infancy; the now magnificent city of Washington was condemned on the same grounds early in the nineteenth century, and even Paris and Venice must have been muddy unlovely places at the start.

In another book, *Off the Main Track*, Hyatt criticised the first inhabitants of Salisbury as 'having no sense of comradeship, split into tiny and mutually hostile cliques, as objectionable as vulgar, wholly inefficient officials, semi-solvent store-keepers, auctioneers whose probity was not even doubtful, second-rate mining men, and a noble army of touts and loafers.' Officials are recognised targets for criticism everywhere, and auctioneers are not always above suspicion; the insolvency of the store-keepers may have been caused by the touts and loafers not paying their bills. But with all these handicaps Salisbury advanced.

[1] For the too brief annals of Tuli, see the *Rhodesia Chronicle*.

land, the half-way house on the rough road up to Salisbury. In the middle of the Rhodesian grain district, and near a pastoral country where the grass was always fresh and green, Victoria should have had a sturdy infancy and prosperous subsequent career as an agricultural centre; while the fact that it was but a few miles distant from the deserted ruins of the ancient goldmines of Zimbabwe, should have attracted the hungry seekers after mammon to this new fort or township. But for one reason or another Victoria remained stagnant, even the overflow from Tuli soon deserting it for other parts; its total population was seldom over eighty, and never more than a hundred in the first decade of its existence; and most of the many people whom it saw from year to year stayed but a day or a night in the little place, and travelled on to Salisbury and the north.[1]

Other Townships.

Even the through traffic was lost after a few years, when the railway from Salisbury to the coast at Beira took goods and passengers along a quicker road; Umtali, high among the hills on the majestic eastern border of Rhodesia, gained what Victoria had lost.[2]

But even sleepy Victoria, whose total population in the town and the surrounding district was only 316 in 1904, was in better case than Fort Charter, the last of the chain of outposts on the road to Salisbury. What should have been a town remained little more than a fort, and the small roll of its citizens actually shrank in the earlier years of the twentieth century, when Rhodesia was passing through the same period of depression that all South Africa had to face.

Such were the infant British outposts and the new British capital in Mashonaland. Each had ambition to outvie the

[1] There is a lively description of Victoria in Hyatt's two books.

[2] Some idea of old Umtali may be gathered from the *Umtali Advertiser* (No. 2, 20th December 1893), a copy of which is in the British Museum. The other issues of the journal seem to have perished.

The original site of Umtali was moved some ten miles when the railway came.

rival settlements, each already showed the beginnings of a local patriotism in jealousy of its fellows; each had its successes and reverses in greater or less degree, but each became in time the centre of an agricultural district, when other settlers took up land and built them homesteads. None of these first Rhodesian outposts had any extraordinary growth; but none—and this is the surest testimony to their founders—was ever abandoned.

So far all had been peace in the young colony, and some of its newer people had been heard to laugh at the old fears of a Matabili irruption as a tale to frighten children. They were mistaken.

The First Matabili War, 1893.

It is true that Lo Bengula had held honourably to his word. He had not attacked the white men, although they had tacitly invited attack when they entered and took possession of a country which Lo Bengula's people claimed for their own. Perhaps, indeed, Lo Bengula knew that the oncoming tide of Europeans, who had already subdued the miserable Hottentot and starving Bushmen, the thievish Kafir, the weakly Bechuana, and even his cousin the mighty Zulu, could not be stayed on its northward advance; he may even have foreseen—for he was a man not without statecraft, and statecraft should imply some foreknowledge of the future [1]—that he was himself the last great chief of the Matabili, the last great native potentate in South Africa.

Lo Bengula may have foreseen these things; his people certainly did not. With difficulty they had been restrained from attacking the British pioneers in Mashonaland; but there was a point beyond which Lo Bengula could not restrain his braves. Even a savage autocrat finds limits to his power, and those limits are certainly passed when he defies the unanimous opinion of his subjects.

From time to time during these three years of peace a Mashona had been outraged by a Matabili under pretence of

[1] Alas! that it does not more often contrive to do so.

collecting arrears of tribute; but no white man was touched. A whole body of raiders descended on those luckless aborigines in 1892, and Lo Bengula wrote to Jameson that 'he made no excuses, claiming his right to raid when, where, and whom he chose.' It was clear that the yearly foray of the Matabili in Mashonaland was to be resumed.[1]

The crisis came on Sunday, 9th July 1893. Three Matabili warriors suddenly appeared at the little town of Victoria on that day, and murdered several Mashonas who were in the streets. To the white men they remarked contemptuously, 'We have been ordered not to kill you yet, but your day will come.' From that threat it was evident that Lo Bengula could no longer restrain his people; and the British colonists prepared to defend themselves.[2]

Jameson at once hurried down from Salisbury to Victoria, and met the Matabili raiders. 'Go back to your men,' he said to the leaders, 'and tell them they must instantly leave for the border. If you do not leave by sundown I shall send out my men, and you will be driven out.' The warning was effectual for the time. The main body left the country after some dispute; but the white colonists had no security that a larger Matabili force would not return and revenge the expulsion. The time in fact had come, as Jameson clearly saw, when the question of authority must be settled once for all between the native and the European, if the British were to remain in Mashonaland and not to sacrifice their work of the past three years. One or other must be acknowledged as the master.

Ten days after these occurrences in Victoria, Jameson sent for Major Forbes and instructed him to raise 750 men—250

[1] There is a curious story, of which I have heard several versions, that the change in Lo Bengula's attitude was owing to his monthly pension of £100 from the Chartered Company going astray. It was said that the two troopers charged with delivering the money stole it, and levanted. I can neither confirm nor deny this.

[2] The best account of the war is in *The Downfall of Lobengula*, by Wills and Collingridge, with chapters by the leaders of the fighting columns.

each from the Salisbury, Victoria, and Tuli districts—and to march on Buluwayo. The force was to be entirely a volunteer army, and each man was to receive as his reward six thousand acres of land in Matabililand, twenty gold claims in that country, and a half-share of all the cattle taken from the enemy, the other half going to the Chartered Company. In addition each man was to retain all his existing rights in Mashonaland until six months after the end of the campaign.

Under such conditions no difficulty was found in raising the force required, even from the scanty white population of Mashonaland; but some delay occurred in getting sufficient horses for the march, and in obtaining the consent of the Imperial High Commissioner at Cape Town to the operations.[1]

Finally the three columns left their respective bases early in October, and pushed forward on the long march to the Matabili capital. The way through the bush was rough, and made slow going; constant watch had to be maintained against surprise attacks, and strong laagers formed at every halt. As they approached and crossed the Matabili frontier a few deserted villages were found and burnt, occasional skirmishes now took place with the outlying forces of the enemy, and a more serious affair on the Shangani River; in every case the advantage rested with the British, whose losses were insignificant, while the Matabili warriors, attacking in close formation, were mowed down by the machine guns of the invader.[2] A second and decisive fight occurred on the

[1] Rhodes paid a flying visit to Mashonaland in 1891, but he could not remain there long, nor take part in this war, since he had accepted the Premiership of Cape Colony on 16th July 1890.

Jameson, however, cabled from Victoria for his advice as to fighting the Matabili. The answer was laconic: 'Read Luke xiv. 31.' ('What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?') Jameson sent for a Bible, read the verse, and telegraphed in answer, 'All right.'

[2] In the fight at Shangani River a curious thing was noticed. Whenever a shell exploded all the Matabili fired their rifles at it; it was explained afterwards that they thought the shell was full of little white men, who ran out as soon as it burst and killed everybody near.

Imbembesi River as the British neared Buluwayo. The Matabili came on in force, but were completely discomfited, their loss again being heavy, at least seven hundred men killed; their best regiments were engaged in this action, and although they fought with great bravery, they were routed. It was absurd, said a wounded Matabili prisoner who was brought into the British camp after the fight, that the greatest warriors of Lo Bengula should be beaten by an army of boys; but there was now no stopping the British advance.

It was now known that the king, discouraged by these defeats, and despairing of success in a war which he had not desired, had fled from Buluwayo, and that by his orders the capital had been fired.[1] The conquerors therefore pushed on quickly, Jameson and Sir John Willoughby, who was acting as his confidential military adviser, a short way in advance of the main body; and when they reached the city they found the royal kraals and the stores of grain and ivory still in flames. **Flight of Lo Bengula.**

The war was nearly over, but one disaster, more brilliant and more memorable than any success of the campaign, checked the British triumph at the last. A small patrol of thirty-four men under Major Wilson hurried after Lo Bengula, on a daring attempt to capture the fugitive king. They might have achieved their aim, but their line of communication was unexpectedly cut by the sudden rising of the Shangani River, and they were surrounded and attacked by overwhelming numbers. A few men were wounded early in the fight, but all held their ground doggedly until beaten down by the enemy, and every man of the patrol died fighting. Even the Matabili, who could respect valour if they could respect nothing else, were loud in admiration of their end.

[1] It should be mentioned, in justice to Lo Bengula, that he gave strict orders to spare the houses of the white men in Buluwayo. The order was obeyed.

But Lo Bengula was never captured. The great savage king, the last great native monarch of South Africa, was spared that last indignity. Before the year was out he had capitulated to a greater enemy; he died a fugitive, of fever on his flight towards the Zambesi.

His Death.

He was a savage, lustful and cruel and bloodthirsty, but not without honour, nor yet unworthy of the chance that made him the last ruler of his people. He would have kept out the white men if he could; since he could not, he kept his word to them, and dealt honestly with the strangers who had come to take his country, until his hand was forced. But he died among his own people, knowing that his kingdom and his race was lost. The first Matabili War was ended.[1]

On 4th November 1893, a day that was afterwards celebrated as Occupation Day, the British force marched into Buluwayo and took possession of what remained of the Matabili capital. The site, in the midst of a rich and fertile country whose thick green grass covered the chocolate-coloured soil, was an admirable one; and the conquering column of British volunteers determined that their own settlement should be made close by the old native city. The Government House of the new Ad-

The new Buluwayo, 1893.

[1] The war was criticised in England by the enemies of the Chartered Company and the opponents of imperial expansion as an act of unprovoked and wanton aggression. These critics were able to make out a specious case, but the facts were otherwise. It is true that no white men had been attacked by the Matabili. But there was evidence to show that they would have been attacked had they not forestalled it by marching on Buluwayo; and it is mere folly to await the other side's convenience. The war could have been postponed, but not in the end averted, save by a British evacuation of Mashonaland.

It may be added that the clergy of all denominations in Mashonaland defended the war as enforced and inevitable. I am not sure that this was very convincing. They certainly wished to see the Mashona protected; but they could not forget—or forgive—the refusal of the Matabili to adopt Christianity.

A more relevant argument was the fact that the Chartered Company had every motive to practise economy. The first administration had been costly and rather extravagant; and when Jameson took it over in 1892 he had reduced the expenditure as far as possible. But the war cost £100,000, a serious matter to the Company.

ministration was placed exactly on the spot of Lo Bengula's kraal. Three miles away the foundations of the new European capital were laid: even the unsavoury aboriginal name was retained as a memento of the past by the masters of the future.[1]

Almost from the first the new Buluwayo began to flourish, and within a year it had outgrown its envious and elder rival Salisbury, and even earned the jealousy of Johannesburg. The enthusiasm of the conquering pioneers attracted others. Early in 1894 the tents of the first arrivals were up, stores were coming in, more settlers were pushing forward across the veldt by coach and wagon from the south; and several men, who had the will to come, but not the means to hire their transport, had walked from Kimberley or begged a lift from chance companions on the road, following the rough track through the bush as best they might, taking good care to avoid the lions and other wild beasts that roamed the land at night, and making what footsore progress they could by day.[2]

It was a weary march, but at the end was the hope of wealth; and for a short two years Buluwayo lived on that hope, which indeed at that time seemed a certainty to its eager citizens.

The growth of the place was astonishing. Hotels were built in such numbers that it seemed, as the proud editor of a local newspaper remarked, as though a magician's wand had been stretched out across the wilderness. Its sudden Prosperity. Sites were given for half a dozen churches, and fresh shops were opened almost every day. In May 1894, a few days after the last of Lo Bengula's followers had made their peace

[1] The generally accepted meaning of the word Buluwayo was 'the place of slaughter.' Its real meaning, as given by Selous, was 'the place of him whom they wanted to kill.' Him was Mosilikatsi, its founder, whom the Transvaal Boers wanted to kill.

[2] One of the first settlers in Buluwayo told me that he started from Johannesburg with a donkey. But one night a lion made a meal of the donkey, and the pioneer had to walk most of the rest of the way. A family going up to Umtali gave him a lift on his road, but he reached Buluwayo on foot.

and sworn allegiance to their conquerors, a branch of the Standard Bank was opened; by July the overland telegraph had reached the town. Already the tents of the first arrivals were beginning to give way to wooden huts, and some brick houses were seen; a month or so later the energetic municipal authorities prohibited straw roofs on account of the danger from fire, and brick or stone began to displace the timber buildings.

The first year of Buluwayo was prosperous; the second eclipsed the record of the first. The fame of Buluwayo had gone abroad, and was noised in the press of England;[1] settlers with capital, both British and Boers, poured into the country, and pronounced it good for cattle-ranching and sheep-farming, prices went up, a mania for speculation in land seized the town, auctioneers and dealers in real estate made fortunes without effort—and then came the crash.

And quick Collapse.

In 1895 nothing could go wrong; in 1896 nothing would go right. The disagreements between British and Boers in the Transvaal Republic, which culminated in the Jameson Raid,[2] bred distrust and lost Buluwayo one of its main supports. A terrible cattle plague broke out, sweeping the country south of the Zambesi bare of its main source of wealth, paralysing the transport service, and rendering the cost of living prohibitive. Over a million animals were lost to South Africa;[3] the rinderpest shook the whole commercial fabric of Rhodesia to the bottom.

And then, when the white troops had been withdrawn from the country and it was in the thick of a financial crisis, came a rising of the Matabili; and the citizens of Buluwayo

[1] One English journal—*Truth*—did its best to harm the progress of Rhodesia at this time, declaring that the only settlers in the country were disreputable company promoters, that a noxious vapour rising four feet from the soil made the country uninhabitable, and that it had no gold. The proprietor of the journal was Henry Labouchere, a well-known political wit of the day, who had hopes of a seat in the 1892 Gladstone Cabinet, which were not fulfilled. His most subtle jest was the title he gave to his journal.

[2] See bk. xxvi. ch. i.

[3] Khama alone is said to have lost 800,000 cattle.

suddenly realised the shifting nature of the foundations on which they had built.

On 22nd March 1896 a rumour reached the town of a disturbance with native police on the countryside. So secure did the settlers feel that this was disregarded as an isolated case. But two days later another rumour reached the town that a British settler at an outlying farm had been murdered. That rumour was quickly verified. And then came reports of more murders, and those reports were also verified. Within a week it was stated that the Matabili were in rebellion; and that statement was also verified. Rhodesia was suddenly faced with a grave and unexpected peril.

The Second Matabili War, 1896.

All outside work was at once stopped, pioneers who had hoped to take up land were either slain or fleeing for their lives, the prosperous beginnings of new homesteads were in ruins, and once more corpses lay out upon the veldt. Selous and other settlers, who had left their womenfolk alone in their homesteads, hastened back to their protection. In a few instances they were too late. . . .

It was now remembered or discovered that for some time past rumours of coming disaster to the whites had been spread from the cave in the Matopo Hills where dwelt a Matabili god; a report that Lo Bengula was not dead had gained wide credence among the natives, and it was believed that he was coming back with a large army from the north to drive the invaders from the country. 'Watch the coming moon and be ready,' ran the word of command and rebellion.[1]

[1] It was also said that Lo Bengula's last words to the people before he died were, 'Await your opportunity; the day will come when you will be able to revenge the death of your king, and the downfall of his country.'

I suspect that somebody else said the words, and ascribed them to the dead king as a means of working up the feeling of the Matabili.

The tradition is mentioned in Boggie's *From Ox-Waggon to Railway*, 1897—a little work which has an interest apart from its contents, in that it was one of the first books printed at Buluwayo, and not badly printed either.

The report was welcomed by the natives who had lost their king. They had certain grievances against the whites, but their main grievance, a very real one, was that they were a conquered people who had been dispossessed of their heritage. Many had sickened and died in the fever-haunted swamps near the Zambesi, to which they had retreated after the loss of Buluwayo, and they had a fierce nostalgia for the healthy uplands of the south from which the whites had driven them. And this people still had many thousand fighting men,[1] ready for war, and convinced that they could drive their conquerors from the country. The guns also which should have been given up after the first war, when a disarmament order was issued by the British, had in most cases been hidden or buried; these were now hastily dug up for the coming fight.

Now the defences of the British in Buluwayo were few and poor. There were no white troops in the country. Half the black police had gone over to the enemy; the remainder were at once disarmed. Apart from this, it was found that not more than four hundred rifles were in the little capital.

Yet the English settlers in the open country came daily to Buluwayo from their deserted farms; and it was feared that a sudden attack by the enemy might overwhelm the whole European population of Matabililand at a single blow.

In this vital emergency all business was at once suspended. Master and servant, employer and employed, banded themselves together in volunteer corps for defence, and a laager was formed in Buluwayo for the protection of the people.[2]

[1] According to one account, between fifteen and twenty thousand Matabili warriors were trained to the use of arms.

[2] Human nature was the same in Rhodesia as elsewhere. A contemporary writer in the *Buluwayo Sketch* remarks that 'the self-importance of some men (of the volunteer corps) placed suddenly in authority is painful to see, and the strict military curt kind of reply is ludicrous when adopted by a common civilian.' A little brief authority!

Many of the details of this rising are taken from the contemporary Buluwayo newspapers, which were produced under difficulties when the town was in laager; indeed, one editor remarked ruefully that 'the

On the first night of the alarm this entrenchment was a mere pretence that would not have deceived the Matabili had they determined to attack, or held them back for long; but soon the place was made impregnable, with sandbags beneath the wagons, a network of barbed wire all round, quick-firing guns at every corner, and a steady watch against emergencies.

And meantime the country round was being searched by a squad of volunteers to rescue those who were in jeopardy, but who feared to take the dangerous road to safety. A priest accompanied the soldiers, whose melancholy work it was to give Christian burial to the mutilated bodies of the first victims of the rising. Sometimes they found a whole family destroyed—in one terrible case eight persons were murdered in one homestead—sometimes a battered unrecognisable mass of dead humanity, the body of a baby pounded to pulp in a mealie-stamper, a woman's hair torn out by the roots; or an official who was killed as he was writing, and whose stiffened upright body still sat stark at the table where he died. Once nothing but a girl's hat was found to tell of what had happened; some articles of women's clothing discovered in a deserted native hut spoke of another tragedy.

Confronted with such ghastly relics, the priest felt, he wrote home, like the Israelites of old, insecure among the people whom they conquered;[1] but he had little time for writing, for it was found that sixty-six men, women, and children around Buluwayo had been murdered, whose remains craved decent sepulture.

vagaries of our staff have been more fatal to a full issue than the advent of the dreaded Matabili.' A more connected account by a participant in the fight is *Sunshine and Storm in Rhodesia*, by F. C. Selous, to which may be added Baden-Powell, *The Matabele Campaign*, 1896; Alderson's *With the Mounted Infantry and the Mashonaland Field Force*; Plumer's *An Irregular Corps in Matabeleland*; and Sykes, *With Plumer in Matabeleland*. All these works necessarily cover much the same ground.

[1] *Mashonaland Paper*, August 1896. (This was an Anglican missionary paper printed in England.)

The laager at the capital now held 915 men, and 627 women and children; and ten babies were born in camp during that time of trouble.[1] Fever broke out, to add to the anxiety; the one bright spot on the horizon was the co-operation between Boer and Briton in an emergency which threatened the existence of both. Old quarrels between the two white peoples of South Africa were forgotten for awhile; and in the presence of a common enemy the Dutch and English in Rhodesia became 'the best of pals.'[2]

But apart from this, 'the shadows,' as a local journalist confessed, 'were dark and the light barely discernible. Blow upon blow had fallen on Rhodesia, and its people were now in a position to appreciate the ten plagues of Egypt.' Altogether some three hundred men, women, and children of the European colony, one-tenth of the whole white population, had been murdered; but hardly a single Matabili had been touched, and the forces that were to revenge the losses of the British were still not fully organised. It was known, too, that the Matabili were now confident of their power to drive every white man from the country, and that even the miserable broken-spirited Mashonas, believing the Europeans doomed, had risen in feeble insurrection. And it was anticipated that the whole force of the native Matabili warriors, a body now estimated at some 17,000 men, after clearing the country of its European settlers, would concentrate their whole strength in an attack on the capital. Things might have gone hard with the British had they done so.

But the Matabili had lost their leader, and they had no

[1] A few white women and children were sent down south by coach from Buluwayo.

But one scandal occurred in this business which was not lightly forgotten. A telegram from Buluwayo was received at Tuli warning that fort of the start of a coach from the north with fifteen women and children. The troops and settlers at Tuli turned out to welcome the refugees; but when the coach arrived it was found to contain only three women, two or three children—and eight males of the Hebrew race. Brave fellows!

[2] *Buluwayo Sketch*, 16th May 1896.

other. Lo Bengula was dead, and he came not back again from the mysterious Zambesi countries whither he had fled. His people waited for his coming to sweep the white men from the country, but their lying gods deceived them. The new moon which should have brought him waned and died and waxed again, and still Lo Bengula tarried on his journey. With him the Matabili were a nation and an army; without him a mere horde of savages.

Still Lo Bengula came not. But the white men were now active. Supplies were coming up to Buluwayo—for by a fatal miscalculation of the Matabili, the road to the south had not been closed, in order, it was said, that the invaders might take the hint and quit—and forces were organised to revenge the dead. Every man's heart was hot within him as he thought of the mutilated corpses of his people out upon the veldt; and in the battles that followed no quarter was given when the Matabili were routed. They were just ridden down by cavalry charges, or mown down by the fires of the machine guns, and destroyed.

The Matabili defeated.

A remnant, a large remnant that would have given trouble in the future, took refuge in the Matopo Hills, whence they could not be dislodged. Troops could hardly reach them there; if they did reach them the Matabili merely retired for a time, and returned the following day when the whites had gone; but the country would not be secure while they remained in arms.

But now the genius of Cecil Rhodes was seen. Although he had no love for war,[1] he had served with his settlers through

[1] The enemies of Rhodes spread a legend that he was a coward. It was founded partly on his admitted preference for peace over war, which surely is no proof of cowardice, and partly on the fact that he was not in Rhodesia in the first Matabili War. He could not be; he was Prime Minister of the Cape at the time.

In this second war he stood fire well, remarking with quiet humour, 'One may get hit—in the stomach—very unpleasant, very unpleasant.' But the true refutation of the slander was his way of making peace.

this campaign, sharing with them the burdens of the march and the dangers of the fight; but he knew that it might take years to conquer the enemy now they lay hidden in caves and fastnesses, and meanwhile the strength of the whites would be exhausted, and the Chartered Company bankrupted by the heavy expenses of the campaign. The only thing was to end the war by persuasion; but none save Rhodes could attempt it with any chance of success, and few save Rhodes would have attempted it at all.

Rhodes ends the War.

He now left the regular camp of the whites, and pitched his own camp, a tent-wagonette, near the hills. He was quite defenceless, but he waited.

The Matabili, who knew of this great white chief, wondered at his action. Day after day they wondered more, as Rhodes remained, within their sight, within their grip had they chosen, unarmed, undefended. For six weeks they watched him; then an old and withered and cunning chief, Babiaan, came to spy more closely. He was suspicious at first; but he found no treachery here; he entered the white chief's camp, stayed a fortnight, had food and drink and blankets, and returned to his own people to tell them of his fortune. Others came and saw this wonder for themselves, and as they came Rhodes reasoned with them.

'Tell your people they are all fools,' Rhodes would say, and the listeners would suddenly look at him with startled serious faces. 'Ask them do they want peace. Ask Babiaan does he want peace, and also Dhliso, does he want peace, do they all want peace?' Not a word would be heard. 'Tell them they are fools, they are children. If they do not want peace, why do they not come down here any night and murder me and my party?' The three or four white men with Rhodes would feel uneasy at this directness, but the conversation went on. 'The thing would be very simple; they need only send down a party of their young bloods—twenty-five would be enough—one night and the business would be

over. If they are not fools they would do this. Tell them, if they want peace, then why do they not all come and shake hands with me, and then they could go back to their wives and children and lands and be happy ever after ?'

This talk, repeated day by day, convinced the Matabili chiefs. A great *indaba* was arranged between Rhodes and the rebel leaders, to discuss the whole situation; when the day came Rhodes and a few white men went out to meet them.

As they reached the spot, a large force, four or five hundred armed Matabili, came forward; treachery was seemingly intended. Rhodes dismounted and walked forward alone until he was among the enemy, then broke out: 'How can I trust you? You asked us to carry no guns and said you would not, and what do I find? Until you lay them down, every one of you, I will not discuss a single point.' Sullenly they obeyed, and Rhodes said he would now hear their grievances, but 'before I listen to what you have to say I must tell you that, while I do not blame you for fighting if your complaints have not been listened to, I tell you most emphatically that I look on all of you as wolves, for you have killed women and children. Many such have been killed—or murdered, rather. Now, if any of you have had a hand in such work, leave this conference, for I wish to talk to men, not murderers.' 'It is well said,' they shouted in answer, 'but no such dogs are here, so let us talk.'

For three hours they now described their grievances, and Rhodes promised them redress; then suddenly he said, almost as if it was a matter of no moment to him, 'Is it peace or war?' For answer the chiefs came forward and threw their spears at his feet. 'Now that we have no longer Lo Bengula,' they cried, 'you are our father, our friend and protector, and to you we shall look in the years that are coming.' 'It is well,' answered Rhodes, as the Matabili shouted and danced and embraced him: 'you are my children, and I will see to your welfare.'

'It is such scenes as this make life really worth living,' said Rhodes, as he rode back to camp. By his courage and address he had saved his country.

Peace was secured, and it proved permanent; the Matabili held to their word. Not another shot was fired; the back of this people was broken.[1]

Yet when it became clear that the peril had passed, the prospect did not greatly lighten. Trade was no longer brisk, new settlers avoided the country, capital was even more shy of Rhodesia; the once-busy Buluwayo seemed now to live in the past, and its people, like those of modern Athens, were bidden to think of the glories that had gone—a curious anomaly in a two-years-old town.[2]

Depression in Rhodesia, 1897-1900.

A darker shadow than a local rising, in fact, was enveloping the whole country—the shadow of the coming war between Boer and Briton in South Africa.

But in these years of depression the founder of the country was ever true to it. The unremitting care with which Cecil Rhodes watched the fortunes of Rhodesia has been compared to that of a bridegroom to his cherished bride; rather should it be styled the devotion of a father to his best-loved child. Rhodes spent his money right and left on Rhodesian development: railways, telegraphs, irrigation works were financed from his own pocket; he would refuse himself luxuries to advance his country. A picture was offered him in Kimberley for five hundred pounds. 'Ah,' he said, 'I should like to have it, but I must not. I can build a court-house in Buluwayo for that.' After the second Matabili War was over

[1] Many of the white settlers suggested that the Matabili had degenerated since they broke away from the Zulus, largely owing to intermarriage with the women of conquered races. It is possible, but I doubt it. Disorganised and deceived by their prophets as they were, the Matabili were a grave peril to the whites; had they been drilled, organised, and led by Lo Bengula, and had he been a younger man in 1890, the European conquest might have been delayed some years.

[2] *Buluwayo Sketch.* The same journal contains a notice of the opening of a public library, and the bitter comment that the settlers had now plenty of time for reading.

many poor broken settlers came to him for help. If they would stay he helped them to start afresh; if not, a note was given them on his bankers, worded, 'Help this man home, and charge to me.—C. J. Rhodes.' Not less than twelve thousand pounds was spent by him in this succour of those who had failed, probably through no fault of their own, in the country which Rhodes had taken.

Many left the country; but some came in, encouraged by its founder's example. They found a ready welcome: 'Homes, more homes, that 's what I work for,' said Rhodes;[1] and these newcomers and the staunch older settlers faced with goodwill the uphill task before them, of founding homes and farms in the new country.

But in the end this period of depression did no harm. It weeded out the weaklings, it proved the men with backbone, men with something of the iron will of Rhodes himself. He, too, was passing through a period of adversity since the Jameson Raid;[2] he was no longer Prime Minister of the Cape, he had been forced to resign the chairmanship of the Chartered Company itself for his complicity in the Raid; honours had been stripped from him, and he held no official position even in his own colony. But he learned a lesson from his trouble: 'If I can put to you a thought,' he said to one at this time, 'it is that the man who is continually prosperous does not know himself exactly, his own mind and character. It is a good thing if one has a period of adversity.' The same was true of his country as of himself; the period of adversity taught the Rhodesians their real strength.

These scattered small communities of British pioneers, some ten thousand men in all, thus settling themselves firmly in the wide territories of the Mashona and Matabili, had already begun to stamp those countries with the impress of their own strong individuality, as they had stamped them from the start with their own name

Pioneer Life in Rhodesia, 1890-1900.

[1] Garrett's *Character-Sketch of Rhodes.*

[2] Bk. xxvi. ch. i.

of Rhodesia.[1] They were the masters of the land they conquered; and as masters they had imported their own habits and their own methods of work and play, of farming and mining and traffic and sport. Nor had they yet been long enough in the upland of Central Africa for it to stamp its mark on them, as every country in the end will stamp its mark upon its people; the second generation, the European children born in Rhodesia and native to the soil, were still no more than children.[2]

The first settlers were mostly of English or Scottish breed, of sound and hearty stock, with a few Germans, a Cape Dutchman or two from the south, a sprinkling of Transvaal Boers, and some Jews who had deserted Kimberley or Johannesburg in the hope of still better fortune further north. A few were altogether disreputable, but these mostly fell out of the ranks rather quickly—the life was too hard for wastrels; but many were pure adventurers, full of the joyous sunshine of life, restless sons of civilisation who fled its shackles for the breezy freedom of a frontier land, open-handed primitive men who spent their money as quickly as they made it, trusting to the chance of circumstance for the morrow. A large number, too—and these were the very backbone of young Rhodesia—were able resourceful men who had roamed the world, and feared not to take the hardest knocks of fortune and give stout blows in answer. Looking on life as a game, it was a

[1] The name Rhodesia appears to have been first officially recognised in an Order in Council, 1898. But it was in popular use at least as early as 1892.

[2] This general survey of early conditions in Rhodesia is built up from the annual *Reports of the Chartered Company*, the authorities dealing with Cecil Rhodes, enumerated in the previous chapter, the old cyclostyle newspapers mentioned in the text, and such books as Fitzpatrick's *Through Mashonaland with Pick and Pen*, *The Adventures of Two Hospital Nurses in Mashonaland*, Knight-Bruce, *Memories of Mashonaland*, Finlason's *A Nobody in Mashonaland*. I have also gained much information from conversations with old settlers in the country. If there are difficulties in writing almost contemporary history, one cannot complain that materials are lacking. The perspective of the picture may give trouble, but the colours are plentiful.

great game they played to win; believers in luck as well as muscle, they were ready to help themselves, and not less ready to hold out a helping hand to others less fortunate who were hard hit in the early rounds; a sense of comradeship and good fellowship was inherent in them all.

They had the usual vices of a virile breed. They drank much, gambled more, and swore most of all; many of the deaths that were credited to blackwater fever were really due to whisky,[1] and often a budding fortune was lost in a night by an unlucky bet on the billiard table, or low cards and high play at whist.[2]

But they could ride hard and shoot straight when the need arose; they were ready to fight the Matabili at tenfold odds, and to rescue some widowed woman and her children from a threatened lonely homestead when her good man lay murdered stark and silent on the veldt. Possibly these rude but steadfast virtues were more useful to the young community which had set itself to master a savage land than the higher arts of Europe; haply they may even be held as adequate excuse for some of those minor vices which the stern untempted moralist at home condemned.

The life of the invading people in Rhodesia centred naturally round the little townships which grew up beside the forts founded at the start by the pioneers. Here stores and hostels were established; and hither the settler came to

[1] At the Geelong mine of Rhodesia, says Hyatt (*The Diary of a Soldier of Fortune*), 'sugar, meat, and flour were abnormally dear; and after a while these, and most other things as well, became unobtainable—always barring whisky.'

But sometimes whisky was so costly that it was almost unobtainable. There is a touching story of a time of scarcity in early Salisbury when the spirit was £76 a dozen bottles, and the people were compelled to sobriety—or to drink the vile Cape brandy, which cost 10s. a bottle in Rhodesia, and was not worth tenpence anywhere.

[2] An advertisement in one of the Buluwayo journals announces that a license fee of £5 would be charged on all gambling tables at the local festival in honour of the Queen's Birthday.

A simple form of whist, much in favour, was to play for a glass of whisky a point, and sometimes a bottle on the rubber.

purchase goods and stock, to fetch his letters, to sell his produce, and to see his friends; while new arrivals in the colony made the township their headquarters when prospecting through the country for the land they wished to farm. Peaceful settlement spread in a widening circle from the township which had been a fort; but there were times and seasons, when the dark shadow or the baseless rumour of a native rising swept across the land, when the township became a place of refuge and a city of distress once more.

Life centres round the Township.

Besides its fort, its inns and stores, its church and drinking bars, each of these small Rhodesian townships had its weekly or even its daily newspaper, which circulated such news and views as it could provide among such local subscribers as it could obtain, usually at the price of sixpence for a small sheet of four pages.[1] Each Rhodesian newspaper resembled its greater English contemporaries in the affection which it showed the advertiser who paid for the use of its columns, and the readiness with which it commented on the errors of a rival print; but the resemblance went little further. The earliest journals of the colony necessarily had a precarious life, and the rate of mortality in the infant press was almost as high as its advertisement rates were low;[2] a large number of fugitive periodicals were started year by year, few of which survived for long, and apparently only one—the *Buluwayo Chronicle*—outgrew all its early troubles.

Old Rhodesian Newspapers.

The first newspapers of the colony were written and published by hand, reproduced by a cyclostyle or some similar duplicating apparatus. The scanty local sheet was obviously of less value at the time of publication than the English

[1] One paper, the *Gubuluwayo Comet*, published in 1901, was priced at 'two tickeys.' A tickey was a threepenny piece.

[2] A whole page advertisement in the *Rhodesia Chronicle* cost 10s. 6d. Other proprietors estimated the value of their space at about the same rate.

journals which most settlers in Rhodesia received by post from time to time, and which were passed from hand to hand for general reading; the local production, which told the settler little more of local life than he already knew, but which would have told the historian much more than he can ever hope to ascertain, was often thrown away as soon as read. Most of these ephemeral sheets, the earliest literature of the country, have perished, but some stray copies of their issues have been preserved by chance—disregarded at the time, they are now among the most treasured specimens of the collector's library, and the most valuable sources of the pioneer history of Rhodesia. Many, however, have not survived at all, and some possibly abusive reference to their existence in the stray copy of a rival sheet which itself owes its survival to chance may be the only testimony to a brief and troubled existence.[1]

The earliest newspaper in the colony was one of the first to die. The *Rhodesia Chronicle and Mashonaland Advertiser*, a roughly lithographed manuscript production, burst upon the little town of Tuli in the May of 1892. It lived a short six months, ceasing publication in December, when its proprietor removed to Victoria, and started the *Mashonaland Times*. Three months earlier, in September 1892, the *Rhodesia Herald* had begun to enliven the little world of Salisbury, and a rival soon appeared in the *Rhodesian Times*. These sufficed to quench the thirst of the capital for news, but Umtali in the further east soon had its *Advertiser*, which began to advertise itself and others in December 1893; and Beira on the Portuguese coast presently possessed its *Rocket*, whose career was not much longer but certainly less brilliant than the spluttering toy of childhood.

[1] For the opportunity of seeing these fugitive journals I have to thank Mr. Sidney Mendelssohn, the bibliographer of South Africa, whose unrivalled library has been freely placed at my disposal. I may add that the kindness with which he gave up several busy hours to the elucidation of difficult points that arose in connection with this volume has been as much appreciated by the author as the library itself.

The energetic folk of Buluwayo, as became so ambitious a community, had a more considerable press. The *Matabele Times and Mining Journal*, whose first issue appeared in March 1894, was its oldest chronicle. It was closely followed by the *Matabele News and Mining Record*, a month later; but this rival venture was quickly absorbed in the *Rhodesia Weekly Review*, a journal which, unlike its lithographed predecessors, was produced on a duplicating typewriting machine. None of these early ventures, however, could compete in quality with the *Buluwayo Sketch*, a larger, more lively, and more critical paper, which began its existence on 21st July 1894, and ran with much success some years. The *Sketch* reverted to the lithographed manuscript method of production, but its well-drawn illustrations and well-written letterpress gave it considerable popularity. A later comer was the *Buluwayo Observer*, which followed in May 1895, and appears to have observed little and profited less during its lamentably short career.

But the death-knell of all these manuscript journals was sounded when the first number of the *Buluwayo Chronicle* was issued on 12th October 1894—a printed paper of four large pages with different founts for articles, news, and advertisements, and at least as good a sheet as many a sound provincial newspaper in England. From that time the Rhodesian press followed the normal course of English journalism in other colonies.[1]

Sport in Rhodesia.

One of the chief items in this infant journalism was the reporting of sport; for sport was indeed a vital interest to the young community. Most townships, even little Victoria, could put a respectable eleven into the cricket field; boxing competitions and billiard matches were public events; but the real enthusiasm was reserved for

[1] Another manuscript journal, the *Livingstone Mail*, was issued so late as 1906.

Curiously enough, the printing press was introduced in Nyasa several years before Rhodesia; see the next chapter.

racing. Every little city in Rhodesia could boast its race-course and its local handicap; and one of the first and chief uses of the direct telegraph cable from England was to let the good sportsmen of Salisbury and Buluwayo know within a few hours of the event what horse had won the Derby or St. Leger in the classic fields at home.

Amateur musical and dramatic entertainments were also sometimes given by such local talent as was available or considered itself competent to sing or act; and where these failed, a smoking concert would beguile or increase the tedium of the dullest evening.[1]

Fortunes were lost as easily as won in these early days, and bankruptcy was lightly looked on by the wise, who knew that fate was fickle and a second start was no disgrace. On the whole the life was happy to those who lived it, whether its end was a bullet through the brain in some wild skirmish on the veldt or a prosperous return to the quiet comfort and mellowed peace of the English countryside when the shadows of age began to lengthen.[2]

Long Credit and High Prices.

Money was easily made and not less easily spent, and credit was supple when money was gone; but prices were almost uniformly high in the days before railways, and none too cheap after railways came. At Salisbury in 1892 a cabbage cost from one to four shillings according to size and demand,

[1] One dissatisfied settler wrote to the local paper at Tuli to say that smoking concerts were held 'to celebrate anything from the Queen's birthday to the opening of a new public-house, and that one never heard anything but the same men singing the same old songs.'

[2] The outline of one such career, typical of many at this time and place, may be sketched. One Ted Slater, a London cockney from Clapham, had come out to Kimberley, and afterwards gone on to Buluwayo. Here fortune favoured him, and he was accredited by rumour with £80,000; but with gambling, racing and the collapse of the land boom he lost every penny, finally enlisting as a volunteer in the South African War. 'I don't think he wanted to come back,' said the settler who told me of Slater's history; in any case, a Boer shell blew his head off. There were many Ted Slaters in old Rhodesia who died penniless.

butter fetched from three to four shillings a pound, eggs varied between three and five shillings a dozen, but fowls, perhaps more venerable than edible, were only half-a-crown apiece. Beer, one of the staple commodities of the country, found a ready market at sixpence a glass, and other commodities were in proportion.

It was largely the uncertainty as well as the shortage of supplies that made for high prices. If a large consignment of corn or cattle were brought in, prices would fall with a run; but sometimes when sugar was plentiful milk was scarce, and tea or coffee had run out altogether.

Travelling, in a country of great distances and few conveyances, was hardly less expensive than food. The coach fare from Tuli to Salisbury was £10; from Pretoria to Salisbury—a journey which took nineteen days—£27, 10s. was charged; the express from Mafeking to Buluwayo, timed to cover the distance of 480 miles in 7 days 18 hours, was £25. In every case except the last luggage was an extra charge; on the Mafeking coach thirty pounds of baggage were carried free for every fare.

Travelling and Hotels.

If a man came up with his wife and family to Rhodesia, his first business would be to run up a rough hut for their accommodation within a few days of his arrival at the chosen spot; but most single men in early days lived at a hotel and paid an inclusive sum for board and lodging—at the Avenue Hotel of Buluwayo, for instance, the very reasonable price of £9 a month was advertised for accommodation and food. Drinks in every case were extras. No hotel-keeper could afford to risk an under-estimate of what might be the main part of his bill.

Since hotel life was the most convenient for the bulk of the population, it followed that the hotel-keeper was an important figure in the community, and many a man found a quick road to fortune by selling rest and refreshment to others who sought gold or gems as their passport to speedy wealth.

A hotel was one of the first buildings to rise in the infant township, and one of the last to close its doors when things went badly with its customers; here business was transacted, deals arranged, and much of the social converse of the colony took place.

Before Buluwayo was three years old it boasted eight hotels, one of which advertised twenty-five bedrooms, stabling for fifty horses, and a billiard room; Tuli had two hotels, and others—which were rather inns or stores that had a bed to let—were scattered up and down the country at convenient resting-places for the horse or ox-wagon which brought the traveller across the veldt. But the railway revolutionised Rhodesian life, and many a small hotel and little posting-station lost its custom when the locomotive came.

The railway, like the telegraph, was ever in the mind of the founder of Rhodesia. The telegraph was at Salisbury and Buluwayo within a year or so of their founding, but the building of a railway was a longer and more costly matter. Its construction was, however, hastened by the rinderpest which swept the colony clear of transport cattle, and from that time Rhodes worked with feverish haste to get his line completed to the two capitals of his colony. 'The rails are being forwarded,' he said in June 1896, 'at the rate of one mile or two trainloads daily, and we will lay the rails as fast as the Cape authorities give us them.' The boast was true: Rhodes was as good as his word.

Railway Construction, 1897-1904.

Before the planting of the pioneer settlement in Mashonaland, the railhead of South Africa had reached no further inland than Kimberley. At the pressing request of Rhodes, the Cape Government Railway was extended in 1890 to Vryburg in Bechuanaland; there for awhile it stopped. But three years later construction was begun again, and the line was pushed forward through the little frontier township of Mafeking, on to Palapye, and on 19th October 1897 it

reached Buluwayo, the last 228 miles of track being laid in the amazingly short time of four and a half months.[1]

A little more than a year later railway communication was completed between Salisbury and Beira on the east coast by way of Umtali, along a route of greater difficulty; but here the line was at first only of two-foot gauge, with break of gauge at Umtali, and its inconveniences were such that it was relaid to the standard narrow gauge of three feet six inches two years later.

By that time the extension to the north, towards the Victoria Falls and Tanganyika—the Cape-Cairo project with which Rhodes astonished his contemporaries—was started. Six months later the outbreak of the war in the south delayed, and for a time stopped the undertaking altogether; but in 1902 the work was begun again, Buluwayo and Salisbury were connected, and in two years more the line had pushed forward to the Victoria Falls.

And with that extension the rough pioneering work in southern Rhodesia was done; the first stage of its development was finished.

CHAPTER VI

NYASA AND THE NORTH: 1876-1900[2]

'BEFORE the year 1885,' said a South African writer in 1876, 'there will be a larger population of European race north of

[1] A word for the navvies who laid the rails all over South Africa. 'To see them shift muck was a treat and to see them shift beer a marvel,' said Hamilton Browne (*A Lost Legionary*).

Muck, it may be explained, is the technical term for soil in the navvies' vocabulary.

This hearty breed of men, hard workers as a rule, but quarrelsome in drink, were often enlisted as auxiliaries in Kafir and other native wars; their discipline was bad, but they loved the fight, and they were apparently the only white men who could punish a black with the fists.

[2] For the early years of the British missions to Nyasa the chief authorities are, Young, *Mission to Nyasa*; Thomson, *To the Central*

the thirtieth degree of south latitude than south of it. This change will be chiefly owing to the presence of gold. It is not probable that the Boers will long remain in the ascendency. A mixed population, having a very strong English element, will outnumber the Afrikanders, and it is not likely that such will fall in amicably under the Government of the Transvaal Republic. Events of an exceedingly troublesome and disagreeable character will in all likelihood take place, unless the sheltering wing of the British Empire is extended over this region.'[1]

A South African Prophecy.

The prophecy came nearer to the truth than many similar attempts to forecast the future. Within little more than the decade allowed for its fulfilment the gold rush had indeed brought a very mixed population into the Transvaal, and the threatening shadow of troublesome events had already darkened the prospect ahead.

But further to the north, where Cecil Rhodes had followed Livingstone, both dreaming of a greater Empire, this prophet of South Africa forgot to look, or inspiration failed. Yet here also, in Rhodesia and beyond, great matters were preparing, and the future destinies of the vast countries between the Limpopo and the lakes were likewise to be decided during the same quarter of a century that saw the troubles of the Transvaal come to a bloody head.

In the very year 1876 when the prophecy was made the

African Lakes and Back; Drummond, *Tropical Africa*; Duff Macdonald, *Africana*; Moir, *Letters from Central Africa*; and Elton, *Lakes and Mountains of Africa*. Johnston's *Laws of Livingstonia* may be consulted; also Jack's *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, a useful book in rather too fervent a style. The old mission journals—*Aurora*, the *Nyasa News*, and Blantyre *Life and Work*—are valuable.

A general description of the country at the coming of the British is in Johnston's *British Central Africa*; see also Waller's *Title Deeds to Nyasa*. For the Arab war, Fotheringham's *Adventures in Nyasaland*, and Lugard's *Rise of our East African Empire*. The early British administration is well described in Duff's *Nyasaland under the Foreign Office*.

[1] *Cape Monthly Magazine*, 1876.

Scottish mission station was opened at Blantyre in the Shiré Highlands, a few months after the Livingstonia settlement at Cape Maclear had been founded and the first steamship floated on the deep waters of Nyasa.[1] At both places small staffs of Europeans were engaged in preaching to the natives, but for some time longer no other white men were located at those settlements. Several years later, indeed, only two Europeans were engaged in trade at Blantyre,[2] and none at all in Livingstonia; but in these far outposts of Christian civilisation was already some promise of development, some small shadow of success that bade fair to grow. The great Nyasa countries were in fact a sacred mission soil, whose very mention brought to mind the sad and lonely figure of the greatest of modern missionaries, David Livingstone, and recalled his lamentations at the slave-trade of those regions, his mourning at the miseries he had seen; and something of the zeal, the doggedness, and the rare humanity of the great Scots evangelist, clung to those who followed him to Central Africa and carried on his work.

Mission Stations in Nyasa, 1876.

The first-fruits of death and disappointment in Nyasa were gathered by the Universities' Mission of the Church of England, whose earliest missionaries were dead within a year of their arrival[3] in 1861; and others who came after them toiled for long in vain, before their work began to tell. In the first five years of the Scottish mission station at Cape Maclear there were preachers, teachers, and a church, but no converts; and Blantyre fared even worse, for the settlement itself was only saved from utter disaster by outside help, sought and sent from Livingstonia.

But on 27th March 1881, the mission journal of the evan-

[1] See ch. ii.
[2] Swann, *Fighting the Slave-Hunters in Central Africa.*
[3] See vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. ii., and ch. ii. of this book. There is a good account of Bishop Mackenzie of Nyasa in the *Cape Monthly*, 1862.

gelists at Cape Maclear records with joy the first baptism of a native of Nyasa; from that time converts came more readily, and the primitive building of mud and straw, which served this little station for its church, soon had forty regular attendants, and the neighbouring school had seventeen pupils.

Success at Cape Maclear, 1881.

Yet hardly was this triumph won when all seemed lost again. The site at Cape Maclear had proved unhealthy, some of the missionaries died, and the deadly *tse-tse* fly ravaged all that country: it was seen that the missionaries must either remove or perish.

Failure and Removal.

Another site was sought and found; and at Bandawe, higher up the lake on its western shore, the new Livingstonia was planted in 1881.

This in itself was a further step on that great northward road which the Cross was driving through the heart of Africa, but at the time the new advance seemed hardly better than retreat. For the deserted station at Cape Maclear was a grim reminder that the missionaries warred with untamed nature as well as savage man: the cottages were empty but the graves were full, and the silent melancholy of the abandoned settlement, where the tombs that lay beneath the shadow of a great granite mountain were quickly covered with the spreading vegetation of the tropics, warned the traveller who looked for welcome that here the European evangelists had fought and failed.[1]

At Bandawe the remnant of the mission had better fortune, but the work had to be begun again among strange people. Gross superstitions and fair legends were encountered—for the tribes of Lake Nyasa had a gift for nature

[1] When Professor Drummond visited the spot two years later, a native, the only inhabitant of the place, showed him the graves of the missionaries; another traveller, Montagu Kerr, was told that the white men were 'all dead, all gone, all gone Bandawe.'

stories,[1] and a love of dance [2] and song [3] —and against their rude philosophy of life the novel doctrines of the whites at first made little head. The white man spoke of peace, the native thought of war; the white man preached of freedom and eternal life, the native knew of slavery and cruel death; the white man told of the love of God, but his curious listeners knew little save the lust of man.[4]

The Settlement at Bandawe.

[1] Two of these stories, one moral, the other human, are worth preserving. The natives told that when man was first born into the world, God sent two messengers with different messages. The chameleon came with a message of life, the salamander with a message of death. And the salamander outran the chameleon; wherefore death has ever since outrun life.

The second story is of the origin of Lake Nyasa. Once, it was said, the great lake was but a brook, when on a day came an unknown man out of the west with a silver sceptre; and he made his dwelling with the tribe that lived beside this brook. Here he married; but presently besought his wife to return with him to his own country. She consented; but her brother said, 'Yes, I will go also with you.' Then the husband said, 'I will not take you too with me.' And the brother wept when he saw his sister cross the brook, and took his stick and struck the water, till it rose and covered everything, and became a flood. Then the woman and her brother died; but the corpse of the woman floated north, and the corpse of the brother south. And now, when a cloud weeps in the south the sister sleeps quietly in the north; when a cloud weeps in the north the brother rests quietly in the south.

[2] Many of these dances were of a ceremonial, religious, initiatory order, and often of lewd character. Great care was taken that no stranger should see them performed.

[3] Not only could the Nyasans sing, but they had a music of their own. The player had a piano of polished sounding wood of twelve notes; or metal tongues attached to a sounding-board; hollow gourds were sometimes attached to the piano to answer each note with an echo. The native orchestra also included a whole range of drums, a rattle and bells, and a horn. Travelling musicians went from village to village, and festival dances were held when the moon was bright. (*Nyasa News*, August 1893.)

Another writer, Duff, notes that he heard a stringed instrument of the guitar kind, which was said to have been imported from the East, possibly by the Arabs.

But many of the Central African tribes were musical. Even the miserable Mashonas had a kind of piano, twenty pieces of flat iron of varying lengths, fastened in a row along a flat board, the sound of which, according to Selous, was not unpleasant.

[4] No complete study of the aboriginal faiths of Nyasa survives; but it is known that there was some kind of ancestor-worship, and that the natives revered primitive natural forces, recognising a seed-giver and a god of lightning—the essential forces of life and death which, by the

But here, as at Cape Maclear, the wisdom of Europe helped forward the gospel of Christ. If the African was unmoved by the teaching of the evangelists, he could not deny their power of healing; for the mission had its medical equipment, and Robert Laws, its head, was a physician. He cured the sick where the rude spells of the native medicine-man were impotent; and his magical 'sleep-medicine'—chloroform—which seemed first to kill a man and then to cure him, was an unending source of wonder. When the white man could do such things himself, what could not his gods do if they chose?

Gradually the work extended, and tribes and peoples further from the lake were brought within the influence of the Livingstonia Mission. As early as 1878 a visit had been made to the Ngoni, a wild and powerful tribe of Zulu blood;[1] and the reception had been friendly. 'Why do you not come up and live with us?' said the Ngoni warriors; 'can you milk fish, that you remain at the lake? Come up and live here, and we will give you cattle. We are the rulers of the land, and all others are beneath us.'

Among the Ngoni, 1878.

The missionaries urged their case, but here were no conversions; the chiefs were indifferent, the people would not change without a lead; only a few poor slaves accepted a creed which had openly proclaimed itself against slavery. These were contemptuously permitted by their masters to adopt the white man's faith.

development of religious consciousness, would in time have been regarded as good and evil.

But with Islám advancing from the north and Christianity from the south, the growth of these native beliefs, like that of the native social organisation, was arrested and ultimately destroyed.

[1] The Zulus had originally come from the northern interior, travelling south as they conquered the weaker native tribes whom they encountered, and finally settling in Natal. But some of them broke back to the north again, where they became known as the Matabili and Ngoni; in each case the love of battle and the masterfulness of a ruling race, typical of the Zulus, survived the migration. The proudly contemptuous salutation of the Ngoni to the missionaries of Nyasa was characteristic of the Zulu outlook on life.

The missionaries despaired not at their failure, but soon they were in serious danger of their lives. The son of a chief died suddenly, and the strangers were accused of witchcraft. A trial by ordeal after the manner of the Ngoni was arranged; two fowls were given poison—if they died the missionaries were proven guilty, if they vomited their innocence was proclaimed. The birds vomited, and they were saved.

On such slight chances did the missionaries' lives depend; a balance not less hazardous decided the conversion of the Ngoni people.

There came a drought among their territories, and the native rain-makers were called on to fulfil their craft. They tried, and tried again with potent incantations, and they failed. The missionaries were now implored to save the country; they came and held a service, in which they prayed to the God of the Christians for the clouds which native art had sought in vain. The next day came the rain in floods, and the drought was broken.

Their Conversion.

So likewise was the indifference of the Ngoni; clearly the white man's god was the power to serve, and the white man's word was mighty with his god.[1]

All were now eager to learn of these powerful teachers, schools and churches were opened among the Ngoni, and many professed their belief in the religion that had worked this miracle. Chiefs and headmen, slaves and women, came to be baptized; on one day 195 adults and 89 children were received into the church, four thousand people assembled at the service, and when the offertory was taken, the astonished missionaries counted twenty-eight shillings in money, 3 lbs. 6 oz. of small beads, 11 knives, 1 axe, 2 hoes, 5 finger

[1] The rain-maker's craft was revered all over southern Africa, as was indeed but natural in a land of ignorance and drought; but once the pious missionaries were themselves accused of worshipping the rain. 'You have a bottle in front of the house,' said a native to the European; 'and when it rains you look at the bottle. What is that but worshipping the rain?' The bottle was a rain-gauge, and the missionary promptly smashed it to prove that this was not his god.

rings, 3 bracelets, 1 spear, 14 cooking-pots, 16 baskets, 1 mat, 67 fowls, 2 goats, 2 sheep, 233 lbs. of maize, 34 lbs. of potatoes, and 62 lbs. of pumpkins—a motley contribution whose diverse character bore witness to the interest and sincerity of the givers.

Others saw this sudden change, and marvelled as they saw. One of the Tonga tribe, a peaceful people that had often suffered under the Ngoni, said in amazement, 'Can these be the Ngoni who used to murder us, who slew the Henga, and the Bisa, and other tribes? I see men with scars of spears, and clubs, and bullets sitting at the Lord's Table in the still quiet of God's presence, and my heart is full of wonder.'

This was the first great victory of Christianity in Nyasa, but others quickly followed; Blantyre as well as Livingstonia overcame its early difficulties,[1] and now the converts came in larger numbers year by year. Many were fugitives, slaves who had fled from the Arab traders, or broken men who feared some savage vengeance of their chiefs; some came from curiosity, others were persuaded to listen, and having listened once, they stayed: in this wise the mission settlement of the Shiré Highlands took firm root, a little Christian colony in a heathen land.

The Advance at Blantyre.

The station had been planted on a modest scale at its first founding, a few simple houses placed on either side a laid-out square a hundred yards long by fifty-five broad; but as the settlement at Blantyre grew an amazing sight was seen. Other mission stations had their plain and homely churches, made of reeds and thatch or timber; but

Its Great Church.

[1] An issue of *Life and Work*, the Blantyre mission newspaper, speaks of 'the early days when raids threatened their existence, and they were beleaguered for months at a time.'

But even in those days the mission had its critics: see the pamphlet, *The Blantyre Missionaries; Discreditable Disclosures*, by Andrew Chirnside, F.R.G.S. (1880), with a rather tall story of unprovoked flogging and execution.

at Blantyre, on a spot that was but wilderness ten years before, there began to rise a great church whose stately proportions would not have disgraced a European capital. Its foundation proved the ambition of the Scots evangelists and the devotion of their people; for if the conception and design of this magnificent cathedral were European, the bricks which formed its walls were of local manufacture, and the whole edifice was built by native labour freely given. Within the church were an oak pulpit, a brass lectern, an organ, and other usual appurtenances of Christian worship; the exterior was in the solid Norman style of architecture that seems built to last for ever.

The Universities' Mission Stations.

And not at Blantyre only did Christianity advance. The Universities' Mission, now firmly founded on the isle of Zanzibar,[1] returned to the scene of its first errand and original disaster; stations of this branch of the Anglican Church were founded in 1883 at Newala, in 1886 at Likoma, an islet near the south of Lake Nyasa, and at Sumba and Pachia elsewhere.

At Newala a church was built, like the native houses, of bamboos and poles and thatch,[2] and here also was established a mission school for native lads, whose regular discipline and hours and lessons seem like some faint echo of an English public school that had reached the wild youth of Central Africa.

[1] See vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. ii. for the church at Zanzibar.

[2] The measurements and structure of these churches may be worth recording, for some students of ecclesiology. That at Sumba was 19 feet 4 inches broad, the nave 60 feet 4 inches long; the full length of the church with the apse was 70 feet; the height of wall 10 feet. The building at Pachia was slightly smaller.

Experience taught the missionaries that iron was too heavy for general use, tiles too dear and scarce; the roofs of their churches were mostly of grass thatch with long ears. These were watertight, even in the rainy season, if properly constructed; but apart from the serious danger of fire, a thatched roof would last several years. The roof was kept up by bamboo poles; no rafters were used, as these either rotted or were eaten by white ants; no windows were thought necessary. The walls were usually made of reeds from the lake, bound with bark rope.

Details of the scheme of work have been preserved.[1] Soon after 5.30 every morning, as the light was dawning, the lads were called from sleep; a short prayer at roll-call opened the day's work, and they dispersed to make the fires, boil water, set breakfast for their masters, and wash the pots and plates. At 6.15 matins were said according to the order of the Church of England—a service at which attendance was voluntary; and in the interval between the close of morning prayer and school at 8, the lads played football, a game they quickly understood. School began with a half-hour's lesson from Scripture in the Yao tongue; the rest of the morning till 11 was given to reading, writing and arithmetic under a native teacher. Then till noon came more football, and at noon, dinner. The boys were fed on porridge made of native meal, on beans, or boiled rice; and, with the iron digestion of youth, immediately after dinner they played football again till 2, when school reopened. At 4.30 lessons closed for the day; an hour of play—more football—relieved the weight of knowledge; at 5.30 was evensong, then the evening meal was prepared and eaten, a short benediction followed, and bed for all at 8.

Saints' days and Saturdays were holidays on which unending games could be enjoyed;[2] but mostly the lads were glad to learn, and quick at their books; the more promising scholars were sent on to Zanzibar to be trained as native teachers.

At Likoma was a smaller school, which relied almost entirely on such native teachers;[3] and among the rough fisherfolk on this little island of Nyasa were many converts to the

[1] In the *Journals and Papers of Chauncy Maples* (posthumous). His *Life and Letters* should also be consulted.

[2] The wise fathers of the Anglican mission allowed and even encouraged football in the intervals between religious exercises on Sundays—a laxity which must have horrified the stricter Scots.

[3] In the *Occasional Paper for Nyasaland*, the organ of the Universities' Mission, it is said that these teachers were too mechanical in their work, and that little progress was made.

Church. At the Christmas service held in 1892, only four of the eighty-four persons who partook of the Eucharist were Europeans, yet admission to full church membership was not easy, every convert being required to pass three years' novitiate before baptism, and careful examination being made of their way of life before the supreme rite of Christianity was administered.

Here as elsewhere there were failures, some who threw off the strait mantle of the new religion for the easier pagan robe; it was simpler, said one of the missionaries, to teach the converts a devotional habit than a strict moral life, to repeat a formula, sing hymns, and pray, than to speak the truth, be honest, and free from impurity.[1]

Polygamy still remained the great stumbling-block in the way of Christianity, and few men of wealth or standing in their country were willing to give up all their wives save one; but among the common people, with whom polygamy was not a personal question, the new faith spread. New mission stations were opened, and more churches built; but it was on one of these forward marches that sudden disaster again came on the Universities' Mission. On 26th August 1895, George Atlay, one of its devoted priests at Likoma, was killed, not by his own people, but by those to whom he would have ministered; and a week later Chauncy Maples, the Bishop of Likoma, was drowned in Lake Nyasa.

The Acceptance of Christianity.

The double loss crippled the Likoma Mission; but Christianity was now too firmly planted in Central Africa for an individual disaster to one station to cause it permanent harm. The nineteen years of steady work since the foundation of Livingstonia and Blantyre had left their mark in most parts of the country, even far to the north of Lake Nyasa; few places south of Tanganyika were so remote, few tribes so distant or so isolated but what some rumour of the Cross had reached them.

[1] *Nyasa News*, No. 3.

But in that time had come far more than a religious revolution. The change from paganism to Christianity meant, in Nyasa as in every other country of the world, a fundamental social change,[1] a departure from old customs and traditions which Christianity could not recognise, a sloughing of superstitions, a breaking with polygamy, a weakening of the authority of the chiefs before the new teaching of the white man. It was a destruction of the native way of life by the invader, and a destruction not less certain or complete that it came by persuasion instead of battle.

Means a Social Revolution.

Possibly the world lost something when these changes came; probably something worth preserving is lost in every revolution. The advance of Christianity in Nyasaland may have crushed some rough gem lying hidden amid the dross and rubbish of a savage realm, it may have distorted or destroyed some stray gleam of beauty or chance vision of delight in native lore. Such losses there must always be when one order supersedes another; but certainly the world gained immeasurably more than it lost when Christianity began to conquer paganism in Nyasa. If the new religion destroyed ruthlessly with the one hand, it brought as recompense with the other all the culture and the proud achievement of Europe, the settled order and the strength of the white man's civilisation in place of anarchy and war, and the liberty which Britain boasted in place of slavery.[2]

[1] As, for example, in the Pacific Islands—vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.

[2] Incidentally it destroyed the native craft of weaving cloth. The traders, as Livingstone remarked, were never far away from the missionary; and the traders introduced the Manchester cottons, whose splendid texture and beautiful prints were naturally preferred by the natives to their own rougher product. 'Truly ye are gods,' said a native to Livingstone as he looked upon these fabrics; from that time nothing would satisfy the people but imported cloths and cottons, and the aboriginal industry fell into decay.

It was noticed that the Nyasans, who had gone almost naked, were anxious for clothes. The women even begged the empty coal-bags from the steamers on the lake, and cutting slits in the top and sides for head and arms, used the dirty bags for dresses.

It was the firm conviction of the missionaries that civilisation must advance hand in hand with religion, and that conviction shaped all their polity and work. Several of the evangelists who accompanied Dr. Laws were skilled Scots artisans, blacksmiths, masons, or carpenters by trade, men who could teach the people of Nyasa craftsmanship as well as Christianity. This was indeed one of the great objects of the founders of the Livingstonia Mission, as it had been of Livingstone himself: 'he who implants the ideas of a straight line and a right angle,' said Dr. Laws, 'in the natives' minds has caused a great stride to be made towards civilisation.'

European Civilisation introduced.

The axiom was sound and true; and each mission station in Nyasa became a little centre of steady work and increasing knowledge freely given. Every native who engaged to labour at Blantyre and Bandawe and other stations was paid in wages for his time, first in cloth or beads and afterwards in English money; every man who brought his produce to the mission house could sell his goods there if nowhere else.[1] It was indeed a settled principle of the Scots evangelists to buy everything that was offered by these people, not because they needed the goods, but as a proof that labour would have its reward.

Printing and bookbinding were quickly introduced when the Nyasan children learnt to read in the mission schools. Printing-presses were imported and set up at Blantyre, Livingstonia, and Likoma; paper was brought from Europe, and with some ingenuity, binding materials were made on the

[1] Unfortunately few records have been kept of the prices paid, but one may serve. When bricks were required at Bandawe, the natives of the district contracted to make them at the rate of 10s. the 1000; and it is stated (*Nyasa News*) that the African contractor made a good profit from the business.

On the whole, however, life was cheap, and money went far. Ten years later Duff remarks that with a shilling one could buy 40 eggs, or 6 chickens, or 50 lbs. of sweet potatoes or the same amount of native flour. But prices rose rapidly as European settlement advanced.

spot from the hides of hippopotamus, while the boards for the backs of the books were fashioned out of old magazines and strips of waste calico.

The pupils in the native schools were taught the tedious mysteries of the printer's craft, and soon they were able to set the type for the translation of the Gospels in the Yao tongue, and even to print from English manuscript. A monthly magazine of several pages, carefully and clearly produced, was begun at Blantyre in 1887; a less ambitious *Occasional Paper* issued from the Likoma station in 1893 developed into the short-lived quarterly *Nyasa News*; a third periodical served the needs of Livingstonia.[1] Each of these productions was set up and printed by local labour; even the official *British Central Africa Gazette*, which began at Blantyre in 1891, was the work of native hands.

But this was only the beginning of the work of civilisation, which soon extended far afield. When the missionaries first arrived on Lake Nyasa all communication between one district and another was slow and tedious and sometimes dangerous, unless the line of travel lay along the great national waterway of the country. But this was remedied when roads were driven through the wilderness, round the Murchison Cataracts from Blantyre up to Cape Maclear and beyond; and already the idea of pushing the great thoroughfare through to Tanganyika and onward to the sea was in men's minds.

[1] A manuscript periodical had been issued as early as 1877, for the joint use of the Blantyre and Cape Maclear stations. It was prematurely born, and only survived two numbers.

Life and Work, the later Blantyre paper, and *Aurora*, the Livingstonia journal, were more substantial productions; but the *Nyasa News* did not survive the deaths of Atlay and Maples of Likoma. Indeed, the last number bears evident signs of the crisis that had overtaken the island mission, and it ends abruptly in the middle of an unfinished sentence.

Some of the papers in these journals are of a high order of merit, showing the sound scholarship and knowledge that distinguished the Nyasa missions; the Nyasa press as a whole was distinctly above the level of the Rhodesian journals, which followed a few years later, and which are mentioned in the previous chapter.

Native agriculture, too, was superseded near the European stations. The old wasteful method, common to all primitive people, of burning down a portion of the forest year by year, planting the seed on the roughly cleared soil, and moving on with every season to repeat the simple process, was given up; better results were shown by the missionaries, who kept their fields and gardens in constant cultivation; and the natives of Nyasa now began to realise that steady industry on a permanent estate gave better yields than their nomadic and sporadic efforts to cultivate the soil. They stood unwittingly upon the threshold of one of the fundamental distinctions between civilisation and barbarism.

Improvements in Agriculture.

The soil of Nyasa was fertile, and in the capable hands of European settlers it soon gave excellent results. A single coffee plant had been brought from the Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh to Nyasa in 1878, and placed in the mission garden at Blantyre; it grew and flourished in the kindly tropical climate, and from that insignificant beginning sprang a considerable industry. For several years, indeed, the coffee-growing plantations were the chief basis of Nyasan commerce.[1]

A secondary but still important product was tobacco. The natives of Nyasa were not ignorant of the uses of that admirable plant, whose soothing virtues had eased the uneven path of life for many generations before the Europeans came; but they were now shown by British planters a more excellent way of curing the crop, and the sweet Nyasa nicotine soon found the favour it deserved in England.

Such dealings led to trade at the mission stations; but regular commerce the missionaries would not touch. They were wise in their refusal, for they would have lost their influence at the price of trading profits; they recognised instinctively, what not every evangelist before them had remembered, that they could

The Growth of Commerce.

[1] The excellent quality of the Nyasa coffee made Cecil Rhodes prefer it above all others. He never travelled without it.

not serve both God and mammon.[1] Yet by a strange paradox, the commerce in this heathen land was Christian, although the leaders of Christianity would take no part in it.

The paradox was due to the practical foresight of the Scots missionary founders of Nyasa. It was clear that trade must come, and with trade the European trader. And it was notorious that the white trader in a savage land was often a blackguardly ruffian who tempted the natives with poisonous drink and guns and ammunition, spreading an evil influence which might destroy in a week the work that the missionaries had painfully accomplished in a year, and leaving behind him when he went a hated name and a fatal distrust of every European. Between trader and missionary was therefore an old and undying feud; but experience showed that wherever the missionary went the trader quickly followed. The missionaries could not have kept the traders from Nyasa for very many years when its opportunities of profit were once known; but the promoters of the missions determined to forestall the traders by founding an independent trading company, whose operations were kept separate from mission work. The mission stations were to have no commercial dealings; but the trading depots that were opened by the company were to be run on Christian lines.

The experiment was a novel one, but it succeeded. The African Lakes Corporation,[2] which was founded in the year 1877 to trade with Central Africa, had for its chairman James Stevenson, a shrewd but godly Glasgow merchant who had been one of the main supporters of the Livingstonia enterprise; its managers in Africa were all professing Christians who could preach as well

The African Lakes Corporation, 1877.

[1] See, for example, certain missionary transactions in New Zealand, vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. i. Previous missionaries in South Africa had not always been above suspicion of engaging in trade; see bk. xxv.

[2] It was originally known as the Livingstonia Central African Trading Company. The cumbrous name was soon dropped for that of African Lakes Corporation.

as barter; even its clerks and junior officials were chosen partly on religious grounds. It was determined that divine service should be held daily at its chief stations in Nyasa; and no work was done on Sundays, no goods were bought or sold. More important than these religious exercises—which some unregenerate onlookers were wont to sneer at as hypocrisy [1]—was the fact that the Corporation steadily refused to import any armaments or alcohol into Nyasaland, and resolutely set its face against the demoralising traffic of which other white men in savage lands elsewhere were not ashamed. The record of this great company of British traders is untarnished.

The first trading station was opened at Mandala, a mile away from Blantyre in the Shiré Hills.[2] It was profitable, the work extended, trading steamers were placed on Lake Nyasa, and within a year or two other stations had been founded, and steamers seen on Tanganyika. The natives brought their goods to the Corporation's depots, they appreciated fair prices and straight dealing; and soon they began to seek direct employment from the British.

The Struggle with Slavery.

But trouble lay ahead of the European traders of Nyasa. From the first they had set themselves against the slave-trade of the country, and by so doing had roused the wrath of the older masters of the land, the Arab dealers in slaves and ivory who were settled at the north of Lake Nyasa.

[1] Occasional slighting references to Nyasa occur in early Rhodesian literature. This may be partly the proverbial jealousy of a neighbour; in this case it usually follows the line of attacking the sincerity and the success of the policy inaugurated by the African Lakes Company.

The *Rhodesia Chronicle* is clearly referring to Nyasa a few years later when it says that 'a protected state, where Catholics are at feud with Protestants, while Mohammedans and heathens are watching for their turn, and where a puppet king stipulates for ivory before consenting to receive absolution, presents a spectacle edifying in a peculiar way.' An exaggerated and distorted caricature; but not unrecognisable.

[2] The name Mandala was said to be derived from the native word for the spectacles worn by the chief agent at this station.

This trade in slaves and ivory was indeed the staple traffic of the country; the Asiatic slave-trade of eastern Africa was far older than the European slave-trade of western Africa, and from time immemorial Arab invaders had raided the weak tribes of the interior for slaves and sent their captives down to the great central market of Zanzibar, where men of every eastern nation met and haggled for their human cattle.[1]

Terrible evidences of the disastrous consequences of this traffic met the Scots missionaries and traders in the interior at every turn, and sickened them as they had sickened Livingstone. The sight of villages in flames or blackened ruins, skeletons and corpses lying where the over-driven natives had dropped beneath their chains or load of ivory, trembling fugitives found hidden in a swamp or forest—such were the normal incidents of travel in Nyasa; and at times the labouring slave-gang, men and women and their children yoked together bearing ivory, hove in sight and passed along the silent, miserable way towards the coast for Mozambique or Zanzibar. In some parts the traffic had been prosecuted with such fury that it had worked its own doom as well as that of the land itself; whole districts of Nyasa were depopulated;[2] the slave-trade had proved as deadly in these northern countries as a Zulu or a Matabili war further to the south.[3] 'In 1877,' wrote one European in the country, 'a

[1] For the slave market at Zanzibar, see vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. ii.

[2] Sharpe, in *Proceedings*, Royal Geographical Society, 1890; and Last, *Proceedings*, Royal Geographical Society, 1887.

'Six years ago,' wrote a missionary at this time, 'on the road to Tanganyika there was a village every six or eight miles; now you can travel for days and scarcely meet a creature.'

[3] Yet the slave-trade, apart from the destruction of life it caused, did not always yield much profit. An Arab trader told Livingstone that after feeding the slave and reckoning up those who died or made their escape on the way to the coast there was little gain from a raid. The demand for slaves at Zanzibar was not always heavy, nor the price high.

It is true that the ivory which was brought down by the slaves, and which nearly doubled in price from 1840 to 1870, paid the traders well, and the slaves carried the ivory. Had it not been for ivory, in fact, there would have been far less slavery.

village five miles from us was fired on at dead of night, and every creature bolted for his life. Many were killed, many captured. It is the custom to shoot every man, capture and take prisoner every young woman, boy and girl, and to chop off the hands and ears of the old and infirm.' And at another village, 'every house seemed entire, but not a creature was within. Innumerable broken pots and gourds and bones were strewn around. At the spot where the death-struggle had taken place the wall of the black man's village had been hewn down and the bloody ruffians had rushed in.'[1]

Against such a brutal traffic every instinct of the Briton rose in quick rebellion; nor was it possible on other grounds to maintain neutrality. Between the Arab and the European was indeed instinctive enmity;[2] between the two ruling races a conflict for the mastery was inevitable, for to the economic war which was fought over the existence of slavery was added a racial and religious zealotry which would have sought a cause for combat had none been there. The impending struggle was not only between the slaver and free trader; it also revived the ancient and interminable conflict between Islám and Christianity which had broken out once more in Uganda and Nigeria and on the Sudan reaches of the Upper Nile.[3]

But the first blow to the slave-trade in East Africa had been already struck. In 1873, some years before the Scots missionaries and merchants had appeared on Lake Nyasa, the Sultan of Zanzibar had prohibited the slave-trade in his dominions, and closed the great slave-mart of Zanzibar. He acted under British influence, and the Arab traders of Nyasa did not fail to note that a British consul had advised the step,

[1] Dr. Kerr Cross of Livingstonia.

[2] This enmity had broken out when first the Portuguese appeared in the East four centuries before. 'Devil take you, what brought you here?' cried an Arab trader to the Latin adventurers when they set foot in India (vol. i. bk. i. ch. ii.).

[3] Vol. iv. bk. xiv. chs. i. ii. iii.

and that a Christian church rose on the site of the old slave market of Zanzibar.

One outlet for their trade was stopped; the trade itself continued. Other avenues for the disposal of their slaves and ivory were found; but within ten years after the closing of Zanzibar to slavery, British traders and missionaries appeared on Lake Nyasa, and as they pushed their way from south to north, opening from time to time fresh stations on the lake and even stretching out to Tanganyika, it became clear that the struggle between European and Asiatic, between freedom and slavery, for the possession of Africa, was now to be carried from the coast to the interior.

The Arabs prepared betimes for the conflict which they saw ahead. They fortified their settlements; they imported arms and ammunition; and they spread a rumour through the land that the Christians were cannibals who would devour the natives and their children. Many a wretched aboriginal who would have sought a refuge from his Asiatic master in the European settlement was deterred by that gross fable.

The Christians on their part were not blind to the future. Their numbers were few, and they could not count on the protection of their government in so distant a land; but they determined to rely upon their own resources when no others were available. Both at Cape Maclear and Blantyre small forts were built in case of trouble, and at every station that went up a native refugee encampment spread around, and the natives who were saved from slavery almost worshipped their deliverers. 'You may tell them it is God,' wrote one engaged in this rescue work; 'they will turn round and tell you that you are God.'

For some time an actual outbreak was averted, but the two sides were now consciously measuring their strength against each other, while disorder swept the unhappy country from end to end. The British trading stations grew in power and influence along the lake; The Slave War, 1887.

and meantime ambitious Arabs proclaimed themselves sultans, and lost their shadow-kingdoms as quickly as they gained them; chiefs were murdered, villages and tribes were menaced and sometimes overwhelmed, and slavery in these last days of its existence in Nyasa was more terrible than ever. There were evil times for the people of Central Africa when Asiatic and European strove for the mastery of the land.

The immediate aggressors in the war that finally broke out in 1887 were the Arabs. The white fort at Karonga, on the far north-western shore of Lake Nyasa, was attacked; negotiations were declined by the slavers, who were confident of victory, and the agents of the African Lakes Corporation, who saw themselves surrounded in the enemy's country—for Karonga was near the very centre of the Arab influence—prepared for a regular siege. Fortunately they were ready for the sudden but not unexpected emergency; they had arms and food, and they soon discovered that their opponents were only formidable against the helpless unarmed natives.

The Arabs numbered some five hundred, while the British were but six in all; the Corporation fort was by no means impregnable—it had been hurriedly built by its garrison of half a dozen, its walls were only breast-high, and its chief security was a ditch filled with acacia thorns—but all the fire of the Arabs only succeeded in scratching two of the defenders and killing a wretched donkey within the entrenchments.

The garrison found that it could hold its own for a time, but it could do little more; and presently came welcome reinforcements from another station of the Corporation, as well as native aid. The aboriginal auxiliaries fought well under European leadership, showing a courage that their previous history had not revealed; but they had little staying power, they disliked the strain and tedium of a siege, and in the end Karonga was abandoned by the whites. Had only one of the Corporation steamers arrived, said the chief of the little garrison, the place might have been retained; as it was,

most of the stores were successfully removed, and the Europeans retreated without loss.

The attack on Karonga was typical of the whole war. The British could not hold the north of the lake, where Arab influence was strong; they could not be dislodged from the south of the lake, where Arab influence was weak. After two years' conflict neither side could beat the other; neither could control the country as a whole or drive the other from it.

But the nobler aspect of this petty struggle of rival traders in Central Africa had now touched the heart of Britain. If the war between the Arabs and the African Lakes Corporation was in one sense a fight for trade between possessor and invader, it was also a fight for native emancipation and British supremacy; if the British business man remembered the commercial advantages that a victory of the British traders would bring, the ardent philanthropist dwelt on the conquest of slavery and the destruction of the slave-traders, while the religious anxiously awaited the salvation of the heathen. Thus the magnificent glamour of liberty for a downtrodden people, and the inspiration of a holy crusade against Islám, combined with the expectation of a new market to interest Britain in Nyasa: from such mixed motives do human actions spring.

But no British Government was yet ready to intervene in these remote regions, on behalf of so great a cause as liberty, or even in the hope of so gross a reward as territorial aggrandisement. Rhodesia was still unpopulated and even unsubdued by Europeans;[1] Nyasa was yet further afield. For six months and more at a stretch its small white population was cut off from communication with Britain;[2] the country itself was approached by a tedious and difficult navigation of the Zambesi, a river whose course

Isolation of Nyasa.

[1] See the previous chapter.

[2] The two issues of the *Occasional Paper for Nyasaland* complain that no mails had been received at Likoma from England for six months.

was little known outside South Africa; the route thither lay through Portuguese dominions, and, what was perhaps more important as a deterrent, through a notoriously fever-stricken land.

A British Consul was indeed accredited to Nyasa 'for service in the suppression of the slave-trade and the development of civilisation and commerce in Central Africa'; but the resounding words of an official without force behind him are at best a negative quantity. And Lord Granville, the indolent Foreign Secretary[1] of the 1880-85 Gladstone Administration, could only warn the exasperated British missionaries and traders who were fighting the Arab slavers of Nyasa that their action was illegal, and recommend 'great caution, tact, and patience' in their dealings—qualities in which crusaders and pioneers are usually lamentably deficient.

Lord Salisbury, the successor of Lord Granville at the British Foreign Office, could for the moment do little more; but it was not the habit of that statesman to shirk responsibility in the easy manner of Lord Granville. As the conflict between the Arabs and the African Lakes Corporation dragged wearily along, he first intervened to end the struggle, and in the end the British Premier faced without flinching the prospect of enlarging the British Empire by the inclusion of Nyasa.

His determination achieved its object. In the year 1888 an official agent from the British Government was despatched to the north of Lake Nyasa to negotiate a peace with the Arab slavers. For the time he failed; but at last, on 22nd October in the following year, the treaty was concluded. And at the same time other agents of the Government were pressing on the native chiefs of Tanganyika and Nyasa the advantages of treaties of protection with so great a power as Britain.

Temporary Peace, 1889.

[1] See vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iii., and bk. xvi. ch. ii. for examples of his indolence.

The arguments they used, and the presents with which they backed their arguments, were effectual. By the end of 1890 the work was done; early in the following year a British Protectorate was formally proclaimed over Nyasa and the Shiré Highlands.

British Protectorate over Nyasa, 1891.

The mere proclamation did not end the contest over slavery. The Arab traders, like other men, had no wish to lose their livelihood; and for the next five years the history of the protectorate was one of continual punitive expeditions against the slave-dealers. A small force of Sikhs was brought over from India to aid the British troops, and one by one the old slave-trading chiefs were overcome. One Mlozi was the last to be attacked; but in 1895 his town was shelled, he himself was captured hiding in a cellar, charged with murder, tried and hanged. Thus ignominiously fell the old slave rule which had been the curse of Nyasa.

Slavery suppressed, 1895.

But meanwhile the new rule had been established firmly. The old native organisation, in separate villages or tribal communities, had been destroyed by the advance of the stronger Arabs from the north, the stronger British from the south; the new government was therefore faced with the need of creating a new administration altogether.

The New British Administration, 1891-96.

Sir Harry Johnston, the energetic head of the Protectorate, was not the man to shirk his work. By 1893 a new land settlement had been introduced, judicial courts established, a tariff and a hut-tax imposed for revenue,[1] an organised civil service was at work, roads and bridges being made, and postal communications enlarged. The country was safe for European and aboriginal alike: and in the first five years of British administration the trade of Nyasa had more than

[1] The hut-tax was revised in 1902, when it was proclaimed that all who refused to work one month in twelve should pay 6s. per annum instead of 3s. There was some criticism of this act as modified slavery; but those who made the criticism did not know what slavery was.

doubled, and the small European population of the country had increased six-fold.

Those five years transformed Nyasa from a land of anarchy and misery to a land of order, with the beginnings of a permanent civilisation; and here, as in other parts of the African tropics where a similar revolution was in progress, in British East Africa, in Nigeria, and Sudan,[1] the European had ousted the Asiatic, the Christian displaced the Mohammedan as ruler. Each imposed a civilisation alien to the soil, a creed and culture foreign to the people of the country; but where the Asiatic had brought ruin and desolation, the European gave peace and ordered industry.

Blantyre the Capital of Nyasa.

The new capital was proclaimed at Blantyre, whose ideal situation, reminding travellers of a station in the Indian hills, became the home of a growing city. Here the Scots missionaries still held to their work of conversion, but they were no longer supreme when the new civil administration was introduced. They had not indeed grasped at the temporal authority which in their early years in Nyasa had been almost forced upon them by their circumstances among a weak and broken people; but even to a spiritual ruler the gross attributes of earthly authority may sometimes have their charm, and the missionaries of Nyasa, like their brethren in Bechuanaland and elsewhere, faced the passing of their full dominion, and the raising of new problems as white officials, settlers and traders came, with natural regret. Their influence with the people whom they had saved, not only from the eternal wrath but from very present misery, was no longer paramount; they were no more as gods among men.

The change was inevitable in a country which was now definitely part of the British Empire, and fertile enough to attract white planters to its soil. Blantyre became not only the administrative capital but a trading centre, a mart for

[1] See vol. iv. bk. xiv.

the produce of the Shiré Highlands as well as a centre of evangelistic effort. The evening bell at the mission schools still called the dusky children to their prayers, the great altar of the Christian faith still drew its crowds of worshippers; but the whole atmosphere of the place was transformed when the telegraph came up from the south,[1] when a railway was projected and begun, and new commercial buildings of galvanised iron were hastily run up near the quiet mission station and the great cathedral church.

The new British planter population spread itself about the land, and prospered; there was no difficulty whatever in growing produce on that easy soil, but a grave difficulty in getting it to market. Many of these settlers, men with capital and energy, founded permanent homes in Nyasa; and they liked to think their country was like England, a tropic England of the austral hemisphere. One noticed 'a bird on the hills whose name I do not know, but whose voice is the voice of the moorland lark; a few stone walls and sheep, and one might be in Scotland or Yorkshire'—a fanciful comparison that betrays rather than conceals the sick heart of the exile.

The New British Settlers, 1891-1900.

The tropic verdure and the burning sun belied the simile: it could hardly be said that Nyasa was a white man's country, and it had yet to be proved that it lay within range of the new white South African nation that was forming further south. The one great blot upon Nyasa was its unhealthiness: the first missionaries had quickly died there, the first civilians were likewise stricken, and old Fort Johnston, the earliest recognised outpost of the British Government in the country, was deserted within a few months of its foundation, left to the eerie silence of dank graves and decaying walls, to become that most melancholy

Unhealthiness of the Country.

[1] Swann, *Fighting the Slave-Hunters in Central Africa.*

of all earthly sights, a human habitation abandoned by its owners.[1]

Happily new hope was here, in the new school of tropical medicine which was to revolutionise hygiene in the torrid belt of the earth.[2] But practically the whole length of the Zambesi Valley at this time was, in fact, an unhealthy country that had taken its toll of pioneering life; and further north, on the way to Tanganyika, were diseases, such as sleeping sickness, which were as yet hardly known to Europeans at all. Here the *tse-tse* fly, which exasperated hunters cursed as a direct descendant of the flies that plagued the Egyptians, paralysed communications, killing horses and transport oxen by its deadly bite; and all along the great river which divides the temperate south from the tropic middle of Africa, fever had claimed its human victims. If any white man wished to die of fever, said one of the earlier explorers in these regions, he had only to go along the Zambesi till he reached Barotsiland, and his desire would quickly be fulfilled.

Further experience somewhat modified this view, for the high plateau of northern Barotsiland was bracing, dry, and not unhealthy, and a splendid cattle country; but not even the diseases of the fertile deadly valley of the Zambesi had prevented Englishmen from settling by the riverside.[3] Where Livingstone had led the way other missionaries and explorers

British Pioneers North of the Zambesi, 1860-90.

[1] Even Sir Harry Johnston, who compares Blantyre with its roses and geraniums and English vegetables to a village of the Scots Lowlands, admits that it was only on a plateau 5000 feet high in this part of tropic Africa that Europeans could rear their children without much, if any, deterioration of constitution. (*Report on British Central Africa*, 1901-1903.)

[2] See vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iv.

[3] The leading authorities are the annual *Reports of the British South Africa Company*; Gouldsbury, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia*; Gibbons, *Exploration and Hunting in Central Africa*, and *Africa from South to North*, both extremely valuable works; Harding, *In Remotest Barotsiland*; Cameron, *Across Africa*; and Bertrand, *Au Pays des Barotsi*. There are some sporting books of no great importance, of which Letcher's *Big Game Hunting in North-Eastern Rhodesia* is neither better nor worse than most of its fellows. The works of Selous, cited in the previous chapter, touch on this part of the subject.

had since followed, and begun, after the manner of our nation, to play a part in the barbaric politics as well as the trade of these remote regions. Since Livingstone had been welcomed at the court of Sebituani, indeed, a revolution had been made in this country; the Makololo supremacy under Sebituani had fallen soon after that monarch died, the old empire of the Barotsi people was restored, and that race, a handsome, well-developed folk, was now prosperous under the rule of Lewanika, a monarch whose earlier days were cruel and harsh, but who was described by an enthusiastic English traveller in later years as a fine man, over six feet high, with 'the manners of a gentleman and the unobtrusive dignity of the well-bred.' He had not held this throne without a struggle, and the name of John Macdonald, a Scots trader at Lialui, the new Barotsi capital, is remembered for the fact that he aided Lewanika to assert his title on the death of Sipopo, the first ruler of the restored Barotsi empire.

Well disposed as he was to the British on this account, the new monarch had not forbidden the missionaries who sought permission to settle in his country; and soon after came evangelists from Europe to preach the Christian gospels, opening mission stations along the Zambesi, one at Lialui the capital, another later at Luanza, a third at Kazombo, others in due course at Kazungula, Ankala, and Seshiki, where Livingstone had conversed with Sebituani. Many of these pioneers, who had unknowingly pitched their camp where the white man could not live, were stricken and died of fever, sometimes a whole family at a time;[1] but others

[1] Two families of missionaries, the Prices and Helmores, settled at Linyanti among the Makololo and Barotsi in 1860. Within a fortnight all save three were down with fever; even the Bechuana attendants were prostrate, 'lying about like logs of wood.' A few days after, as Price was tending the sick family, he 'touched a little face among the four children, and found the cold hand of death had been there before him.' It was one of the young Helmores. Presently the mother herself became delirious, and fancied 'she heard her little ones calling for water, and had denied herself of all for her loved ones.' She also died; Helmore and the other children followed; and Price made his way out of the

took their places, although they made few converts, and the king himself remained true to the old barbaric creed.[1] But if they had seemingly small measure of success, their work was not without its influence. The strength of savage customs was insensibly diminished, the belief in witchcraft was discouraged, the indifference to human suffering perhaps grew less;[2] and the good example of the evangelists helped to prepare the way for the white man, if not for the white man's creed.

Even this almost unknown land, so remote that it had never suffered from the Arab slavers of Tanganyika and Nyasa, was not secure from the spreading European influence of the nineteenth century. Lewanika foresaw and bowed to the inevitable destiny; and liking the fair dealings of the British

fatal district. 'If suffering in mission work is doing anything,' he wrote, 'then I have done something; if not, then I have done but little.'

This pitiful tragedy, which is described in Mackenzie's *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, does not stand alone. Many years later the Buckenham family settled as missionaries at Ankala; little Elsie Buckenham sickened, drooped for several months, and died; within a few months the father was laid beside his child; the widow abandoned the accursed country.

The fate of the parents was sad enough, but they knew what they were risking when they went out. But why did they not leave their helpless children in England? The separation would have been hard, but not so hard as to see the children die before their eyes. Missionary enterprise has been hungry of child life.

[1] He gave the excellent reason that he could not abandon any of his many wives.

[2] The Barotsi were little less cruel than their neighbours. Those guilty of witchcraft had their stomachs roasted over a slow fire until their entrails burst out, or they were smeared all over with honey, and tied on an anthill where thousands of ants would attack them. And it was a favoured amusement of Sipopo, first king of the restored Barotsi dynasty, to sit in a canoe on the Zambesi and order children to be thrown into the water. He would watch the little ones struggling to reach the shore with mild amusement; but his real enjoyment began when the sudden shriek and upthrown arms of a wretched child showed it had been seized by a crocodile. At such a moment Sipopo felt that he had not spent his time in vain.

Compared with the amusements of this human devil, the sport of Mosilikatsi, king of the Matabili, was tame. He threw from time to time old men and women of the tribes he had conquered to the vultures —a little food 'for my children,' as the barbarian termed his action.

whom he knew and distrusting both Portuguese and the Transvaal Dutch, he declared himself anxious for British protection over his dominions. The day was not long gone when no notice would have been given to his request; even in 1890, when the request was made, the idea of extending the British Empire north of the Zambesi was still almost beyond the political horizon both of London and Cape Town, and many who were not averse from the enlargement of British territory held that the Zambesi was the natural boundary of the British dominions in South Africa.

The Founding of North-West Rhodesia, 1891-1900.

Not so Cecil Rhodes, whose soaring vision reached from the Zambesi onwards to the great lakes and far beyond to Egypt. He had helped the African Lakes Corporation with a large financial grant in its struggle in Nyasa, and thus secured that district to the Empire; and it was mainly through his influence that the Barotsi country was marked as British territory in the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1891, which carried the sphere of British influence through to Tanganyika and the undefined southern boundaries of the Congo Free State.[1]

The whole Barotsi empire was soon to be known as North-West Rhodesia, the equally unknown country around Bangweolo, that land of swamps and sponges where Livingstone had breathed his last, as North-East Rhodesia; but for the time at least no steps were taken to ensure effective occupation, that sole title to possession, and Lewanika became

[1] Rhodes had obtained a concession still further north, along the western shores of Tanganyika. The precious document was being sent to the coast by runners, but it was intercepted and destroyed by a member of Stanley's expedition, who was more concerned with Belgian than British interests. The act had important consequences. 'But for the blackguardism of one man I should have been right through Africa,' said Rhodes to his secretary, Le Sueur, who tells the story.

Stanley had himself urged that Britain should take over the Congo district, but his appeal fell on deaf ears. And unlike Rhodes, he had not the money to carry out a great annexation himself. The Congo is one of the lost opportunities of the English people overseas.

restive under the delay. It was too much even for the colossal ambition of Cecil Rhodes to develop two inaccessible tropical provinces, whose full extent was not yet explored, much less surveyed, at the same time that he was founding a colony in Southern Rhodesia and fighting the Matabili. An occasional white traveller reached the country, or even settled there; but not until 1898 was the authority of the Chartered Company introduced. In that year British officials, commissioners of the Company, were stationed at Monze, Kalomo, Kazungula, and at Mongo near Lialui; the beginnings of a new administrative system were thought out; but unfortunately the Zambesi country did not belie its unhealthy reputation—blackwater fever killed some of the early administrators, the station or fort at Monze was abandoned, and little progress was made elsewhere. From one cause and another, but mainly on account of the great war which broke out in 1899 between British and Boers, little progress was made in North-West Rhodesia, and when the war was over it was realised that little could be done until the railway reached the country.

North-East Rhodesia, 1891-1900.

The great district nominally known as North-East Rhodesia had much the same fortune. A line of stations was founded between Nyasa and Tanganyika; each contained a few thatched or tin-roofed buildings, an office, surgery, and prison, a post office and perhaps a church; each had an administrator responsible for the government, most had an independent trader ready to traffic with the tribes, some had a missionary, and a few had an individual settler. The smallest fort in the country had little less; the capital at Abercorn, in the far north near Tanganyika, had little more.[1]

The total white population of the country in 1900 was less than a hundred, and it was not increasing rapidly. Those

[1] Abercorn was called after the duke of that name, the first President of the British South Africa Company. See note on page 567.

who were there realised that in North-East as in North-West Rhodesia, little more could be done until the railway was driven through to Tanganyika; but some who liked the peaceful remoteness of station life in the tropics were happy in this slumberous lotus-land. Small as was the British force in the country, it was sufficient to stamp out much of the old misrule which had saddened Livingstone; the slave-trade had gone, and there was no fear of a native rising among the unwarlike tribes of the place; the only danger to the whites was the chance of fever, the only danger with the blacks the spread of sleeping sickness.

These two vast provinces with their small white body-guard were like trustees of the future, waiting for their day to dawn. The administration was costly, the revenue was low, and both provinces showed a considerable annual deficit, which was, however, reduced when the two were united under the name of Northern Rhodesia in 1911.

Union of North-East and North-West Rhodesia, 1911.

The government was now centralised at Livingstone, the one place that could be called a European town, and that only a town by courtesy, as yet founded in this district. The name was fittingly given by its founders, since it stood beside the Victoria Falls which David Livingstone had discovered, but for awhile its growth was not much quicker than that of the province of which it was the head. In 1906 Livingstone Town, although situated on the highroad to the interior, had only one hotel with no more than ten rooms; its white population was less than fifty, and its newspaper, a thin type-written sheet after the style of the early press of Salisbury and Buluwayo, found four foolscap pages ample to inform its few readers both of local doings and the scanty news that came up by the great transcontinental telegraph which Cecil Rhodes had planned and largely financed from his own pocket.[1]

[1] The *Livingstone Mail*, 1906, in Mr. Mendelssohn's library.

A few years later the prospects had begun to improve. The railway from the south had reached to Livingstone, spanning the Victoria Falls;[1] by 1912 it stretched through Broken Hill and the whole length of Rhodesia from south to north, and onwards into the Congo Free State. With the building of the line the old isolation of the country quickly vanished: casual tourists now visited the place which David Livingstone had discovered fifty years before, restaurant and sleeping-cars ran as far as the Zambesi, and white prospectors and intending settlers made their way about the country where Lewanika had ruled his Barotsi. By 1912 the total European population of North Rhodesia had risen to over a thousand, of whom nearly three hundred were white women.[2]

Advance of Northern Rhodesia, 1912.

Such were the first foundations of a European civilisation in Nyasa and Northern Rhodesia. Time was to show whether those foundations were permanent; the potential wealth of the country could no longer be disputed, but its future as a European colony depended chiefly on its health.

Fifty years had seen the British Empire in South Africa advance from the Orange River to Tanganyika, from the Griqua Town of the older missionaries to the Chartered Company's fort at Abercorn. This advance had been made despite the reluctance of Imperial Governments in London, colonial Governments in Cape Town, an anti-imperial bias in England,[3] and an anti-British bias in Cape Colony. Many had played their part in this great advance; but two men were so largely responsible for the expansion that one may say that without their aid it

Comparison between Livingstone and Rhodes.

[1] When he was planning the railway to the north, Rhodes had taken a great interest in its crossing the Zambesi at this point, closely examining the engineers to discover if the spray from the Victoria Falls would touch the carriages of the trains as they crossed the river-bridge—a detail which appealed strongly to his imagination.

[2] Not all of these people, however, were permanent inhabitants. (*British South Africa Company's Annual Report*, 1912-13.)

[3] See vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

would not only not have been made so far, but it would hardly have been made at all. Those two men, David Livingstone and Cecil Rhodes, were the giants among the pigmies in this movement, and it is as natural to compare their work and character and circumstances as those of Clive and Warren Hastings in another portion of the Empire a century before.

Between the two men were obvious points of resemblance as well as obvious differences. Each had the broad mind that could take wide grasp of men and things: Rhodes would not trouble himself about petty details, and rose superior to small provincial prejudices; Livingstone had no love for the bickerings of rival sects, and hated the 'competition to catch souls,' the going about to make one proselyte, among his fellow-missionaries. In the smaller details of life both had the same carelessness in dress, allied, by a curious coincidence, with the same scrupulous carefulness of person: Rhodes for preference wore old loosely-fitting clothes, Livingstone had never more than one change of attire in his travelling wardrobe; yet Livingstone warned fellow-European travellers of the importance as well as comfort of a neat and cleanly appearance when going among the natives, and Rhodes was known as the only man who troubled to shave himself daily in the rough pioneering days of early Mashonaland.[1] In disposition, both men had a sweet and sunny character among their friends, with occasional sharp hastiness when matters went awry; both, too, were at all times openly straightforward and clear-spoken. Each gave all his working life for Africa, led onwards by the vision of the north and the hope of reaching through at last to Egypt; and each died prematurely, before his work was done.

But there resemblance ends. Rhodes was the son of an

[1] Finlason (*A Nobody in Mashonaland*) remarks that those who did not know Cecil Rhodes by sight could always recognise him on the road by the fact that he had shaved—a certain sign of great rank in a land where razors and other commodities of civilisation were scarce.

English parson, and gave his thoughts to politics; Livingstone was the son of a Scottish layman, albeit an extremely pious layman, and gave his thoughts to religion. And Livingstone was no statesman, but the greatest of modern explorers; Rhodes was no explorer—there was little left, indeed, for him to explore—but the greatest statesman of modern times in South Africa. Livingstone was the path-finder, Rhodes the man who used the path to the north; but without Livingstone the world might have waited many years for so full a knowledge of Central South Africa, and Rhodes have laid his mighty plans in vain. And without Rhodes as an opponent Paul Kruger might have cut off the interior which Livingstone had discovered from the imperial path of Britain in South Africa, and have founded the great Boer dominion in the interior which was the working dream of his long life. Livingstone and Rhodes, in short, were the complement of each other, and the making of British South Africa on a larger scale than its older statesmen had thought possible.

Friction with Portugal, 1889-91.

But the work of British expansion to the northward in South Africa had not been completed without some friction outside South Africa. For one brief moment the dying energies of Portugal flickered into sudden flame at this last enlargement of the British Empire; and both Nyasa and the Shiré Highlands were claimed as part of that great Portuguese domain in Africa which had nominally stretched across the continent from sea to sea, and recognised no rivals in past centuries.

The claim had once been valid; yet one after another the neglected provinces had passed to other hands since the great days when Portuguese explorers led the way across the unknown ocean and reached out towards the very heart of Africa. The whole history of the Dutch and British for three hundred years past had been one of continual expansion from their first port of call at Table Bay, and every en-

largement of their settlements had been made at the expense of the older Latin Empire, an encroachment on the nominal sovereignty of the Braganzas over Africa. The Dutch had spread through Cape Colony and across the Orange River on to those Transvaal heights which the Portuguese had seen and claimed but never taken; the British had spread along the coast from west to east, settling in countries which bore the Latin names of Algoa and Natal, but had no Latin owners.

And now the British had pushed forward far into the interior. When their line of advance ran first through the deserts of the Griqua country the Portuguese made no remonstrance; when that line was carried onwards through the country of the Matabili and Mashonas into the dim realm of Monomotapa there was again no sign of protest. But now at last they had reached the tropics; and by the annexation of Nyasa they drove a broad wedge between the disunited eastern and western colonies of Portugal that finally separated Mozambique from Angola, and for ever stayed a junction of the two and a consolidation of the Portuguese colonial empire.

Then—too late—the Portuguese awoke and acted.

The commander of the small Portuguese forces on the Lower Shiré and Zambesi Rivers in the year 1889 was one Lieutenant Coutinho. He was new to his post, and therefore energetic; the fatal lassitude of Mozambique had not yet eaten into his career. And he became impatient of the long negotiations which were now proceeding between his government and the British Foreign Office as to the boundaries of Nyasa—negotiations in which he was convinced that the weaker country would be worsted.

The thought was as gall to the young Portuguese, who preserved some of the ancient fire of his people; and he determined to obtain by arms what he knew could never be obtained by argument. He put the small force under his command in motion; the Ruo River, which had been treated as a temporary boundary between British and Portuguese

territory, was crossed; a Makololo village near Chiromo was burnt, and Coutinho set forth on his way to Blantyre.

The Portuguese give Way.

What would have happened, or which side have gained the victory when he reached the little Scots settlement in the Highlands of Central Africa, it is useless to speculate. When the too daring soldier of a decaying power outruns the caution of the statesman he has to suffer for his zeal; the scandal of an open rupture was avoided by the recall of Coutinho; and although the Portuguese Government breathed defiance, Lord Salisbury remained impervious to threats which he knew could not be carried out. Soon afterwards, in 1891, the authorities at Lisbon grudgingly recognised the British claims to the interior, in Nyasa and Northern Rhodesia. Effective occupation, backed by external power, had conquered a nominal suzerainty that had never been enforced.

Cape Town to Tanganyika British.

The Portuguese had claimed but never possessed the interior; the British possessed before they claimed; and possessing, held what they now claimed—South Africa from Cape Town to Tanganyika, from Table Bay to the heart of the tropics. The onward march of explorers, hunters, missionaries, and traders had carried them through half a continent in seventy years.

The road to Nyasa and the north, the route which Livingstone projected and Cecil Rhodes secured, was made. The grotesquely mingled aims of Christianity, commerce, and civilisation, of the gospel, force, and mammon had conquered; the road through the interior was made, and it was British.

Book XXV

CHRISTIANITY AND THE EMPIRE[1]

Contrast between Temporal and Religious Power.

Alongside the pomp and the majesty of the expanding empire of Britain marched ever through the centuries another but a less tangible force. Sometimes it ran ahead of civilisation, sometimes it followed in its steps; sometimes it was associated with the traders and traffickers in material things, more often it was opposed to them and their aims and their methods. And sometimes its inspiration was the very source from which the new settlements drew their being.

That force was Christianity.

The same creed, almost unchanging in a world of change, had seen other empires rise and rule and perish. It had conquered the proud unity of the older Roman Empire, coerced and sometimes controlled the divisions of the Holy Roman Empire of mediæval Europe; it had decided the boundaries of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, and seen those later Latin states tower into splendour and in time decay.

If the Christian faith had outlived such mighty powers, it

[1] This section is mainly a drawing together of loose strands and open threads from previous chapters of this work, where religion and missionary effort are referred to only casually or incidentally. I have not attempted to write a general history of the relations between the Christian churches within the Empire—that would be a tedious and unprofitable inquiry—but rather to give a general view of the position of Christianity among the English peoples and their subjects. From this general survey I have excepted India, but that subject I hope to treat in a subsequent volume.

might yet outlive others—the Russian Empire which it had followed through the snows and steppes of Siberia, the British Empire whose emigrants it accompanied to the ends of the earth. And the humble Christian missionary who built his hut of reeds and clay in the wilderness might be doing a work that should outlast the immutable decrees of a viceroy or the fundamental constitution of a free people, even as the work of Paul the apostle outlasted the work of the Roman Cæsars.

The strong hand of the civil power was clearly temporal, perhaps temporary, the invisible authority of Christianity claimed to be eternal. The one was immediate and local, the other ultimate and universal.

The two were ever connected and ever opposed: like the soul in the human body, each influenced the other, acting and reacting; each found it difficult to work with, and not less difficult to work without the other. Often the two were at variance, sometimes at open issue; each claimed part of the other's sphere, and each also claimed a sphere in which its own authority was supreme.

The grounds of opposition were clear and outstanding. The Church in all ages claimed its power direct from God, the Empire claimed its authority from man. The aim of the politician was temporal, of the priest eternal. The statesman sought dominion and the mastery of his own people, the missionary preached the equality of all men before God. The minister of Empire spoke of struggle, the minister of Christ spoke of peace. The soldier of Empire took by force, the soldier of God conquered by persuasion. The trader dealt by haggle, bribe and barter; the evangelist worked by love.

But overlying these fundamental divergencies between the two forces of Christianity and Empire there were also superficial likenesses which helped at times to conceal those divergencies. Each worked for civilisation, as civilisation was

understood in Europe; each carried the banner of European supremacy before it—the Empire in open acknowledgment, the Church by implication, by propagating a faith whose claim to universal belief had become localised by the circumstances of nineteen centuries to Europe. Each sought power, but each sought a different kind of power, and sought to encompass power by different methods. Each sought unity, but a different kind of unity—the Imperialist a unity of law and government, the priest a unity of faith and doctrine. And each failed of his ideal, since each worked with a human material that changed with changing circumstance and environment; yet neither failed utterly. There was a rough unity of law and allegiance in the British Empire, a rough unity of faith in the same God among the Christian Church.

Divisions among Christian Churches.

The Church, as was its duty, ignored the barriers of race and language, the boundaries of nations and empires; and here was the great divergence of church polity from statecraft. But here was also a likeness concealed beneath the divergence. The Church was itself divided by barriers, not of race or empire, but of sects and schisms; not by boundaries of language, but of dogma and doctrine. The conflicting politics of rival empires were paralleled by the conflicting propaganda of rival denominations; the lack of unity in human society was equalled by the lack of unity in religious practice.

Their Disastrous Consequences.

The notorious divisions among Christians had indeed been fraught with disastrous consequences to the faith. The great schism between Eastern and Western Churches had weakened the uniform front of Christendom in Europe, and the Turk had driven the solid wedge of Islám through Byzantium, the meeting-ground of conflict between Slav and Latin Christianity. Even before the loss of Constantinople in 1453 had put its dark lesson on the strife, that schism had made the conception of

all Europe as a single religious, social, or political unit an unreal vision.

But Christendom had not learned the need of union even from a disaster which threatened to overwhelm it. Hardly was the Turk firmly seated in the city of Constantine when another schism spread in Western Europe, and the old contrast between Teuton and Latin was permanently deepened by the Reformation. The Teutons became Protestants, the Latins remained faithful to the old Catholic Church; and the magnificent conception of an all-embracing Church in an all-embracing Empire, already so sadly shrunk by the schism between Eastern and Western Christendom, finally vanished in the religious wars and rival persecutions of the Reformation.

Religious Schisms in England.

Another, and in the end perhaps not less disastrous, line of religious cleavage was seen among the English people, whose full consequences it needed centuries to show. The reformed Church of England still indeed claimed communion with the Catholic Church after its secession at the Reformation, but the claim of Canterbury was repudiated as an absurd impertinence at Rome. And the Church of England, itself the creation of a comprehensive compromise that was intended to provide for the spiritual needs of all the English people, was to be faced with the same schism it had itself committed. Elizabethan Puritan and Georgian Nonconformist seceded from the national church, and their permanent secession marked the whole of modern English life with a division that has been not merely religious, but largely coloured by social and political bitterness as well.

It has been claimed, indeed, that the division between Established Church and Nonconformity has given a variety and individuality to English spiritual life which could not have existed in a uniform organisation, that the competition between sect and sect has made for general vitality, and that the full religious freedom of the English people has been well

purchased at the heavy price of frequent jealous rivalry and concealed or open enmity between one denomination and another. On such vexed matters men will always differ according to sympathy or upbringing, those who value unity emphasising the obvious disadvantages of overlapping organisations and minimising their advantages, those who value freedom disregarding the strength and discipline of a common unit and exaggerating its undoubted defects.[1] But at least the impartial judge—if such a one exists—in this eternal controversy may admit that men will always worship as they will, but that the price paid for freedom is a high one, and that while the tendency of liberty is to broaden, it sometimes also narrows by the very strifes which it creates.

The Church of England, in short, was a compromise, but a compromise that neither failed absolutely nor completely succeeded. The permanent schism of Nonconformity showed where it failed; the continued existence of the Church, the admitted strength of its organisation and its undoubted hold on the affections of half the nation which it served, was the best proof of the partial but still considerable measure of its success.

British Empire and Puritanism founded together, 1583.

But these unhappy divisions, which had so marked an effect for good or ill on England, were not confined to England. The rise of the British Empire abroad and of Nonconformity at home were absolutely contemporaneous, and the two movements soon became inextricably connected. It is a curious coincidence, but nothing more than a coincidence, that the first colonies of the English people in America were planned and founded in the very year that the activities of the Puritans attracted the attention of the English Government: in 1583, while Humphrey Gilbert was proclaiming the

[1] At bottom the question of church establishment versus dissent is the secular controversy of the great empire versus the little kingdom or republic, in another form.

establishment of the Church of England in his abortive settlement on the still uncolonised shores of Newfoundland,[1] and Walter Ralegh was giving £100 for the propagation of the Christian religion in the intended settlement of Virginia, the Brownist sect of Puritans drew upon themselves the serious displeasure of the ministers of Queen Elizabeth and the heads of the Anglican Church.

What had been a coincidence, however, became a connection: Puritanism and the Empire not only rose together, they grew together. As the British Empire spread the strife of sects spread with it, and the disputes which had perplexed Lambeth and Westminster were revived on the banks of the Potomac and Connecticut, on the Caribbean Sea, and even far off in remote Pacific Islands, whose other native gods had vanished before the coming of Christianity. Everywhere, indeed, that British settlers went this strife of sects went with them, often showing in some sharp cleavage of interests or opinion that should have been as one—an element of underlying but inevitable discord that could not be forgotten when the need for common action rose.

Religious Differences in English America.

The West Indian plantations and the southern colonies of the English people in North America, founded by the royalists of the seventeenth century, followed generally the liturgy of the Church of England which they loved; the northern colonies were founded by those who cherished an irreconcilable hatred for her teaching and her government. The cavalier settler in Virginia regarded Canterbury with much the same reverence that the Catholic emigrant to Maryland regarded Rome;[2] the island of Barbados, like Virginia, was divided into parishes after the ecclesiastical pattern of England by its faithful Anglican colonists,[3] Jamaica and Bermuda likewise had their parishes and parsons, the latter not always creditable or competent

[1] Vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. i.
[2] Vol. i. bk. ii. ch. iv.
[3] Vol. i. bk. ii. ch. vi.

to perform their spiritual duties.[1] But Puritan influence was not unknown in the West Indies, as the history of Providence and indeed the very name of that little city of the Bahamas shows; Puritans were found in Virginia; members of the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, found their way to the southern colonies, and the Bermudas;[2] and the new Nonconformity of the eighteenth century, which indeed did not yet confess to its dissent from the Church of England, made its appearance in the Carolinas, colonies where the Church was late in coming to the people.

Here indeed Nonconformity was a weak and persecuted force that made but little headway; but in the northern English colonies in America, settled by avowed and open rebels from the Church of England, it was ever the predominant and ruling factor, giving the prevailing tone to political and social life as well as the religion of the people, and establishing itself and its authority with a rigour to which the Church of England under the strong hands of Whitgift and Laud had aspired but never attained. The Prayer Book of the Anglican Church was hated in New England as the Mass was hated in Geneva or the Kuran in Vienna; the episcopal order of government to which the Church had steadfastly adhered was as much associated with tyranny and oppression in Massachusetts as the Inquisition in England, and the bishop's mitre was as foul a memory in Boston as the thumbscrew and the rack in Holland.[3]

[1] Vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.

In 1683, however, when Jamaica had nine churches, it was stated that 'all the ministers were sober, orthodox, and good men; none but such as conform, and are recommended by my Lord Bishop of London can be admitted.'

The slackness of the Church was not always entirely the fault of the clergy. One Governor of the Bahamas openly avowed that the laws which forbade incestuous marriages in England did not apply in the colonies, and ignored a protest from the Bishop of London. He may have had a personal interest in the question. (*Digest of S.P.G. Records.*)

[2] Vol. i. bk. iv. ch. ii.

[3] 'They left no means untried, both foul and fair, to prevent the settling of the Church among them,' wrote an Anglican missionary from

That fact at once marked out New England as a distinct religious entity from old England or episcopal Virginia. Protestant Puritanism dominated the northern colonies, as the Anglican Church dominated the southern and West Indian colonies; and the former, which only gained a partial and temporary victory in England under Cromwell, proved permanently the stronger of the two in North America.

Strength of Established Nonconformity in New England.

There were adequate causes for this greater strength of Nonconformity in North America than England. The Nonconformist colonies had the advantage from the start, in that they were founded for a definite religious purpose, whereas the Anglican colonies were not. Had there been no national Church of England, the complexion of Virginia and Carolina would not have been essentially different from what it was; but had there been no Nonconformist revolt against the Church of England, the whole character of New England would have been different, if indeed New England had been founded at all. The very basis of New England was its Nonconformity, a spirit of revolt against the established order which permeated its politics as well as its religion.

New England Puritanism therefore had this advantage over Virginian episcopacy, that it went far deeper into the roots of its local life. And while it had this advantage, it had no corresponding disadvantage. Whatever strength may come from state recognition and establishment—it is a controversial question—the English Nonconformists in New England had secured, since their creed was legally established in those

New England; 'the people were likewise threatened with imprisonment, and a forfeiture of £5 for coming to hear me. They spare not openly to speak reproachfully and with great contempt of our Church, they say the sign of the Cross is the Mark of the Beast and the sign of the Devil, and that those who receive it are given to the Devil.' (*Digest of S.P.G. Records.*) This was at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

But after all the Anglican propagandists were intruders in New England.

colonies and the Anglican ritual was proscribed or at least discouraged. They held communion with English Nonconformists of their views, and their creed was therefore never entirely isolated from the intellectual basis of its origin in the mother country; but they had at the same time all the advantages of complete local self-government.

It is indeed true that even in New England the fissiparous tendencies inherent in Nonconformity[1] became manifest; a local Nonconformist revolt against the now established Nonconformity of New England was seen when Roger Williams founded his little colony of Providence at Narragansett Bay on a system of complete toleration,[2] which Nonconformity in its day of power no longer recognised. Rhode Island was the logical outcome of the paradox of Nonconformity, in itself a revolt against the state establishment of religion, being established by the state: but the paradox prevailed, and the revolt—perhaps for geographical reasons, for Rhode Island necessarily remained a small community—was never serious or widespread. The internal discipline of New England Nonconformity, the masculine vigour of that people, and perhaps the lively sense of enmity to their neighbours, the French Catholics of Quebec and the English Churchmen of the south, maintained their zeal for the rather bleak repellent creed of their fathers.

Weakness of the Colonial Church of England.

The Church of England in the American colonies, on the other hand, was very badly served. It had all the disadvantages of dependence, and none of the advantages of self-government. By a scandalous and amazing oversight of the metropolitans of Canterbury, the infant Anglican Church possessed no bishop and few clergy of its own in the very colonies which were

[1] In our own time a decided movement towards union is visible among English Nonconformists. But it is coincident with a lay movement for the formation of Brotherhoods, in itself hardly distinguishable from a new division.

[2] Vol. i. bk. ii. ch. ii.

well affected to its usage; nominally under the control of the Bishop of London, it was neglected by successive diocesans of Fulham Palace, who seldom even feigned an interest which they did not feel in this portion of their charge. Anglican episcopacy in consequence became a reproach in the very colonies which had been willing and anxious to recognise it, and while the Catholicism of Rome was laying its foundations firm and deep in French Canada and the Spanish colonies of South America, the Anglican Catholicism of Canterbury became a plant of feeble growth in its own peculiar territories.[1]

Seldom indeed has a religious organisation so entirely missed its opportunity as the Church of England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the southern English settlements of North America;[2] so complete and absolute was its failure that the field it had ineffectively occupied was invaded and to some extent secured by the emotional Wesleyanism which made a more direct and striking appeal to the heart of the people.

The process was repeated in Canada. There, too, the Church of England was established by law, but it possessed hardly any other hold.[3] Its impotence and arrogance were a byword in Quebec, where it roused contempt rather than

[1] 'The poor Church has nobody upon the spot to comfort or confirm her children; therefore they fall back again into the herd of the dissenters,' wrote an Anglican visitor in 1703. And in the same year another wrote that if ministers of the Church 'come not timely the whole country will be overrun with Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and Quakers.' From South Carolina it was reported that the English settlers 'were making near approach to that heathenism which is to be found among negroes and Indians'; and much the same report was given of Georgia, which was, however, established on a better foundation. Vol. i. bk. iv. ch. iii.

[2] In 1675 Bishop Compton declared that there were 'scarce four ministers of the Church of England in all the vast tract of America, and not above one or two of them, at most, regularly sent over.' A sufficient condemnation.

[3] An exception must be admitted in Newfoundland, where the Church provided effectual civil administration. In 1769 a clergyman who was burying a corpse discovered by examining the body that a murder had been committed, and trial and execution followed. Following this

enmity among French Catholics ;[1] in Ontario, where it should have gained a hold among the United Empire Loyalists and the later emigrants from England,[2] it had more official privileges than adherents. Lands had been set aside for its maintenance: but these were valueless until occupied, and few ordained clergy sought a cure in the profitless wilderness. The great Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which had been founded in 1701 to spread the principles of the Church of England overseas, and which had done whatever had been done for Anglicanism in the old American colonies,[3] certainly accomplished much in Canada, sending out its missionaries to the Maritime Provinces, Ontario, and early Manitoba, to preach to the colonists and baptise them.[4] Many of these excellent men did their utmost in conditions of great difficulty, were well received, and gathered large congregations round them; but it was too late. The clergy lands which had been set aside for the maintenance of the Church were alienated in 1855 to secular purposes by the state—a step which would hardly have been taken had the Church not neglected its work during the first two vital generations in the making of British North America.

Some years before that disaster threatened, a great revival of Anglican activity was seen among the clergy of Ontario and Nova Scotia. But the day had passed. The prevailing

detection, many civil magistrates were appointed; but many of the early clergy had previously been designated magistrates.

Even in Newfoundland, however, there were places where 'the word of God was not heard for thirty years.' (*Digest of S.P.G. Records.*)

[1] The English Protestants had to use French Catholic churches for their services at one time, having no buildings of their own. After each service, the church was thoroughly cleansed to remove the supposed pollution. The very refinement of religious insult.

[2] Vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iii.

[3] Wesley was himself at one time a S.P.G. missionary.

[4] In one case recorded in Canada a man had to wait twelve years for his children to be baptized, and another twenty-six years before they could be confirmed. No wonder that one of the clergy declared that baptizing the children was 'something like a shepherd setting his mark upon his sheep and then letting them go in the wilderness.'

and predominant denomination among the English Canadians was Wesleyanism, of Scottish Canadians Presbyterianism, of French Canadians Catholicism.

The religious history of Canada illustrates in striking fashion the relative advantages of voluntary and established creeds. The discipline, the organisation, and the regular succession of an Established Church give it a strong advantage over other denominations of more fluid character, and that advantage is added to by its relation with the state. The Church gives something in loyalty to the state, and it gains something in official recognition, if it loses a little in freedom,[1] from the state.[2] But these things are at best accessories, the mere trappings of a creed; the essential is life. And it was life that the Established Church lacked at this unhappy period of its history, both in England and abroad; it was life and enthusiasm, if nothing else, that the voluntary Nonconformist bodies had. While the Nonconformist ministry of New England had education and sound theological knowledge, the roving and enthusiastic Dissenters of early Canada had neither; their ignorance was often as incredible as their zeal was great. But their ignorance mattered little to their audiences, who were themselves not too well informed; if the lamp of religion burnt smokily, at least it burnt vigorously, while the wretched candle of the Established Church guttered and drooped and hardly burnt at all.

[1] Nonconformists, however, are also bound by the trust deeds of their chapels in many cases, which sometimes hampers their doctrines. But it does not hamper their politics, as too many of their sermons attest.

[2] In the Imperial Civil War, George Washington sent a message to a clergyman in New York State, that he proposed to come to the church, 'and would be glad if the violent prayers for the King and royal family were omitted.' The violent prayers were presumably the moderate petitions ordered by the liturgy of the Church, and the clergyman refused to shorten the service.

I cannot prove it, but I doubt if any prayers were put up for King George in any save Anglican churches of North America. The Nonconformist ministers of New England were among the leading spirits of the secession movement.

In later days the Church had learnt its lesson, and determined to be early in the field. Anglican missionaries were among the first pioneers in British Columbia, which owes some at least of its English complexion to their efforts in the days when the city of New Westminster was no more than a few huts in the forest;[1] the primates of England founded a special mission to establish the Church among the rapidly growing prairie provinces at the close of the nineteenth century. Their work was not without reward, but as a whole the Church of England was unable to recover the opportunity it had had and lost.

Its Late Revival.

In Cape Colony for many years the Church of England was even more remiss than in Canada. There was not indeed the same obvious need for its services, since there were few Englishmen in South Africa, and the Dutch Reformed Church, which retained all its old privileges after the British conquest, justly held the affection of the old Dutch colonists. The few priests of the Anglican Church that visited and ministered in Cape Colony were received with courtesy and kindness by their colleagues of the Dutch persuasion, and usually by the Nonconformist English bodies which had already started operations in the colony, and which in consequence had gained adherents from the Anglicans in South Africa: but it was not until 1847 that an English bishop was appointed to Cape Town, and the Church—which received no special privileges above other denominations—really took up its work in earnest. From that time, under the devoted influence of Bishop Gray, with Archdeacon Merriman and others of his band of workers, the Church of England went steadily forward and more than redeemed the early reproach upon its name.[2] If it had been

[1] Vol. iii. bk. x. ch. iii.

[2] But not without a minor scandal. The cathedral at Cape Town was a joint stock affair, some of the original proprietors of which were said to be Jews or atheists—they were probably merely irreligious men—and the offerings of the Holy Communion were sometimes hypothecated to pay interest on the building shares.

There were other similar cases in Cape Colony.

last in Cape Colony, it was first in Nyasa, and well to the fore in the other provinces of South Africa.

Australia proved a more fertile field for the Church of England. A chaplain accompanied the first convicts to Botany Bay, and the early ministers of the Anglican communion were men of earnest active character, who sowed a seed that spread and flourished through the continent. What could be done by spiritual agencies to mitigate the evils of the transportation period was done by the Church of England, which in this respect led all other denominations, and the lead obtained in those early days was never lost. An Anglican bishop in New South Wales could report in 1842 that there was not a single district of the colony in which his Church had not taken the lead of every other persuasion, and in some cases its adherents outnumbered the adherents of all other religious denominations combined; in Victoria the people were said to have 'a much stronger sense of their responsibility towards the Church than in England' itself, and when the clergy made their way into Queensland they found, instead of the rough irreligion and insult which for some reason they expected, an enthusiasm for their work and the warmest welcome.[1]

In New Zealand the Church of England was likewise fortunate. Its first bishop, Selwyn, was a man of great strength of character and conviction, whose long service at Auckland obtained the respect of colonist and Maori alike;[2] one great settlement in the South Island was founded on avowedly Church of England principles, its very name of Canterbury recalling the sacred city of the Kentish vale from which English Christendom has sprung; but here, too, as in Aus-

[1] *Digest of S.P.G. Records.*

[2] Vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. iii.

Selwyn ascribed much of his success to the fact that he 'was not fettered with strict rules or obliged to refer every question to England'—the same freedom which the New England Nonconformists had obtained. Had such a man existed, and gone to Virginia or the Carolinas two centuries before, the history of the Church of England in America might have been very different.

tralia, the Nonconformist sects were vigorous and prosperous, and the Catholics, although for long in a very small minority, maintained, and perhaps even slightly increased, their hold.

Practically all of the hundred and more denominations and varieties of the Christian faith that were recognised and followed in the British Isles had a footing, if often a precarious footing, in the outer Empire; the same religious divisions distracted Christendom in the new world as the old, and the ideal unity of the faith, to which lip-service was often paid by priests and pastors in their quieter hours, was as far to seek in the antipodes as in Europe. In this matter at least the new English communities were a pattern of the old.

Continued Religious Divisions.

But perhaps the most extraordinary and unexpected thing about these various phases of Christianity that took root in the English colonies was their entire lack of originality in form, ceremony, and doctrine, their astonishing imitativeness of the parent churches, their faithful reproduction of an older pattern of religion. In vain the patient chronicler searches the records of the faith for the scandalous but lively episodes of heresy or schism; with one partial and temporary exception in South Africa, all is unmitigated orthodoxy.[1]

Their Imitative Character.

Yet in other details of character and occupation the colonial Briton was frankly and even assertively divergent from the stock from which he had sprung; he was often ready and even anxious to innovate in politics, to express contempt for the traditional conservatism of England, to lay out his life in a new country on new lines. Only in his religious views had he no such innovations of practice or belief. In a new world one would have thought that some new form of faith would have arisen, some new vision of eternal life have spoken in

[1] Bishop Colenso of Natal was excommunicated by the Church of England in 1865. He had a few followers, but although the secular arm upheld him, the heresy was local and temporary.

the silence of the wilderness: but the Australian Christian celebrated his midsummer Christmas and autumnal Easter without a thought of incongruity, he fought a wordy war over the details of religious education like his co-religionists in England, and his sects distinguished and paraded their petty divergencies of practice with the same pride and pomp that they showed in their divisions at home.

In the whole long range of their history, indeed, the English people overseas have produced only one novel and notable creed which has left a considerable mark on their history—the Mormon revelation; and several peculiar or passing phases of belief, in which the orthodox may fear the voice of the tempting serpent, but the philosopher will more truly recognise the inchoate longings of human souls astray—the charlatanism of a Dowie, and the body of doctrines that have obtained a widespread acceptance under the name of Christian Science.

Cause of this Phenomenon.

The cause of this remarkable lack of originality, however, lies not very deep. As a whole the European, who has taken his creed from Asia, the conqueror of the world by force who reveres the gentle memory of one to whom force was abhorrent, the anti-semite who worships a Jew as God, is not so much an innovator as an imitator in religion; the quality of other-worldliness is the exception rather than the rule. It is the contemplative spirit which furnishes the mental atmosphere from which new creeds evolve; and the European stands for action more than contemplation.

The further west one goes the more does action triumph and the less is contemplation esteemed; among the most westerly of Europeans, the English people in particular—to whose other faults can certainly not be added a disregard of religion—this tendency is seen in marked degree. The daring originality which they have shown in politics is far to seek in their religion; if they have been fertile of new sects they have been sterile of new creeds, and the real religious energies of

the English people have been given not to evolving new beliefs but to enlarging the knowledge of the old among those with whom they have come in contact. An age of missionary enterprise is not one in which heresies or new religions flourish, nor a people who exalt the messengers of the God they know above the seer of new gods.

Early Missions of Christendom.

The plain duty of Christians, which they have not always too readily obeyed, is in the command of their founder to preach the gospel to all mankind. From the moment when the early Christian Church emancipated itself from its Jewish origin and its Jewish tendency to exclusiveness, from the moment, that is, when Paul rather than Peter directed the development of the Church, the propagandist aspect of the faith was seldom wholly neglected, and at times the missionary zeal of Christendom surged up triumphant in some great movement to convert the barbarians of the outer world to the true revelation. The evangelists of the Church were found in Britain and Germany, in Scandinavia, in Scythia and Sarmatia, and as far afield as Abyssinia and even India under the Roman Empire: in early as in later ages they ran ahead of civilisation, their messengers outpaced the Roman legionary and the British soldier; the Greek trader of antiquity and the Scots commercial traveller of modern times both found the messengers of Christ had been before them in the wilderness.

It becomes the Creed of Europe.

They looked for no reward on earth: but their work was not without result. If Christianity was practically overwhelmed outside Europe by the rise and spread of its potent enemy Islám, it became in the end the accepted and dominant creed of Europe itself. If it lost some of its early purity in contact with the barbaric superstitions of Goth and Vandal, it yet broke the shock of their assault upon a declining Roman Empire, and preserved the dying civilisation of the Latins from the rude hands of its assailants. At the very time when it was driven out of Africa,

and its petty outposts in Asia were left isolated and forgotten for a thousand years, Christianity was becoming the supreme and indeed the only faith of Europe. Therein lay its destiny: for Europe was to be the supreme arbiter of the outer world, and the creed of Europe became, in the eyes of many Europeans, a test not only of salvation in the next world but even of civilisation in this.

The heathen and the infidel were one in the sin of rejecting the Christian God, but while both were certain to be damned unless they discovered or repented their error, the brutish heathen at least had no foreknowledge of the truth—the infidel of Islám had known the way of salvation and rejected it. His sin was therefore the greater, as error is worse than ignorance. The warlike Carib of the West Indies, the coal-black negro of the African tropics, the horrid Hottentot of the Cape—these men had never heard of Christianity; the cultivated Musalman had heard, and preferred another revelation. The former must be taught, the latter fought; the false gods and devils of the heathen and the infidel cast out and trampled underfoot. Such was the conception of his duty by the Christian of the Renascence.

Catholic Missions of the Renascence.

From the first invasion of the outer world by European explorers in the fifteenth century the distinction was made that the expanding civilisation and religion of Europe must fight the Asiatic civilisation and religion—which had also expanded and was still expanding over Africa—and instruct rather than coerce the heathen barbarians elsewhere. The good Christians of Catholic Europe, recognising their duty to the people whom their explorers had discovered and their pioneers exploited, convinced that Christians alone held the secret of eternal truth, prepared to impart that secret to others, sometimes by persuasion, occasionally by force. The admirable Las Casas, troubled by the brutalities of his countrymen in the Spanish West Indies, introduced Christianity in those colonies, whence

it spread to Peru and Mexico and other provinces of that great empire, and took firm hold on all South America. Francis Xavier carried the knowledge of his faith through the Eastern Seas, his followers preached in China and Japan, French missionaries spread the gospel among the redskins of Canadian forests, and others of like aims brought their creed to the inattentive tribes of Africa.

The English people came later to the field as colonists and conquerors, and for a time they did less than the Latins as evangelists. In Asia they could do nothing, since the English East India Company was no more than a commercial corporation, and its agents often merited the reproach of godless traders, who had forsaken their own religion and adopted no other;[1] on Africa they had as yet no hold; in America the Church of England achieved but little propagandist work in the southern colonies, and the established Nonconformity of New England did no more in the north. Both had first to strike full root themselves before they could sow the seed for others.

Early English Missions.

Some negro and redskin converts in Virginia and Carolina,[2] and a translation of the Bible into the language of the American aborigines by John Eliot,[3] a Puritan of the north, summarise the missionary work of a century of English Churchmen and Nonconformists;[4] the real missionary effort of Britain began with the Society for

They increase in Eighteenth Century.

[1] The first English church in India was built in Madras in 1680; but most of the traders of the East India Company abandoned their religion altogether while in the Orient.

[2] An Anglican missionary in North Carolina reports in 1752 that he had baptized 243 black children and 112 black adults; as much or as little seems to have been done in other colonies (*Digest of S.P.G. Records*). Many slaves in Pennsylvania were, however, converted to Christianity.

[3] It has been said that the translation was incomprehensible to the redskins. But one of the historians of the Church Missionary Society has been assured by an American scholar that such was not the case. Nevertheless the converts were few.

[4] A missionary society was established under the Commonwealth, and both Cromwell and the Parliament took some interest in it. But I cannot discover that it achieved much.

the Propagation of the Gospel in 1701, and it spread far and fast with the eighteenth century. One missionary society after another was established—the London Missionary Society, an undenominational organisation which, sent such men as Livingstone and Moffat to South Africa, and a whole army of excellent teachers and preachers to the Pacific Islands;[1] Baptist and Wesleyan Societies, a Presbyterian organisation from Scotland, and the great Church Missionary Society in 1799, which became in effect a centre of Anglican low churchmanship, in more or less friendly rivalry with the high Anglicanism of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Their Disagreements.

The spreading work of these evangelistic agencies reached in time to the very ends of the earth; but unhappily the old divisions and jealousies of the Christian churches in Europe were again a subject of strife within and derision without the mission field; various sects and denominations, and rival upholders of different forms of the same creed, each started their own particular propaganda, and their frequent disagreements and occasional open quarrels retarded the work which all were anxious to do. Some evangelistic agencies were not above poaching another's converts:[2] the Protestant distrusted the Catholic as an historic foe, whose missions to the heathen too often had successful and permanent results;[3] the Catholic denounced the Protestant as a vulture surrounded by moral carrion;[4] and the French missionaries in Basutoland were accused of meddling in the politics of the tribes, in a manner contrary to the interests of the British Government.[5]

[1] Vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.

[2] Livingstone comments on, and reprobates, this tendency among rival mission stations.

[3] The bigoted Philip admits this as well as the fairer-minded Livingstone.

[4] I quote this gem of ecclesiastical jealousy from O'Haire's *Twelve Years in South Africa.*

[5] Cust, *Africa Rediviva* (1891). The charge is not referred to in Lagden's *Basutos*, but it is not in itself improbable. The more energetic and successful the missionary, the more is he likely to interfere in tribal

Between one evangelistic agency and another was little attempt at co-operation, and the inevitable duplication and overlapping of propagandist zeal which resulted could not but be productive of lost and wasted effort. Too much attention was concentrated on some sections of the vast mission field, which indeed offered ample size and scope for all, while other districts were left vacant and untilled. As an instance, in 1890 there were no fewer than thirty-one differing denominations at work in South Africa;[1] in one part of Rhodesia alone were three different agencies—the Brethren of Christ, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the American Episcopal Methodists—besides the original and well-organised Universities' Mission of the Church of England, the Roman Catholics and the Salvation Army.[2]

The Missionaries.

To no denomination alone can be given the palm for achievement. Each denomination depended for success partly on the funds contributed at home, partly on the character of its missionaries, a continuance of their zeal and health in often unfavourable circumstances, and their relations, political and social as well as religious, with the people among whom they had cast in their lot. Some lived and died unknown, obscure and unsuccessful, toiling a whole lifetime perhaps for hardly a single convert in some neglected corner of their divine Master's vineyard; many saw wife or child or comrade fall in some fatal climate, and worked on alone till stricken down in turn; a few, like Williams and Patteson in the Pacific,[3] and Threlfall in Namaqualand,[4] were given the supreme crown of martyrdom for their faith; others

politics. And a Frenchman can hardly be blamed for not upholding the interests of Britain in a land that was not at the time British territory.

Similar accusations had been brought, no doubt with some truth, against the French missionaries in Canada (vol. i. bk. v. ch. iii.), and the English in South America (vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. i.).

[1] Cust, *Africa Rediviva*.

[2] London *Guardian*, 31st May 1912.

[3] Vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.

[4] Bk. xxiv. ch. ii.

again won honour and renown in their lifetime, recognised, like Marsden of New Zealand,[1] as the apostle of a country or a people, or like Livingstone or Moffat or Mackenzie, as the discoverer of new countries and the agent of civilisation as well as Christianity.

Some Unworthy Workers.

Not all the missionaries could be of the commanding type of Livingstone, heroes who adventured far into the wild like Threlfall, or builders of civilisation with their own hands like Moffat and Broadbent and Laws of Livingstonia. A few were indeed utter failures, totally unsuited for the work they had taken upon themselves to do; some fell away from their high calling, engaging in the very traffic with the natives which they had denounced, buying and selling at their own prices, dealing in guns and ammunition and even slaves or holding lands.[2] Some scandals occurred on this account, and more were hinted at.[3] But these lapses were usually inquired into when discovered, and the missionary who was proved guilty of unfitting conduct was recalled or dismissed by the Society which sent him out.

In general, however, the most of the missionaries were worthy and well-meaning men of good character, if somewhat

[1] Vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. i.

[2] See Moffat's *Journals*, and *Scenes and Labours in South Africa* The scandal was stopped by Dr. Philip; and years later we have Livingstone's emphatic testimony that in all his journeys he never saw a missionary trading for profit, although European traders were sometimes allowed at the mission stations. Often, indeed, there was no other accommodation.

One of the early envoys of the Church Missionary Society in West Africa abandoned his sacred calling, and became an agent of the slave-trade; and the missionaries in New Zealand were not always quite disinterested (vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. ii.).

[3] In *Twelve Years in South Africa*, by O'Haire, a Catholic priest, who alleged that 'enormous tracts of land were in the hands of the Protestant missionaries, who let it out in small lots to the blacks. The missionaries generally had warehouses, sold all sorts of goods, and in many instances were said to have amassed considerable riches, while the poor blacks were impoverished.' But O'Haire's testimony is far from trustworthy, as other passages in his book show, and he hated the British Protestants with all the fervour of an Irish Catholic.

narrow views, devoted to their work, tolerant of its hardships and occasional dangers, and not often complaining of the poor pay and scant consideration which were usually their lot. They were carefully chosen and given some training by the evangelistic agencies in London or elsewhere, and their enthusiasm for the gospel mostly carried them through to the end.

But mostly of good Character.

Yet often it seemed a hopeless task to convert the world to Christianity, and many of those engaged in the work were at times discouraged as they thought of the slow progress of the past and the difficulties ahead. In his earlier days at Kuruman the stalwart Moffat mourned that 'we have no prosperity in the work; five years, and not one soul converted—all treat with ridicule and contempt the truth'; while his devoted wife burst out, 'It is not conferring with flesh and blood to live among these people. In the natives of South Africa there is nothing naturally engaging; their extreme selfishness, filthiness, obstinate stupidity, and want of sensibility have a tendency to disgust.' He who would take up mission work in South Africa, said Moffat on another occasion, needed a strong stomach as well as a warm heart, for in preaching to the savages he would sometimes have to live almost a savage life himself, among the 'immeasurable heaps of dirt and filth' in their villages and encampments, and after years of labour the worker might not see the advance which he expected.

Their Difficulties.

Some friendly native rulers understood the difficulties of the white evangelists perhaps better than the evangelists themselves. 'Do you imagine these people will ever believe by your merely talking to them?' said a Bechuana chief to Livingstone; 'I can make them do nothing except by thrashing them, and if you like I shall call my headman, and with our whips we will soon make them all believe together.' The well-meant offer was declined.

The native languages, too, were a serious trouble to many

of the evangelists, who had to learn a strange and barbarous tongue before they could preach to their savage hearers; and the blank ignorance of the people, the frequent absence of any religious ideas whatever among them[1] was often a grave stumbling-block. When Broadbent, for instance, was teaching the Barolong tribe the Lord's Prayer in their own speech he tested his pupils by the simple question, 'Who is our Father in Heaven?' and was answered frankly, 'We do not know.' One aged man to whom Moffat was speaking of the miracles of Christianity assured the missionary of a warm welcome if he could tell him how to become young again—a miracle far beyond Moffat's power.[2] And another who had listened for awhile to the preaching of Campbell, a great Scots missionary, confessed that 'he knew no more about anything than a beast.'[3]

Their Encouragements.

But while they were always faced by ignorance, and often by indifference, the evangelists were seldom openly opposed, save on some savage island of the Pacific where all strangers were seen as enemies. At times, indeed, they were welcomed and even entreated to stay by their hearers. 'If after all you do now leave me,' said the chief of a tribe to one of the messengers of God who had rested with him awhile on his journey, 'I will lay

[1] Dr. Philip remarks that the Hottentots had a tradition of a golden age, when their ancestors had believed in the one true God. Perhaps; but I am more sceptical than the doctor, who with his usual prejudice against the Boers remarks that this golden age was before the Dutch came to South Africa.

[2] Sometimes, on the other hand, the missionaries got undeserved credit for working miracles. When one dug a well and found water in a droughty country, the grateful but astonished natives who were watching remarked, 'Now we are sure you know God, and He has told you of this.' Whether the white man denied the acquaintance or not, he probably improved the occasion by a sermon.

[3] The Europeans were sometimes little better. A white navvy once said to O'Haire (*Twelve Years in South Africa*), 'We belong to the religion of horses; we eat our share and drink our fill and then sleep.'

A native on one occasion remarked to Livingstone, 'We love you as if you had been born among us, but we wish you to give up that everlasting preaching and praying—we cannot become familiar with that at all.' My sympathies incline to the native.

me down and sigh my life out.'[1] Sechele, a great ruler of the Bechuana, saluted the first missionary in his territory with tender affection as the 'friend of my heart's love.' And sometimes the bringer of heavenly tidings was entreated as a deliverer from earthly ills: 'We are tired of flight,' said a hunted tribe with whom Livingstone dwelt, 'give us rest and sleep.' But that was beyond even Livingstone's power to give to weak and weary fugitives from native war.

And if the seed of Christianity often fell on stony ground among indifferent hearers, sometimes also it was carried far afield by unexpected means, news of the new religion spreading from one native to another, from one tribe to another, even from one territory to another. One who had heard something of mission teaching in Namaqualand told another on a journey 'strange things, such as we had never heard before, by which we were greatly alarmed. We became so terrified of our sins that we fled to the rocks to hide. But there too we could find no refuge from the frowning eye of God.'[2]

Many times, indeed, the message went ahead of its own proper messengers, and some distorted rumour of the creed they brought ran before its bearers in the wilderness; and often, as with the poor fugitive from invisible wrath among the desert rocks of Namaqua, the first effect of the mission preaching was one of fear and wonder more than joy. 'You startle me,' said the great Sechele when Livingstone expounded to him the Christian doctrine of the Day of Judgment, 'these words make all my bones to shake—I have no more strength left in me. But my forefathers were living at the same time yours were, and how is it they did not send them word about these terrible things sooner? They all passed away into darkness without knowing whither they were going.'

So indeed we all must pass at the last, vanishing like shadows into darkness, missionary and convert, Christian

[1] Marrat, *Missionary Veterans of South Africa.*
[2] Cheeseman, *Story of William Threlfall.*

and pagan alike. Of that ultimate test of the evangelists' work none but the God whom they trusted can judge; but the temporal results of their labours were there for all men to see.

Temporal Results of their Work.

There were many who cavilled, and some who openly condemned the creed, the aim, the methods, and the results achieved: the European colonist was an unsparing critic of the European missionary. If it was often said, and sometimes with justice, that the religion of aboriginal converts was only skin-deep, that the Christianised native was arrogant and overbearing as well as lazy,[1] a hypocritical rogue who sang psalms and prayed unctuously but did no work, a proselyte who professed the European's creed for his own advantage, the missionaries could retort with effect that they could not work miracles; that a savage race cannot alter all its habits and traditions in a generation, and that the gap between the white man and the black could not be bridged by a sermon or a baptism. When the missionaries had full scope, as in Nyasa—where the Scots evangelists not only converted the community but practically ruled it[2]—the improvement was too clear to be denied even by the malicious; the example of a Khama, who ruled his people like an enlightened European, outweighed a dozen failures;[3] and the martyred native Christians

[1] E. B. Baker in (London) *Empire Review*, 1913. These and similar accusations were frequently brought.

[2] A habit of the Scots. The same thing occurred in some of the Pacific Islands (vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.),—and in England.

[3] Khama refused to practise polygamy after his conversion, and stopped the witch-doctors, the killing of children, and enforced abstinence on his people, the Bamangwato; he even refused to allow the manufacture of the native beer. An excellent chief, he was the ideal South African native statesman under Christian rule, and the best example of missionary success in that country. Accounts of him will be found in Knight-Bruce, *Memories of Mashonaland*; and Mrs. Knight-Bruce, *Khama: An African Chief.*

There are similar testimonies to the advance of the American redskins who adopted Christianity, and with it some of the habits of European civilisation: see the *Digest of S.P.G. Records.*

of Uganda showed that the neophyte black converts could equal in staunchness even the great heroes who had given their blood for the early Church.[1]

Nor stood these things alone. It was ever the aim of the missionaries to raise up evangelists among the natives, fresh bearers of their message from the converts themselves; and every Christian school that was founded among the heathen sought to train a body of aboriginal preachers, sound in doctrine and enthusiastic in their faith. If much of the labour was lost, and many of the native pupils were backsliders—the boys often giving way to drunkenness when they left the school, and the girls engaging in lewd native dances and such abhorrent practices[2]—there was also a sufficient number of successes. Much of the teaching in Central Africa was done by natives of Cape Colony trained in the mission schools of Lovedale and elsewhere, some more promising pupils were sent to Zanzibar for further training or even to England for ordination;[3] and the trusted native schoolmaster and the native deacon became a noticeable feature of the mission churches of South Africa, as also of New Zealand.[4]

This training of young natives to mission work in the mission schools was often criticised by other Europeans as a serious blunder, tending to create a large class of sancti-

[1] Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. ii.

[2] Examples of this will be found in the Nyasa mission periodicals, Blantyre *Life and Work*, and the *Nyasa News*. It is also noticeable in the missionary literature of the Pacific Ocean (vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.).

[3] Not always with complete success. I notice in the London *Guardian* of 31st May 1912, in the report of the Universities' Mission, a complaint that 'when the native Christians who went away to be trained for the work of the ministry returned to their people they were not the same as before. They had somehow lost touch; they were not fellow-Christians, but missionaries.' In other words, they had absorbed something of the feeling of superiority inherent in the white man, as a result of their living among white men.

[4] Bishop Selwyn strongly insisted on the necessity of a native teaching and pastoral element in New Zealand, and in South Africa it became the usual practice among all denominations.

monious but otherwise useless natives, who despised manual labour and did no other work,[1] but spent their days in singing hymns and psalms, and had the insolence not only to despise the unconverted natives but the godless whites. The criticism had truth enough to make it sting, but it was not wholly justified. The missionaries, conscious of their own poverty of numbers, so inadequate to the task in hand, did wisely to train up a staff of native assistants where they could; but there were many of their pupils who had no aptitude for mission work, and these were set to learn a trade. Once the habit of regular work was established—in itself a difficult task where failure was perhaps more frequent than success[2]—good results would be achieved that justified the experiment. At Theopolis in South Africa, for instance, between 1822 and 1825 the resident Hottentots of that religious settlement built themselves houses which were valued at 35,000 rix-dollars; at Hankey, a similar institution, they built their own houses and the school, besides contributing £580 out of the total purchase money of £1500; at Pacaltsdorp, Philippolis and other Christian stations their gardens were neat and tidy, their houses respectable, and the land around the settlement well cultivated.[3] At the great mission station of Lovedale in Cape Colony, looking back over half a century of steady work among the Kafirs, a studiously moderate report stated that a reasonable number of native scholars followed their trade; and although the quality of their work was not high, needing close European supervision and constant direction, a small educated class was growing up that was capable of better things.[4] More could not well be reason-

[1] It is a fact that the mission schools in some parts occasioned a shortage of native labour, which the white planters naturally resented.

[2] Some of the failures are noted in bk. xxiv. ch. ii.

[3] I owe these details to the courtesy of my correspondent, Mr. W. A. Elliott, of the London Missionary Society.

[4] See *Lovedale Past and Present: A Register* (1887); and *African Wastes Reclaimed*, by Young (1902).

ably looked for: the gulf between native and European could not be bridged in two generations.

But the adoption of Christianity meant much more than a change of view and a habit of industry. The acceptance of the new religion by a heathen tribe necessarily revolutionised its social organisation as well as changed its conception of religion; the acceptance of the creed of Europe meant, in fact, the acceptance of a civilisation of the European type, usually although not inevitably with the European as the master. That fact as a rule prevented any gross corruption of the creed by the introduction of native superstitions; it was only when European influence was withdrawn, as in the island of Hayti, that the old heathen rites bred in the native blood, and not exorcised by Christian baptism, resumed their place, and mingled incongruously with the nobler worship of the Messiah or the Virgin. As a whole native Christianity was pure in doctrine if primitive in form; it was the simple doctrines of salvation, of hell-fire and heavenly bliss, not the difficult questions of predestination and the Trinity, that were preached and accepted.

Christianity implies a Social Revolution.

It was sometimes made a reproach that the native peoples lost their originality when they abandoned their creed and their old habits and traditions for the white man's faith and customs; and there was truth in the reproach. Native arts died out, native songs—the literature of the illiterate—were tabu;[1] and here was certainly some loss. But far more was gained in the process. If a few legends of beauty or fantasy grew dim,[2] massacres and slavery were likewise for-

[1] The examples of the Pacific Islands (vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.), and Nyasa (bk. xxiv. ch. vi.) may be recalled.

[2] As in New Zealand, vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. iii. Some ideas, however, were common to both civilisation and barbarism. In Nyasa it was believed that if a baby cut its upper front teeth before the lower, it was unlucky, and it was destroyed. In many parts of England it is still said that a baby which cuts its teeth in this order will never grow up. The basis of this idle superstition is identical in both countries.

gotten. A lyric of the lake might perish in Nyasa, but a whole tribe lived that would have died; a lecherous dance might vanish from Tahiti, but abortion and child-murder were stamped out; a fable might be forgotten in West Africa, but unclean rites were suppressed. The missionaries destroyed something, but they built much more; and what they destroyed was largely evil, what they built was mainly good.

They were, it is true, often ignorant and prejudiced, inclined to condemn a thing merely because it was pagan, and to introduce an alien habit merely because it was European. In all they did the European missionaries made their standpoint that of Europe: their converts were taught to dress after the European fashion, and the top-hat of Piccadilly sometimes graced or more often obscured the likeness of a native chief in Tahiti or Bechuanaland; the women converts of the tropic islands wore skirts and bonnets after the approved fashion of an English country town, and even the little children, whose brown bodies the sun kissed into sturdiness, were clad by their new masters.[1] These things, absurd in themselves, were often irksome to the converts, and they did the cause some harm: indeed, the relative failure of the Christian missionaries in conflict with Islám in Central and Western Africa[2] may be traced largely to the fact that the Crescent made no such incongruous demands upon its forced converts as the Cross on its willing adherents.

These superficial but nevertheless important changes may be recorded with a smile or a sneer; but in fundamentals as in externals the European missionaries set up the lofty standard of the white man—the standard which the white man himself so often disregarded. The gross habits and

[1] There is a dreadful story of a missionary visiting a tribe in Central Africa that was said to have adopted the religion and even the dress of Europe. He found the queen of the tribe dressed in the cope of his predecessor; the more modest king was satisfied with an alms-bag for his whole costume.

[2] Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. i.

superstitions of the aborigines were tabu; the unnatural and inhuman customs of abortion and child-murder and other revolting institutions were discouraged and where possible forbidden; but most of all the missionaries fought against the practice of polygamy.

They opposed it as an institution that was contrary to Christianity, as a system which degraded women and debased the men, as both evil in itself and evil in its results. Their task was a difficult and in some ways almost an impossible one: the system had firm root the world over, it was sanctified by centuries of tradition and immemorial usage, and its abolition by consent meant a social revolution of fundamental character. The native chief who was asked to put away all his wives save one felt himself shorn of his dignity and reduced to the rank of common men; the women who were repudiated were bitterly opposed to the missionaries, for they were left defenceless, in an uncertain middle state between wife and widow; and the system itself was sometimes clandestinely revived, the single wife being supplemented by concubines, whose position was no longer recognised, as before, by tribal law or custom.[1] In these last cases the change merely made for evil, and hypocrisy was the only consequence of a social revolution that changed nothing.

In standing firmly to their position as monogamists the missionaries were certainly delaying the progress of their creed, for many honest men would not repudiate their wives at the price of a promised heaven; but they struck at the very heart of paganism, and if they failed in this, they failed nobly in accordance with their principles. Their desire to Europeanise their converts was often ludicrous, but that desire in itself preserved Christianity from the untoward fate of many a propagandist creed preached by advanced to primitive man; it saved their own religion from those

[1] See vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. i.

insidious corruptions of the convert, which early Christianity had not escaped.

Where the missionaries failed, it was sometimes because they insisted on too complete a revolution; but it may be argued that such a failure was more noble than the facile success which conferred Christianity by thousands of unmeaning baptisms, and enlarged the creed by converts who understood not what they professed. But where they succeeded, they succeeded thoroughly; if they sometimes paid the penalty of their work and their mistakes with their lives, they frequently gained an influence which the most potent conqueror might have envied. When the power of the old heathen chief vanished with the conversion of his tribe to Christianity, it was often the missionary who took his place, a white chief among the blacks, a Christian despot among his converts.[1]

The Missionary as Ruler.

The missionaries of Christianity had indeed become a power in the world since the eighteenth century neared its close; and they used their power, as other men use power, both for good and evil.

They made many blunders; they were unwittingly the cause of some crimes, perhaps of some rebellions among those whom they converted.[2] They were often grossly at fault in their estimates of the people among whom they worked, as to their mental capacity and desire for improvement; and they were nearly always prejudiced against their fellow-Europeans, as their fellow-Europeans in turn were equally prejudiced against them.

[1] See the example of several of the Pacific Islands.

The desire to smash the existing native organisation was frankly confessed by Buchanan, a missionary in South Africa, who hoped that 'the whole system of chieftainship would be effectually rooted out, and with it the very essence of heathenism.' The same desire animated nearly all his colleagues in the mission-field. They were sincere in their belief that the native system must be rooted out—but incidentally it led to an increase of their own power.

[2] See the disputable cases in British Guiana and the West Indies: vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. i. and ii.

From the first dawn of missionary effort in the European colonies indeed this sharp division between colonist and missionary stood out conspicuous; one of the great difficulties in the way was the almost inevitable opposition of white colonists or conquerors of savage lands to the work of the evangelists. The worst enemies of Las Casas were not the redskins but his own countrymen in the West Indies. The worst enemies of the French missionaries in Canada were not the savages who sometimes heard and sometimes slew them, but their own secular countrymen who swindled and sold alcoholic poison to the people of the Canadian forests, and 'lost in a month the fruits of the toil and labour of thirty years.'[1] The worst enemies of the English missionaries in West and South Africa were the slavers and traders, men whose ravages made one poor savage say, 'God made the black men first, and did not love us, as He did the white men. He made you beautiful, and gave you clothing, and guns, and gunpowder, and horses, and wagons, and many other things about which we know nothing. But towards us He had no heart.'[2] The worst enemies of the English missionaries in the West Indies and the old American colonies were the English planters, few of whom would allow Christianity to be preached to their slaves.

Enmity between Missionary and Colonist.

The white colonists were Christians, or at least professed Christianity as their creed; many had their place of worship and contributed to the upkeep of a church or the maintenance of a minister of their religion; but they had no wish for the natives to adopt their faith, although that faith insisted in the sacred writings which they bound themselves to obey on the catholicity of its aim and their duty.

The reason for the opposition between colonist and missionary is nevertheless simple. Christianity taught the equality of all men before God; the colonist depended for his existence on the inequality of the native to himself.

[1] See vol. i. bk. iii. ch. ii.

[2] Livingstone.

Very often he had taken the natives' land, and although he had improved that land by his greater knowledge, the essential condition of its improvement was that he should be the master and the native be the servant, the slave, or the exile. From that position, which was inevitable in the nature of things, the white colonist could not depart; his whole existence in a new country depended on his keeping the mastery. Yet from his own opposite position also the missionary could not move. He cared little or nothing for the temporal supremacy of the white; but he cared very greatly for the equal chance of eternal salvation for all men, black and white alike.[1] It was for this fundamental reason that Christianity and colonisation, the Church and the Empire, were frequently opposed.

Reason for this Enmity.

Each party to the unending controversy could maintain its point of view with vigour and often with undoubted facts. The missionary regarded the white trader as a rogue, which he often was,[2] and the white planter as a cruel tyrant, as was occasionally the fact.[3] The white trader, on the other hand, regarded the missionary as a fool, and a pernicious or sometimes dishonest fool who spoilt his business; the white planter looked upon the Gospel which the missionary preached

[1] It may be recalled that the New Humanity of eighteenth-century England (vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. i.), unlike the contemporary new philosophy of France, had a definitely Christian impulse, and while the New Humanity allied itself with freedom in its stand for the emancipation of the slaves, and its implied belief in the equality of man, the new missionary effort of the time was firmly on the side of the New Humanity, supporting its aim of emancipating and uplifting the extra-European races—which it believed could only be done through Christianity. That implicit alliance was never broken in a century of effort.

[2] This will hardly be disputed after the instances given in this work, particularly in vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.

[3] See vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. iii. for proof. The tyranny was often caused by the fact that the white man was obliged to assert his mastery over a people whom he was convinced—not always rightly—understood nothing but force.

When Bishop Knight-Bruce was working among the Mashonas, one of those natives asked him, 'Why is not the Bishop vicious like other white men?' (*Memories of Mashonaland*)—a testimonial of character which would have embarrassed anybody but a bishop in the recording.

—and which the planter himself believed as the salvation of his own soul—as a teaching of sedition when applied to his slave.[1]

It is impossible to deny that there was some truth, but not the whole truth in both these views. White traders and planters were sometimes rogues and often tyrants, and the missionary who exposed their doings was hardly likely to earn their gratitude. Yet the missionaries on their part were by no means always wise, and certainly not always just, in their denunciations. They were not above blackening the white planter to increase their own apparent goodness; and if they exaggerated the shortcomings of their countrymen in the colonies, they could expect but little mercy when their own shortcomings were exposed by the planters.

It followed from this prejudice against the white trader and planter that the missionaries opposed them when they were already in possession, and protested against their coming when they followed the evangelist to a land of material as well as spiritual promise. In this attitude, again, the missionaries were at once logical and right from their own point of view.

They knew the wreckage and havoc which followed the advent of the white trader, with his guns and gin, and in the interests of the natives whom they served, the missionaries attempted to close any country in which they were established against other white men.[2] And they also recognised —since missionaries, like other men, are human—that if white settlers were once permitted in any country their own influence would diminish and in the end perhaps vanish altogether.

Yet the missionaries were themselves the agents, sometimes the unwitting and nearly always the unwilling agents, of

[1] See vol. iv. bk. xii. chs. i. and ii.

[2] As in New Zealand, vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. ii.; and by Mackenzie in Bechuanaland, bk. xxiv. ch. iv. The kindred example of the Jesuits in South America will be at once recalled as a parallel showing that this principle transcended denominational differences.

European advance; the trader or the colonist often followed them and always vanquished them. In New Zealand the white teachers of the Maori opposed the coming of the colonists, but were quickly worsted in the struggle;[1] in South Africa the missionary Mackenzie went down before Rhodes in Bechuanaland,[2] the missionary pioneers in Nyasa could no longer rule the land when white planters came,[3] the first missions in Mashonaland were soon followed by white settlers,[4] and everywhere the white man settled and cultivated the soil the missionary ideal of a Christian autocracy over converted natives vanished.

But not Christianity itself. It was changed, but not abolished, by the discord between white evangelist and white settler.

Native Christianity despised by White Colonists.

The missionaries disregarded the ties of race and colour, as indeed they were bound to do by their religion; and they denounced others who did not also disregard those ties. In this they were logical but hardly wise; for the trader and planter whom they opposed knew by experience, what the missionary did not, that racial superiority and distinctions of colour were fundamental in human society. Mostly the white colonists would not worship with the black converts, and their reluctance or refusal, which caused much sorrow and misgiving to the missionaries, was a warning to the newer native Christians of unexpected difficulties ahead. In quite another sense from that in which the words were spoken it was correct, as a Canadian of the Huron tribe said to an old evangelist, that the natives 'inhabited a different world, and there ought therefore to be another paradise for them, and consequently another way by which to arrive.'[5]

It was in truth a different way the native Christian trod;

[1] Vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. ii.
[2] Bk. xxiv. ch. iv.
[3] Bk. xxiv. ch. vi.
[4] Bk. xxiv. ch. v.
[5] Vol. i. bk. iii. ch. ii.

for if the messengers of God had preached the equality of all men before Christ, the example of their fellow-Christians and white masters fell sadly behind the precept. The fact that the European colonist would not enter the same place of worship with the coloured aboriginal convert showed that he would never acknowledge the equality on earth which he grudgingly allowed might be enforced in heaven: white and black worshipped the same God in different churches, and communion between the two was found impossible. 'Some whites say they will not receive the Cup of Salvation with us,' confessed an African convert sadly to his pastor;[1] and indeed everywhere, even in the remote interior of Rhodesia, there was difficulty over the position of the black convert to the white man's creed.[2]

This practical difficulty, which was not without its justification from the white colonists' standpoint,[3] was one of the causes, perhaps the chief cause, of the formation and secession of a native African church. 'We cannot expect,' wrote one of the missionaries at Blantyre, 'that native church life will move in the grooves cut out elsewhere,'[4] and if some of the broader minds in Central Africa could congratulate themselves on possessing 'the force of a Christianity which knew nothing of Protestant or Papist,'[5] they were soon to find that the creed they spread could split on racial lines. A century after the gospel had been introduced in South Africa, an independent native church was born.

Independent Native Christianity.

Its coming should not have surprised or distressed those who had laboured to plant the Christian religion firmly in

[1] *The East and the West*, a missionary magazine, 1910.
[2] Report of Universities' Mission to Central Africa, London *Guardian*, 31st May 1912.
[3] Although the native convert's creed might be the same as that of the European, his social standard and manners were not; and such things count.
[4] *Life and Work* (Blantyre), Sept. 1895.
[5] *Ibid.*, Dec. 1893.

South Africa; for there is no more certain sign of growth than the putting forward of fresh branches and new roots, and every missionary throughout the world was bound to pray that the divine seed which it was his glorious privilege to plant should bear immortal fruit. They had encouraged native converts to spread the gospel among the remoter and still heathen tribes, and they had not refused to ordain some selected aboriginal Christians to the holy ministry of the faith; yet the new Ethiopian Church, which was founded at Pretoria on 20th November 1892, was regarded from the start with distrust by European missionaries as well as European statesmen in South Africa.[1]

The Ethiopian Movement.

The source of that distrust is not immediately apparent. The doctrines of the new church were strictly Protestant and evangelical, and showed no divergence from the orthodox teaching of the Protestant and evangelical school in Britain. The Ethiopian leaders displayed none of those tendencies towards heresy which had distinguished the older and long since extinct churches of northern Africa, whose disputes had split the brotherhood of primitive Christianity into warring camps of religious enemies; the Ethiopian Church professed no dangerous originality of thought or practice to disquiet its doubtful sponsors, the European missionaries.

Its articles further denied any intention to interfere with politics; it repudiated the preaching of sedition, and professed loyalty to the properly constituted authority of the State—in other words, it was ready to submit to the existing temporal power in temporal things, and to confine itself to the spiritual matters which are the proper and, according to some, the only concern of a religious organisation.

[1] It took its name from Psalm lxviii. 31: 'Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall haste to stretch out her hands unto God.'
The old travellers, such as Sir Thomas Herbert, usually called the Cape or all Africa indifferently Ethiopia.

Moreover, in seeking an independent form of worship, the Ethiopian Church might have claimed that it was but following the example of the negro Christians of the United States, who had long since established themselves in separate congregations from the whites. Their religion, if more emotional and less intellectual than that of European worshippers, was neither corrupt,[1] nor obscene;[2] and although the white American democrat who acknowledged the equality of man refused to worship as an equal in the negro churches, he could not refuse to acknowledge that the negro whom he despised worshipped the same God with the same rites as himself. Nor could he advance the objection that the American negro churches added a political complexion to their energetic religious exercises; an impartial and exhaustive inquiry proved that they made no attempt to engraft racial or colour-hatred on the religion of universal love.[3]

The Ethiopian Church in South Africa might have advanced the example of North America in its favour, but it did not in fact follow the same course. Some of its members, who appear to have been originally of the Wesleyan persuasion, became reconciled to the Church of England in 1899 as the Order of Ethiopia,[4] and against these the strongest European opponent of native Christianity could say nothing; but the remainder presently justified the dislike of the whites by their actions. A trustworthy witness before the South African Commission on Native Affairs declared that the Ethiopian movement had loosened moral bonds and lowered the ethical

[1] Some variations, such as dancing in church to a chant with curious words, were remarked; but these could hardly be called corruptions.

[2] At least in the United States. In Hayti and San Domingo, from which European influence had been expelled, both corruptions and obscenities were alleged, and, I think, fairly proved.

[3] *The Negro Church, a Social Study*, published by Atlanta University, 1903—a work of admirable temper and thoroughness.

[4] See *Missions Overseas: Fifth Annual Review of Central Board of Missions of the Church of England*, 1912.

For Ethiopianism generally see *The South African Natives* and the *Commission on Native Affairs*; also Leenhardt, *Le Mouvement Ethiopien*.

tone of the community, and it had, moreover, discovered a dangerous political aim, which was nothing less than that of ousting the whites from the country. South Africa, declared an Ethiopian publication, *The Voice of Missions*, was destined to become a black republic: 'If the Anglo-Saxon cannot mingle his blood by wedlock with the aborigines of the country which he grabs,' said this production, 'why does he not keep his heels in England?'

When such doctrines were maintained, it was no answer to the objections of the whites that the independent native church was the natural outcome of the missionary work of the previous hundred years, and that its political prejudices were directly caused by the fact that the European colonists had themselves been opposed from the start to native Christianity. The retort was true, but it did not dispose of the objections of the ruling race, who were more than ever confirmed in their feeling against missionary effort. Whatever might be the religious aims of Ethiopianism were now of secondary importance in the eyes of Europeans; perhaps even to the natives who embraced the creed of Europe the dangerous temporal ambition of uniting the whole of the African aboriginal peoples against their European conquerors displaced the eternal aspiration of Christianity.

However that may be—for Ethiopianism had yet to prove itself by deeds—a racial and colour bar had shattered the catholicity of the new Christendom which so much effort had created: and in this wise vanished once again the splendid hope and the elusive mirage of a universal Church.

Book XXVI

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA: 1852-1910

CHAPTER I

THE TWO EUROPEAN PEOPLES: 1852-99

For the space of more than half a century the colonists of two white peoples, sprung from opposite shores of the North Sea of Europe, had now lived side by side among the aboriginal races of South Africa; and that half century had been of momentous import in the discovery and development of the vast and hitherto unknown territories from Cape Town to the Zambesi. More had been done in each year of that period than in each decade of the preceding period; more advance had been made in exploration, in settlement, and in throwing the rough-cast of a new civilisation over the wilderness than in the three earlier centuries in which Europeans had inhabited South Africa.

Rapid Advance of Discovery and Settlement in South Africa.

Much, perhaps even the greater part of the pioneer work had now been done. Both peoples had gained a firm footing in the country, from whose broad distances it was improbable that either would ever be displaced by the other or by some new rival. In the hands of these two peoples lay, therefore, the ultimate destinies of South Africa. With them rested the decision whether it was to be the seat of a colony or a nation, the home of a collection of individual human units or groups of units or of a single national entity; and the decision of that question engaged

Dutch and British possess the Country.

the troubled years of the last quarter of the nineteenth century and even overstepped into the twentieth.

At first sight the answer should have been clear. These two peoples, the British and the Dutch, were of no mean political capacity, between them were no great differences of character; and therefore it seems that there should have been little difficulty in forming a national union of both stocks in this new land which the two had conquered for their inheritance. They were as two branches of a large family whose members have often met, sometimes quarrelled, and not infrequently agreed. Briton and Hollander had long sailed together and fought together in the four quarters of the earth and the five seas for land and trade and money, for power and the good things that power may buy; yet from time to time they had also dwelt together as brethren who acknowledged the same God and worshipped in much the same fashion. If we remember the bitter fight for empire between England and Holland in the Eastern Seas [1] and India,[2] we must also remember that it was in Holland that English religious refugees found a home when they could find none in England, and that the first resting-place of the Pilgrim Fathers was not in New England but in the Netherlands.[3]

Their Likeness of Character.

And both England and Holland had produced the same tough breed of daring sailors, shrewd traders, dauntless pioneers, admirable colonists as their typical men; stubborn, indomitable, rough-hewn men with a faculty for suiting their environment to themselves rather than themselves to their environment. Each nation knew something of hard work and hard drinking, of heavy fighting and strong swearing as a means of getting through the rough tasks of a rough world; both loved freedom at home and abroad, and with both freedom was no inaccessible abstract goddess of Latin birth,

[1] Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. ii.
[2] Vol. ii. bk. vi. ch. iv.
[3] Vol. i. bk. ii. ch. ii.

but a plain man's purpose of getting his own way. Both had given up much for liberty; both had gained much from liberty: and with both liberty for themselves was sometimes hard-elbowed and intolerant of the rights of others.

Such were the small differences between the British and the Dutch. But small differences do not avoid great disputes; the quarrels of brothers are proverbially bitter. And between these two peoples in South Africa a long series of detached and unrelated events had quickened the dormant sense of opposition into a feeling of very real enmity that led to war; but if some of those events were the chance outcome of accidental circumstance, others were due to sheer folly, to a wavering indecisive policy, and to stupidity on the one side, obstinacy on the other. A short analysis of the cumulative effect of these events is an indispensable preliminary to the consideration of the wars through whose bloody portals the distant vision of national union was first dimly seen.

Their Opposition in South Africa.

In the early days of British sovereignty in Cape Colony there had been little ill-feeling between the two peoples, if little actual sympathy. No impassable social barriers divided them. The difference of language was no insuperable difficulty. The intermarriage of Englishmen and Cape Dutch women was not uncommon—nor is there any suggestion that such marriages were less happy than unions between people of the same stock. Nevertheless the British and the Cape Dutch began to drift apart.

The Boers, it is true, acquiesced in British rule after the enforced change of allegiance in 1806; but they acquiesced with reluctance. Most of them would have preferred full independence—for the Boer dislike of the British Government was largely a dislike of all government, based on the practical absence of government in the interior under the Dutch East India Company for a whole century before—and the outbreak at Slachter's Nek in

Origins of this Opposition.

1815 proved the existence of irreconcilables; the appeal of the rebel Boers to the Kafir for common action against the British proved how far they were prepared to go in their hatred of the new rulers.

That outbreak was the first definite breach between the two white peoples; its consequences were remembered with bitterness long after that miserable affair should have been forgotten. The fact that it was resented so long and so bitterly shows how largely the irreconcilable feelings which animated the actual rebels were shared by men who took no direct part in the rebellion. Slachter's Nek became a permanent racial memory, a cherished tradition, a distorted grievance to be handed down from father to son; and such memories gain rather than lose with time, when their memory is sharpened by other incidents. Nor were other incidents lacking.

The eastern frontier of Cape Colony was sometimes left undefended against Kafir irruptions by the British Government. It had always been neglected by the Dutch Government; but the faults of their own people were now forgotten, the omissions of the British were ever visible.

Not only was the frontier neglected, but the British Government sometimes took the side of the black man against the white. Its policy was known to be largely influenced by the missionaries, who always took the side of the black man against the white. And both were considered unpardonable by the Boer, who always, and not unnaturally, took the side of the white man against the black. The Boer had no sympathy with the work of the missionaries, no belief in the conversion of the aborigines to Christianity; and he made no secret of his views. In consequence he was reviled by every missionary in the land, and those revilements reached England and were believed. The Boer side of the case was not presented to the British public.

These facts did not dispose the Cape Dutch to welcome the emancipation of their slaves, which the British Govern-

ment insisted on in 1834. And the gross blundering which attended emancipation, the disappointment as to the amount of compensation, the malversation of part of the already diminished compensation funds, and the inevitable disturbance of the labour market, finally determined many of the Boers to quit a country whose government had become intolerable to them, and to set up their own form of society elsewhere.[1]

A triplex divergence, of political theories, social conceptions, and religious ideals had been revealed. The Boer stood for mastery over the aborigines, the Briton for equality between European colonists and African natives.[2] The Boer stood for an exclusive creed that looked upon the native as unworthy the high doctrines of Christianity, the Briton believed in the equality of all men before God. The Boer stood for independence from outside rule, the Briton stood for the British Empire. Its Extent.

Each of these feelings played its part; but the greatest factor of the three was the Boer desire for isolation and independence, which had been born of the old freedom of the eighteenth-century settlers from the control of the Dutch East India Company, nourished by the doctrines of the French Revolution that found a place at the Cape a few years before the first British conquest of 1795, and openly admitted in the proclamation of the republics of Graaff Reynet and Swellendam. Those short-lived republics were rather the expression of a crude feeling of Cape Dutch nationality than of any convinced adherence to, or understanding of, the new revolutionary doctrines that were overturning the thrones of Europe in the name of a triumphant democracy and a common

[1] For emancipation, see bk. xxiii. ch. iv.; for the Great Trek, bk. xxiv. ch. i.

[2] The British Government and missionary, at least; the ordinary British colonist was inclined to agree with the Boer as regards treatment of the natives. Had there been more British colonists and fewer British missionaries in South Africa the differences between Briton and Boer would not have been so marked.

humanity; and when forty years afterwards the Great Trek took place the same ideas of independence, which had not died with the death of the republics, were carried across the Orange and the Vaal by the emigrant Cape Dutch. And there, in the virgin pastures of the uplands, they came to their brief fruition.[1]

And Consequences.

Such were the results of the first generation of British rule in South Africa—the abandonment of Cape Colony by a large number of its old inhabitants, and a definite and well-marked feeling of enmity between the old Dutch settlers and the new British rulers. In the second generation the two people drifted still further apart. The emigrant Boers founded their pastoral republics in the interior, an unstable series of loosely-bound communities; the British after awhile recognised, albeit very grudgingly, the independence of these recalcitrant subjects. But the British remained in Cape Colony and along the coast, the Boers remained north of the Orange and the Vaal in the interior; and the Conventions of 1852 and 1854 admitted the independence of the Boers and put a limit, so far as paper could put a limit, to the future expansion of the British.

Expansion of the Boer Republics.

For some years the position seemed to remain unchanged, but in fact it was changing slowly and inevitably as the interior was explored. The Cape Dutch emigrants across the Orange and the Vaal spread themselves continually further north, occupying fresh districts where they could, subduing native tribes where their strength was equal to the task, or concluding treaties with the stronger native powers when conquest was impossible. By such means the Boers spread themselves north of the Orange in the nineteenth century, as they had spread themselves south of the Orange in the eighteenth. The British

[1] The previous volumes of this work have shown precisely the same feelings of local nationalism and a desire for freedom of control from the mother country, in practically every British colony.

missionary settlement at Kuruman among the Bechuanas, and indeed the whole of the Bechuana territories, were threatened by their expansion in the west;[1] to the east the Boers were watching their opportunity in Zululand and Basutoland;[2] in the north their hunters had already crossed the Limpopo into Mashonaland and the new territory of the Matabili,[3] and some of their younger men had begun to discuss another trek and the founding of a permanent settlement in those countries.

The British also were spreading over the country, trading, exploring, and preaching to the natives in these years. Dealers in ivory and hunters of big game pushed their way far into the interior. Travellers in quest of sport and science followed the now well-trodden track from the Orange River through the Bechuana countries, and passed on to the tropic lands beyond. Rumours of gold and precious stones drew some; love of adventure without reward attracted others. But most of all this advance of the British in the interior was due to the Christian missionaries. They had, it is true, been expelled from the territories now occupied by the Boer Republics, by their old enemies, the Cape Dutch trekkers, and driven westwards towards the desert; but the great mission road which ran up from Kuruman to the left of the Transvaal was continually lengthened towards the north. The middle course of the road was a little changed, but the building of the road went on unchecked, and in time its extension took the missionaries, no longer able to labour in the country of the Boer, into lands where the Boers themselves were yet unknown. The missionaries out-trekked the trekkers when they reached forward to Nyasa.

The British also expand.

No treaty was broken by this first advance of evangelists

[1] See Mackenzie, *Ten Years North of the Orange River*. The projected attack was abandoned, owing to a remonstrance by Sir George Grey, Governor at the Cape.

[2] See the *Life of Sir Bartle Frere*, and the Zulu War later in this chapter.

[3] See bk. xxiv. ch. v.

and traders from Britain. They visited, explored, and even settled in these lands to the north of the Boer, but they took no territory, they made no treaties with the natives. The Sand River and Bloemfontein Conventions of 1852 and 1854, which forbade the British to annex the countries north of the Vaal, were therefore still unbroken by the British—but the temptation to break them was beginning to be felt. It was easy to resist a desire to annex the Griqua desert; it was far less easy to resist the wealth and beauty of the Zambesi Valley or Lake Nyasa.

The British Diamond-Diggers.

But even the Griqua desert had its hidden wealth; and the discovery of the diamond-fields which led to the foundation of Kimberley in 1871, not only revolutionised the economic position of South Africa, but led also to the first permanent step of British territorial aggrandisement in the north.[1]

Repudiate the Orange Free State.

The first diggers and diamond-hunters on the Orange River good-humouredly repudiated the claim of the Orange Free State to the soil which they were searching in the hope of wealth. The Free State, a weak pastoral community under the form of a republic, had no means of enforcing the authority it declared; the few burghers who were sent to proclaim its rule found themselves welcome to as much of the diggers' liquor as they pleased, but to none of their obedience; and for awhile the miners ruled themselves.

The Diggers' Republic.

A Diggers' Committee was elected, one Parker was proclaimed its chairman, and he ruled the small community with mock majesty but real authority for some time as President Parker. His constitution followed the revered model of the British, in that it was unwritten; his committee adopted the practical example of the mother of Parliaments, in that they considered difficulties as they arose, and not till then; and this easy

[1] See bk. xxiv. ch. iii.

solution of the matter seems to have worked admirably while it lasted.

The British annex Griqualand West, 1871.

But when the diamond-diggings by the Orange River extended to the New Rush, and Kimberley was founded, something more than a government of diggers was desired by the native states, if not by the diggers themselves. The land on which the diamonds lay was claimed both by Waterboer, a native chief, and by the Orange Free State; the British Government now held that Waterboer had the better title, although the lands in question had been considered part of the old Orange River Sovereignty under British rule,[1] and it had never before been suggested that the Orange Free State occupied less territory than the Sovereignty. And when Waterboer, conscious that he could not control the settlers on the land he claimed, and not unimpressed by the offer of a pension from the British Government,[2] offered his lands to the British, that Government accepted the proposal which they had desired and perhaps suggested. Griqualand West was proclaimed a Crown Colony of the British Empire on 27th October 1871.[3]

Consequent Friction with the Boers.

The annexation naturally acted as a further breach between the independent Boers and the British. Both claimed the country, and this sudden desire to annex a land so unexpectedly proved to be wealthy, and to maintain the appearance of being disinterested, was in itself suspicious. The Orange Free State held that Britain would not have taken the country had it not been valuable, and that was both relevant and true. It held also that Britain had no title to the land; that was also true, but irrelevant, for Britain derived her title from Waterboer. The question resolved itself therefore into the original owner-

[1] See bk. xxiv. ch. i. for the Orange River Sovereignty.

[2] The pension was not paid, and Waterboer's lawyer, in a letter of 18th March 1876, complained with some reason of this scurvy treatment. The letter is in Wilmot's *Life and Times of Sir Richard Southey*

[3] It was incorporated in Cape Colony in 1880.

ship of the land, and here Waterboer was not necessarily the best judge of his own possessions, while the fact that the country had been considered to belong to the Orange River Sovereignty when a British colony was strong presumptive proof that it still belonged to the Orange Free State as a Boer Republic.

Boer farmers were already established on the diamondiferous lands, but that fact was hardly sufficient of itself to prove them burghers of the Free State. The authority of the two Republics was proverbially as loose as their boundaries were vague; and the outlying Boer settlers, who more closely resembled independent squatters than citizens or subjects owning definite allegiance, might have repudiated the authority of the Free State on a question of paying taxes as firmly as the diamond-diggers themselves. If, in short, there was effective occupation by the Boers in the disputed territory, there was hardly effective control by the Orange Free State, as the independent existence of the Diggers' Republic proved.

The case was at best a doubtful one in a land of uncertain frontiers, but the balance of argument was as strongly in favour of the Boers as the balance of power was on the side of the British. The Orange Free State as the weaker party acquiesced after an official remonstrance, grudgingly and with remembrance; but five years later the British Government tacitly admitted that the attitude of the republic was justified, and agreed to pay a sum of £90,000 'in full satisfaction of all claims which the Orange Free State considered that it might possess in regard to Griqualand West.'[1]

From the British point of view it was urged—and there was truth in this contention—that since the Free State could not control the diamond-fields, the imperial authorities had to make their choice between the recognition of an independent Diggers' Republic and the enlargement of the Empire by the annexation of Griqualand West; they chose the latter, as

[1] C. 1631 (1876).

the lesser of two evils.[1] But the lesser evil did not raise the credit of the British for fair dealing.

Once again the British territories in South Africa reached beyond the Orange River, the great dividing line between the old colonies and the new states. There British expansion stayed for awhile; but the future had already begun to declare itself across the uncertain northern frontier. For British missionaries and traders were still lengthening the road into the yet unclaimed interior; and four years before Kimberley was founded or Griqualand annexed David Livingstone set eyes on the beautiful shores of Lake Tanganyika.

The great evangelist-explorer thus pointed the road to the far north in 1867; but before news of his discovery reached Europe, another annexation in South Africa had startled and annoyed the Boers. In the year 1868 Basutoland was proclaimed a British Protectorate.

The British annex Basutoland, 1868.

The Basutos were a Bantu people, a collection of consanguineous tribes who had been welded into some rough national union by the pressure of outside enemies and the ruling genius of Moshesh, the great chief of the Basuto and allied

[1] Theal admitted, in an early edition of his *History*, that 'there was no alternative from British Sovereignty other than an independent diamond-field republic.' In later editions this statement was suppressed. Here, as in other controversial portions of his works, the industrious annalist was able to effect a politic change in his views when circumstances required.

For the whole subject see official Blue Books C. 459 (1871), and C. 508 (1872); also Wilmot's *Southey*, and the *Life of Molteno*.

It was said in some quarters that the British action in crossing the Orange River was an infraction of the Convention of 1854 with the Orange Free State. The vague wording of that Convention, however, did not confine them south of the Orange River as the Sand River Convention of 1852 confined them south of the Vaal. But it did nevertheless in clause 2 state that the British Government 'had no wish or intention to enter hereafter into any treaties (with native chiefs) which might be injurious or prejudicial to the interests of the Orange River Government.' It might reasonably be argued that the agreement with Waterboer was both injurious and prejudicial; but the point is relatively unimportant compared with the question of ownership of the soil and the competence of the Free State to assert its authority.

tribes.[1] Their country, beautiful, wild, and mountainous, had been called the Switzerland of South Africa by the few travellers who had visited it; its climate was magnificent, its configuration favoured the inhabitants; but the boundaries of this native empire were uncertain. Moshesh ruled as far as his authority was acknowledged, and claimed to rule more than his strength could control; but he had raised his own people, whom he had governed for more than thirty years, from extreme misery and degradation to a barbaric power of no mean rank. Foreign and European influence had not been despised; Christian missionaries had worked steadily among the people with some success;[2] and in 1848, when the independence of the country seemed threatened by the Boer emigrants beyond the Orange River, a treaty had been made between the British and the Basutos by that energetic soldier, Sir Harry Smith. The Dutch complained with some reason that the British had invaded their rights—for they had already a few settlers in the Basuto country—when the treaty, which was practically an assumption of British protection over Basutoland, was made known; but the British themselves found Moshesh and his people far from easy to control in the next few years. An armed British force was sent into the dangerous fastnesses of the country to reduce the natives to submission: imperfectly acquainted with the mountains and ravines of the Basuto territory, its leader committed that old blunder of civilised man in dealing with the barbarian, and miscalculated the strength of the enemy; a skirmish took place, in which the Basuto had the indecency to win the day; a second skirmish under Governor Cathcart produced no better result, and the British somewhat hurriedly withdrew.

It was now the turn of the Boers to try their hand. The Basutos raided the Orange Free State farmers, against the

[1] The standard work on this people, which has superseded all others, is Lagden's *Basutos*.

[2] See bk. xxv.

wish of Moshesh;[1] the farmers retaliated, and the Basutos retorted with success by defeating their commando. The Boers attacked again, and this time, infuriated by the sight of their dead and mutilated comrades, they began to drive the Basutos before them. It was at this inopportune moment that the British intervened; the Basutos were now as anxious for protection as they had before been anxious to avoid it; and the Boers proclaimed, perhaps with truth, but certainly with anger, that they had been balked of the legitimate fruits of victory by men who could not win the victory themselves.[2]

But a few years after Basutoland had been annexed and the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley had drawn hungry adventurers into the African desert, and at the very time when the British mission stations had again been founded in Nyasa,[3] far to the north of the Boer Republics, the Boer communities beyond the Orange and the Vaal once more came into direct conflict with the British Empire.

Both the virtues and the vices, both the weakness and the strength of those communities were indeed a source of frequent embarrassment and occasional danger to themselves and others. Their admirable love of freedom, which no Briton could condemn, meant in fact an entire absence of internal discipline, although faced by external dangers whose menace should have made for union. Their pride of race, not un-

Difficulties and Weakness of the Boer Republics, 1859-77.

[1] So at least he said; probably with truth, as he would have realised that retaliation might mean defeat in the long run. His own remark on the subject is full of wisdom: 'I cannot bind myself to say there will be no more stealing; thieves do not tell me when they come in or out of Basutoland. You must give me time. I have eaten the Governor's meat, and it will be easy for me to vomit it up; but it is not so easy to make thieves disgorge what they have stolen.'

[2] In 1871 Basutoland was incorporated in Cape Colony. It was an endless source of embarrassment to the authorities at Cape Town, and in 1884 was transferred to the Imperial Government. This arrangement was so successful that the country was retained under imperial control at the Union of 1909, and four years later, when the Union wished to bring Basutoland under its control, the chiefs protested that they preferred direct British rule.

[3] Bk. xxiv. ch. vi.

justified by the record of their ancestors both in Holland and South Africa, made them feel a chosen people, arrogant, exclusive, and self-centred; and those feelings were naturally increased by their evident superiority to the savages among whom they lived, and many of whom they had dispossessed. Their lofty ignorance made them contemptuous of all other men, at the time when their more energetic and better-equipped British rivals were pushing ahead of them in the interior.

The Boers also were expanding their territories every year, each of the many sons of a large family usually occupying fresh land when he set up in life for himself: but as they spread themselves over so large an area, in great farms of five or six thousand or more acres, they weakened their hold on the country they had taken; their loose political organisation, inadequate even for a pastoral community, weakened them still further. The dislike of any effective government remained as strong among the Cape Dutch emigrants when living north of the Vaal as south of the Orange; but whereas in the latter case it led to rebellion against the British, and could be represented as a legitimate rising against the tyrannical foreigner, in the former it led to the impotence of their own executive. Many of the burghers refused to pay their taxes—an old trouble inherited from Cape Colony—and although the executive spent much of its energy in collecting its dues, it was not very successful in enforcing its demands.[1]

It could not control the burghers; it also could not control itself. Faction divided these petty republics, rival parties hated and intrigued against each other; civil war often threatened, and more than once broke out; and on one occasion the scandal was seen of an elected President deserting his dominions, invading the dominions of the sister republic in force, there declaring himself president, and from

[1] This is clearly shown in Kruger's *Memoirs*.

its capital attempting to reduce his old comrades to the new allegiance.[1]

In primitive pastoral communities such as the Transvaal and the Orange Free State these things are not indeed of great importance by themselves. A revolution does not convulse the country nor a civil war destroy it; they merely incommode a few stalwarts on either side. Trade is not disorganised or credit shaken by a crisis in the capital, for nearly the whole wealth of the country is in its farms, and every farm is practically a self-sufficing unit in itself, every farmer his own master, living on his crops and stocks. And most of the independent Boers in the interior, who were but living as they wished, were perfectly satisfied with their condition, and happy in the lack of system and the freedom from control; this patriarchal manner was precisely the form of life to which their ancestors had been accustomed, and which they themselves enjoyed; had it continued in Cape Colony there would have been no Great Trek, no sudden break of allegiance, but a gradual expansion over the interior.

There are clearly advantages in such primitive political organisations, a certain rude strength and resisting power in the people apart from the government, a tough national fibre that is hardly conscious of national existence; the trouble is that things cannot remain as they are, that communities must grow, organisations increase, and in growing and increasing become more complex and interdependent; and in the process the primitive organisation, not without some regrets and resistance on its part, must vanish.

[1] There were three leading republics in the Transvaal country, at Potchefstroom with Pretoria, Lydenburg, and the Zoutpansberg. In 1857 young Pretorius, the son of the old trekker (bk. xxiv. ch. i.), attempted to conquer the Orange Free State; but both Lydenburg and Zoutpansberg rose in the rear, and the attempt failed. In 1859 peaceful union was proposed, but again Lydenburg and Zoutpansberg refused. A general civil war broke out in 1859, and lasted until 1864, when peace was concluded; from that time the forward policy against neighbouring native tribes was resumed, and the boundaries of the Transvaal enlarged.

To that stage South Africa was now slowly coming. All would have been well with the Boer Republics—for a time—had the British remained stagnant in Cape Colony. But the relative position of the two peoples had changed considerably in the twenty years since the signing of the Sand River Convention. In that time the British had explored much and annexed a little; but they were no longer so ready to resign all claim to the interior as when they bound themselves to the south side of the Vaal in 1852.

With much knowledge had come some understanding; the search for diamonds and the search for souls had taught them the value of South Africa, and they had begun to realise—what the pastoral Boer Republics in the interior had not—that the various independent states, Cape Colony, Natal, Griqualand West, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State, could not in fact remain independent of each other, but must in time be interdependent on each other. And one man was ready to go further, and advocate a general union of the South African states.

Time proved the policy of union right. Unfortunately for its success, it was advocated by the wrong man, from the wrong quarter, in the wrong manner, and at the wrong time.[1] And consequently it failed.

Three years after the Kimberley diamond-fields were annexed, a new Conservative Government was elected in Britain. It was a time when the first stirrings of the new imperial impulse were felt; in place of the wish to be rid of the glorious burden of Empire, which had dominated the previous thirty years, a sense of imperial union and a desire for imperial expansion now began to animate Britain.[2] Of that sense

Britain advocates South African Federation, 1874-77.

[1] Butler in his *Autobiography* remarks that confederation was tried at the end of twenty years of peace. True. But it was likewise the beginning of twenty years of expansion, which led to war.

[2] See vol. iv. bk .xvi. ch. ii. for the ebb and flow of the imperialist tide in Britain.

the new Conservative Government was fully conscious. It enlarged the Empire by a forward policy in India and the annexation of new territories elsewhere; it looked not unfavourably on the prospect of expansion in South Africa; and its Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon, had turned his back on the cold colonial policy of his predecessors, and was ready not only to enlarge, but to engage in the far more difficult and delicate task of attempting to consolidate the Empire.

Carnarvon was an able man and an honourable statesman, who saw clearly, what indeed was clear enough, that many of the difficulties, and consequently much of the weakness of South Africa sprang from the divisions among its ruling white population. He saw also that until the last few years the Canadian colonies had suffered from similar divisions producing similar results, and that those difficulties had been removed by federation in 1867. The moral seemed clear, that union or federation would do for South Africa what it had done for British North America.[1]

Parallel between Canada and South Africa.

The parallel between the recent political condition of Canada and the existing political condition of South Africa in 1874 was in many respects a striking one. Canada had her disunited and jealous provinces —Ontario, Quebec, the maritime provinces; South Africa had the same—Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. In both countries the various provinces had opposing commercial interests. Canada had her racial question—the large foreign population of Quebec living under the British Crown; South Africa likewise had her racial question—the large foreign population of

[1] See vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. v. for Canadian federation.
Sir George Grey, Governor of Cape Colony in 1858, had already advocated South African federation, and he may therefore be considered the pioneer in this matter. But his despatch on the subject, which was a noteworthy one, fell on deaf ears at the Colonial Office, and his faith in federation carried him further than the facts of the situation warranted in South Africa.

Cape Colony Dutch living under the British Crown. In both cases this foreign population was older than the British occupation, and had lost its rule to the British Empire; in both cases, although generally loyal to its new sovereign, it remembered the fact with natural regret, in some instances with bitterness. In both cases there had been considerable, and at times intense, friction; in Canada the question was complicated by a sharp difference of religious belief, in South Africa by a sharp difference of religious practice;[1] and, finally, in Canada as in South Africa there was a difference of social habits due to difference of occupation. In both countries the British were the traders, the discoverers, the townsmen, the inaugurators of a new political synthesis, while the French Canadians and the Cape Dutch were peasants, agriculturists, farmers. The former were necessarily progressive, the latter necessarily conservative.

In both countries, too, a political deadlock was inevitable: in Canada it had actually occurred, in South Africa it was clearly coming, and Lord Carnarvon, like a true statesman, did his best to anticipate and avoid it.

But there resemblance ended. Carnarvon forgot that in Canada each jealous province was under the British Crown, united by that tie if by no other; in South Africa two of the states had been founded by men who revolted from British rule, and who would not hear of any return to the imperial fold; he forgot too—and this was his capital mistake—that in Canada union had come from within, in South Africa he attempted to impose it from without.

A self-governing British colony will no more brook the intervention of the mother country in its internal affairs than a married daughter who has set up house will allow her mother-in-law to alter the arrangement of her rooms; the older party may possibly be right, will certainly be more experienced, but if she is wise she will wait till advice is asked before it is given.

[1] I refer to the antagonism regarding Christian missions to the natives.

Carnarvon forgot this ancient maxim in his policy. Nevertheless the attempt to federate South Africa was justified, or, if one adopts the convenient opportunist attitude of English political theory, it would have been justified had it succeeded.[1]

South Africa refuses Federation.

It was at once made clear, however, that South Africa was not yet ready for federation. Lord Carnarvon's despatch recommending the subject, and suggesting the names of those persons who, in his opinion, would be most suited to draw up the proposed scheme of union, arrived at Cape Town on 2nd June 1875; within a week the Ministry at the Cape had condemned his proposals, and the Cape Legislature emphatically declared that any such projects must originate in the colony, not in Britain.

The objection of the Cape might be considered unreasonable, as implying absorption in local interests; or natural, as indicating a pride in its own recently obtained institutions—responsible self-government had only been obtained three years before, and was still an attractive novelty—but the objection was fatal. The Cape was the leading colony in South Africa, and its refusal killed the federation policy as much as the refusal of New South Wales killed the same policy in Australia.[2]

J. A. Froude's Mission.

But Lord Carnarvon was unfortunate, not only in his method but in his men. South Africa was not yet convinced of the wisdom of political union, or she would have united of herself; she had therefore to be convinced that it was wise, and indeed essential to her interests. And the agent whom Carnarvon chose to

[1] To its lasting credit, the Imperial Government has never adopted the base and paltry method of perpetuating differences among its children in order to enlarge its own power by weakening them. The course has been suggested by political writers—an example is given in vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. i.—but the Imperial Government has never followed it. After the manner of parents, it has often been tyrannical, and attempted to enforce a line of action with which the colonies would have nothing to do, as in the endeavour to unite the old American colonies from without (vol. i. bk. iv. ch. v.). There, as here again in South Africa, the end was right, the means hopelessly wrong.

[2] Vol. v. bk. xix. ch. iii.

convince her failed completely in his errand. James Anthony Froude, who was charged with the political conversion of South Africa, was a brilliant literary man who wrote an admirable English prose style and a passably inaccurate English history. He was an imperialist by instinct, but he knew little of modern politics, and he was more at home in the common-rooms of Oxford and the great country-houses of England than in the life of a pastoral colony. He had a literary man's ideas of statecraft; he knew what he knew of ruling men from the study of books, and that is little more than a politician knows of literature from a study of official documents. Like many men who write history but do not make it, the quiet of a library had unfitted him for the noise and dust of public life, the underground intrigues, the insincere declarations, the mean arts of lobbying; Froude could read documents but not men, and even documents he could not always read accurately. Faced with a task that would have taxed the greatest of statesmen to the utmost, a man who was not a statesman at all was bound to fail.

The choice of Froude was unfortunate; the moment of his advent even more unfortunate. He arrived at Cape Town a bare week after the Cape Legislature had declined to consider the very proposal he had come to discuss. Froude might well have decided that their refusal was a sufficient reason for abandoning his mission; but instead he toured the country, was entertained at banquets, made speeches as brilliant in language as they were contradictory in policy, and in a short six months wrecked whatever small chance Carnarvon's ideal might have had of success. He found federation dead; he left it damned.[1]

[1] That was not, however, Froude's own opinion. On his return to England he wrote, 'If anybody had told me two years ago that I should be leading an agitation within Cape Colony, I should have thought my informant delirious. The Ministers have the appearance of victory, but we have the substance.' (Shirley's *Table Talk*.) Froude's substance was not even an insubstantial shadow, as he found out before his death.

But Carnarvon was still hopeful, and failed to realise that the beautiful body of union which he worshipped was already a decaying corpse. No conference could assemble in South Africa, but a Federal Conference met in London in 1876. Its composition, however, made the discussions a farce. If the small colony of Natal sent three representatives—one of whom was Wolseley, its late governor and a soldier who had no knowledge of politics — neither Cape Colony nor the Transvaal, the most important states in South Africa, were represented at all. President Brand of the Orange Free State was present, but refused to discuss federation, and expressly limited himself to native policy. Froude was understood to represent Griqualand West, a district whose acquisition by the British he had condemned in one of his more indiscreet moments in South Africa.

The Abortive London Conference of 1876.

The proceedings of such a conference were necessarily unreal, its conclusions an abortion, the whole policy a failure.[1] Carnarvon, it is true, saw further than most men of the time, and he saw that union must come if South Africa was to prosper. But he forgot that other men could not see so far, and he attempted to take them along a road they did not know to a destination they did not wish to reach.

Confederation by consent had failed; a new policy, union by force, was next attempted.

The originator of the new policy was Sir Theophilus Shepstone, one of the delegates from Natal at the abortive London

[1] Carnarvon, however, refused to recognise the demise of his pet project. When Bartle Frere went out to South Africa in 1878, Carnarvon told him that the time required for the achievement of federation was 'not more than two years.' Actually it took thirty-four years.

For the whole federation policy, see C. 1732 (April 1877); and the *Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*. Carnarvon, *Speeches on South African Affairs*, should also be consulted; and *The Conference* (1875) and other pamphlets and articles of the period dealing with the subject, in vol. xxv. of bound pamphlets in the Royal Colonial Institute.

Conference of 1876. This remarkable man,[1] who exercised so considerable an influence on South African history, was of English birth, but only the first three years of his life had been spent in England. In 1820 his father settled as a Wesleyan missionary in Natal, and the son had from an early age been concerned in the native politics of that colony, acting as interpreter in the negotiations at the close of the Kafir War of 1835,[2] subsequently becoming British diplomatic agent to the natives of Natal, and, when the colony obtained its constitution in 1856, taking the office of Secretary for Native Affairs. Shepstone's native policy was his own: it included the establishment of land reserves for the aborigines, and the legalisation of many native customs, such as polygamy, which the missionaries had opposed. He was violently criticised, but he had his way; and he was generally regarded as a strong and upright man, reserved and slow of speech but prompt in action.[3]

Sir Theophilus Shepstone, 1817-94.

In these duties were passed the greater part of Shepstone's life. But while employed among the natives of Natal he naturally learnt much of the position of affairs in the neighbouring Transvaal. He was no friend of the Boers or of Boer policy, and he appears to have been ready to exaggerate the admittedly serious diffi-

Advocates Annexation of the Transvaal.

[1] Unfortunately there is no regular biography of Shepstone. An account of him appears in the *Cape Illustrated Magazine*, August 1894, the year of his death; the references to him in the *Life of Sir Bartle Frere* sum up his character not unjustly; and there is a thumb-nail sketch of him from personal knowledge in Butler's *Autobiography*.

[2] See bk. xxiii. ch. v.

[3] Sir Bartle Frere, his superior at the Cape, characterised him as 'an African Talleyrand,' and remarked that one of his greatest faults was his reserve; his superiors could never be sure whether he had told them everything, or was holding back some important consideration that would have led to a change in policy. Frere clearly disliked Shepstone, and distrusted his policy; but the characterisation was just.

This reserve was attributed by Butler, and no doubt justly, to long association with the natives. It was the native habit of long silences, and he had also adopted the native habit of using illustrations and parables in his talk.

culties of the republic, and to have honestly formed the opinion that that Government, threatened as it was by bankruptcy and lack of executive authority within its borders and by the dangers of a Zulu attack without, could no longer carry on without assistance.

His view may have been the right one, but he failed to perceive that he could not altogether judge the strength of the Boers by the weakness of their government.[1] However that may be, Shepstone imparted his views to Carnarvon in 1876, adding that there was a party in the Transvaal anxious for union with Britain; and Carnarvon, impressed by the quiet and masterful air of the man, agreed with the suggestion that the annexation of the republic by Britain would become a necessity in the interests of the burghers themselves. This was a greater mistake than ever he had made in his confederation policy, and it was to lead to graver consequences; for when Shepstone returned to South Africa he had in his possession a commission empowering him in certain circumstances to annex the Transvaal to the British Empire; and that commission had been signed by the Privy Council at Balmoral on 5th October 1876.[2]

The British Government approves.

[1] Similar mistakes have often been made. After the Imperial Civil War ended in 1783, many people thought that the independent British colonies in North America were ruined, because Congress had no power. (Vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv.) But the people were not ruined, and once an acceptable Constitution was established, made astonishing progress for ruined men.

But Shepstone was not alone in his mistake. Theal the historiographer, who was not unfriendly to the Boers, declared in 1876 that the commando system of military organisation, which was the Boer burgher form of military service, had broken down for ever. The historian is a poor success when he takes to prophecy; for the war with the British in 1899 was fought with extraordinary success on the commando system.

[2] The Colonial Office Blue-Books (1877-82) and the *Life of Sir Bartle Frere* give the British side of the case; the *First Annexation of the Transvaal*, by Dr. Leyds, the standpoint of the Transvaal. Other books, which mostly reflect statements at second-hand, may be disregarded.

Many of the statements in the British Blue-Books must be received with caution, as mistaken, prejudiced, or inaccurate; several are effectively traversed by Leyds, whose work on the annexation is without exception

Three months later, on 4th January 1877, Shepstone crossed the Transvaal frontier to carry out his plans. The end was determined—union with Britain; the means was yet uncertain. It appears that Shepstone hoped the Boers would consent or be persuaded to voluntary union; he little knew the stomach of that people. If they refused or delayed, he determined to proclaim the country British.

How far Shepstone was right or wrong in his estimate of the external danger to the Transvaal is very doubtful. An authority on native affairs, he knew that the Boers had been unsuccessful in their war with the native chief Sikukuni, he knew too that the power of the Zulu kingdom had revived since Dingana was defeated forty years before,[1] and he was better able to judge the ambitions and intentions of Cetewayo, the then Zulu king, than perhaps any man in South Africa. He believed that the Zulus would soon rise against the Europeans, and he was so far right that war did in fact break out within two years. But he was not so well qualified to estimate the resisting power of the Transvaal burghers. He believed that the republic would be defeated; the burghers with some reason held that they were strong enough, and that Shepstone had grossly exaggerated their difficulties.[2] The question

the cleverest piece of special pleading I have ever seen, not only for the evidence it brings forward, but for what it judiciously omits—the Diggers' Republic, for example, the sharp words spoken by Frere to Joubert regarding the message concerning the constitution for the Transvaal, the application of Kruger for office under the British. I have an enormous respect for the author, if only for several days of hard labour to which he has put me, in the necessity of checking his statements, and discovering what he has thought fit to leave out as telling against his case.

[1] See bk. xxiii. ch. vi.

[2] The Transvaal delegates who subsequently came to London declared that the reports of internal troubles in 1877 were grossly exaggerated. (*Correspondence between Sir M. Hicks-Beach and the Transvaal Delegates.*) But these also were not impartial witnesses, for they stated in the same breath that the Transvaal flourished until Britain annexed Kimberley.

The Boers contended that they could easily have defeated the Zulus in 1879, as they had forty years before; the Zulus were no more powerful under Cetewayo than under Dingana, the Boers were far more

was never put to the test, for when the Zulu War did break out, it was fought from Natal and not the Transvaal.

As to the internal condition of the Transvaal, Shepstone was right on every point save one—and that point was the one that was vital. The republic was divided into factions, dissatisfied with its president, and a bitter contest was waging as to his successor; the taxes were not paid,[1] the Government was owing £300,000, the treasury was empty,[2] and the prisons were thrown open because there was no money to buy food for the prisoners. These things Shepstone saw; he could not see the one thing that mattered—the determination of the Transvaal not to have British rule. He saw—he could not help seeing—the distressful body, but he did not see the soul; he ignored the national spirit of the people; and who does so in such circumstances ignores everything.

Yet there were not lacking signs to those who could see. Carnarvon had hoped to obtain voluntary union; but although some of the Boers, particularly those who lived on the Zulu frontier and would have had to bear the brunt of a native invasion, advocated union with Britain, the great majority of the people were strongly averse from losing their independence.[3] President Burgers, the head of the republic,

numerous in the Transvaal than they had been in Natal, and they would have had, moreover, the advantage of fighting on their own ground in case of a Zulu invasion. Zulu tactics, like those of their cousins the Matabili (bk. xxiv. ch. v.), were to fight in lowland forest country; on the high veldt of the Transvaal or Mashonaland neither Boer nor Briton feared them. These are very weighty considerations against Shepstone's argument.

[1] Those who refused them resisted on the ground that the taxes were illegally levied—the Hampden ship-money case again.

[2] To be meticulously accurate, there was a sum of twelve shillings and sixpence to represent the resources of the republic.

[3] For the annexation 31 petitions with 587 signatures were obtained; against it 125 petitions with 6591 signatures. The usual doubts were thrown on the authenticity of the signatures on both sides. Many of those who signed the petitions in favour of annexation were British store-keepers in the Transvaal. The total male white population of the republic was about eight thousand.

A referendum on the subject was afterwards suggested by a member of the Volksraad, but rejected by Shepstone for obvious reasons.

it is true, and some members of the Government, secretly told Shepstone that the position was hopeless, urged him to proclaim a British protectorate, and not only saw, but made various amendments in the proposed proclamation of British rule.[1] But they spoke with a double voice: in public they repudiated the course they had urged in private, and that fact alone should have given Shepstone pause, even had he dismissed entirely the agitation of the large party that favoured independence as factious and ignorant.

But Shepstone was in a hurry to complete his work, for he believed there was instant danger of a Zulu attack on the Transvaal; Carnarvon, who was even then contemplating the introduction of a Bill in the Imperial Parliament to carry through South African union, was likewise in a hurry. The Boers were not.

And suddenly, on 12th April 1877, Shepstone proclaimed at Pretoria the annexation of the Transvaal Republic by Britain, a few days after he had told the leading Boer politicians that he was authorised by his instructions from London to do so.

Britain annexes the Transvaal, 1877.

Opinions as to the wisdom, if not as to the ethics, of the revolution may vary. Shepstone may have saved the republic from a disastrous native war,[2] and he certainly intervened when the country was in a condition of

[1] This statement rests on Shepstone's words, and is not, so far as I know, confirmed directly by any documentary evidence from Burgers. But Shepstone was an honourable man, who would not falsify or manufacture evidence. (His letter is given in *The Life of Sir Bartle Frere*.) And Paul Kruger, who headed the independents, accused Burgers of treachery—a presumptive proof of Shepstone's accuracy.

[2] The day before the proclamation, Shepstone wrote to inform Cetewayo, to which the Zulu king answered, 'I thank my father for his message. I am glad that he has sent it, because the Dutch have tired me out, and I intended to fight them once, only once, and to drive them over the Vaal. You see my impis are gathered. It was to fight the Dutch I called them together. Now I will send them back to their houses.' (C. 1883.)

Unfortunately Cetewayo's message was a verbal one, which gave point to the Boer suggestion that its purpose had been strengthened by the British to support their case. Such things will happen.

administrative anarchy. But morally the act was indefensible, almost as improper as the seizure of the Palatinate by Louis XIV. in the seventeenth century, and not less open to reprobation than many of the subsequent acts of the restored Transvaal Republic itself during the next twenty years: it was not to be excused even by the peril in which Shepstone believed the republic stood. The Volksraad were the best judges of the peril of the country, but the Volksraad had not petitioned for Shepstone's proclamation. At the last moment, too, Burgers changed his attitude and repented of his weakness; after the act which he had counselled was accomplished, he protested publicly, and two Boer delegates left the Transvaal for England to state their case.

Apart from its ethical side the annexation was precipitate and ill-timed. It clearly broke the Sand River Convention of 1852, and gave the Boers an opportunity of which they were quick to take advantage, of accusing England of bad faith.[1] Its suddenness took Carnarvon by surprise,[2] and

[1] It must be remembered that the Boers had also broken the Sand River Convention by disregarding the clause prohibiting slavery. There is overwhelming evidence of this, and Burgers himself admitted that slavery was in vogue in the Transvaal.

[2] Shepstone's commission from Carnarvon was in the following words: 'If the emergency should seem to you to be such as to render it necessary in order to secure the peace and safety of our said colonies (in South Africa) and of our subjects elsewhere, that the said territories, or any portion or portions of the same, should provisionally, and pending the announcement of our pleasure, be administered in our name, and on our behalf; then, and in such case only, we do further authorise you, by proclamation under your hand, to declare that from and after a day to be therein named, so much of any such territories as aforesaid, as to you after due consideration shall seem fit, shall be annexed to and form part of our dominions. And we do hereby constitute and appoint you to be thereupon Administrator of the same provisionally and until our pleasure is more fully known.

'Provided, first, that no such proclamation shall be issued by you with respect to any district, territory, or state, unless you shall be satisfied that the inhabitants thereof, or a sufficient number of them, or the Legislature thereof, desire to become our subjects; nor if any conditions unduly limiting our power and authority therein are sought to be imposed. And, secondly, that unless the circumstances of the case are such as in your opinion make it necessary to issue a proclamation forthwith, no such proclamation shall be issued by you until the same has

Sir Bartle Frere, the new Governor at the Cape, was amazed at this unexpected increase of the territories under his charge. 'Good heavens,' he remarked, when he heard the news, 'what will they say to this in England?'

In England, as it happened, they said very little at the moment; only one member of Parliament protested,[1] and the Transvaal delegates who discussed the subject with the new Colonial Secretary, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach [2]—for Carnarvon had resigned his office in the meantime—were told that the annexation was irrevocable. But a great deal more was to be said and done about the question in the next year or two.[3]

For the time being the matter was overshadowed by the Zulu War. Here Shepstone proved too true a prophet; and Sir Bartle Frere, the experienced and well-beloved Indian administrator who had been prevailed upon to crown his career by settling the difficulties of South Africa, found his attention called away from the political relations of the whites by the revival of the native problem. All the fates indeed seemed against the union of South Africa in that generation.

The Zulu War, 1879.

been submitted to and approved by our trusty and well-beloved Sir Henry Barkly.' (Governor of Cape Colony).

Shepstone based his action both on the emergency contemplated in the first paragraph, and the popular desire stipulated in the second. The latter will not bear examination; the former is more doubtful.

The words of this extraordinarily dangerous commission are sufficient proof that Carnarvon entirely misunderstood the whole situation in South Africa.

[1] Leonard Courtney, afterwards Lord Courtney, a notable opponent of imperial expansion, and in later days equally remarkable for his advocacy of proportional representation and his wearing of a mustard-coloured waistcoat.

[2] Afterwards Lord St. Aldwyn, popularly known in parliamentary circles as Black Michael from the colour of his hair, and respected or avoided by more timorous members on account of the vigour of his language.

[3] The general opinion may perhaps be gathered from an article in the *Nineteenth Century* of the same year. Beginning with the remark that 'Imperial Government is a costly and onerous inheritance, and as Liberal principles have ripened, the policy of imposing rule by force upon a reluctant community has been repudiated,' it proceeds to justify the annexation. A dexterous performance.

The power of the Zulu people, crippled for the time by the Boer and British settlers in Natal some forty years before,[1] had revived in a generation of peace, and Cetewayo, the new king of that warrior people since 1873, now dreamed of restoring the military glories of the past. The long but irksome interval of quiet had not destroyed or deteriorated the fighting instincts of this people, and they gladly welcomed a return of the old days of valour of which their fathers had boasted. 'Here is Tshaka come back to us,' cried the braves when they knew their new sovereign's character: the old discipline was restored to the Zulu army, the old desire to wash their spears in the blood of the enemy revived. Foreign influence, which had obtained some superficial hold in his predecessor's reign, was despised by Cetewayo; and the missionaries of Christianity, who had secured a precarious permission in the days of peace to settle in the country, were now expelled, for Cetewayo held that 'A Zulu converted was a Zulu spoiled'; the sixteen mission stations were perforce abandoned, and the religion of peace had no longer any place in the land whose real creed was war. Cetewayo.

It seemed clear that Cetewayo, like his forbears Dingana and Tshaka, was preparing for a reign of blood: massacres revived in the country,[2] and Cetewayo coolly defended his action in answer to a remonstrance from the British. 'Did I ever tell Mr. Shepstone I would not kill?' he exclaimed. 'Did he tell the white people I made such an arrangement? Because if he did he has deceived them. I do kill. But do not con-

[1] Bk. xxiii. ch. vi.

[2] A large number of young women had transgressed one of the fundamental laws of Zululand, and married the men they chose, instead of those for whom they were destined. Many of these and their friends were in consequence murdered, and the corpses exposed as a warning; and when the parents buried the bodies of their murdered children, they too were put to death. (Sir H. Bulwer to Lord Lytton, 13th Oct. 1875, in C. 1748.)

I commend this example to the advocates of Eugenics.

sider,' he added as a warning threat, 'that I have done anything yet in the way of killing. Why do the white people start at nothing? I have not yet begun; I have yet to kill; it is the custom of our nation and I shall not depart from it.'

Cetewayo likewise protested that the British had no more right to interfere in the internal affairs of Zululand than he had to interfere in those of Natal—an unexceptionable doctrine in theory which was complicated in practice by the existence of an uncertain frontier, a boundary dispute between the Transvaal Boers and the Zulu chief Sekukuni, and a raid on the borders of Natal.

Frere's Ultimatum.

The people of the colony were not ignorant of the Zulu strength and their own numerical, perhaps actual, weakness; they believed that Cetewayo and his trained army of thirty thousand men could destroy the European settlement, and from his words and character they gathered that such was his intention; and Frere, who had not long arrived in South Africa, and who had already seen a minor rising of the Kafirs on the eastern borders of Cape Colony, now found himself drawn to this more serious frontier peril. For several months he watched the position from Natal, examining the evidence for and against Cetewayo carefully; and finally he was convinced that Natal was in serious and imminent danger from the new military power of South-East Africa. He wrote home for reinforcements; but so threatening, in his view, had the black cloud of Zulu regiments on the frontier become, that he decided not to await the attack. On 11th December 1878 an ultimatum was sent to Cetewayo, imposing the terms that a suzerain power demands from an inferior; and the king was warned that if he refused, the British troops would invade his country on the first day of the following year.

'When shall wars cease on this poor earth?' said Frere sadly as he rode out of Pieter Maritzburg on the afternoon when he had determined on the ultimatum. He was too old

at his trade of government not to know that if things went wrong the blame would fall on him, too sound a man to rely on the consideration that if he waited for the Zulus to attack Natal no censure could touch him personally. It was the safety of the colonists alone that weighed with him.

Of the justice of his action there can be little doubt, for no civilised community can remain indifferent to the excesses of a more powerful savage neighbour; but the necessity of the war which followed—for Cetewayo ignored the ultimatum—is a more arguable matter. Whether the danger to Natal was real, and if real, whether it was imminent, became matters of furious controversy at the time, on which the more cautious and temperate verdict of history must pause. Frere's past career in India showed his judgment sound; his faculties were not yet dimmed by age; although a soldier, he had no glory to gain, no personal ambition to gratify, from a Zulu war, and he was sincere in his love of peace. Shepstone too, who had known the Zulus all his life, had no doubt of Cetewayo's warlike intentions. The Transvaal Boers, who advised Frere in some details of the situation, agreed with Shepstone in this if in nothing else. The people of Natal, who had some reason to know the truth, if also some cause for nervous panic to affect their judgment, held, with one considerable exception, that their existence was threatened by the revival of the Zulu military spirit. That one exception was the bishop of the colony, Colenso, an able and fearless Anglican, whose theology provoked the charge of heresy, and whose open admiration of the Zulus had brought upon him the resentment of his flock. Neither the great army nor the military fervour of Cetewayo, neither the banishment of the missionaries, nor yet the massacres which showed the revival of the old Zulu spirit, turned him against his friend the savage king; and Colenso urged his view, both in England and South Africa, with an untiring persistence that made many converts outside Natal.

Controversy over Frere's Action.

His words were not without effect on the Imperial Government, which, although it had appointed Frere, hesitated to accept his assurance as to the Zulu danger, and quite clearly disliked the war and disputed its necessity from the start.[1] Between Colenso and Frere can be no conclusive judgment, and for this reason, that Frere's action in invading Zululand destroyed the very evidence that would have proved his case. He may have saved Natal, but by forestalling the Zulu attack he destroyed the proof that an attack was contemplated. Frere held that the attack on Zululand was fundamentally a defensive war, since in his view it merely anticipated a Zulu invasion of Natal: the conclusion is sound provided the premiss is well founded.

The final verdict must rest on a balance of probabilities, on the fact that savage armies are not trained for nothing and that Zulus are not disciplined to play, on the known ambition of Cetewayo and his warriors, and on a comparison between the judgment of Colenso and Frere. As to that, it can only be said that the balance inclines towards Frere, and that his action would hardly have been impugned had it not been that a terrible disaster and an individual tragedy focused the attention of the world upon the war.

On 10th January 1879, ten days after the ultimatum sent by Frere had expired, the British troops under Lord Chelmsford marched into the wild Zulu country.[2] They numbered

[1] The Imperial Government's reluctance was due to the threatening character of international politics in Europe in 1878. It had no desire to be involved in a native frontier war in South Africa at a time when it might become involved in a first-class contest nearer home.

[2] There is a considerable literature of this war. First in authority is the official *Narrative of the Field Operations* (1881); Wilmot's *Zulu War* is good, also Norris-Newman's *In Zululand with the British in 1879*, and Ashe and Edgell's *Story of the Zulu Campaign*. Rider Haggard's *Cetywayo and his White Neighbours* is the sound work of a literary man who knew his South Africa well; other books that may be consulted with advantage are Elliott's *Victoria Cross in Zululand*, Viju's *Cetshwayo's Dutchman*, and from the pro-Zulu point of view, Colenso's *Ruin of Zululand*. For the Prince Imperial, Augustin Filon's *Memoirs of the Prince Imperial*, a work which in its English translation has lost most of the charm, but none of the inaccuracies of the French original.

some 5500 in all, and they had with them two thousand native levies,[1] none too large, but perhaps a large enough force to attack a Zulu army of thirty thousand trained men on their own proper ground. Ten days after the British force had crossed the Tugela River into Zululand, and one or two severe brushes with the enemy had occurred at Isandula and Inyezane, part of the invading army encamped at Isandhlwana, the lion's hill in the native tongue. The British troops were full of confidence, so assured indeed of success and contemptuous of their opponents that they disregarded the warnings of the Boers, who knew by past experience the Zulu methods, as to the absolute necessity of unceasing watchfulness against sudden attack, and the need of securing the camp at night against surprise.[2] This over-confidence was the direct cause of a terrible disaster.

The Zulu War, 1879.

The British force was divided; the camp, in defiance of direct orders, was not secured; and the scouts, by a miracle of blindness, had failed to discover the main Zulu army, to the number of twenty thousand men, encamped near by. It was the morning of the 22nd January, and the Zulus, restrained by some native superstition, had not meant to fight that day. But the British, catching sight of some small outpost, provoked an attack; the martial instincts of the enemy overcame their superstition. The Zulu army swung round upon its foe; before the invaders could join their ranks they were surrounded, and the sudden impetuous onslaught, characteristic

The Isandhlwana Disaster, 22nd January.

[1] These natives were an unmitigated nuisance. They had no training, and understood not a word of English, while the officers knew nothing of their tongue; they were horribly afraid of the Zulus, but the officers whose thankless task it was to lead them were more afraid of the Kafirs killing them by accident than of the Zulus killing them by design.—Hamilton Brown's *Lost Legionary in South Africa*, an admirable book by a participant in the war.

[2] This confidence was shared in Natal. One leading member of the Legislative Council, who should have known better, stated that he did not believe the Zulus would fight, and that two hundred soldiers could march from one end of Zululand to the other.

of Zulu warfare, swept away the poor defence in a few moments.[1] On that fatal day of savage triumph perished sixty officers and six hundred men of the British army.

The disorganised invaders swept back across their frontier. A heroic defence at Rorke's Drift, by a handful of men who kept the Zulu regiments at bay, somewhat restored the spirits of the troops; but it could not undo the past, nor could it save Natal a panic. Even in Durban men feared lest the conquering tide of Zulu braves should sweep them from the colony; and all along the frontier and through the land was the fear of destruction and death at the hands of the triumphant Cetewayo.[2]

Defeat of the Zulus.

But Cetewayo stayed his hand. The remainder of the British force in Zululand, which had been divided from the main body under Chelmsford, kept the natives fully occupied; reinforcements were hurried out from Cape Town and from England; Chelmsford was quietly superseded by Wolseley, but before Wolseley arrived, his unfortunate predecessor had redeemed his name in the great victory of Ulundi on 5th July. A few weeks later Cetewayo was captured and banished, and instead of one paramount chief the country was divided among thirteen kinglets whose petty authority could no longer be a danger to Natal.[3]

[1] The Zulus drove cattle before them into the British camp, and threw the defence into hopeless confusion. Had the camp been laagered this manœuvre would have been ineffectual.

A small party of whites reoccupied the camp during the night, and the Zulus seeing them thought the enemy had come to life again, and refrained from attack.

[2] So bad was the panic that Hamilton Browne found one prosperous farmhouse which had been deserted the moment the news arrived. A meal was on the table, the coffee in the oven, and the food on the plates weeks after it had been abandoned. Even money and jewellery had been left behind in the hurry.

[3] One of these minor sovereigns, and perhaps the greatest of them, was one John Dunn, a renegade Englishman who had adopted Zulu customs and possessed several Zulu wives.

The system of Zulu kinglets, which was Wolseley's own idea, proved unworkable in practice. Some years later Cetewayo was allowed to return to his people; he gave no trouble, but his successor precipitated another outbreak, which caused much trouble in Natal, in 1906.

But the war had not closed without another mournful tragedy. Among those who had come out to Africa as a volunteer in this campaign was the Prince Imperial of France, son of the third Napoleon, and claimant to the crown which had fallen from his father after the disaster of Sedan. It was unwise that a foreign prince of so high rank, an exile from his proper throne and the honoured guest of England, should be allowed to share so dangerous a service; but the lad was intelligent and brave, and none could have foreseen the shameful story of his death.

Death of Prince Imperial of France.

On the morning of the 1st June, the Prince accompanied a small patrol of six mounted men and one friendly Zulu under the command of Lieutenant Carey to Ityotyozi. The patrol was too small for safety, the watch was careless, and the whole party was suddenly attacked by the enemy. A panic broke out; the English troopers saddled and galloped away, Carey with the rest, leaving the Prince Imperial, who had some difficulty in mounting his horse,[1] to make his escape as best he could.

He did not escape; he alone of the party that should have protected him was taken by the Zulus. When the news was known to the main army a search was made, and his body was found lying on a bed of wild flowers, the face looking upward to the sky, the eyes open as if smiling; but the corpse had been stripped of all save an amulet which the prince's mother had given him, and it was stabbed with eighteen wounds from Zulu assegais.[2]

[1] The Prince was an excellent horseman, who could easily vault into the saddle from the ground (Butler's *Autobiography*), but the horse was a wild one, and the shameful fact that some dishonest tradesman had made the saddle partly of brown paper added to his difficulty.

Brown (*A Lost Legionary*), who knew the country and the Zulus, declared that the small patrol could probably have escaped had they stood together. Not a doubt of it, for all save one did in fact escape.

[2] The corpse was brought to England, and buried at Farnborough, in the magnificent tomb where Napoleon III. also lay.

So perished the Prince Imperial of France, to the shame of England, in a tragedy of cowardice. The miserable Carey was tried by court-martial, and his sentence, which was kept secret, was forwarded to England for confirmation; but the Empress Eugénie, with a merciful compassion that not every parent could have shown, intervened to save the miscreant that had lost her only son and the chief hope of the royalists of France.

With that unhappy memory an unfortunate campaign drew to a close. The Zulu War had provoked far stronger criticism than the annexation of the Transvaal in England, where the Isandhlwana disaster and the death of the Prince Imperial had startled and alarmed men into momentary attention to the obscure and complex politics of South Africa. Few understood the real position: some held, and not without apparent justification for their attitude, that the war had been provoked by Frere,[1] others maintained the low and selfish theory inherited from Cobden, that the colonists were in favour of such campaigns because they led to the presence of a British army and consequently the spending of much money in their country.[2] And some held the extraordinary belief, which could hardly be excused even by complete ignorance of South African conditions, that the Zulus were an oppressed and hardly-treated people who would have

[1] The mild *Spectator*, a supporter of Liberalism in those days, remarked that 'Frere was perhaps the most conspicuous example of the class of men who will deliberately conceive and carry out an iniquitous policy, thinking all the while that they are doing God service and conferring benefits on the victims of their policy. . . . We are thankful that a man so fanatically and sincerely colour-blind as to the fundamental laws of political morality no longer occupies a position of official responsibility.' (London *Spectator*, 27th August 1881.) The true accent of insular party passion.

[2] The London *Daily News* (8th July 1879) stated that Frere 'had allied himself with the worst passions and sinister motives of the colonists, (who) sponge on the Empire, to prosecute their own gain at the cost of the mother country. They make war with the British taxpayers' money and the British soldiers' blood.' This was the very voice of Cobden (vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

preferred peace, but had been forced to defend themselves against their will.[1]

From the Zulu War men turned naturally to the condition of the Transvaal, whose annexation by Britain had passed with little comment; and here also was material in plenty for comment and criticism. At first, indeed, all had seemed to go well in the new province. Confidence was renewed, the public credit was restored—although not without Shepstone drawing heavily on the Imperial Government to pay the debts of the defunct republic, in a lavish manner which frightened the cautious officials of the Colonial Office;[2] and many of the Boers congratulated Shepstone on saving the country from disaster, and a memorial protesting against the deputation that had gone to London to complain of annexation was largely supported, its signatories including six members of the late Volksraad.

Troubles with the Transvaal, 1877-80.

All seemed well; but Bartle Frere, a wiser man than Shepstone, soon realised that several dangerous undercurrents of public opinion ran beneath the superficial quiet. He was well aware that the sudden revolution had come as a shock to the conservative Dutch colonists throughout South Africa; it was clearly disliked by the Ministry at Cape Town; Shepstone, too, was becoming personally unpopular in the Transvaal, and the Boers had good reasons for their dislike. He came from Natal, a British colony for which they had no love, and he held views as to native policy which they detested. He had annexed the Transvaal to defend it from the Zulus, and the promise had not been carried out—the Boers had had to defend themselves. Moreover, Shepstone was a man of no

[1] This attitude was taken by a pseudo-philanthropic agency, which called itself the Aborigines Protection Society.

[2] One of these officials declared himself 'aghast' at Shepstone's financial methods. Vouchers were produced for about one-third only of the payments; the unvouched revenue contained duplicate charges, and such items as Shepstone's hat, and somebody else's hair brushes, cricket bat, and fishing-rod.

constructive or administrative ability,[1] and constructive genius was badly needed in the anarchic condition of the country. The old republican constitution was no more; but no new constitution had been proclaimed. The Volksraad had not been summoned, lest it should protest against the annexation, but no new Assembly, not even a nominated Council, had been called, and public meetings had been forbidden.

Shepstone's rule, in short, was an autocracy, and a foreign autocracy, such as the freedom-loving Boers would not abide; and many of the burghers, sorrowfully abandoning hope of better things, had determined, like their ancestors, to quit their homes and trek further north into Mashonaland, where freedom might be theirs once more.

But at that moment Shepstone was recalled, Colonel Lanyon was appointed in his stead, and in April 1879 Bartle Frere paid an official visit to Pretoria. As he rode towards the capital, whose very name commemorated one of the great Boer leaders who had shaken off British rule in Cape Colony, he found large numbers of the Boers, fifteen or sixteen hundred in all, encamped awaiting him a few miles from the city. He had been warned that his life would not be safe among them, but he disregarded the base suggestion—for the Boers were men, and could respect a man even if an enemy—and entered their ranks. As he passed through ahead of his escort, he raised his hand to the salute; not a man of all that gathering acknowledged it. They stood in moody deathlike silence, watching the representative of the power they hated, who had come to discuss the situation with their leaders; and in this dismal fashion the conference opened.

Frere visits Pretoria, 1879.

[1] This judgment was passed by Frere, who had ample opportunities of deciding. But if Frere's statement were distrusted, the facts of the case would proclaim its truth.

Frere explained to the Boers that the annexation could never be undone—he had no foreknowledge that his grave words as a ruler of the Empire would be turned to mockery within two years—but that he was anxious to discuss the future constitution of the country with them. His hearers would have none of it. Piet Joubert, a man of whom the British were to know much more in the ensuing twenty years,[1] had failed to deliver Frere's message to the assembled Boers concerning a constitution; an angry altercation followed, but Joubert declared plainly, 'I should mislead your Excellency if I said that the people of the Transvaal would be content with anything short of their independence. All the independence as defined in the Cape Colony and England is understood by the people who have chosen their sovereign or voluntarily stand under that sovereignty, and unlike us, who have never consented to such sovereignty. A slave, however kindly treated, desires his liberty, and will exchange for such slavery freedom, even though it might entail great misery.' To which Frere answered, 'Mr. Joubert, I think we have had enough of this tall talk. You must know that it is pure nonsense, this talk of being a slave.'

A Constitution promised.

It was clear that nothing could be done to lessen this stubborn love of independence, which an Englishman in other circumstances might have admired. 'Unless I had seen it,' Frere wrote home, 'I could not have believed that in two years things could have drifted into such a mess.' He did his best—and the best that Frere could do was very good indeed—to save the situa-

The new Transvaal Legislature, February 1880.

[1] Piet Joubert, like Paul Kruger, had been born a British subject, at Graaff Reynet, in 1831. He was the child of one of the Voortrekkers, and as such had great influence in the counsels of the Transvaal; but although he stood for independence, his career showed him less firm of purpose than his dour associate. He was no irreconcilable foe of the British, and unlike Kruger, he was prepared to work with them rather than against them whenever it was possible. But Kruger's masterful character overbore Joubert's more pacific views.

tion; he drew up the scheme of a new constitution, and planned a better administration of justice;[1] but over all his work lay this fatal flaw, that it came too late. What might have had a bare chance, but no more than a bare chance, of success in 1877 was hopeless three years later; this new constitution was fruitless.[2] The Executive Council met, indeed, on 23rd February 1880, and the Legislative Assembly on 10th March; but before the year was out the crisis had arrived. In December 1880, the old Volksraad of the republic was convened at Paardekraal—a clear act of rebellion.

The Boers rebel, 1880.

That there should be no doubt regarding their attitude a lengthy proclamation was published embodying the grievances of the Boers and declaring war upon the British, and a triumvirate—Paul Kruger, Pretorius, and Piet Joubert—was appointed to carry on a provisional government.[3] The seat of government was declared to be at Heidelberg, and the flag was hoisted on 16th December, the day which had been kept for many years as 'Dingaan's Day.'[4]

Folly of the British Policy.

This sudden outbreak clearly took the British by surprise. Until the last moment they had thought—and it was nearly the last and worst of their many mistakes in this dismal business—that the situation was improving. They had not realised the stubborn independence of the Dutchman, although history might have taught them

[1] Frere's plans were described by himself in the London *Nineteenth Century*, February 1881.

[2] 'Do you understand,' said Paul Kruger to a fellow-Boer, 'what this self-government is that the British offer you? I will try to explain. They say to you, first put your head quietly in the noose, so that I can hang you up; then you may kick your legs about as much as you please.' An apt illustration.

[3] A curious point about this proclamation was that the republic declared itself 'prepared to confederate with the colonies and states of South Africa.'

[4] For Dingana and Dingaan's Day, see bk. xxiv. ch. i.

The actual rebellion arose out of the seizure by the British of a Boer farmer's goods to enforce payment of his taxes. The farmer's name was

something of his character, and a knowledge of psychology have taught them more. Their fundamental error and their colossal folly was the conviction, ineradicable from English minds, that British institutions are so superior to those of other peoples that less fortunate men must always crave for British government: behind all their actions was the unspoken belief that they were doing a worthy act in repairing the strange error of an otherwise kindly Providence, which had made men in His image and forgot to make them British. That absurd belief underlay the whole of this Transvaal question.[1] In their desire to give the Boers the blessings of a government which they did not realise its people hated, Carnarvon and Shepstone had been stupidly honest; one is almost tempted by the result to say that it would have been better had they been cleverly dishonest.

One fundamental error should have been sufficient, but others followed. The Conservative Cabinet in England which had appointed Frere allowed his policy in the Zulu War

Bezuidenhout, and he was a descendant of the Bezuidenhout of Schlater's Nek (bk. xxiii. ch. iii.). Had the British been a superstitious people, they would not have worried that unquiet family again.

[1] It was suggested by some Boer apologists that Britain annexed the country for two reasons—because the Transvaal was known to contain gold, and because the British were no longer confronted with the menace of the French Empire in Europe after 1871, and therefore were able to expand in the outer world.

Nobody can pry into the thoughts of dead men, and it is easy to impute motives which cannot be proved wrong. As to the first reason, I will only say that I have examined the records pretty carefully, and can find no shadow of a hint before the annexation that the British Government or Shepstone knew the great value of the Transvaal goldfields; it was eight years before the Witwatersrand was discovered, and the older gold workings in the country were not very successful.

As to the second reason, I doubt if the Franco-German War directly had the effect on British opinion suggested above. It certainly made Britain realise that her dream of peaceable commercial expansion was an imperfect reflection of the facts; but the removal of pressure in Europe does not necessarily make for oversea expansion. The competition of Germany a few years later led directly to colonial expansion. For the whole subject of British expansion and the reasons underlying it, see vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

to be censured in the House of Commons; and that censure, which arrived in South Africa when he was negotiating with the Boers, distinctly weakened his authority. The same Conservative Cabinet divided his office as High Commissioner, and gave the Transvaal and Natal to Wolseley, whose ideas of policy were those of a soldier in a conquered country.[1] On each occasion Frere's natural instinct and better course was to have resigned, but the very Government which censured him begged him to remain.

The Conservatives had done their best to ruin any slight chances of a South African settlement; it was now the turn of the Liberals. The imperialist wave in England had spent its force for the time; the flowing tide of British expansion had now retreated, and a strong reaction was visible towards the Little England policy of the early Victorian period. The annexation of Cyprus [2] and a military excursion into Afghánistán had taken place in the same years as the seizure of the Transvaal and the Zulu War; and the policy of conquest which Disraeli had inaugurated furnished a weapon which his Liberal opponents were not slow to use. As the general election of 1880 approached, Gladstone emerged from his retirement, and swept the country with a torrent of rhetorical passion; on one occasion he described the Transvaal as 'a country where we have chosen, most unwisely, I am tempted to say insanely, to place ourselves in the strange predicament of the free subjects of a monarchy going to coerce the free subjects of a republic, and to compel them to accept a citizenship which they decline and refuse'; in another speech he declared 'that if these acquisitions were as valuable as they are valueless, I would repudiate them, because they were

[1] There was some friction between Bartle Frere and Wolseley, not unnatural in the circumstances. I need not rake up the details.
Wolseley made several blunders in the Transvaal as extraordinary as his settlement after the Zulu War. He had Pretorius imprisoned on a charge of high treason, then released him, and nominated him for a seat on the Legislative Council. *Quem Deus vult perdere* . . . .

[2] See vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv.

obtained by means dishonourable to the character of our country.'

Such was the burning fever of election; but when it had played its part, and Gladstone entered office in triumph, a cold reaction of official responsibility quickly followed. The Boers, who did not understand that it was a sacred custom among their enemies for otherwise honourable men to promise in opposition what they could not fulfil in office, awaited with impatience the restoration of their country; when the boon was delayed, they made inquiry, and to their utter amazement were officially assured that 'it was impossible now to consider the question as if it were presented for the first time. . . . Our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish her sovereignty over the Transvaal.'

The contradiction between promise and performance, which astounded the Boers, was too much even for Gladstone's own party followers; and many of the Liberals, balked of their desire to restore the Transvaal Republic its independence, appealed to Gladstone that at least Sir Bartle Frere, against whom a violent campaign of vituperation had been waged, should be recalled. The Government consented, and on 1st August 1880, Frere was dismissed from office.

He was the one man who emerged from the whole affair with credit; he was not responsible for the annexation of the Transvaal, nor for the miserable mess that had been made by Carnarvon and Hicks-Beach, Shepstone, Lanyon, and Wolseley of the Transvaal question; he was respected by the Boers as an honest man, loved by the Cape Dutch, trusted by the natives.[1] For that reason, perhaps, he was sacrificed;

[1] Molteno, Prime Minister of Cape Colony, who had come into collision with Frere over the Zulu War, denounced him as the dictator of South Africa up to Zanzibar. Frere was certainly a strong man, but the universal sorrow of South Africa at his recall showed that the people did not share the angry politician's opinion.

On the other hand, the Liberal prejudice against Frere in England survived twenty years and more. I notice, in one of the books of G. W. E. Russell, a politician turned paragraphist, he casually refers to South Africa as 'the scene of Bartle Frere's misdeeds.' It had other titles to fame.

the offerings to evil gods in some religions must be the finest in the flock.[1]

The War of 1881.

The Boers now perceived the weakness of the British Government—they had not yet probed it to the bottom—and they struck for independence. For six months before the old flag of the Transvaal was hoisted secret preparations had been making: the British had been warned of the danger of rebellion; they had not believed it.[2] But within a week after the rebel flag was hoisted and Joubert, the Commandant-General of the Boer forces, had marched towards Natal, the small British garrisons stationed at Pretoria and other centres in the Transvaal were isolated;[3] the authority of the Imperial Government had collapsed with a crash; and the first British defeat in that short and disastrous campaign had occurred. Four days after the outbreak of the war, a company of British troops was surrounded and taken prisoner at Bronkerspruit.[4]

[1] Frere never recovered from the shock. He died on 26th May 1884, his last words being, 'If they would only read the *Further Correspondence*, they would surely understand—they must be satisfied.' The hope was vain; Englishmen do not read blue books. I doubt if a dozen men beside myself have even glanced at the documents since Frere died.

[2] General Pomeroy-Colley, High Commissioner of South-East Africa, Governor of Natal, and the tragic hero of the ensuing war, had been warned by a loyal Boer. He thought the talk of rebellion mere bluff. So also did Shepstone. When men on the spot were so deceived, the Imperial Government need not be blamed if it misjudged the situation in this respect.

[3] For the benefit of the British garrison at Pretoria, a newspaper was issued by an enterprising journalist three times a week at the price of sixpence, called *News of the Camp, a journal of fancies, notifications, gossip, and general chit-chat.* Advertisements were accepted at two shillings the line, and later in the campaign, when they were somewhat scarce, the price was reduced to a shilling. With a grim humour, not unworthy of the camp, the first leading article was headed, 'Peace on earth, goodwill towards men.'

[4] There were allegations of treachery against the Boers on this and many other occasions of this war. Some of the allegations were perhaps justified; but there will always be accidents in mortal combat, and men fighting for their independence will not stick at the niceties of military etiquette.

As regards Bronkerspruit, I have examined the evidence on both sides, and I think the Boer defence against their accusers holds good.

The commander of the British troops in the neighbour colony of Natal at that time was likewise High Commissioner of South-East Africa, a gallant soldier who had served with success and distinction in Ashanti under Wolseley and in the great Afghan campaign of 1879. Sir George Pomeroy-Colley[1] had been accounted lucky by his friends, had always held himself till now a favourite of fortune; but now the time had come when the fates that guard our little destinies did more than equalise the scales.

Sir George Colley.

From the first day he took command events went wrong. He left Maritzburg on 10th January 1881; the rivers were in flood, the roads were quagmires. Had he waited a few weeks, reinforcements would have come from India; but Colley would not wait. With a small force of twelve hundred men he hurried forward towards the Transvaal frontier to relieve the imprisoned British garrisons; but at the steep pass of Laing's Nek on the mountains that divide the two countries he was repulsed by the rebels under Joubert. The British artillery was ineffectual, the Boer guns were deadly in their aim; and Colley found himself defeated. 'I am too tired and sad to write much,' he said as he sent the news home; but instead of retreating he pushed forward and crossed the double drift of the Ingogo River. He was again attacked, and again repulsed, and forced to recross the stream. The Boers did not pursue them, for this time the fight had been more equal, and the Boer leader admitted that he 'had got all there was to be got out of the men'; and now negotiations opened.

The Imperial Government had now to pay the price of Gladstone's contradiction. It had not anticipated the rebellion; it detested the war; it hated the idea both of carry-

[1] Colley's *Life* has been admirably written by Sir William Butler, whose work is valuable both from a military point of view and the fact that it contains many official documents.

The general history of the campaign may be studied in Carter, *Narrative of the Boer War*.

ing the war further and of owning itself beaten. It therefore suggested that a settlement of 'the present difficulties' could be arranged if the rebels would consent to a 'cessation of armed opposition.' The negotiations miscarried; Colley still believed that 'in a few weeks (he could) break the back of the military resistance'; and in that forlorn hope, and with only the remnant of his little army, he again pressed forward.

He had not waited for reinforcements; and when he came in sight of the Boer army, which far outnumbered his, he seized the hill which lay as a great natural bastion before their lines. Amajuba or Majuba Hill—the hill of doves, in the native tongue—seemed an impregnable position, so inaccessible indeed that the Boers had not thought of occupying it. As the British troops climbed and scrambled up the heights in the dead of night on 26th February, they had to support themselves by seizing tufts of grass or projecting fragments of the rock; and when day dawned on Sunday, 27th February, they looked down upon the enemy beneath with the full assurance of success. Only Colley, already shaken by his past defeats, was doubtful of the issue: 'It is a strange world of chances,' he wrote in a tender letter of farewell to his wife at home—and the chances of war had gone against him.

Majuba Hill, 27th February 1881.

The British force was 554 rifles in all, and they carried with them three days' food and seventy rounds of ammunition per man. It seemed that that would be sufficient to hold Majuba Hill; so strong, in fact, was the position that some of the Boers advised their leader Joubert to retire. A council of war was hurriedly summoned to discuss the new position; and for perhaps the first time in the history of councils of war, the bolder course was determined on. It was decided to storm Majuba Hill.

The decision seemed a foolhardy one, entirely out of keeping with the Boer character, which if brave was cautious. But the keen-eyed men beneath had discovered that the British

force on the summit was not a large one; picked shots had volunteered to scale the height and take such cover as they could: the chance of success, though small, was worth the risk.

The ascent began. As the volunteers started on their difficult and perilous task, their comrades below maintained a steady fire at the British. It was harmless, but it had the effect of distracting their attention; and slowly but yet steadily the Boers crept up the hill.

Suddenly one party emerged unseen, close on an astonished picket of the British. Taking careful aim, they fired, and firing, killed their men. One of the rough tracks that led from the Boer side of the hill to the summit, of whose existence the British had been ignorant when they climbed Majuba the night before, was now unguarded. Along this the Boers advanced more quickly, and as they neared the summit they discovered that the British had omitted to entrench their camp.

It was a fatal error. The Boers came on towards the summit, pouring in a deadly fire; a disgraceful panic, such as will sometimes unnerve the best of troops, broke out among the British. They saw that the position they had thought impregnable was lost; and like a flock of frightened sheep, they broke and fled.

But Colley did not run. He stood steadily watching the Boer advance; and in those last dreadful moments of his life he knew that his premonition of disaster had been true, and all was lost. Standing straight up upon the summit he awaited the end with outward calm; a ball struck him full in the forehead, and so he died.

Of Colley as a general there is little need to speak. His precipitance and rashness, his mistakes and blunders, were patent to the world. He had only to wait for reinforcements, and Laing's Nek might have been avoided; he had only to have stayed in camp again, and Majuba need never have been fought. He was doubtless a brave man, but he proved a poor soldier in command.

Yet when all is admitted against Colley that can be admitted, the Boer storming of Majuba Hill remains an amazing feat of arms, an achievement of which any army might be proud, a daring enterprise which should have ended once for all the talk of cowardice which some British levelled at the Boers, a piece of soldier-craft which should have made the British understand this was no common enemy with whom they fought.[1]

The Imperial Government surrenders.

Majuba was the last battle of the war. These petty defeats—they were little more—and a plain warning that the Orange Free State might make common cause with the Transvaal, were enough to dishearten the Imperial Government. It was decided that the annexation which Gladstone had first condemned and then confirmed should be annulled; an armistice was arranged with the Boers, and an attempt was made to establish a basis for a definite peace. A phrase was invented by Gladstone to deceive the people; he declared that terms had been arranged to save the nation from sheer blood-guiltiness; but the phrase did not deceive the British and the concession did not delude the Boers.[2] The surrender seemed cowardly,

[1] Yet the same charges of cowardice and incompetence were brought seventeen years afterwards in the second Anglo-Boer war. Fitzpatrick, in *The Transvaal from Within*, remarked that the Boer military reputation was the largest unpricked bubble in the world—this before Colenso and the Modder River. The British as a nation are far too ready to impute cowardice to the enemy; it is perhaps a modest way of depreciating the merits of their own victory.

[2] In February 1881, the Transvaal issued a moving appeal to the Orange Free State. 'Come and help us. Consider our case. God rules, and is with us. It is His will to unite us as a people, to make a United South Africa, free from British authority. The future brightens for us. His will be done.'

An honest or incautious member of the British Cabinet admitted several years afterwards that it was the fear that the Free State might join the Transvaal, and no fear of sheer blood-guiltiness, which determined the Imperial Government's action. The speaker was Lord Kimberley, the place Sheffield, the date 1899; and so perturbed did he feel by his indiscretion that he asked the reporters present not to publish that passage of his speech. The London reporters did not; but the local reporters, whom he forgot or who forgot his request, published it in full.

the excuse was hypocrisy; the plain facts were that the Imperial Government had not anticipated war, that at the first pinch of distress it had no stomach for more fighting, and that the mere threat of one third-rate pastoral republic allying itself with another third-rate pastoral republic was enough to bring a shaking Imperial Cabinet to its knees.

But it stooped ungracefully enough, and played the part of the convicted thief who attempts to cheat his captors by swallowing some of the spoils. It was at first proposed that part of the Transvaal should be given back to the Boers, part retained by the British. The Boers naturally objected; and the Royal Commission which was sent out from England to determine the final terms of peace, knowing that the Imperial Government would not support its views by force, gave way. Little but the pale shadow of a British suzerainty over the foreign relations of the Transvaal survived the terms of peace in 1881, and even that was modified three years later by the London Convention of 1884.[1]

[1] Would the trouble have been avoided had it not been for Gladstone's vacillation? I doubt it. It is true that Kruger, the real leader of the rebellion, became a member of the Transvaal Council under the British, took British money for his services, and even asked for more—which was refused; but he was an irreconcilable at heart, and he had not that nice sense of honour which would have prevented some men from accepting a living from the enemy while plotting a rebellion.

Gladstone's speeches out of office and his action in office had aggravated and made impossible an already difficult situation; but the original mistake was Carnarvon's misconception of the situation. Shepstone's inaction made things worse; Wolseley's blunders and Lanyon's stupidity did not improve the situation; but Gladstone's speeches (and the encouragement given the Boers by his followers, notably Courtney, who corresponded with Kruger) were the final cause.

It is nevertheless true that there were many signs of unrest before his speeches, but no actual sign of rebellion.

But the bitterness on the Boer side was very great; an example will illustrate it clearly. During the war an English resident sent a letter to his wife to relieve her anxiety, and prayed Joubert's aid to pass it through. The letter was returned by Joubert with the following note on a blank page: 'Why do you bear arms against us? In this most inequous (*sic*) war of Lanyon? Don't ask us for favours as long as your administrator is a fool.' It was not, of course, Lanyon's war at all, but the folly of his administration cannot be denied.

The original of this letter is now in the library of the Royal Colonial Institute.

The Transvaal had won; and Paul Kruger, the man who had played the leading part in the struggle for independence, became the next President of the restored republic.[1] He hated, and he had hated since his boyhood, the British Empire and the English people: at a politic moment he could dissemble his feelings, and disguise his contempt in terms of adulation;[2] but it was his aim, and it remained his aim during the ensuing sixteen eventful years during which he was President, the first and last President of the restored republic, to block the British road to the north which missionaries and traders had opened, to build a solid Dutch Afrikander nation out of the older settlers in Cape Colony and Natal, and so far to reduce the strength of the British element in South Africa as to compel the British Government in the end to withdraw from the country altogether.

The Policy of Paul Kruger, Transvaal President.

And at that time, after the fatal five years' blundering which ended in the retrocession of the Transvaal, there seemed nothing impossible in Kruger's aim. Men who commit such mistakes and show such vacillating policy as the British Ministers had done deserve to lose their Empire; and Paul Kruger had with him not only his own people of the Transvaal, but the active sympathy of the Free State, and of large numbers of the Cape Colony Dutch. In the year 1881, when the British cause seemed hopeless in South Africa, a revival of Cape Dutch nationalist feeling was clearly noticeable; and in the following year a remarkable organisation which had chosen

The Afrikander Bond, 1882.

[1] For Kruger's origin and early life, see bk. xxiv. ch. iii.

[2] 'We do not wish to seek a quarrel,' wrote Kruger as head of the provisional Boer Government on 12th February 1881, 'but cannot do otherwise than shed our last drop of blood for our just rights, as every Englishman would do. We know that the noble English nation, when once truth and justice reach them, will stand on one side.' This in public; in private the *Memoirs* show a very different tone. But the compliment flattered his correspondents of the anti-Imperial party in England.

for its name the Afrikander Bond held its first congress at Graaff Reynet, the historic centre of Cape Dutch independence since the proclamation of the short-lived republic of 1795.[1] Its programme was cautiously but clearly worded; and it declared that, 'While in itself acknowledging no single form of government as the only suitable form, and while acknowledging the form of government at present existing, (the Bond) holds that the aim of our national development must be a united South Africa under its own flag.'[2]

This was evidently nothing more than passive obedience, if indeed it was as much; and passive obedience may easily be transformed by circumstance to active disloyalty. Events less startling than Majuba, weakness less criminal than that of Gladstone, would be sufficient to turn an organisation of this character openly on the side of rebellion; and if the constitution and the avowed object of the Bond were justly condemned as veiled treason, the speeches of its leaders left no doubt whatever of its ultimate aim. The real founder of the Bond, du Toit, a Cape Dutch clergyman who transferred to politics the enthusiasm which was not permitted by the chilling creed of his church, declared in a speech at Amsterdam that 'the South African flag shall yet wave from Table Bay to the Zambesi, be that end accomplished by blood or by ink. If blood it is to be, we shall not lack the men to spill it'; and in the newspaper which he conducted—*De Patriot*—where the nationalist Afrikander policy was outlined, it was made clear that the Dutch language, or rather the soft enfeebled dialect of Dutch which was spoken at the Cape, was to displace the spreading English tongue, that marriages and social intercourse between the British and the Dutch were to be discountenanced, and the

It aims at South African Independence.

[1] See bk. xxiii. ch. iii,

[2] Some good and several indifferent studies of the Afrikander ideal of South Africa will be found in vol. cciii. of the pamphlets of the Royal Colonial Institute, in Worsfold's *Lord Milner's Work in South Africa*, and in more detail in Iwan-Müller's *Lord Milner and South Africa*.

independent republics of the Transvaal and the Orange to be reverenced as the standard-bearers of the future. The real barrier to South African federation was declared to be the British flag, and from the Bond point of view the assertion was correct.

This sudden nationalist agitation, the unforeseen consequence of the British surrender, was dangerous both from an imperial and colonial aspect: from the latter, because it persuaded the Dutch inhabitants of Cape Colony to put the interests of the Transvaal before their own; from the former, because it worked ceaselessly to undermine the Empire from within.

In the first year of its existence the Bond showed its strength by securing that Dutch as well as English should be spoken in the Cape Parliament. There was nothing against the change save that it was recommended by the Bond; but politicians soon discovered by other signs that a new force had risen in Cape politics. While the Bond had not yet power enough to obtain a majority or form a ministry of its own, it had the power to keep the party that did its bidding in office, or to turn a ministry out that refused its demands. And there was the prospect that after a decade or so of steady work by its enthusiastic supporters, it might yet hold the power itself, not merely the balance of power. If that day came, as seemed not unlikely, and if the principles of the Bond were unchanged, as seemed even less unlikely, it would be a bad day for British South Africa.

Its Qualified Success.

But that day did not come, and strong as the Bond was, its power remained considerable but never overwhelming, and its principles were quietly revised and moderated. The Cape Dutch are not by nature a revolutionary people; some of them had no great grievance against the British, and refused to join the agitation; and many sympathised with Merriman, the brilliant Cape English politician, who bluntly accused the Bond of stirring up race-hatred—an accusation whose truth could not be denied. The attack told; and by 1885 the professed, perhaps

the actual aim of the Bond had been changed at the instance of Jan Hofmeyr, an able but enigmatic politician whose growing influence was felt rather than seen throughout South Africa. The anti-British character of the Bond was damped down, its original profession of veiled independence expunged from the articles of its constitution, and the enthusiastic nationalist propaganda transformed into alliance with a peaceful agricultural association, which worked for years in close association and occasional harmony with Cecil Rhodes. The nationalist Afrikander objective of the Bond slumbered rather than died under the influence of Hofmeyr, who had the acumen to see, what more hasty politicians had not seen, that British policy in South Africa, however vacillating, would never vacillate to the extent of abandoning the country altogether: but for several years it was the natural tendency of the Bond as an essentially Cape Dutch league, to thwart British expansion and to encourage Boer expansion in South Africa; and that, at a time when both Briton and Boer were intent upon expansion, was an asset of no small value to Paul Kruger.[1]

Discouragement of the British.

To combat Kruger and the Afrikander Bond, and their mutual ideal of South African national union founded on racial exclusiveness and Boer isolation and independence,[2] the British had on their side nothing but the consciousness of defeat, of imperial blunders that seemed irreparable, of divided local

[1] Some years later the excellent du Toit, the founder of this league, whose vital principle was secession from the empire, became a convinced Imperialist. A short personal experience of the Kruger Government in Pretoria sufficed to change his views.

Strangely enough, although I have read any number of English apologists for the Transvaal Government, I have never seen a reference to this fact in their writings; nor do they usually enlarge much on the origin and aims of the Bond.

[2] The Afrikander ideal worked in much the same fashion as the Czech national ideal in Bohemia, and the Polish national ideal in Germany. In each case the bitterness of the smaller nationality was carried into social life; in each case the dominance of the ruling people was to be thrown off. But the Czechs had no Kruger, the Poles no Johannesburg.

interests between Cape Colony and Natal, divided commercial interests between Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and Durban —seemingly a hopeless prospect. Their soldiers had failed in the war; their Government had more than failed, it had dishonourably failed, in its policy.

They did not know that in the young English diamond-digger from Kimberley who took his seat in the Cape Parliament in 1881, the year of Majuba, they had one who would raise their prestige to a higher point than it had ever reached before; few recognised, when Cecil Rhodes made his noteworthy declaration in 1883: 'I have my own views as to the future of South Africa, and I believe in a United States of South Africa, but as a portion of the British Empire'—that he had thrown down a challenge to the man who had just become President of the South African Republic, and whose steady aim it was to drive British rule from the southern half of the continent altogether.

Cecil Rhodes enters Politics, 1881.

But very quickly it was seen that these two men, Cecil Rhodes and Paul Kruger, stood for the two contending policies in South Africa: the policy of Kruger one of Dutch exclusiveness and Dutch Afrikander rule; the policy of Rhodes that expressed in his own words, South African union under the British Empire, and 'equal rights for every civilised man south of the Zambesi.' Between the two men and the two policies a long duel now began which lasted twenty years, and ended only with the death of the one and the defeat and exile of the other.

His Duel with Kruger.

The two men were not unworthy of the fight or the interests involved, and each had his own peculiar advantages and disabilities in the coming struggle. Each man was strong and dogged, each typical of his masterful race; each refused to accept defeat, and returned to the fight with admirable pertinacity. In that respect the struggle was an equal one; in others it was not.

The two Men contrasted.

Paul Kruger had a solid people at his back, but no money; Rhodes had much money, but no popular support at the start of his political career. Kruger was the head of his government, with all the immense prestige of a Voortrekker in the land the Voortrekkers had taken, and the added merit of having saved his country from the British in 1881; Rhodes was a mere private member at the Cape, hardly known among the British, and likely to find himself opposed as soon as he was known among the Dutch.

Kruger accused his English adversary of foul play;[1] but he himself fought doggedly, by fair means and foul—for he was too much in earnest to observe the bonds of treaties when they conflicted with his aims—to gain his ends; no man ever fought better. It was his misfortune that the cause he represented was a dying one, and it was the supreme tragedy of his life that he lived to see it dead. It was not indeed the cause of liberty that was dying—that cause can never die while men are men—but the cause of isolation, and with it the independent Boer dominion in South Africa. Certainly it was through no special virtue of the British that they won, or fault of the Boers that they lost, in the long fight which lay ahead; it was simply that the British represented the future, and the Boers clung to the past. A combination of economic circumstances and the genius of one Englishman destroyed Paul Kruger's dream; but when he became President in 1883 those circumstances were unforeseen and the Englishman was unknown.[2]

[1] Kruger says in his *Memoirs* that the murder of Grobler, his emissary to Lo Bengula (bk. xxiv. ch. iv.), was instigated by Rhodes and his clique. But he brings no evidence to support the charge; nor has anybody ever done so. The charge may be dismissed as unfounded; it was not by such means that Rhodes gained his ends.

[2] A curious but not inexact parallel might be drawn between the contest of Spaniards and English in North America, and that of Dutch and English in South Africa. In both cases the former were the first European inhabitants of an undeveloped land. In both cases they came in contact with aboriginal savages, who lost the territories they were incapable of using. In both cases the Spaniards and Dutch

The first round of the fight was fought out over the vital question of expansion. The limits of the Transvaal Republic had certainly been defined by the revised Convention of 1884, but that made no difference to Paul Kruger, who had no respect for a treaty when it conflicted with his desires, and no belief that the British would be more exacting in the future than the past. At first he was successful. The Transvaal incorporated part of Zululand in its territories under the title of the New Republic in 1884; it was already watching an opportunity of expansion in Swaziland which might give it an outlet to the sea, and the full independence which it sought; and a movement among the burghers to trek into the fertile pastures of Mashonaland, already known as a great hunting-ground, had been afoot in 1879. The scheme was abandoned or postponed when the republic was restored by Britain, but the belief that the ultimate destiny of the Transvaal lay in expansion

The Fight for Land, 1889-90.

acquired great possessions; and despite fundamental differences of national character, both lived a life of arcadian simplicity and retirement, caring little for refinements or culture of any kind. In both cases, too, they formed an agricultural or pastoral community, as opposed to the mercantile and trading interests which developed in later times. And in both cases, again, the latter interests were controlled by men of English stock, who gradually beat down all resistance. These were at first a feeble folk, whose influence was confined to a small area along the coast; but they extended their power until they possessed the whole. The Spaniards were driven even from their last stronghold in California by the restless Yankee. The Boers lost piece by piece their governing power in South Africa. And in both cases the synthesis that unified the two lands was built on an English basis.

The parallel must not be pressed too far, since the Boers, with the old tenacity of the race that had been so splendidly shown in Holland, retained much of their influence under British rule; while the control of the Spaniards faded utterly away, and is now remembered in the West only by such names as San Francisco and Los Angeles, and a few chance relics that have survived the English invasion.

But the reason was the same in both cases. The purely agricultural and pastoral communities represented the older life that is giving way everywhere before the new and more complex order of civilisation; Boers and Spaniards alike belonged to an era that is past. And both the Yankees in North America and the British in South Africa were the progenitors of the modern life; of the modern life, it must be confessed, sometimes in its rawest and least attractive aspect. . . .

to the north remained firm; for the moment, however, Kruger only attempted to extend his authority over Bechuanaland, which would have cut the British off entirely from the interior.

The British, who saw the Transvaal Boers doing what they had so often done themselves, begrudged them their spreading territories; and Rhodes now came into contact with Kruger, and won his first victory. Bechuanaland was annexed to the British Empire in 1885.

The Boer President was foiled in his primary aim of extending the republic eastwards as far as the new German territory of South-West Africa;[1] and the struggle shifted further north. The idea of Boer expansion over Matabililand and Mashonaland, which had never been forgotten at Pretoria,[2] was now revived; but here again Rhodes won the day, and the great colony of Rhodesia had by 1890 cut the Boers off from the countries which they had believed their rightful heritage.

In the seven years' struggle for the possession of the north the Englishman had won. 'Rhodes,' said Kruger to his opponent once, 'you are putting a ring fence round me, and that is why I am fighting you.'[3] And again he burst out in angry sorrow to a young English

Success of the British.

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. iv.

[2] When the British were negotiating with Lo Bengula for the mineral rights of his country, they found a letter from Joubert to the Matabili king, dated 9th March 1882, which contained clear evidence of the Boer interest in that country, and their contempt for the British after the surrender at Majuba. 'The English took away our country, or, as they say, annexed it. We then talked nicely for four years, and begged for our country. But no; when an Englishman once has your property in his hand, then is he like a monkey that has its hands full of pumpkin-seeds—if you don't beat him to death, he will never let go—and then all our nice talk for four years did not help us at all. Then the English commenced to arrest us because we were dissatisfied, and that caused the shooting and the fighting. Then the English first found it would be better to give us back our country. Now they are gone, and our country is free, and we will now once more live in friendship with Lo Bengula, as we lived in friendship with Mosilikatsi.'

The Boers had certainly lived in friendship with Mosilikatsi—after they had fought him and expelled him from the Transvaal country. Probably Lo Bengula knew how much faith to place in these professions.

[3] Speech by Cecil Rhodes, 25th October 1898.

journalist who interviewed him, 'What is the use of talking? I am shut in—shut in for ever.'[1]

It was true. Kruger had lost the first great round of the fight; the interior of South Africa was to be British, and the direct road to the sea through Swaziland was also lost. But Kruger's loss was more than this. Within a few years many of his burghers had gone up into Mashonaland despite a pathetic appeal by Joubert that they should not desert their own sacred territories which their fathers had won from savagery, and they themselves had defended from the British; by 1898 Rhodes found a thousand Transvaal Boers, or one in eighteen of the male citizens of the republic, had renounced their President and the republic and crossed the border into British territory. 'Why do they not return?' asked Rhodes, and he answered his own question. 'Because I have the sweet veld, and (in the Transvaal) they had the sour veld. I have got President Kruger's burghers, and I am going to keep them. I have got one-eighteenth of his burghers, and if he does not look out I shall have half of them before long.'[2]

The Transvaal Gold Mines.

But if Kruger's aims had been foiled in the north, and the Transvaal Republic could no longer reach to the Zambesi and beyond, a great economic revolution had in the meantime enormously strengthened Kruger's position in his own proper territories. The Witwatersrand goldfield had been discovered in 1885, and proved extraordinarily wealthy; Johannesburg was founded, and in a few months far outgrew Pretoria; and the whole world of mammon-hunters suddenly seemed to flock towards the Transvaal.[3] The invasion was unwelcome to the Boers, whose cherished isolation was invaded, and who saw their primitive pastoral way of life inevitably yielding place to commerce and finance and the complex machinery of indus-

[1] Cook's *Garrett*.
[2] Speech by Cecil Rhodes, 3rd August 1898.
[3] Bk. xxiv. ch. iii.

trialism;[1] but it was not altogether unwelcome to Paul Kruger. There was no longer any question of poverty at Pretoria when such wealth was at Johannesburg; and the Transvaal Treasury, which had been forced to suspend its payments temporarily in 1885, was soon full to overflowing. The Boers were ever bad taxpayers, but the new population of the Rand were a very milch-cow to the Government.

The New Wealth of the Republic.

The revenue of the republic, which had been no more than £161,596 in 1884, rose suddenly three years later to £637,749. In that year the Rand had just been proclaimed a goldfield. The following year, 1888, it had risen again to £884,440; by 1889 it was £1,577,445; by 1894 it had reached £2,247,728; by 1896 it was £3,912,095; and by 1899 it touched £4,087,852.[2] By far the greatest part of this new taxation was raised from the industry of the new alien population of the Rand.

Influence of the New Population.

But this invasion of the Transvaal by the Uitlanders, from being a source of wealth, quickly became a source of danger to the republic. It was like one of those powerful medicines which, taken in small doses, acts as a tonic, but all the time the medicine is a poison, and if too much is taken the result is fatal. So it was now with the Transvaal. The Boer population of the republic was not very large, some eighteen thousand burghers and their families in all; it was soon equalled, and in time outnumbered by the alien immigrants or Uitlanders—outlanders, as they were known in the republic. It is true that these latter were

[1] Kruger relates in his *Memoirs* that a Transvaal burgher told Joubert with joy of a new gold-reef being discovered. 'Instead of rejoicing you would do better to weep,' said the wise old Boer in rebuke, 'for this gold will cause our country to be soaked in blood.' A true prophecy.

Joubert's remark was an unconscious paraphrase of the great English poet's line, 'War seldom enters, save where wealth allures.'

[2] There had been a temporary setback in 1891, the year after the Baring Crisis in London. But ten years before a financial crisis in Europe would not have touched the Transvaal. That fact is eloquent of its lost isolation from the world.

men of every nationality, and that numbers of them had no interest in politics or any interest at all beyond finance, while the old Boer guard on which Kruger relied was a united people of strong national instincts, which sank all internal differences in the presence of the foreigner. But the Uitlanders increased; and in the very years when their numbers were growing most rapidly, the Boers began to emigrate to the new British dominions north of the Limpopo.

These two things weakened Kruger at both ends; he saw his own people going over to the foreigner, his own land invaded by the foreigner. Not the most autocratic sovereign could long maintain his power unchecked in such changing circumstances; for the time was clearly coming, and coming quickly, when the foreigners who had obtained great financial power would demand some measure of political power,[1] and the diminished Boers would be unable to refuse them. True though it was to a large extent that most Englishmen went to Johannesburg to 'make their pile and clear,'[2] the fact remained that many of them had established their homes in the country, and were prepared to stay there. Some were of course unworthy immigrants, the very scum of humanity, which always floats towards a goldfield; but the bulk were law-abiding people.[3] And sooner or later these people would demand a share in the government of the country which their taxes had so large a share in maintaining.

Clearly a crisis lay ahead. But how to meet it? Piet Joubert, whose past record vouched his patriotism—he had stood up to Bartle Frere with a demand of full independence for the Transvaal—realised the difficulty of refusing all

[1] Kruger might have read with profit Macaulay's *Essay on the Civil Disabilities of the Jews.*

[2] Garrett.

[3] Kruger's own words in his *Memoirs.*

General Butler, the British Commander in Cape Colony, whose sympathies with the Boers were extreme, described Johannesburg as 'Monte Carlo superimposed on Sodom and Gomorrah'—a description which may fitly be compared with Kruger's more restrained account.

political privileges to the Uitlanders at the time when the Boers were leaving their country for British territory. He appealed to the burghers to remain, but the appeal fell on deaf ears, for the emigrants hungered after the sweet veldt of Rhodesia. And he favoured some measure of reform; many of the younger generation of the Boers, some of whom had been educated in Europe, and who had sloughed the prejudices of their fathers, were with him in his views. But against him was a stronger man: Paul Kruger, as immovable still to reform as fifteen years before, when Burgers had advocated change, was more than a match for the Boer reformers and the Uitlanders together. The solid strength of the President, with its appeal to the backveldt Boers, carried the day.

Dilemma of the Republic.

'Perhaps I should have been wiser had I shown more consideration for the feelings of the foreigners,' said Kruger years afterwards in exile,[1] taught by sorrow and defeat; but at the time he had no thought of yielding.

Yet the Transvaal was indeed in a serious difficulty, and rapidly drifting towards a situation which was becoming impossible. To have given some measure of political rights to the new alien population would have led to an immediate agitation for more; to have given more would have shifted the old basis of the State, and rendered the Boers of no account in their own proper country. On the other hand, to give nothing was clearly the direct road to a revolution by force.

Faced with this dilemma, 'I never ceased thinking,' said Kruger, 'how I could meet the wishes of the new population for representation, without injuring the republic or prejudicing the older burghers.'[2] There is no reason to disbelieve him. But the thing simply could not be done: the interests of the new population and the older burghers could

[1] Kruger's *Memoirs*.
[2] *Ibid.*

not be reconciled.[1] Within five years a state within a state had sprung up in the Transvaal; and the new population was more numerous than the old.

The attempt was made, and Kruger put forward a scheme for a second Volksraad, a purely consultative body, with local powers for the Rand, which was intended to represent the Uitlanders. It was not unkindly received by the British Government in London, but the attempt proved the impossibility. The second Volksraad certainly came into existence, but it had no real authority, and neither Kruger nor the older burghers would give it any: and the great population on the Rand would have no sham authority.

The root of the difficulty, said an English writer with much force some years afterwards, was the 'growing need of the economic rulers to become political rulers.'[2] It is no shame to Kruger or his people that they would not resign their power to the foreigner; nor any to the British who insisted on equal rights. 'All the trouble in the Transvaal,' said Rhodes bluntly in 1898, 'is due to the fact that Englishmen are treated as slaves there, and they won't have it. The essence of Englishmen is that they will be a self-governing state, and they will go on agitating until they get their rights. We are the most uncomfortable people in the world—we will insist on our rights, and will never stop until we get them. That is the very essence and characteristic of our nation.'[3]

[1] This attitude of exclusiveness by the older settlers had several parallels in British colonial annals. The Puritans of Massachusetts would not accept as fellow-citizens the godless cavaliers of England (vol. i. bk. iv. ch. i.), and something like Kruger's attitude, on a smaller scale, was assumed by the Family Compact in Ontario towards the new English immigrants (vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iv.). In neither of these cases was the issue complicated, as it was in South Africa, by a question of race; but in Ontario, as in the Transvaal, there was a rebellion.

[2] *Contemporary Review*, 1900.

[3] Speech by Cecil Rhodes, 21st April 1898. The words might have been spoken by Cromwell, who declared that Spain offered 'no reason why there should not be liberty given to your people. We thought, being denied just things—we thought it our duty to get that by the sword which was not to be had otherwise. And this hath been the spirit of Englishmen.' The whole passage is in vol. i. bk. ii. ch. iii.

It was the simple truth, from the British point of view, but a truth that Kruger could never admit. 'You see that flag,' said the President once as he pointed to the republican emblem over the government buildings; 'if I grant the franchise I may as well pull it down.' That also was the simple truth, from Kruger's point of view.

Kruger's unyielding attitude solidified the Uitlanders. At first these newcomers had had no political organisation, not even a common political consciousness; the hunt for wealth absorbed all their energies. But as Johannesburg became more of a town and less of a camp, the disabilities of the Uitlanders showed more clearly. Political impotence combined with heavy taxation made a substantial and increasing grievance, and the grievance made for cohesion.

The Uitlander Agitation, 1892-5.

At the start the agitation which afterwards became so formidable was nothing more than a constitutional movement for reform. The Transvaal National Union that was established in 1892 by Charles Leonard, a solicitor from Cape Colony who had settled in Johannesburg, to urge the representation of the Uitlanders in the Volksraad at Pretoria, was not a very powerful organisation: it was supported by the professional men of the Rand, doctors, lawyers, and engineers, but the large floating population held aloof, the disreputable element was not wanted by the Union and did not want the Union; and the capitalists took no interest in the thing at all. It was noticed that the non-British element took no share in the activities of the Union, and Kruger grew more contemptuous and unyielding to the British Uitlanders. They insulted him in the press, even in person[1] on the rare occasions

[1] One riotous individual waved a Union Jack over the old President's head as he rode in his carriage through Johannesburg; and there were other similar incidents. These things were made the most of by those who supported the Transvaal in England; they forgot that Kruger in his turn had taunted the Uitlanders with their impotence. 'What is the use of protesting,' he said one day, 'I have the guns, and you have not'—a cogent but dangerous argument.

when he visited Johannesburg; but he had no belief that these people would rebel, and others were of the same opinion.[1] His attitude towards them hardened; all concessions were refused, and when a deputation from the Union met him to discuss reform on 1st September 1892, he answered harshly, 'Go back and tell your people I shall never give them anything, and now let the storm burst.'

But no storm burst. The Uitlanders were not yet strong enough, and although a final barrier was now put upon their representation in the Volksraad,[2] the Johannesburg capitalists, without whom the agitation could have no driving force, would probably not have joined the Transvaal National Union had they not also suffered. For the Transvaal Government was not only autocratic; it was corrupt. Contracts were given to the President's friends, monopolies sold to his supporters; the members of the Volksraad, who enjoyed his financial favours,

Corruption of the Transvaal Government.

[1] The Uitlanders are 'not the stuff of which revolutionaries are made' —Garrett in 1890. It was true then, but five years more made some difference, although the 1895 revolution did not come off.

[2] The franchise had been modified backwards. Before 1877 one year's residence in the Transvaal, the payment of £25, and the taking of an oath of allegiance made an alien immigrant a burgher of the republic. At the Convention of 1881 Kruger promised there should be no difference of rights between Boer burghers and the British immigrants who became naturalised; but in 1882 the period of residence required before papers of naturalisation could be taken out was increased to five years, and this was gradually increased to twelve years in 1889, and subsequently made fourteen years. Even then it was conditional on the majority of burghers in the constituency signifying *their desire* in writing that the alien should be naturalised and obtain the vote—a provision which effectively made the enfranchisement of the Uitlander impossible.

Not all the Boers agreed with Kruger in these changes. 'Now our country is gone,' said Gert de Jager, as one of those reforms backward was made, 'nothing can settle this but fighting, and there is only one end to the fight. Kruger and his Hollanders have taken away our independence more surely than ever Shepstone did.' A true saying.

Another grievance which pressed hardly on the reputable Uitlanders, was the fact that £63,000 was raised annually for education (I take the figures for 1895), mostly from the Uitlanders, and of this only £650 was spent on schools for the Uitlanders' children.

became his tools.[1] The civil service of the Transvaal was recruited, not from the burghers of the Cape Dutch but from the Netherlands, and the young Hollanders, hated by Boer and Uitlander alike, made for themselves a comfortable and not unprofitable home in the republic. These things diminished Kruger's popularity with his own people, and at the presidential election of 1893 it was thought that his rival Joubert had a majority of votes. But the obedient Volksraad did its master's bidding. One of Joubert's chief supporters was unseated, several of the votes cast for him were disallowed, and in the end Kruger was declared elected by the small majority of 7911 to 7246.

Had Joubert been made President the coming crisis might have been averted, for he made no secret of his sympathy with the Uitlanders; but with the return of Kruger it was clear there was no hope for constitutional reform. The Uitlanders might agitate and agitate, but nothing would move the unyielding President; he was determined to have everything and to give nothing.

But early in 1895 a crisis arose in a different quarter. Steadily pursuing his settled policy of isolation, Kruger had refused to co-operate with Cape Colony in the building of a through railway to the south until 1892, when it became impossible to refuse any longer; his own Delagoa Bay Railway, opened in 1895 and at once heavily advantaged by a high tariff on Cape-imported goods, diverted

The Crisis of 1895.

[1] One notorious scandal out of several may be instanced. In 1890 a concession was given to Barend Vorster, a member of the First Volksraad, to build the Selati Railway, the Government guaranteeing at 4 per cent. the share capital and debentures. But the concessionaries were allowed to account the £100 debentures at £70, the substantial difference going into their pockets. It was arranged also with a contractor to build 200 miles of railway at £9600 per mile; the following day the same contract was sub-let at £7002 per mile. It was discovered afterwards that the company had bribed 21 out of 26 members of the First Volksraad, including the Vice-President of the republic, to give it the contract. Kruger defended the affair on the ground that there was no harm in members of the Volksraad receiving presents.

the bulk of the Transvaal traffic from the British colony; a tariff war broke out, and when the produce from the Cape was sent up-country, Kruger closed the drifts through which it was transported into the Transvaal. This was too much for the British Government, which in this matter at least had the support of the whole Dutch agricultural community in Cape Colony: an ultimatum was sent threatening war in twenty-four hours if the drifts were not reopened to Cape produce; and Kruger hastened to withdraw.

His deference to force taught the Uitlanders a dangerous lesson. To force alone would the President give way, and to force they determined to appeal, since peaceful agitation failed. From that time the storm which he had invoked three years before began to gather.

The Uitlander Conspiracy, 1895.

Some of the capitalists of the Rand had now come in, and joined the agitation they had formerly discountenanced: but they had joined at first, not so much to gain the franchise,[1] as to work for a more honest government for the Transvaal as a whole. That hope, however, had vanished since the defeat of Joubert as candidate for the Presidency; a few months convinced the capitalists that the other Uitlanders were right, and that reform could only come through the franchise; a few months more showed them that the franchise could never be obtained by peaceful means; still a few months more, and they saw that Kruger had yielded to force over the crisis of the drifts. The conclusion was obvious.

From that time the road was clear, and the path towards rebellion quick. The leaders of the Transvaal National Union were given funds by their new and wealthy supporters,[2]

[1] In 1894 Lionel Phillips, one of the great capitalists of the Rand, and a partner in Ecksteins, the dominant financial house of Johannesburg, remarked in a private letter that not many of the Uitlanders cared a fig for the franchise, the real trouble being over the unconcealed enmity of the Pretoria Government to the Johannesburg aliens.

[2] Rhodes gave over £60,000, and others subscribed about a quarter of a million sterling.

some part of which was spent on arms; and by the middle of 1895 they had secured an adherent from outside, whose assistance far outweighed all others. Cecil Rhodes, the old opponent of President Kruger, now Chairman of the Chartered Company and Prime Minister of Cape Colony, was supporting the Uitlanders of the Rand and advising an armed rising within the republic.

His support was enough to show the hopelessness of peaceful agitation, for Rhodes was not a man to appeal to force unless he thought force the only means. But once he was convinced that nothing else would serve, he was not the man to delay the use of force; and a conspiracy was now set on foot between Rhodes at the Cape, Charles Leonard, Chairman of the Transvaal National Union, and Lionel Phillips, Chairman of the Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines. It was arranged that the Uitlanders should rise in revolt, seize the arsenal at Pretoria—which was known to be weakly defended—and its ammunition, retire on Johannesburg, and hold that city against the Boers until the British High Commissioner should intervene. So much for the Uitlander rising; but it was also arranged that Dr. Jameson, who was now Administrator of Rhodesia, should station himself with a considerable force upon the Transvaal frontier, and that he should come to the assistance of the rebels if they should send him word they needed aid. To this end Jameson received an undated letter from the leaders of the movement in Johannesburg inviting him to invade the Transvaal, which it was understood was only to be used when confirmed directly at a later date; and Colonel Frank Rhodes, an elder brother of Cecil Rhodes, visited Johannesburg to hurry on the preparations.

The date of the combined raid and rebellion was provisionally fixed for 28th December 1895, and if all went well it might have happened that the Transvaal Government would have been surprised and forced into granting the Uitlanders'

desires, if not actually overthrown. But all did not go well; never did conspirators muddle away their chances in worse fashion.

A week before the rising was planned a curious difficulty arose. Rhodes and Jameson had understood that the rebels and the raiders were to raise the British flag; but for this many of the expectant rebels had no particular desire. They wished for the franchise and good government in the Transvaal, but they had hardly contemplated that it should be declared a British colony—and it was more than doubtful if the Imperial Government, which knew nothing of the conspiracy, would have recognised the proceeding. On this matter, therefore, Rhodes, who was all for quick decisive movement, gave way; but he met with another disappointment. The Uitlanders had miscalculated their strength and the time required to complete the conspiracy, they had little or no organisation, some hung back at the last moment, many wished to postpone the rising or forgo it altogether; the whole thing seemed to be fizzling out, remarked Rhodes, like a damp squib.

The Conspirators disagree; the Rebellion postponed.

And at that moment Jameson on the frontier, who had received no invitation to do his share in the business from those who were unready at the last moment to do their own share, started in to invade the Transvaal and succour Johannesburg —in the historic phrase used by Rhodes, he 'took the bit in his teeth and bolted.'

The heads of the republic were now aware that rebellion was afoot in Johannesburg; they knew, too, that assistance would be secured to the rebels by an armed invasion from without. But Kruger was too old a hand at South African politics, and too experienced a rebel and raider himself, to discount the possibility of a successful rebellion and raid in combination; he was likewise too shrewd a statesman to

Kruger temporises by Apparent Conciliation.

leave the crisis to ripen, and he acted promptly when he heard that Jameson had started for Johannesburg. Negotiations were opened with the reformers who were so nearly rebels, the Government professed unusual complaisance towards the alien agitators, and the Johannesburg Reform Committee were officially informed that the British High Commissioner was coming to the Transvaal to discuss the situation, that no hostile step would be taken against the Uitlanders pending his arrival, providing they took no hostile step against the Government, and that the President would earnestly consider grievances.

By these clever tactics, and a promise which committed him to nothing, Kruger averted, or at least postponed the rebellion: the danger was diminished by half. The British Uitlanders could not well refuse to accept the terms: clearly a rebellion was impossible when the highest representative of British authority in South Africa had himself taken the troubles of the Uitlanders in hand. So ended, before it had begun, the rising of the Rand.

The Johannesburgers were too good financiers to be good revolutionaries, and in truth they muddled their chances. They changed the date of the rising more than once; they changed their plans and methods of procedure; they were in two minds as to the flag they should raise—for one party merely wished to reform the republic, another clearly wished for British rule—and openly divided as to the wisdom of asking Jameson's assistance on the frontier. Almost at the last moment the suggestion was made, and largely supported, that the entire project should be postponed and remodelled; but by that time Jameson had started across the frontier, Johannesburg was in a panic, and Kruger had his chance.

After the event charges of cowardice were flung against the Uitlanders, and not without effect. For they had secured their safety—not their political aims, as the future was to show—but not the safety of their ally, whom they had tacitly

disowned as he was on his way to aid in their rebellion. They were acquitted indeed of poltroonery by Rhodes, who held that the reformers 'were not cowards; they were rushed.' The verdict was sound: Johannesburg was rushed, first by Jameson's haste and then by Kruger's tactics. But it is not of such stuff that revolutions are made; it was not in this way that the Boers had rebelled against the British in 1880.

Meanwhile Jameson had been waiting on the frontier, and he had become tired of waiting. The conspiracy seemed to be hanging fire, and Jameson decided to push things to an issue. On Sunday, 29th December 1895, at about three in the afternoon, the force of some eight hundred men which he had collected was paraded at Pitsani, the conditional letter of invitation read,[1] and the announcement made that they were to start at once for Johannesburg. A number of the troops asked if they were fighting under the Queen's orders, and the ambiguous answer was returned that they were fighting to maintain the supremacy of the British flag in South Africa. On this many refused to join the expedition, and the total force that set out on the Jameson Raid into the Transvaal was not more than 480 men, 350 of whom were from the Chartered Company's forces, the remainder from the Bechuanaland Border Police.

The Jameson Raid, 29th December 1895.

If this fell far below the original estimate of two thousand, it was nevertheless a formidable force, and it might conceivably have been successful had it been supported from Johannesburg. The troops were well mounted and armed,

[1] No actual letter was sent, as had been arranged was to be done before the invasion was finally decided. When Jameson was subsequently questioned on this point, he replied that he had received so many contradictory messages from the Uitlanders that he thought it better to make up their minds for them. (Wilson, *South African Memories.*)

There is no doubt that the project strongly appealed to him, and he was loath to abandon it. The idea is said to have been suggested to him by reading a *Life of Clive*; but his own success in the Matabili War also had some influence (bk. xxiv. ch. v.).

taking with them 8 Maxims, 2 seven-pound and 1 twelve-pound gun; but, as a rapid march over the 170 miles to Johannesburg was essential to the revolution, no other heavy equipment was provided, and food was carried for one day only.

The pace was extraordinarily quick, half-hour rests being permitted every twenty miles to refresh the horses and the men, and this was maintained without a stop from Sunday afternoon through Sunday night, the whole of Monday and Monday night, and Tuesday. It was necessary that the force should reach Johannesburg before resistance could be organised; but it happened that the excessive fatigue which the speed entailed told against the raiders in the end.

On Tuesday as they marched a warning was received from the British High Commissioner, ordering their return to British territory. It was ignored. On the following day a severe action was fought with the Boers outside Krugersdorp. The defenders had been hastily summoned to resist the raiders, but they were fresh, and although they were heavily damaged by Jameson's artillery, the advantage rested with the Boers.

The raiders took up another position on higher ground for the night, and the following morning they attempted to reach Johannesburg by a circuitous road. Had they pushed straight ahead during the night they might have arrived in safety, but it appears that the troopers and their horses were too exhausted for the work; they did not know the road, and the guide whom they had expected from Johannesburg had not arrived. On the following morning they were guided, by an agent who is alleged to have been an accomplice of the Boers, eight miles south to Doornkop; and here a large commando of Boers had assembled in the night and was now blocking the way to Johannesburg. They were more than double the number of the raiders, they were heavily armed and provided with artillery, and they had taken up a

strong position behind a ridge of rocks, whereas the invaders had to advance along an open grassy slope where concealment was impossible.

A desperate effort was made by Jameson to force the position, but it was hopeless. Quick as the invasion had been, the defence was even quicker; and after a short engagement in which some twenty men were killed, the white flag was hoisted by the British. A promise to surrender, provided a safe conduct out of the country was guaranteed to every member of the force, was sent by Sir John Willoughby; and to this the following reply was returned:

Its Failure, 1st January 1896.

'I acknowledge your letter. The answer is that, if you will undertake to pay the expense which you have caused the South African Republic, and if you will surrender with your arms, then I shall spare the lives of you and yours.—P. A. CRONJÉ,
Commandant, Potchefstroom.'

The guarantee was absolute: but the raid as well as the revolution had failed. Over-haste and recklessness on the one side, procrastination and infirmity of purpose on the other, had wrecked the conspiracy: the republic was saved. How near it had been to disaster may be judged from the hurried truce with the rebels and the extraordinarily generous terms granted to the raiders: the Transvaal Government was glad to be quit of the crisis at any cost.[1]

[1] The facts relating to the history of the raid, so far as they were ascertained, and the abortive Johannesburg plot, are in the British Blue-Books 165 (1897) and C. 1830 (1897). Fitzgerald's *Transvaal from Within* is a good account, and there is some information in Fort's *Life of Jameson*.

It has been constantly stated that many salient facts have been withheld; but Michell, an honest man in a position to know, in his *Life of Rhodes*, denies this. There is some confusion and discrepancy in the various accounts; not more, however, than in most similar movements. A number of pamphlets, both approving and condemning the raid, were printed in South Africa. Few are worth notice. The title of one, *Jameson's Heroic Charge, a Complete Vindication*, sufficiently indicates its character; another, called *Puppets on Show; England's Dilemma and the Boers' Mistakes, by an independent American*, characterised the

Ethically the raid was entirely indefensible, no more to be condoned or justified than the attempt by Kruger to annex Bechuanaland in defiance of the Convention with the British,[1] or the raid which the President had led into the Orange Free State many years before. But the abstract doctrines of political ethics were somewhat scantily observed in South Africa in these years; the real condemnation passed upon the raid was not that it was wrong and therefore unsuccessful, but that it was unsuccessful and therefore wrong. The Jameson Raid, in short, was a political blunder of the first magnitude. It transferred the grievance to the other side without improving the position of the Uitlanders; it gave a handle to the Boers, and furnished them with an argument before the world. More than that, it broke—for a time at least—the power of the two leading Britons in South Africa. Rhodes was bluntly told that his career was ended; Jameson was openly reviled for his attempt by the Dutch,[2] and none too well received by the British for his failure.

The Raid Indefensible.

It was true that the over-haste of Jameson had ruined whatever chance, and it was not a great one, the mild revolutionaries might have had; but there was no reproach from

affair as 'the dismal smash of a political and financial Punch and Judy show,' and remarks that Rhodes was 'pushing, active, intriguing, pugnacious; a great man, but Satan is great in his way.'

The English Liberal press strongly condemned the raid; the Unionist press with some exceptions upheld it. I remember an old journalist, who in younger days had served his country as a soldier in India, told me that he nearly quarrelled with his editor on this matter. The editor was bent on supporting Jameson; the other journalist pointed out that for any subject of the Queen to levy private war on a country with whom Britain was at peace was an act of rebellion, and as a soldier he could not argue on Jameson's behalf.

The English poet laureate published some verses applauding the raiders; a judicious public opinion generally held that this was their final condemnation.

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. iv.

[2] I well remember that a Dutch friend of mine, whose brother was a farmer in the Transvaal at this time, told me some years afterwards that the Boers had privately threatened to kill Jameson if the opportunity offered.

Rhodes, whose splendid loyalty to his friends was never better seen than now. If he could no longer say, as he had said in the pioneer days of the north, that 'Jameson never makes a mistake,'[1] he could defend the best-loved of his comrades against the critics of Cape Town with a valiant persistence. 'Jameson at any rate tried to do something,' he burst out angrily; 'all you down here do nothing at all, except jabber, jabber, jabber.'[2]

But it was nevertheless a time of cruel anxiety to Rhodes. For five nights after the raid he slept not a wink, and his servant told how 'the Baas walks up and down his bedroom, which is locked, at all times of the night.'[3] The whole scheme had miscarried, and for the first time in the long duel between the two men Kruger had beaten Rhodes; many old associates and fair-weather colleagues quickly turned their backs upon him, and the beaten statesman cried, 'Now that I am down I shall see who are my real friends.'[4]

Britain punishes the Raiders.

Officially at least his friends and those of his associates were few. If the British community at the Cape applauded Rhodes and Jameson, and the British at home generally did not condemn his action, more responsible official circles were bound to mark their displeasure. Jameson and the chief participants in the raid were handed over by the Transvaal to the British Government, tried in London, and sentenced to imprisonment;[5] Rhodes was stripped of almost all his honours. He

[1] Fuller's *Cecil Rhodes*. An anecdote will best show how great was the affection of Rhodes for Jameson. The beautiful house at Groote Schuur was burnt down; and a friend, wishing to break the loss to Rhodes, told him he had bad news. When it was done, Rhodes said simply, 'Thank God! I thought Jameson was dead.'

[2] Cook's *Garrett*. This was openly in his defence. Privately Rhodes said to Schreiner, 'Poor old Jameson. Twenty years we have been friends, and now he goes and ruins me. I cannot hinder him. I cannot go and destroy him.'

[3] Jourdan's *Cecil Rhodes*.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] When Rhodes heard the sentence he exclaimed, 'A tribute to

resigned his office as Cape Premier; the Imperial Government insisted on his resignation of the chairmanship of the Chartered Company which he had founded; and a prolonged inquiry was held by a committee of the House of Commons into the circumstances of the conspiracy and the raid.

The guilt of Rhodes was plain, and he made no attempt to deny it, in the plain statement which he gave in evidence before the committee, which declared in its report that 'whatever justification there might have been for action on the part of the people of Johannesburg, there was none for the conduct of a person in Mr. Rhodes's position, in subsidising, organising, and stimulating an armed insurrection against the Government of the South African Republic. He seriously embarrassed both the Imperial and Colonial Governments, (and) such a policy inevitably involved Mr. Rhodes in grave breaches of duty to those to whom he owed allegiance. He deceived the High Commissioner, he concealed his views from his colleagues in the Colonial Ministry and from the board of the British South Africa Company, and led his subordinates to believe that his plans were approved by his superiors.'

Rhodes censured by Imperial Parliament.

The judgment was a fair one, not unworthy the traditions of the Imperial Parliament which had tried Clive and Warren Hastings a century before;[1] and Rhodes returned to South Africa, his career shattered, as it seemed, by the raid and its consequences. Publicly he declared, with the courage that never deserted him, that his career was only beginning;

the upright rectitude of my countrymen who have jumped the whole world.'

Jameson was released some months afterwards on account of illness. There were some who declared that the Imperial Government had favoured him; but the illness was genuine. It was a recurrence of fever contracted in Rhodesia a year or two before, when he had nearly died, and it was this old enemy that compelled his retirement from South African politics in 1911.

[1] For Parliament's judgment on Clive and Hastings, see vol. ii. bk. vii. ch. iii.

privately he admitted that it would be ten years before he recovered his position with the public,[1] and quietly turned his attention to the growth of his favourite child, Rhodesia. In the colony of his own founding he was at home; even the burning of his magnificent house at Groote Schuur could not move him much. With quiet cynicism he summed up his new position: 'Providence has not been kind to me this year; what with Jameson's Raid, rebellion, famine, rinderpest, and now my house burnt, I feel like Job—all but the boils.'

The Imperial Government and the Raid.

So ended the raid; but not yet its consequences, either in Britain or South Africa. There was a wide, indeed almost a universal suspicion that the Imperial Government had been privy to the raid, had encouraged the raiders, and then disowned them when they failed. The facts were otherwise: the Imperial Government had known nothing of the raid, had therefore not encouraged the design, and had disowned it as soon as it had known. Nevertheless the suspicion was diligently fostered in South Africa by Kruger and the Bond as a means of increasing the distrust and hatred of the British; and not less openly proclaimed in Britain as a piece of party tactics. Many Liberals indeed would have been glad to fix the blame on another man than Rhodes—not because they loved Rhodes, but because they hated the other man; many believed, or wished to believe, or convinced themselves that they believed that the Imperial Government through the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, had cognisance of the raid.

It was untrue. About twenty people in London were in

[1] Wilson, *South African Memories*.
In a speech at this time he said, 'If I may put to you a thought, it is that the man who is continuously prosperous does not know himself, his own mind or character. It is a good thing to have a period of adversity. You then find out who are your real friends. From those from whom I expected most I got least; but from many quarters, some the most remote, I received a kindly support I never anticipated.'

the secret,[1] but Chamberlain was not. The utmost that could be alleged was that some telegrams were not produced before the Parliamentary Committee, although Chamberlain had no objection to their production; that the secretary of the Chartered Company, Dr. Rutherford Harris, had had an interview with Chamberlain some months before, at which he desired to impart some confidential information to Chamberlain, and Chamberlain had stopped him, and that the accounts of that interview differed in some minor details.[2] Against that it is sufficient to say that Sir William Harcourt, a good party man who cherished no unnatural love for his political opponents, and in particular disliked the Colonial Secretary and Cecil Rhodes, after hearing all the evidence declared in the most emphatic terms in the House of Commons his firm belief that Chamberlain had had no knowledge of the Jameson Raid.

Had the Colonial Secretary been a man of the ordinary stamp of colonial secretaries, a Kimberley or a Harcourt, not the least doubt of his ignorance would have been entertained by his political opponents or even by his friends; that the Colonial Office should have been ignorant of colonial movements would have been assumed as natural. But the Colonial Secretary in the new Unionist Government that entered office in 1895 was as few colonial secretaries have been before. Joseph Chamber-

Joseph Chamberlain, 1895-1902.

[1] Butler, *Autobiography*, mentions that it was known at Aldershot; a few knew in London, mainly close friends of the conspirators or employees of the Chartered Company.

[2] It was also a point that Rhodes was not put on his trial with Jameson as a fellow-conspirator, and it was suggested that had he been tried the complicity of the Colonial Office would have been discovered. But there was a well-marked distinction between Rhodes and Jameson in the fact of the actual invasion, and this the public well understood.

On this flimsy basis a large literature of controversy was built up. I need refer only to *The History of the Mystery*, by W. T. Stead (1897), which defends Rhodes and attacks Chamberlain; and *The Scandal of the South African Committee* (1899), by the same author. I have read both carefully, and remain unconvinced—and happily unasphyxiated by the gaseous political journalese which Stead affected.

lain was a successful business man who had entered politics a Radical, had been hated by the Conservatives for his outspokenness and revolutionary speeches, and sometimes dreaded for the same reason by timid Liberals and the last decaying remnants of the Whigs. An ally of Gladstone whose caustic tongue was as valuable in parliament as on the platform, he deserted Gladstone when Gladstone deserted the union of the British Isles and proclaimed himself an Irish Home Ruler, a conviction that coincided happily with his dependence on the Irish vote. Chamberlain became one of the leaders of the new Liberal Unionist party which worked in alliance with the old Conservatives, and brought them brains and votes at a time when they needed both, during the next few years; doubly hated by his old associates as the chief of turncoats, and somewhat dreaded and at first distrusted by his new allies,[1] Chamberlain had his chance when Lord Salisbury offered him the post of Colonial Secretary in 1895.

His smaller opponents delighted to accuse him, as the minor Tories also accused Gladstone, of that least deadly of political sins, inconsistency, as though it were a crime to learn from experience. The charge troubled Chamberlain far less than Gladstone, partly perhaps because Gladstone's change of view had opportunely brought him office, and Chamberlain's had, for the time at least, cut him off from political advancement; but while Gladstone, that magnificent paradox of Victorian politics, had changed from the Conservatism of his youth to the strong Liberalism of old age, his energetic lieutenant had progressed in exactly the contrary direction, moving from an almost republican attitude in politics towards the staunch Imperialism of the later Victorian period; and by a curious

His South African Policy.

[1] The law of averages makes rough justice. A few years later Winston Churchill deserted the Unionists for the Liberals, who also distrusted the brilliant recruit.

trick of fate, South Africa was to illustrate the man in both characters. He had been a member of the Government that had given the Transvaal back its independence in 1881; he was now a member of the Government that pressed the Boers to a policy which, in effect, meant resigning their independence. In both cases Chamberlain defended his position with the forcible speech which his enemies, and occasionally his friends, were known to dread. 'What is the use of being great and powerful if we are afraid to admit an error when we are conscious of it?' he said after Majuba; 'shame is not in the confession of a mistake; shame lies only in persistency in wilful wrong-doing.'[1] Fifteen years had passed since then, and South African politics had changed: British interests and possessions there had expanded, the Transvaal was no longer a bankrupt pastoral community, but a wealthy republic, whose wealth was produced by aliens, and the hard case of the Uitlanders had attracted the sympathy of Chamberlain's predecessor, the Liberal Colonial Secretary in the Rosebery Government. It could not attract less attention from the energetic Joseph Chamberlain, the smouldering embers of whose old Radicalism could still kindle at the thought of a large community deprived of political privileges, and whose new Imperialism could not accept a theory of South African politics which placed thousands of British subjects in an inferior position in the very state over which the Imperial Government claimed to exercise a suzerainty.

Inevitably Chamberlain's work at the Colonial Office began to centre more and more in South Africa, and particularly on the Transvaal, which was not a British colony at all. If his new Imperialism neither neglected nor snubbed, as some of his predecessors had done, the other colonies of the Empire —for in this period West Indian interests were succoured,[2] the Australian Commonwealth was born,[3] the new school of

[1] Speech, 7th June 1881.
[2] Vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.
[3] Vol. v. bk. xix. ch. iii.

tropical medicine was founded under Chamberlain's direct encouragement,[1] and the Colonial Conference which Salisbury had summoned in 1887 enlarged its scope in 1897—the position of South African politics became continually more pressing. It is probable that future ages will count Chamberlain's greatest achievement the establishment of a system of tropical medicine, even as the legal code of Napoleon now bulks larger than his greatest victory; but his own contemporaries judged the man almost entirely by his South African policy.

In the perfectly constituted world of theoretic argument, the interests or status of the subject of one country who emigrates for his own advantage to another country would cease to concern his own proper rulers; and British statesmen had before now taken the view that in certain circumstances the disabilities or dangers to which their adventurous fellow-countrymen exposed themselves were no affair of the British Government.[2] But in a perfectly constituted world there would be no grievances to remedy; and in practice no powerful state has ever neglected the interests of any considerable body of its subjects in another land. The interests of British subjects in a republic that was, at least nominally, under British suzerainty, were therefore a matter of legitimate concern to the British Government; and Chamberlain, with the strong support of the Cabinet of which he was a member, took up the case of the Uitlanders in the Transvaal with all the force of his energetic nature.

The Jameson Raid occurred when Chamberlain was still new to his work, and it needed no political acumen to see that it made the task he set himself, of obtaining political privileges for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal, enormously more difficult. The raid at once inevitably revived all those unhappy differences, that mutual distrust and seeking for offence

Racial Bitterness revives in South Africa.

[1] Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iv.

[2] As, for example, the early missionaries in Nyasa, bk. xxiv. ch. vi.

between Boer and Briton, which had seemed to be dying down. Three years earlier an English tourist had remarked with some exaggeration that the old hostility had entirely passed away;[1] it now suddenly broke out again, in all and even more than all its former intensity, and from that time the Dutch in South Africa believed no more in Britain. Racialism once more became the dominant factor in the country, and the Cape Dutch, who had lost something of their old sympathy with their Transvaal kindred of recent years, again supported Kruger in his policy of isolation and exclusion. Before the raid Kruger was practically a beaten man: after the raid he seemed stronger than ever before. He could pose as a wronged man, an honest patriot, a magnanimous foe; and many excellent people, both in England and elsewhere, were deceived thereby.[2] Once again the whole position of Britain in South Africa seemed in danger.

The Uitlanders' Position remains Unchanged.

But the strength which the raid gave to Kruger was not real strength. Jameson's over-haste had obscured but not changed the fundamental facts of the situation. Externally the Transvaal was still hedged in on every side by foreign territory; internally the Uitlanders were still a discontented majority, powerful but politically impotent. And Kruger was still a strong man in a weak position, a stubborn man struggling with circumstances not of his making, a man fighting for his people, his country, and his own hand against an enemy within whom he could not expel without ruining the republic, and

[1] Lord Randolph Churchill, *Men, Mines, and Animals in South Africa* (1892). Not a very accurate witness, it is true. But Bryce formed somewhat the same impression, and Rhodes's speeches and co-operation with the Bond bears this out.

[2] A definite Kruger legend grew up on the Continent about this time, and journalists in Paris, Berlin and Vienna exhausted their vocabulary in praise of the simple President of an arcadian republic whose existence was threatened by the rapacious British. The legend withered in 1902, and perished shortly afterwards; by 1905 the most ignorant editors of provincial newspapers had forgotten it.

an enemy without over whom he had a temporary advantage, but whom he knew had, through the possession of the north, the ultimate advantage over him.

For such a man, in so difficult and even tragic a position, the most unsparing enemy could hardly begrudge a word of admiration: the amazing thing is not that Kruger was defeated in the end, but that he was not defeated for so long.

But once the raid was over, Kruger at once renewed his work for the security of the Transvaal Republic—security that could never really be obtained while the Uitlanders remained a majority of the population.

Kruger's Foreign Policy. 1. In Europe.

The President had sought assistance in his fight against the British from two quarters—from the great European powers who were ambitious of territory in Africa, and from the small republican neighbour of the Transvaal whose peaceful citizens desired no entanglements.[1] From France the President could hope for little aid, from Portugal—whose decaying greatness he could judge by Delagoa Bay—even less; but a new and martial star had risen over Europe, whose rising was coincident with his own career. When Kruger was in England in 1884 he had extended his journey to the Continent; and while there he had visited Germany. That colonial ambitions and, more than that, colonial ambitions in South Africa were cherished in high quarters at Berlin could not be hid even from less shrewd eyes than those of Kruger; and he resorted to that inevitable policy of the weak, the policy of playing off two strong men against each other. He sought German support, he received German compliments; but his aims in this direction cost him some criticism among his friends in South Africa, where the spirit of Boer exclusiveness and

[1] The idea of an alliance with a European power, as a means of counteracting British supremacy in South Africa, was not new. Sir Bartle Frere found that Kruger's predecessor, Burgers, had sought such alliances, but without effect.

independence made small distinction between one European power and another, even between Germany and Britain.[1]

Criticism or no criticism, Kruger held on his way; and could the secrets of diplomacy be revealed, some highly interesting exchanges between Pretoria and Berlin would be added to the history of imperial rivalries. The President believed—and it was not easy to deceive him—that Germany was behind him in his fight with Britain for South Africa. 'I know,' he had remarked publicly at Pretoria before the raid in 1895, 'that I may count on the Germans in future. I feel certain that when the time comes for the Transvaal to wear larger clothes, Germany will have done much to bring it about. The time is coming for our friendship to be more firmly established than ever.'

The speech showed that Kruger had not yet abandoned the hope of enlarging his territories, and that he relied on German support to do so. And a few months later, in the confusion following the raid, it became known that Kruger had received the following telegram from the German Emperor:—

'I tender you my sincere congratulations that without appealing to the help of friendly powers you and your people have been successful in opposing with your own forces the armed bands that have broken into your country to disturb the peace, in restoring order, and in maintaining the independence of your country against attacks from without. WILHELM, I. R.'

The telegram was followed by a request from Berlin to Portugal to allow German marines to land at Delagoa Bay, 'to guard German Consulates in the Transvaal.' The request was refused, and a storm of indignant patriotism was evoked in Britain by the Emperor's telegram, which was only appeased by the mobilisation of a naval squadron; but the

[1] Hofmeyr in particular, the head of the Afrikander Bond, and one of the most powerful politicians in Cape Colony, had a passionate hatred of Germany and German colonisation of South Africa.

incident showed that Kruger had not spoken altogether at random when he had claimed the friendship of Germany. It did not show him, what was the fact, that that support would not be forthcoming when he most needed it four years later.

European aid was yet to fail him at the crisis of his fortunes, but Kruger still believed that assistance might be obtained in some future trouble from the great rivals of Britain. It was a chance not to be neglected; more effective work, however, in strengthening the republic's hand was accomplished nearer home, at Bloemfontein and not Berlin. The Orange Free State had much in common with the Transvaal; its people had the same ideals, its policy was much the same. In 1881 the burghers of the one republic might have joined the other had not Britain hurriedly concluded peace; in 1886 the Transvaal was urging political union with its neighbours, and was refused on the significant ground that the Transvaal was itself under British suzerainty; but three years later, the pivotal year when the prospect of northern expansion was finally cut off from the Boer republics, this objection was no longer held a barrier, and an alliance between the two independent states of South Africa was concluded, which was renewed and strengthened in the following years. The new President of the Free State, Martin Steyn, entirely reversed the policy of his predecessor Brand, whose good feeling towards the British was unconcealed; Steyn threw in his lot entirely with Paul Kruger, and in the end he and his country played a stronger hand for the cause of Dutch independence than the Transvaal itself.

2. In Africa.

The alliance in South Africa was a source of strength to the Transvaal, as the reliance on European support proved in time a source of weakness; but neither could touch the real problem, which lay within the republic itself, in the presence of the large alien population on the Rand.

There were some good-hearted, feeble-headed folk, in England and elsewhere, who believed that after the raid had shown the President the internal danger to the republic, Kruger would have seen the wisdom of reform, and introduced conciliatory measures and the franchise. Conciliation lay not in that unbending nature; but Kruger did see, what some of his more foolish friends could not see, that reform was quite as dangerous as reaction. There was no middle path between the two. Sham reforms would not deceive the Uitlanders, and real reform would give them the balance of power and wreck the republic. Conciliation would not serve; but there was at least a chance that the harshness which was more easy to his nature might yet avail.

The Uitlanders are oppressed.

It was tried. The leaders of the abortive reform movement in Johannesburg were heavily fined.[1] A new press law was passed to limit criticism; the right of public meeting was restricted, and any open assembly of eight people could be declared a breach of the peace; an Alien's Admission Act and an Alien's Exclusion Act regulated the immigration of the Uitlanders. No change was made in the franchise; but the old corruption continued, and even the administration of justice was tampered with. Most of the judges were the tools of Kruger; but one, Chief Justice Kotze, was an upright and independent man. To the scandal of all South Africa, he was summarily dismissed because he would not demean his high office to the will of the executive; and it was by this

[1] Kruger also presented a bill to the British Government for £677,938, 3s. 3d. for expenses in suppressing the raid, and a further claim for a million sterling for 'moral and intellectual damages.' The preposterous character of the demand excited universal laughter, and the expression became proverbial. The bill was not paid.

As it was, the confiscated arms at Johannesburg, together with those of the raiders, were of considerable value, and were used in the war against the British four years later.

The cost of the raid to the Chartered Company is declared by Fort (*Life of Dr. Jameson*) to have been £75,000, all of which was, of course, dead loss to Rhodesia.

man that a memorable sentence indicting the Transvaal republican system was pronounced. 'There will never be the harmony and peace we all desire,' said Kotze, 'until the present oligarchy is transformed into a genuine republic such as the United States.'[1]

Lord Milner, High Commissioner, 1897.

For over a year after the raid the position remained much the same, not righting itself, but rather drifting from bad to worse; and in 1897 the British Government, finally realising the seriousness of the position in South Africa, sent out a new High Commissioner to the Cape. Men of both political parties in England joined in praising the choice of Sir Alfred, afterwards Viscount Milner, whose rise to power and high office was a portent of the times. He came not of the governing stock of England, but no man of the classes that had inherited the tradition of administration from former generations had more natural ability as a ruler. A poor public speaker but an excellent writer, a journalist who had been successful in that calling yet had committed no indiscretions, an official whose Oxford training had not prevented him from becoming an able and accurate financier in Egypt, Milner's character was even yet not fully understood by all his friends—some of whom so soon became his enemies, open or concealed. They knew and respected him for an austere and upright man; they did not realise that his was one of those unbending characters, somewhat scarce in English politics, but happily not scarce in England, who put principle before compromise in all their actions, and whose iron will is not well suited to the tricks and mental reservations and ignoble concessions of a democratic constitution. He was a man who knew his own mind; and almost for the first time in South Africa a High

[1] Some English journalists of the day made the inevitable comparison between Kruger and the Bourbons, that he had learned nothing and forgotten nothing since the Jameson Raid. The comparison was unfair to Kruger: the Bourbons had only to conciliate their own people if they wished to keep their thrones, Kruger had to conciliate the foreigner, and had he done so, his own position would have been undermined.

Commissioner at Cape Town who knew his own mind was supported by the full force of the Imperial Government in London.

Into the details of the prolonged negotiations that were conducted during the next two years between Chamberlain and Milner on the one side, and President Kruger on the other, there is little need to enter. The essentials of the situation remained unchanged throughout. Britain insisted on political privileges for her subjects in the Transvaal; Kruger refused those privileges, lest his burghers should be swamped and his country handed over to the strangers within his gates. To grant the franchise to the Uitlanders, he declared, would be worse than annexation.

His Negotiations with the Transvaal, 1897-9.

From that standpoint neither side would shift. Kruger and Milner met face to face in conference at Bloemfontein on 30th May 1899, in a final effort to adjust their differences; but the conference only emphasised the hopelessness of discussion. Milner proposed that five years' residence in the Transvaal should enfranchise the Uitlanders; but Kruger utterly refused. 'It is our country you want,' said the old man sadly, as tears coursed down his cheeks; his thoughts had indeed already turned to war as the only means of saving his country.

The Bloemfontein Conference, 1899.

The conference was abortive, but almost immediately after came a gleam of hope. For the moment it seemed that Kruger had reconsidered his position, and was on the point of giving way: a draft law was proposed by which a seven years' residence was to confer the franchise on the Uitlander, and the bare detail of the proposal led Chamberlain to assume too hastily that the crisis was over.[1]

Between five years and seven years was apparently so slight

[1] The London *Times* definitely announced in July that the tension was relaxed. A month later, on 26th August 1899, when he realised what Kruger's actual proposals were, Chamberlain made the celebrated speech in which he remarked that Kruger 'dribbled out reforms like water from a squeezed sponge,' a frank utterance that caused much shaking of heads among the quidnuncs.

a difference that a compromise should have been assured; but it was not to be. The five years on which Britain insisted was a clear and definite limit, the seven years which Kruger offered was so hedged about with limitations that its value was seriously diminished.[1] Nevertheless it was a basis, if a somewhat doubtful basis, for further discussion, and the British Government replied with a suggestion of a joint inquiry into the proposals. But this not unreasonable answer, to the amazement of his friends, Kruger declined, and in its stead put forward new alternative proposals.

It was a grave blunder in tactics, which gave the impression, which was in fact correct, that the Transvaal had no desire for a peaceful settlement of the difficulty. The Dutch and German Governments both represented the unwisdom of his action to Kruger in friendly remonstrance; the Dutch Afrikanders protested; and English Liberals who sympathised with the difficult position of a small country struggling for its independence regretted the false move.[2] But it was now too late to withdraw, and Kruger had no intention of withdrawing. He had begun to prepare for war.

Negotiation and argument now approached that ultimate form when negotiation and argument are dismissed. Boer armaments, which had increased rapidly since 1892, were pressed forward with feverish haste; arms and ammunition were introduced in enormous quantities from Delagoa Bay and elsewhere; wagons from the Cape railways were detained in the Transvaal for

Preparations for War.

[1] It might have been made an argument in Kruger's favour that the franchise laws of the United Kingdom were also hedged about with limitations, and seemingly set full of pitfalls for the purpose of excluding voters from the register. A *tu quoque* is sometimes effective as a diplomatic argument.

[2] A letter was afterwards found from Labouchere, the editor of London *Truth*, and a Liberal M.P. of extreme Little England proclivities, to a Boer politician. 'Don't let Kruger make his first mistake by refusing this (offer of a joint inquiry); a little skilful management and he will give Master Joe another fall. You are such past-masters in the art of gaining time—here is an opportunity.'

military transport purposes, despite the belated protests of the Cape officials. Military precautions were now also taken in Britain; and to balance Kruger's preparations British troops were concentrated on the Transvaal frontier.

Many thought that Kruger was only bluffing his opponents, and that a threat of force would be enough, as it had been in the Bechuana difficulty,[1] and again in the crisis of the drifts in 1895; among those who held this view was Cecil Rhodes himself, who remonstrated with members of the Imperial Government for their belief that Kruger might appeal to war. But Rhodes miscalculated, and the Imperial Government was right:[2] Kruger meant to fight sooner than yield, and he had a solid basis for his intention. In the previous crisis which he had faced as President the independence of the republic had not been at stake; it was merely a point in the game he had lost, and the loss might be made good. Now the whole existence of the republic was at stake, and Kruger, like the man he was, preferred to go down fighting.

Kruger decides to Fight.

It was really the lesser risk he took as well as the braver course. The reforms which Chamberlain and Milner pressed would for a certainty end his power in the republic if not the republic itself. The prospects of a fight between a little republic and a great empire were not indeed encouraging for the republic, but they promised a chance, although a very slight chance, of success. The republic could concentrate its forces on the one object; a scattered empire could not. The republic was fighting on its own ground, with the secret sympathy of a large part of the Dutch population of South Africa and the active aid of its neighbour the Orange Free State; the empire was

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. iv.

[2] It is of course conceivable that a sudden threat of war from London in July 1899, such as Wolseley suggested, would have led Kruger to give way, and in that case Rhodes could have claimed that he was right. But the Imperial Government would not agree.

fighting six thousand miles from its base. And the republic might hope—it was a gambler's hazard—for foreign complications which would embarrass Britain, perhaps even for direct foreign aid; it might hope, too, for a change of government and consequently policy in Britain.[1] And always at the back of Kruger's mind was the memory of Majuba and its consequences, that petty defeat of the British by the Boers eighteen years before, which had paralysed the Imperial Government and restored the republic;[2] and now, fortified by his trust in God and the knowledge that the Orange Free State would throw in its lot with the Transvaal, he decided once more to challenge the British Empire.

Objections among his own People.

In the main his people were with him. Many of the burghers had always hated the British with the inherited hatred of their fathers who had crossed the Orange River to quit a British colony; among these the authority and counsel of the dour old man, himself a Voortrekker, were supreme. And many more, among whom hatred of the British had grown dim and who had doubted Kruger's methods, perhaps even his uprightness, found their mouths shut when they remembered the Jameson Raid four years before, and the peril of their country from which Paul Kruger had then rescued them. But there were critics of the President even in the Transvaal: one member

[1] The Unionist Government had then been in power four years in England, and Kruger knew that the average life of a British Cabinet was five years. Many members of the Liberal party, and the bulk of the Liberal press, had criticised the policy of Chamberlain, some from sincere conviction, many as a good party point, quite sufficiently to embarrass the Liberal party had they suddenly obtained power. These things were not overlooked in Pretoria.

[2] The idea that Kruger was reluctant to fight the British army, or that he had any idea that his burghers would be outstrengthed, may be dismissed. Sir John Willoughby once threatened the President that if a great Boer trek into Rhodesia were not stopped, the result would be war. 'If it must be, let it be,' replied Kruger quietly. 'Then tell him,' said Willoughby to the interpreter, 'that in that case he will have to reckon with the British army.' 'And tell *him*,' replied Kruger, 'that I have reckoned with the British army once before.'

at least of Kruger's Cabinet, Lukas Meyer, opposed the war;[1] Joubert and others of the Progressive party still stood for conciliation and gradual enfranchisement of the aliens; others again would have spun out the negotiations and played for time.

There were doubters, too, among the Dutch Afrikanders in Cape Colony, whose support the Transvaal Government hoped to obtain. Sir Henry de Villiers, an honoured Cape Dutchman of unquestioned loyalty both to his own people and the empire, declared that Kruger's counter-proposals, of a sham franchise hedged about with every conceivable restriction, were quite ridiculous, and urged him for the sake of peace to adopt a more reasonable tone; the Cape Ministry under Schreiner, although dependent on the support of the Afrikander Bond, was against a war, and while maintaining a neutrality that was criticised by both sides at the time, it privately used such influence as it had at Pretoria to restrain the President from taking the extreme course.

And in Cape Colony.

But the iron will of Kruger beat down all opposition and objections. An ultimatum was drafted by his Cabinet and submitted to the Orange Free State for alteration or approval; and this peremptory message in its final form insisted that all British troops on the borders of the republic should instantly be withdrawn, that all reinforcements landed in South Africa since 1st June 1899 should be removed within reasonable time, and that troops on the high seas should not be landed in any part of South Africa. If no answer was returned within forty-eight hours by the British Government it would be regarded at Pretoria as a declaration of war.

The Transvaal Ultimatum.

The ultimatum meant certain war, for if the British had

[1] This was openly stated in the peace discussion at Vereeniging three years later. Lukas Meyer had been the founder of the New Republic on the border of Zululand, which was afterwards incorporated in Natal.

temporised or faltered after this amazing document was despatched its prestige, not only in South Africa, but throughout the whole world, would from that moment have been dead. The first draft of the ultimatum was written on 26th September, by which time the Boer commandos had been warned of approaching war; the final text of the document, as approved both at Bloemfontein and Pretoria, was delivered on the 9th October 1899.

It is delivered, 9th October 1899.

When the ultimatum had been sent, it was said by some that Kruger's stout heart misgave him, and that he would have recalled it if he could.[1]

It was too late. The die was cast.

CHAPTER II

THE WAR OF WHITE SUPREMACY: 1899-1902[2]

ENGLAND entered on the most serious war she had faced since the Indian Mutiny forty years before with the easy lightness of heart that comes from ignorance of the task ahead. The weakness of the Boers was despised; the folly of their leaders was denounced as national suicide. Despite the clear evidence of history and of British colonists and soldiers, the South African Dutch as a people

Britain underrates the Boer Strength.

[1] The statement rests on no good authority. But it may nevertheless be true.

[2] There is an enormous literature of this war, much of it worthless, ephemeral trash, foisted on a long-suffering public with more patriotism than discrimination. But there are several excellent books dealing with the whole or great part of the three years' campaign; the chief is *The Times History of the War*, very lengthy but maintaining a high standard; the (British) *Official History of the War in South Africa*, which begins well but deteriorates towards the end; the *German Official Account of the War*, dealing only with the first year. To these may be added the popular account by Conan Doyle, and Captain Mahan's discussion of the purely military aspect.

From the Boer side, De Wet's *Three Years' War* is admirable, the best book in reasonable compass on the subject, but with unfortunate omissions, owing to the author's plan of describing only what he saw

were written down as a race of stupid peasants who were cowardly in war. 'The whole thing will be finished in six weeks,' men assured each other in London. 'We shall be in Pretoria by Christmas,' was a common farewell of the soldiers who embarked at Tilbury or Southampton in October 1899 for the field of war six thousand miles away.[1]

There was indeed some excuse for this optimism. The path of Empire had run smoothly of late years: no European enemy, no enemy even of European descent, had been faced within living memory, but petty barbarian foes had been overwhelmed with ease, and the 'little wars of England,' which furnished occasional temporary disasters and ultimate triumphs and enlargement of the imperial territories, had passed into a proverb. It was generally assumed that the war with the Boer Republics of South Africa would be little greater strain on the national resources than a campaign against the Ashantis or some punitive expedition in the Indian hills—a matter of a quick march, a sharp decisive fight or so, a victorious occupation of the country of the enemy, and a dictation of generous but sufficiently definite terms of surrender from the fallen capital. In such a way a Roman citizen might have looked upon the insurrection of a barbarian tribe upon the frontiers of the Empire in the days of Trajan; in some such way, perhaps, the legionaries of Vespasian spoke of a campaign against the ancient inhabitants of Britain. . . .

And with the Diamond Jubilee of 1897 still fresh in men's

personally, and not always accurate; Davitt's *Boer Fight for Freedom* is violently partisan, and of no great value; Viljoen's *Reminiscences*, written without access to his own notes while a prisoner at St. Helena, are vague but interesting.

The large number of other books dealing with phases or isolated passages of the war are mentioned—when they are worth mentioning—in the course of the narrative.

[1] Yet Chamberlain himself had warned his countrymen. 'A war in South Africa,' he said on 8th May 1896, 'would be one of the most serious wars that could possibly be waged. It would be in the nature of a civil war, a long war, a bitter war, and a costly war, and it would leave behind it the embers of a strife which, I believe, generations would be hardly long enough to extinguish.' The warning was forgotten.

minds, when the whole force of the British Empire seemed concentrated in one long line of triumph in the streets of London, there seemed no task too great for the might of Britain; with this recent evidence of imperial strength, Kruger and his people seemed guilty of a gross impertinence in disputing the position or asserting their claim to independence at all.

But Britain was speedily disillusioned when she came to grips with the South African War. The difficulties of transporting a large force across half the world were indeed surmounted with ease. Britain was still supreme at sea, and for that reason no foreign rival on the continent of Europe stirred a finger to assist the Boers; enmity was confined to leading articles in the newspapers of Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, and to popular demonstrations against the mighty Empire that had wantonly attacked—so it was said—a small republic. A sudden unwonted passion for peasant freedom was seen abroad in these days. . . .

Such things could be disregarded by a proud phlegmatic people, whose good opinion of themselves was not affected by the outspoken criticism of their neighbours. The British public had convinced itself that its cause was just and its enemy contemptible, and foreign denunciations and lamentations from the opponents of the war in England only added to the certainty. A wave of martial ardour swept a peaceful land;[1] the nation promptly

Enthusiasm for the War.

[1] This patriotic and martial enthusiasm showed itself in curious ways at times. Little boys formed themselves into imitation soldiers in the London streets, with uniforms made out of brown paper, as the nearest approach to khaki—an anticipation of the Boy Scouts of ten years later; khaki ties and waistcoats, even khaki dresses were fashionable; and South African names were suddenly popular in England. I recollect that the peaceful High Street of a Kentish village suddenly labelled itself Bloemfontein Avenue; Mafeking became a favourite name for commonplace villas that required a number to distinguish themselves from their neighbours, and many hapless infants were christened with such names as Redvers Buller, or other heroes of the hour.

But this was merely an old fashion revived. In the dismal propriety of the Thames-side suburb of Battersea, certain streets are named Afghan, Cabul, and so on. The place was built at the time of the Afghan War of 1879.

decided that the foreigners were jealous, that pro-Boers at home, as they were called, were traitors,[1] and that the voice of the overwhelming majority was right. That determination never wavered, although the war lasted nearly three years instead of six weeks, and defeat instead of easy victory surprised the people at the start.

All classes, indeed, were ready to volunteer for active service. The Duke of Norfolk, a Cabinet Minister,[2] enlisted as a sign that the Catholics of Britain were ready for their share in the war;[3] recruits were forthcoming of undoubted patriotism if of little military training, whenever the call was made;[4] regiments of troopers were raised privately or locally, and the roll of the City Imperial Volunteers, London's own contribution to the field, was sufficient proof of the universal enthusiasm. Among the vocations of the 64 officers and 1675

[1] In the early days of the war I remember seeing a regiment of street arabs throw a sallow Briton, whose injudicious sympathy with the enemy aroused their wrath, into the fountains at Trafalgar Square. They certainly damped his enthusiasm as well as his person, but he made some heartfelt observations about freedom of speech and the birthright of every Englishman as he dripped out into the October night.

So universal was the feeling at the beginning of the war that one London newspaper, which favoured the Boers at the start, hurriedly changed its tune and its editor when the circulation dropped so heavily that the proprietors became alarmed; and I believe that two or three other British journals which favoured the Boers throughout also lost very considerably.

[2] It was suggested in some quarters that the British Cabinet held divided opinions regarding the justice of the war, and that Chamberlain had forced his colleagues' hands. As to that, the Duke of Devonshire, a member of the Cabinet, said emphatically, 'It is no more Chamberlain's war than mine. We were all agreed at the beginning. We are all agreed now. It is our war.' (Smalley's *Anglo-American Memories*, Second Series.) And Salisbury was not the Prime Minister to have his hands forced by any of his colleagues.

[3] A well-authenticated anecdote alleges that when Lord Salisbury was informed of his colleague's decision, his only comment was 'When is Cross going?' The venerable Lord Cross, the Lord Privy Seal in that Ministry, was then seventy-six years of age.

[4] The deficiencies of the later English recruits in South Africa were well understood in England. Once in those days I heard a comedian at a low-class London music-hall, who came on the stage as a trooper of Somebody's Horse, sing a song with the chorus, 'The only horse that ever I could ride, was the horse that the missis dried the clothes on.' The audience cheered uproariously.

men of that popular force were every trade and profession—bank clerks, stockbrokers, dentists, horse-surgeons, solicitors, warehousemen, postmen, printers, architects, barristers, an engine-driver, and even men who pursued in normal times such peaceful occupations as those of schoolmaster, pawnbroker, and librarian.[1]

Overseas Contingents.

The war was popular, not only in Britain, but throughout the British Empire. The imperialism of the Jubilee two years before was not forgotten in the colonies, and from the new English nations in the making came insistent offers of help that were gladly accepted as an indication of the solidarity of feeling overseas. Queensland was the first to offer a contingent for service in South Africa three months before the war broke out; each state in the budding Commonwealth followed suit, and the same fervour was shown in Melbourne and Sydney as in London. White feathers were sent to those who did not volunteer for service, but there was little need to impute cowardice or lukewarmness, for squatters, lawyers, dockers, and, as one observer laughed, 'middle-aged men and old, to all appearances quite sane,' pressed forward. New Zealand quickly followed suit; in Canada the Government, which feared the resentment of the French Canadians,[2] held back, but the popular enthusiasm broke all bounds, and forced the Ministry to action. Before the year was out a Canadian brigade was on the high seas; and altogether there took part in the war 8400 Canadian volunteers, 6208 from New South Wales, 3897 from Victoria, 2903 from Queensland, 1494 from South Australia, 796 from Tasmania, and 6000 from New Zealand.[3]

[1] For the City Imperial Volunteers, see Mackinnon's *Journal of the C.I.V.*, a workmanlike narrative; Lloyd, *One Thousand Miles with the C.I.V.*, and Childers, *In the Ranks of the C.I.V.*, are of little value.

Of this force 68 were killed or died of disease; 61 were wounded—and one heroic individual resigned.

[2] The fear was groundless, for many French-Canadians joined the South African contingent, and rendered good service.

[3] See Wilkinson, *Australia at the Front; New Zealanders and the Boer War* (anon.), and Evans, *The Canadian Contingent.*

These troops demonstrated not only the solidarity of the Empire on the issue of the war, but also the love of adventure among its scattered peoples; there was no lack of men for the work in hand. But as a whole the war found Britain unready. A British soldier with a taste for epigram and a quarrel with his superiors[1] declared that while the Colonial Office was bent on war, the War Office was intent on profound peace. The remark had as much truth as most epigrams: the facts were that Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, had only nominal authority at the War Office, and his suggestions were carefully disregarded by the Secretary of State, Lord Lansdowne, in whose cold official hands the preparations that should have been made while peace and war hung in the balance were effectually strangled.[2]

British Unpreparedness.

British troops had been landed in South Africa in the six months before the war; but the bulk of those thought needful for the campaign had not arrived, and some, particularly the Army Service Corps, had not yet started when the Transvaal ultimatum was delivered. In these circumstances Britain began a war which, in some folly of insular-imperial pride,

[1] General Butler, in his *Autobiography*.

[2] A debate on this matter took place in the House of Lords on 15th March 1901. Lansdowne's defence was that Wolseley had advised the British to occupy Delagoa Bay, and to begin the war in June 1899, in order to finish it by November 1899. 'The idea of forcing the (political) pace in such a manner was one that did not at all commend itself,' said Lansdowne; the war would then undoubtedly have been aggressive. There was here a clash between diplomacy and military interests which was hardly avoidable; but in the debate Lansdowne refused to produce the papers which, in the opinion of Wolseley's brother-officers, would have justified the Commander-in-Chief, and thus admitted by implication that the responsibility for the lack of preparation lay with the civilian. English apologists for the war adduced England's unreadiness as a proof that her action was not aggressive. A strange view indeed: the fact that a man is unready for death does not make him a saint.

Much of the War Office work was well done nevertheless, and a hearty tribute is paid it in the *German Official Account of the War*.

Probably little would have been heard of the shortcomings of the War Office had it not been that the famous reply, 'Unmounted men preferred,' was sent in answer to the colonial offers of troops.

her soldiers and her people boasted they would finish in six weeks.

The commander of the British troops was Sir Redvers Buller, a gallant officer who had made his name in many a minor war. A man of Devon, he was equally loved by his county and his country, equally trusted by the troops under him and by the public at large. He was now sixty years of age, a time of life at which great men can still do great service to their country: but war, at once the cradle and the grave of the soldier's reputation, was the undoing of his fame. Buller proved one of that numerous class of men who fill a secondary place so well that all the world swears them equal to the highest post—until they hold it, when all the world is ready to admit its error.

Sir Redvers Buller.

But Buller also had not yet left England when the Transvaal ultimatum was delivered.

The Boer position on the whole was better at the start. The generals of the republics had no ocean to cross; they were on the spot, fighting in their own country and among their own people; and they had chosen their own moment to begin. They had not omitted to prepare for war during the last four years of diplomatic conflict;[1] and whereas Britain depended on a volunteer army, the two republics could claim every male citizen for the ranks. For the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, too, the fight was a vital one in defence of the fatherland, for Britain it was not:[2] for them also it was a religious war, a fight in which

Position of the Boers.

[1] Apart from heavy guns bought in Europe, the Boers had 62,950 modern rifles; before the Jameson Raid, according to Davitt, they had only 13,500, without counting their muskets of an older pattern.

[2] Much was said, and more was written, to prove that the war was vital to Britain. The idea proceeded from the new imperialist school of the day, and it had its uses as an argument. But the fact remained that the war was not vital to Britain in the sense that it was to the Boers. It mattered greatly to the Empire, and it was vital to British interests in South Africa; but British independence was never at stake, and a hundred Boer victories would not have led to the invasion of Britain.

the burghers were convinced that God was on their side; for the British it was not.[1]

Nevertheless there were many doubters and some shirkers among the Boers who were to fight the British and lead the invasion that was to drive them out of South Africa into the sea. If some patriots proclaimed that at last the opportunity had come to prove the strength of the Boer Afrikander nationality, and carried flags showing the United Dutch South Africa of their dreams,[2] if the younger Transvaal burghers announced that they would be in Durban in a month,[3] the older burghers were more dubious of success. They knew something of the enormous power of the British Empire, and they knew that the republics could at the utmost raise no more than forty-five thousand men.[4]

Character of their Troops.

And if four out of six members of the Transvaal Government took up arms, and two out of every three members of the Volksraad went to the front, there were also some cowards, or at least unwilling fighters among the Boers. One commandant remarked sarcastically that some of those who were the loudest in proclaiming their intention of shedding their last drop of blood in their country's cause really meant that they would not expose even the first drop to any

[1] The sound of Boer hymns and prayers often reached the British camps, and a British officer told Menpes the artist that if the British troops had the same religious feelings victory would be easier (Menpes, *War Impressions*).

The British army chaplains were as ineffective in South Africa as British army chaplains usually are; but sometimes the officers held services themselves. One officer, who shall be nameless, thinking the time fitting for religious exercises, paraded his men before dawn one morning to sing a hymn, choosing, as the only one they were likely to know, 'Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.' As they sang the first line the morning sun rose over the mountains of Natal. . . .

[2] Menpes, *War Impressions*.

[3] Nevinson's *Ladysmith*. Winston Churchill states (*London to Ladysmith*) that the Boer troop trains from Pretoria were labelled, 'To Durban.'

[4] Davitt says the total Transvaal force was 31,329 men, the Free State about 13,500; and 700 foreign volunteers. But not all were effective fighters.

danger,[1] and a considerable number of burghers handed in medical certificates of their unfitness, an altogether unsuspected amount of heart-disease being disclosed on the first summons under arms.[2] . . .

These unworthy citizens were mostly allowed to remain in their homes; a little people fighting for its life had no need for such. Several more turned pale and ran away when the first shot was fired; these likewise were given permission to depart, their certificates of exemption bearing the contemptuous and disgraceful words, 'Permit . . . to go to Johannesburg on account of cowardice, at Government expense.'

There remained the vast majority of good sound men, ready to fight to the end, to invade the enemy's country or defend their own. Each brought with him food enough for a week—after which he was supplied by the republic[3]—a rifle and ammunition, and usually a Bible and hymn-book in token of his faith. They were of all ages, whitebeards, greybeards, men in their prime, youths and even boys of ten; they were strong with the strength that comes of living close to the soil in sun and open air; most could shoot, and all could ride.

They seemed indeed a motley army to those accustomed to the regular panoply of European arms. Uniform was unknown: most came to war in their ordinary clothes, a shapeless soft slouch hat of unknown age, loose-fitting ancient coat and breeches, flannel shirt and high boots; but some more ceremonious burghers, conscious perhaps of the dignity of the occasion, went to the front, as they would have gone to church, in incongruous black frockcoat and top-hat.[4]

There was at first no discipline in this extraordinary army. Each commando elected its commander, as much for his

[1] De Wet, *Three Years' War*.
[2] Viljoen, *Reminiscences*, and De Wet.
[3] The rations were not always good, and the Boers seem to have suffered as much from the roguery of army contractors as the British. The burghers on commando called part of their rations stomach-bombs.
[4] Lowther, *From Pillar to Post*.

piety as his knowledge of war; each commander was apt to act independently of his fellow-officers, and sometimes paid scant heed to the orders of the Commandant-General. The burghers were not exempt from that universal curse of all irregular armies, which had troubled leaders so different in character and aim as the Marathas in India[1] and George Washington in North America,[2] the desire to desert the army from time to time, and to visit their homes for a period of rest, or to look after their private affairs; against this ineradicable tendency the Boer generals issued protests and proclamations in vain, and the numbers in the field were continually rising and falling. The report of a small success would bring back the laggards by the hundred; a serious reverse, and they would melt away in the night by thousands. Such discipline as there was came with the war, and the weeding out of fainthearts and weaklings; but to the last the control of the Boer troops was far from perfect.

The two Armies compared.

But if in this respect they compared unfavourably with the British, they had the advantage in initiative. The Boer thought, acted, and shot for himself; the British trooper was trained to let others think for him— and when they thought wrong the result was disastrous. 'The men,' said Redvers Buller some months later in a phrase that became historic as regards the British soldier, 'were splendid.' It was true of their valour, hardly of their training. The careless bravery of British troops, their reckless courage in the face of death, was never better shown than in South Africa; but the record of the war showed that neither officers nor men could easily adapt themselves to changed or novel conditions.[3] The British artillery were

[1] For the Marathas, see vol. ii. bk. vii. ch. ii..

[2] For Washington's army, see vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iii.

[3] There is truth in General Butler's saying that the training at Aldershot, which was the child of the Crimean War, was the parent of British disasters in South Africa—the massed divisions, shoulder-to-shoulder tactics were entirely unsuited to the country. The Zulu War of 1879 had shown this, but the lesson had not been learnt.

indeed by the universal admission of their opponents excellent, but the use to which their guns were put was often feeble; the shooting of the infantry was frequently aimless and generally poor, the markmanship bad, and far too much at random. As the war progressed and fresh recruits came out to take the place of those who had fallen, the British infantry fire became even less effective; but the same applied in almost equal degree to the Boers.

The older generation of the Transvaal and Orange River burghers, men who had campaigned against the Matabili and Zulu tribes and had long experience of big game shooting in the north, were cool, clean shots, incomparably better than the British; their eyes were also better trained to long distances, their hunting experience had made them realise, what the drilled armies of Europe were never taught, the need of taking cover; they knew, too, that ammunition was not inexhaustible and therefore husbanded their supplies. They had also a great natural advantage over their opponents in being at home in the country, and familiar with its light and wind when firing. Such was the older breed of Boer; but the younger men, who had done little fighting and hardly seen a native war, were no better than the British.

The Foreign Auxiliaries.

In addition to the true Boers of the veldt, the foreign population of the republics was commandeered to fight. Some were men of British birth who had thrown in their lot with the Boers; it was now their unhappy lot to attack their own people at the behest of their adopted country, and they found themselves in consequence distrusted by both sides, regarded as Boers by the British and as British by the Boers. And there were other human items of all nationalities resident in the republic, even a Turk, perhaps a Jew, pressed into the Transvaal service;[1] and beyond these were foreign volunteers, an amazing collection of soldiers of fortune drawn by sympathy, or more pro-

[1] Nevinson (*Ladysmith*) vouches for this. But I doubt the Jew.

bably by sheer love of adventure. A gallant French soldier, Villebois-Mareuil, volunteered and lost his life in the Boer cause;[1] there was an Irish corps,[2] an Irish-American corps, a German, a Scandinavian and a Russian brigade, a few Italians and some Hollanders.

How far these miscellaneous volunteers aided the Boer republics is very doubtful. A few perhaps earned their rations; probably the majority deserved, what most of them certainly obtained, the suspicion of the burghers with whom they made common cause.

Joubert was the Boer Commandant-General, as he had been eighteen years before in the campaign when Majuba made his fame; but he was no longer the Joubert of Majuba. Still the high-bred Boer peasant of simple tastes and home,[3] he was now an old man, with an old man's caution and lack of enterprise and occasional sharp petulance of temper.[4] He who at fifty had not feared the daring attack on the impregnable Majuba was at nearly seventy a constant drag on his subordinate commanders in the invasion of Natal: a few weeks after the war had begun he thought the time had come for peace;[5] he would not allow a pursuit of the British after their defeat in a skirmish, saying that it was barbarous to slay a Christian people in their extremity;[6] a whole commando was recalled because two of its burghers had been struck by lightning, and this was a sign that Providence was angered.[7]

The Boer Commandant-General, Joubert.

[1] His life has been written by Jules Caplain.

[2] One of the members of this corps, Colonel Lynch, returned to Ireland after the war, was elected a member of Parliament by the Nationalists, accused, tried, and condemned to death for high treason—and reprieved and re-elected.

I have to thank him personally for some of the details of this chapter.

[3] A banquet was once given in Colley's honour by Joubert at his house. It was cooked by Mrs. Joubert, whose 'flushed face could be seen through the kitchen door to see how we were getting on.'—Butler's *Colley*.

[4] Viljoen.

[5] Viljoen again.

[6] Davitt, *Boer Fight for Freedom*.

[7] Viljoen once more.

Soon it became plain that the old man's heart was not in the war. He had desired not war, but conciliation of the Uitlanders and agreement with the British; he had not approved the policy of Kruger, and he openly doubted not only the wisdom but the outcome of the appeal to arms. 'The heart of my soul is bloody with sorrow,' he said to an Englishman; 'we can only leave the issue to God. If it is His will that the Transvaal perish, we can only do our best.'[1]

It is not in such a doubting spirit that victories are won. But if Joubert's age and scruples told against a success of the Boer forces, not less did the obstinacy of another commander, Piet Cronjé, in charge of the eastern branch of the republic's forces. The real generals of the war were discovered by the war; and the younger generation of the Boers, who took the places of these seniors, quickly showed themselves of great military capacity. Such were the stern and stubborn De la Rey, Christian de Wet, the amazing agility of whose movements baffled a whole army for months, and made him a popular hero the world over;[2] Viljoen; Louis Botha, whose fame as a general was eclipsed by his later fame as a statesman of the British Empire; and a brother of Louis, Philip Botha, whose premature death in action robbed his people of one who, in the opinion of many who served under him, was the ablest of all these younger men.[3]

Weakness of the Boer Plan of Campaign.

But the Boer plan of campaign was planned by the veterans, and was therefore timid and feeble. A sudden dash to the south, such as Botha and De Wet advised, might have seen them in possession of Natal before the main British army arrived; a quick march to the south-west across the Orange River into Cape Colony

[1] Nevinson, *Ladysmith*.

[2] Davitt mentions a curious tradition which grew up among the Irish volunteers in South Africa that De Wet was Parnell. At least the tradition did De Wet no harm.

[3] No fewer than five of the Botha family served in this war. Philip Botha was killed at Doornkop in the Orange Free State on 22nd October 1901.

might have taken them near Cape Town and secured a rising of the Cape Dutch. Either of these things would have made the position of the British serious; both together would have made it critical. Neither was attempted.

Instead of a concentrated attack and invasion of the British territories, the Boer armies were split up into sections, and placed on the defensive; one force protected the northern Transvaal against a possible invasion from Rhodesia, a second threatened that little township of Mafeking on the north-west frontier which the Transvaalers regarded as their own rightful possession;[1] a third mounted guard over Kimberley, whose diamond mines the Orange Free State still believed by right to be its own;[2] a fourth occupied the mountain passes into Natal.

They were waiting for the intervention of the European powers to stop the war. But intervention never came—and on that vain hope the precious days were wasted, while British troops poured into South Africa from the ends of the earth.[3]

This weakness of the Boer plan of campaign was due partly to the innate conservatism of the people, which made them prefer a passive and defensive campaign above the risks of an aggressive attack on the enemy's territory; it was due partly to the caution which came naturally from the age of the Boer commanders who controlled the early stages of the war: but in the main it seems to have been due to a serious divergence of political aims. The younger men, particularly in the Free State, were

Due to Divergent Political Aims.

[1] They had never forgotten that Cecil Rhodes had prevented them from seizing Mafeking in 1885.

[2] For the controversy between Britain and the Free State over Kimberley, see the previous chapter.

[3] Viljoen records that the Boers in Natal were assured definitely that the great European powers would stop the war in a fortnight. But Joubert seems to have placed his hope more in a change of government in England. He remembered Gladstone, and he knew that Liberal members of Parliament in England had been in correspondence with Kruger.

enthusiasts for the Boer Afrikander ideal of a United South Africa under Dutch control, and President Steyn supported them. But the older burghers were less definite in their views, and more inclined to be content if they held their own possessions intact; and Kruger, while doing nothing to discourage the idea of Dutch South African union—on which indeed he largely depended for the enthusiasm and driving power he required—kept his eyes mainly on the more practical end which would relieve him of many of his difficulties, the acquisition of a foothold on the coast. A strip of maritime territory and a seaport for the Transvaal would in his view have been a not inadequate reward for a successful campaign.

A White Man's War.

The war was by tacit consent a white man's war. The natives were used as carriers, transport riders, messengers, spies, scouts, and trench-diggers on both sides; but no attempt was made to arm them against the enemy, or to enlist them as active combatants. When Kruger was appealed to that his forces might be strengthened by native levies, he boldly answered that it would be barbarous and unchristian; the idea was wholly alien to the Boers, whose contemptuous enmity for the natives had been acquired in several generations of native war; and Kruger may also have recognised that the dangers of the policy to his own people might well outweigh its military advantages. It might even have induced the British to imitate that policy in self-defence, and their hold upon the natives was far stronger than that of their opponents. The British on their side rejected the offers of help which came from the loyal native populations of the East and West Indies and New Zealand—they were determined to see this war through by themselves, and their determination did not waver though the task was far more difficult than they had supposed; and those natives under imperial protection in South Africa who were supplied with arms were strictly warned that they must not intervene in a white man's quarrel, and must only use

their weapons against the Boers in the event of the Boers invading their territory. There were occasional breaches of the rule, as was inevitable when the war was waged over so large an area, but on the whole the agreement was honourably kept.[1] The war was one for supremacy between two dominant white people, in some respects almost a civil war, and as such it was carried on throughout.

The first shot of the war was fired at Kraaipan on the north-west frontier on 12th October, where an armoured train was wrecked by the Boers; but the real business of killing was begun in Natal, a country which the Boers had never ceased to regard as their own proper territory since their fathers of the Great Trek had invaded it and fought the Zulus for its possession sixty years before.[2]

The Campaign in Natal.

Both the geographical position of the colony and its physical configuration offered peculiar advantages to the Boers. The north of the colony ran like a wedge thrust between the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and could therefore be easily invaded from both republics; the country here was also mountainous, a formation which suited the Boer method of fighting behind cover as much as the flats of southern Natal and the Free State favoured the British. On northern Natal therefore the Boers directed their main attack under Joubert, and two days after the ultimatum had been sent the Transvaal commandos crossed the frontier into the colony.

[1] There were of course complaints, particularly from the Boers or their sympathisers, that the natives had been enlisted against them. Many of these complaints were merely to gain support or blacken the other side; but in such a war isolated instances in proof could be found. The natives of Mafeking, for instance, who were involved equally with the British in defence of the town, were unfortunately not disarmed after the siege was raised, and spread terror among the farms around. (Young, *The Relief of Mafeking*.) But the accusations made by the European press and English pro-Boers of wholesale arming of the natives against the burghers were groundless, although in the later stages of the war the native scouts who reported the Boer positions to the British were given a rifle for their own protection.

[2] Bk. xxiii. ch. vi.

The British commander in Natal was Sir George White, a veteran of war whose fighting memories reached back to the terrible days when he had taken part in the Indian Mutiny. Since then he had reached the high position of Commander-in-Chief in India, and his career had shown him a capable soldier; but no occasion had yet arisen to prove him a great general. Now, however, his chance had come: he was suddenly and unexpectedly faced with a situation which would have taxed the ability of a commander of the first rank. Unfortunately the emergency proved somewhat beyond his powers.

Sir George White.

Arriving at Durban only three days before the war began, White had had little time to form any plan of campaign in a country which was strange to him; but that was for the moment of little importance, since the British troops in Natal were too few for any forward movement until reinforced from England. It was no question of invading the enemy's territory that White had to decide, but of checking their advance into his own country.

White was not inclined, like the brave and reckless General Penn Symons, from whom he took over the Natal command, to underrate the strength or the ability of the Boer as a soldier.[1] Not less reckless than Symons in his youth, White had learnt caution with experience, and it was now his policy to withdraw the British troops which were in the long northern neck of Natal back upon Ladysmith, convinced as he was that their numbers were too small to hold the country in which they were placed, and that their isolated and unsupported position was extremely dangerous.

His first thought was right. Unfortunately White was persuaded against his better judgment by the Government of Natal, which naturally disliked the idea of abandon-

[1] Churchill, *London to Ladysmith*. Symons nevertheless knew something of South African warfare, having nearly lost his life in the Isandhlwana disaster in the 1879 Zulu War.

ing any part of the country to the enemy, particularly the valuable coalfields from which the little city of Newcastle took its name, and which stretched southwards to Dundee. It was urged that to retreat before a battle had been fought would depress the colony, exult the Boers, and perhaps precipitate a native rising, and that was true; but it was equally true that a forced retreat after a battle would be still more depressing, and might be disastrous.

White hesitated, and rather weakly gave way; but the event proved the soldier's instinct right, the politician's judgment wrong. Newcastle was indeed abandoned, and the Boers entering the place on 15th October found it empty when they hoisted the Transvaal flag above its unpretentious buildings; but Penn Symons held Dundee, and here White allowed himself to be overruled by his confident subordinate.

The enemy now saw their opportunity. While commandos from the Orange Free State were surrounding Ladysmith and cutting off communications with Dundee, the Transvaal burghers advanced upon Dundee itself; and that place, which lay in the hollow of a hill, was indefensible. Nothing but incredible incapacity, said the French soldier, Villebois-Mareuil, when he visited the place some weeks later, would have chosen such a spot for a defence; and the judgment, though harsh, was not unjust. But Symons had no belief that the Boers would attack him, and he took every warning of his danger with the cheery optimism of ignorance which too often precedes and invites disaster. For the Boers did attack him, and it proved his own, although by good luck, not his men's undoing.

Dundee Fight, 20th October.

At dawn on the morning of 20th October a large force of Boers suddenly fired on the British in Dundee. The surprise was complete, but the disciplined garrison showed no confusion, and the over-confident Symons decided to retaliate with an immediate frontal attack. His men promptly formed and charged the Boers; and by sheer dash and recklessness

they justified, what nothing but success could have justified, their reckless leader's command. The Boers, weakly lead by Lukas Meyer,[1] were repulsed and hastily retreated, but Symons, leading his troops to the charge, was borne back to Dundee fatally wounded.

The first fight of the war had given the victory to the British which their pluck but not their generalship had earned; but three days more proved the victory useless.

The contingency which White had feared had now occurred; the road between Dundee and Ladysmith was blocked by Boer troops, and the Dundee garrison was cut off from its retreat at the very moment when retreat might become imperative. White saw that he must attack the Boers without delay, and on the afternoon of the day after Dundee fight the British opened fire on the Boers at Elandslaagte, a spot about a third of the way from Ladysmith to Dundee. The Boers fought bravely and served their guns well, but the Hollanders and other foreigners who happened to be engaged in the fight put up a poor resistance against the rush of the British cavalry; after a short encounter the Boers too broke and fled, the British chased in hot pursuit, and a terrible scene followed as lancers and dragoons rode the burghers down. The pursued begged mercy, the pursuers gave none as they drove spear and lance through the bodies of the foe to the shouts of 'Majuba avenged.'[2] Day now shrank from the bloody scene, and all through the night that followed the beaten Boers, heartsick

Elandslaagte, 21st October.

[1] Lukas Meyer was founder and president of the New Republic of 1884 in Zululand, which was afterwards incorporated in the Transvaal territories. He was Chairman of the First Volksraad at Pretoria when the war broke out in 1899, and far more suited to that position than to military command. In a later battle he collapsed altogether, and had to return to Pretoria to restore his health; his absence from the field was of great assistance to the Boers. It must not be forgotten that he was one of those who had opposed the war.

[2] This charge caused great bitterness among the Boers, who considered that quarter should have been given when asked. But it is almost impossible for charging cavalry to give quarter and take prisoners.

and demoralised at their defeat, made their way north to the frontier and their homes.

General Kock, the Boer leader, had been killed,[1] and many of his burghers abandoned the campaign after this first battle in despair. These were the weaklings and the laggards, of whom the Boer army had no need; stiffer work lay ahead than these could stomach, and their presence merely demoralised the rest.

There was no denying that Elandslaagte was a considerable victory for the British. It caused misgiving at the Boer capitals, and it was hailed by the British with enthusiasm as the first-fruits of the short, sharp campaign that was to end at Pretoria by Christmas. But it was the last British victory for several months, and even at that it was in effect little more than a triumphant retreat.

Within less than a week its uselessness was proved. The position at Dundee had now become impossible, and General Yule, who had succeeded Symons, decided to abandon a place which should never have been held. On 23rd October he left the town for Ladysmith; a few hours afterwards General Penn Symons died of the wound he had received three days before. The bullet that struck him would have been more merciful had it shot him dead, for he lived just long enough to see the Boers entering Dundee in triumph.

British abandon Dundee, 23rd October.

Yule accomplished a difficult retreat without serious loss after a fight on the road at Rietfontein; but the position at Ladysmith was now serious, and the transient success at Elandslaagte could not disguise the fact that White was nearly surrounded. The British troops were recalled from the scene of their victory, and on the following day the Boers again occupied Elands-

Boers occupy the Town.

[1] He was a very old man who had fought the British so far back as Boomplaats in 1848 (bk. xxiv. ch. i.). The body of this venerable patriot was discovered on the battlefield, and it was said that it was treated with less reverence than was its due.

laagte. The British had won two useless victories, but the solid success lay with the Boers.

Northern Natal was now theirs, and in a triumph of victory the invaders looted and destroyed the houses and furniture of the British farmers who had fled to the south. The stern orders of Joubert to the contrary notwithstanding—'I will not allow robbery or plunder,' he declared, 'and forbid any personal injury to be done to any private individual'—rioting, drunkenness, and pillage had their way unchecked for several days, property was burnt and wantonly damaged, even the trivial but sacred possessions of home, a photograph, a family Bible, or a child's treasured toys, were trampled on and smashed by the invaders. Such are the minor episodes and individual tragedies of war.

And Northern Natal.

It had now become overwhelmingly clear to White that unless he made a desperate effort he would be besieged in Ladysmith. A combined attack on the Boer forces that were slowly enveloping the town was planned on 30th October, and duly carried out; but the plan, which was at best a risky one, lacked cohesion both in idea and execution, and it led to grave disaster. By accident or design the enemy withdrew from the spot which White had chosen for his main attack, and the main body of his army was left with nothing to strike at; several regiments were badly led, and broke away from the heavy Boer fire with little credit to themselves or their commanders. But this was not the worst, although the miscarriage of the plan ensured its failure. One column of nine hundred men under Colonel Carleton had been sent on a hazardous and difficult road to Nicholson's Nek, and they were slowly making their way by night when the mules accompanying the column stampeded. The whole column was thrown into disorder as the terrified animals rushed through the ranks a nervous trooper cried that the Boers were upon them, and

Nicholson's Nek, 30th October.

a panic broke out. Order was presently restored, but day dawned on a body of tired, dispirited men cut off from their communications with Ladysmith, and occupying a hazardous position on Nicholson's Nek. All might yet have been well, for the Boers themselves were surprised when they discovered the British almost in their midst: but they had a man among them, at that time no more than a simple burgher, who saw and seized the opportunity.

Christian de Wet was among the Boer commando, and without him there would have been no disaster to the British. But De Wet saw that the enemy had not occupied the key of the position, and at his direction the burghers seized it. They crept nearer and fired steadily, and the British gradually retired, replying with ineffective volley firing; again the Boers crept nearer, and the British once more retired. They were weary—some of them even slept through the fight—but not altogether spent after the night's mishap; for some hours the fight swayed slowly and not very perceptibly in favour of the burghers. And then quite suddenly the end came. Somebody hoisted a white flag from an isolated outpost of the British line. The Boers accepted the signal of defeat; but many of the British who had not seen the white flag and who had no intention to surrender, fixed their bayonets and prepared to fight the battle further. It was useless. The bitter news was passed that Carleton had agreed to throw up the fight, and officers broke their swords in disgust, and their men sullenly piled their arms as the enemy came to take them prisoners.

De Wet's First Victory.

Such was the first serious reverse of the British, and it more than outweighed their two abortive victories. Their loss was heavy—46 men killed, about 138 wounded out of 900—but not extraordinary, and there is no doubt they could have fought further; they were certainly in a difficult position, thanks to the remissness of their officers, the misfortune of

the night, and the quickness of De Wet; but the surrender was a serious blunder.[1]

Its effect upon the Boers was instantaneous. The long line of British prisoners dolefully making their way towards Pretoria was a strong tonic to the republican cause. It wiped out the memory of Elandslaagte, it proved that the Boers could still do what they had done in 1881, and it justified, in the minds of simple burghers who had somewhat doubted, their President's assurance that God and right were on their side.

On the day after Nicholson's Nek, Redvers Buller reached Cape Town. The whole situation had changed since he left England a fortnight before; a few days more, and it grew still worse.

Buller arrives at Cape Town, 31st October.

White made no further attempt to throw off the enemy; from the rashness which had ended in Nicholson's Nek he changed to extreme, perhaps excessive, caution: in another week Ladysmith was definitely besieged, and the little city of single-story houses and corrugated iron roofs which was the urban centre of northern Natal contained not only some of the best British cavalry but a large refugee population of men and women and their children who had flocked thither from Newcastle and Dundee and the neighbourhood for safety. The tragic irony of the situation could not have been surpassed: the city of refuge had become the post of danger, and the army that was to have invaded the Boer Republics was shut in by the Boers like a cat in a mouse-trap.

Ladysmith besieged.

White could still indeed have cut his way out of Ladysmith, and at the price of a battle with the Boers his troops could have been released for the advance that Buller was preparing. But that would have meant the abandonment of Ladysmith,

[1] According to De Wet, the Boer loss was only four killed and five wounded. But the figures given by him in *Three Years' War* are not always accurate.

and have been in itself a confession of failure. It might have provoked a native rising; it would certainly have given the Boers an advanced base—Ladysmith was the junction of the Transvaal and Orange Free State railways—and enormous quantities of supplies.[1]

Against a more active enemy Ladysmith could hardly have been held, for the position, surrounded as it was by hills, was not naturally strong; but the Boers made no attempt to take the place by storm, relying on bombardment and the starvation of the garrison, and attempting later, on the advice of a German engineer, to flood the town by damming the Tugela River.

A little enterprise and daring, and Maritzburg might have been taken, and all Natal overrun; but the caution of Joubert and the stolidity of his men saved the British from that danger. The Boers had had their success, and they were content to wait their time for more.

British Plan of Campaign changed.

But the critical situation in Natal changed the whole British plan of campaign. Buller had intended to strike straight at the republics through Cape Colony and across the Orange River; but it seemed clear to him that Ladysmith must be first relieved, and 'I have not the nerve,' he said with a generosity that did not conceal his belief in himself, 'to order a subordinate to do it. It was the big business, and I had to go myself.'[2] He little knew to what shipwreck of his reputation he was going; but even had he known he would have gone nevertheless. What-

[1] One reason given for remaining in Ladysmith was that the siege occupied a large Boer force (*South African Despatches*, xi. 15). But it also rendered useless a large number of the British.

Thirteen years afterwards, when White died in 1912, a controversy arose as to the wisdom of his remaining in Ladysmith; on which Roberts gave it as his opinion that the reasons for and against evacuation were very evenly balanced. By retiring White might have preserved the mobility of his force; but retirement would have been desperately critical, in that it would have greatly assisted the Boers, and given them an advanced base. (Letter in London *Times*, 28th June 1912.)

[2] Churchill, *London to Ladysmith*.

ever faults may be laid to Buller's door, and whatever may be said of him after the misfortunes of the next few months, he was no shirker.

Troops that should have been sent to the Orange River were now diverted to Natal, and the quick advance that had been expected was indefinitely postponed. The major campaign suddenly became the minor, the minor became the major, because of White's collapse; but even in the minor campaign the British were unfortunate.

On the very day before Buller's arrival at Cape Town, the Orange Free State burghers had crossed the Orange River and invaded Cape Colony, in violation of a pledge which President Steyn had given to the Cape Ministry that the colony should be considered outside the field of war. At Pretoria and Bloemfontein it had been hoped that the Cape Dutch would rise on the declaration of war by the republics, and thus in a sense the pledge would be absolved when all Dutch Afrikanderdom was in arms against the British. Had that rising in fact occurred—and Milner no less than Steyn thought it not merely possible but likely—the situation would have been desperate. But neither the republicans nor the British allowed for the conservatism of the Cape Dutch. A few hotheads certainly joined the burgher commandos, more perhaps talked of doing so and allowed half-hearted resolution to evaporate in warlike words; but the great majority of the Cape Dutch confined themselves to passive sympathy with their kinsmen.[1]

Cape Colony invaded, November 1899.

Their inaction was a severe blow to the republicans, but it was thought that a friendly invasion calling on Cape Colony to rise might yet effect its purpose. To some extent this was true, but the great bulk of the people still remained neutral.

[1] A proclamation warning the colonists of the consequence of assisting the enemy, which was published at the beginning of the war, may have had some effect. It was noticed that the Dutch deleted the words 'God save the Queen,' which ended the proclamation, while the British colonists underlined the penalties which intending rebels might suffer.

How long that attitude might continue was doubtful; in any case a Boer force was violating British territory, capturing British stores, its very presence a proof of the helplessness of the British in their own proper colonies. That force had to be repelled, or worse might come of it; and General Gatacre was detailed to the work of dealing with them or chasing them out of the country. Gatacre was neither better nor worse than many of his fellow-officers at that time: he had little of the mental training that a general needs for war, and while he was the embodiment of vast physical energy, he sometimes forgot that not every man was as strong on the march as he.[1]

Stormberg, 9th December.

These defects led to his undoing. A long night march near Stormberg railway junction, in the north of Cape Colony, where the Boer invaders were encamped, tired his troops; no scouts were employed, and the general and his men lost their way; they blundered on the enemy unawares on the early morning of 9th December—the Boers were equally surprised—and they attacked at random. But Gatacre's men were exhausted, and their leader knew nothing of the enemy's position; a desultory fight ensued, in which many of the British lay down from sheer fatigue and half the force were not engaged at all—and presently they were ordered to retire. Their casualties were trifling, but the repulse was none the less serious. It proved that the enemy was now firmly established in Cape Colony as well as in Natal.

Meanwhile another British general, Lord Methuen, had been detailed to the relief of Kimberley, where the position was far from happy. The diamond city had sent out agitated but premature appeals for help; friction had arisen between the officer in charge of the defence, General Kekewich, and Cecil Rhodes, who

Attempted Relief of Kimberley.

[1] There is a biography of Gatacre by his wife Beatrix, who executed the difficult task of describing her unfortunate husband's career with admirable taste.

had gone up to his own city at the outbreak of the war,[1] but the siege itself was conducted with amazing desultoriness, and Rhodes himself could boast that he was as safe in Kimberley as in Piccadilly.[2]

Nevertheless Methuen was sent to disperse the besiegers, now concentrated before Kimberley under Cronjé. Every mile of the road was disputed by the enemy: on the way thither Methuen fought a successful action at Belmont on 23rd November, where the troops, by the testimony of one of their commanders, 'did for themselves what no general would dared have ask of them'; a second at Graspan two days later; but at the Modder River on 28th November the Boers were entrenched in the deep river bed, and Methuen walked straight into the trap that had been set for him.

He knew little of the dispositions or even the size of the Boer army under Cronjé; his maps were bad, his scouts were worse, his confidence perhaps worst of all. The troops were sent straight forward to the attack, and from the Boer trenches in the river bed came a murderous fire that no man could face and live. Time and again the deadly guns of the enemy spoke as the day advanced, time after time the British were repulsed; it was only when Methuen's artillery did what should have been done at first, and shelled the Boer position, that the engagement became equal. Night fell, and the battle hung uncertain; but in the darkness the Boers abandoned the position in the Modder River. The order to withdraw came from Cronjé, and it evoked a strong protest from De la Rey. That

Modder River, 28th November.

[1] Rhodes had no great opinion of the British officer in general, and the Kekewich family in this generation were proverbially cross-grained; but although Rhodes's agitation cannot be excused, it must be remembered that he was already suffering from the disease which he knew would kill him. The war, which he had not expected, was a hindrance to his plans, and he knew his time was short.

[2] A gun was forged in Kimberley to reply to the Boer attack; it was called "Long Cecil," in answer to the enemy's 'Long Tom.' The first shells it sent into the Boer camp were marked, 'With C. J. Rhodes's Compliments.'

brave Boer had lost his own son in the fight, but the stoic parent sternly said that the death of his lad touched him less than the abandonment of the position. Whether Cronjé's decision was sound or not, it was justified by the event; the Boers fell back on Magersfontein, and it was clear that Methuen would have to fight another battle or more before he reached and relieved Kimberley.[1]

Reinforcements now came up for Methuen, and after a halt of some days—which gave the enemy time to prepare their position—he moved forward to make a direct frontal attack on Magersfontein Hill. Once again, as at the Modder River, ignorance of the country and lack of military ability made him decide on the simple but least effective and most dangerous way; once again the Boers had read the mind of their opponent: but this time the result was disaster to the British.

Magersfontein, 11th December.

On Sunday afternoon, 10th December, the British shelled the Boers on Magersfontein Hill. The fire was ineffective; Methuen believed the loss of the enemy was heavy, but in fact no more than three men were wounded. The failure of this preliminary cannonade gave the Boers confidence; the British, however, were already confident of success. Shortly after midnight the Highland Brigade under General Wauchope, gallant men under a gallant leader, were ordered to march towards the hill to rush it. Wauchope was a brave man, but like the good soldier that he was, he hated butchering his troops, and he pointed out to Methuen the extreme hazard of the plan. Nevertheless the order was given, and in a pouring rain on a pitch-dark night the troops pushed on—the famous Black Watch, the Seaforths, the Argylls, and the Highland Light Infantry. The march was long and trying,

[1] Methuen described the Modder River as 'one of the hardest and most trying fights in the annals of the British army.' He had not been at Malplaquet.

But this was a generation that knew not serious losses in war. The British losses at Modder River were 70 killed and 413 wounded.

and over rough and broken ground; it took longer than had been expected, and daylight was already dawning when the troops neared the enemy. The Boers were anxiously awaiting the attack, and from the trench before the hill they at once poured in a murderous fire; the Highlanders were still drawn up in the close order that was considered advisable for a night march, and they were at the halt, about to change their formation, when they were surprised.

It was a fatal moment. Many fell at once; some broke and fled; Wauchope was shot dead. But the rest pushed on to the very foot of the hill, crawling through the wire fence of a farm which obstructed them, until they nearly reached the Boer trench, a simple excavation some five feet deep, covered by scattered bushes, whose real strength lay in the fact that it followed the slope of the hills, and was below the skyline.[1]

The hill was almost taken by the sheer gallantry of the forward charge; but at this moment another Boer commando opened fire, and the Highlanders, now hardly led at all—almost all their officers were dead—could do nothing save lie down full length and take what cover they could find. In an agony of thirst and helplessness the men lay wounded, among the dying and those already dead; a few crept back out of range; towards early afternoon, after some hours in this terrible position, they were relieved.

The British had lost 205 men killed, 690 wounded, and 76 missing or prisoners. The night attack had failed, the Highlanders were not supported, and Methuen fell back beaten from the attempted relief of Kimberley. The battle of Magersfontein was a complete victory for the Boers.[2]

These two reverses, Stormberg and Magersfontein, coming as they did together in one week, caused a painful feeling of

[1] Lowther, *From Pillar to Post.*

[2] The Boer losses, however, were also heavy, and their ammunition was so low that they could not have fought another battle. But Methuen did not know this.

disquiet in England, but no acute anxiety; the faith of the nation was pinned on Buller in Natal. And Buller, after a few days in Maritzburg, was now ready to attack the Boers.

Redvers Buller in Natal.

Over a month had passed since White was shut up in Ladysmith, and the Boers had come down to the Tugela River, and even crossed it on a southward invasion. Colenso, a small formal village of corrugated iron roofs after the typical South African fashion,[1] surrendered to them, and for awhile they held Estcourt, a little township of three hundred houses lying in a cup of the hills half-way to Maritzburg; but after a fight at Willow Grange the invaders retired behind the Tugela, and there began to entrench themselves against the British advance.

This southward march to Estcourt proved that the Boer armies were now in stronger hands than those of the veteran Joubert. The cautious old general had retired to Pretoria, severely injured by a fall from his horse; his fighting days were done, and death soon released him from the troubles which had come upon his country.[2] His command had fallen on Louis Botha, a young Transvaaler in the prime of early manhood, and it was upon him that the task of checking Buller fell.

Colenso, 15th December.

If Botha felt anxiety in his responsible position he showed it not. Trenches were thrown up along the heights on the left bank of the Tugela, where the Boers lay concealed; a hill on the right bank named Hlangwana, which commanded the Boer position, was occupied, but none too strongly occupied; and in this admir-

[1] It was named from Bishop Colenso (see the previous chapter).

[2] Joubert died at Pretoria on 27th March 1900. An extraordinary rumour arose among the foreign volunteers, who had been impatient of his cautious policy, that he was suspected of treason to his country, and had been poisoned. (*Dix Mois de Compagne chez les Boers, par un ancien Lieutenant.*) Never was a more baseless story; Joubert was as honest a patriot as ever breathed, and his defects were those of age. Tributes of respectful admiration were paid him by his British opponents as well as his own countrymen at his funeral.

ably chosen situation for defence Botha awaited the direct frontal attack of Redvers Buller, as Cronjé had awaited Methuen at Magersfontein.

He had gauged correctly the simple method of his opponent. Buller had indeed an alternative plan in his mind, but this was abandoned in favour of a direct frontal attack; the British, in fact, were dominated by the theory of a pitched battle, and since this was the nearest approach to pitched battle they could get, they took it. Yet the position of the Boers, protected by the river, covered by their trenches, and their formation almost invisible, made a pitched battle and frontal attack impossible of success.

Yet hope ran high among the British troops, still trusting their commander and contemptuous of the enemy: all expected that Colenso would prove an easy victory, and a rumour even reached the field hospital in the rear that the Boers had fled.[1]

They had not fled, but they were invisible, so well had they concealed their position; and against that invisible foe Buller launched his men. The great guns of the British opened battle at sunrise on the morning of 15th December, and the horrid whine of bursting shrapnel and the mournful chant of shells singing through the air greeted the dawn of a South African summer day; but the guns did no damage to the enemy, and the Boers, instructed by their leader, who knew that his real weakness lay in his artillery, made no reply. An advance was now ordered, and Colonel Long, commanding the British artillery, pushed forward his cannon towards the river. It was a reckless act that brought its own immediate punishment, and it led later to a grave disaster. Instantly came the signal for the Boers to fire, and the British artillery, on open ground, without cover, and unsupported by infantry, suffered badly. The attacking guns were presently silenced by the enemy, and a gallant attempt to withdraw them from

[1] Treves, *Tale of a Field Hospital*, an excellent little book.

the field led to further heavy loss, one retrieving party losing 13 horses out of 22, and 7 men out of 13, so deadly was the Boer fire. The British infantry elsewhere, advancing towards the river in the close order beloved of Aldershot but fatal in the field against modern rifles, was shot down man after man; and Buller, disheartened at the loss and failure of his attack, and seeing it impossible to force a way across the Tugela that day, ordered the battle to be abandoned. One who saw the defeated general immediately after the battle noticed that 'Buller climbed down limp and weary from his horse like an old, old man; I thought he was wounded with vexation.'[1] As a fact he was wounded by a shot from the enemy, for he had stood, like his men, steadily under the awful fire from the other side the river; but the spectator was right. Buller's heart was wounded by his first big defeat, and the blow dogged him during the remainder of his long and difficult campaign.

The British had lost 145 men killed and 762 wounded, and 220 were missing or prisoners.[2] But worse than the loss of men was the loss of artillery. The ten great cannon which had been put out of action still lay before the river. They could have been recovered with some loss at any time that day, or they could have been protected by rifles from the Boers, and quietly removed without danger under cover of night. But Buller abandoned the guns entirely, and towards evening the Boers crossed the Tugela and seized the guns unmolested, along with ten ammunition wagons and six hundred rounds of shell, more than all the artillery they themselves had at Colenso. That was the real disaster of the day.

British Guns abandoned.

Buller's action in abandoning the guns was as inexcusable

[1] Atkins, *The Relief of Ladysmith.*

[2] After the dead were buried their comrades placed little crosses in remembrance above their graves. The crosses were fashioned out of whisky cases or provision crates, and the dead men's names were cut on these rude memorials by a knife or tin-opener.

as his original plan of a frontal attack against a concealed and protected enemy was faulty. The latter showed he had no generalship, but relied on simple slogging by brute force in a position where slogging and brute force were obviously useless; the former proved that he was disheartened by the day, a beaten demoralised man. Yet the magnificent courage which his troops had shown that day should have told even their beaten leader that he would not have called on them in vain to save the guns.[1]

But Buller was beaten indeed and cowed by the disaster. He lost faith in himself, and in a moment of despair he telegraphed to White in Ladysmith that the attempt to relieve him had failed, the city must fall, and advising White to destroy his papers before agreeing with the enemy on surrender.

On this painful episode one need not linger, the shame of a brave but stupid man suddenly stripped of his pride as he realised he had faced a task beyond his powers. White received the message with the calm announcement that Ladysmith would hold out to the last, and his quiet resolution saved Natal.

The news of Colenso, following on that of Stormberg and Magersfontein, was received in England at first with feelings almost of dazed incredulity, then of sorrow and of wounded pride, but never with despair. In its hour of trial, all the more bitter because too quick success had been expected, the whole nation stood firm and resolute, shocked indeed and angry, somewhat puzzled by its failure, but grimly determined to carry the thing through.

The News in England.

Such was the black week of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and

[1] There is a story, which I have no reason to doubt, of a British trooper riding out to his death at Colenso, and calling to a comrade, 'So long, sonny; meet you at the Day of Judgment.' A great friend of my own, who went through that battle, had a presentiment that he would be killed before the day was out. The heel of his boot was shot off, another bullet took off his helmet, but otherwise he was untouched. So much for presentiments.

Colenso, which followed swiftly on the Mournful Monday of Nicholson's Nek. Foreign critics now foretold with joy the speedy dissolution of the British Empire, and in greedy anticipation portioned out the spoils among themselves: little did they know the spirit of that people when confronted by disaster.[1]

Prompt Action by British Government.

The Imperial Government rose promptly to the crisis. Immediately on the receipt of the news of Colenso, more troops were got ready for the front, and, since Buller was now clearly incapable of bringing the war to a conclusion, the chief command was offered to Lord Roberts, with Kitchener as his chief of staff.

Roberts and Kitchener go out.

Roberts accepted the high responsibility, although he had now reached an age when men may claim their ease. He was sixty-seven; he had spent over forty years on active service in India, and his record then included the great march between Kabul and Kandahar. That was twenty years before in the very prime of life; but now he was near the mortal span, and he lay beneath a crushing family bereavement. On 17th December, the day when he was offered the supreme command in South Africa, he learned that his only son had been mortally wounded at Colenso, and had died the same evening of his wound.

Yet despite his years and heavy sorrow, Roberts felt himself fit and strong enough to face the toils of a first-class campaign; Kitchener, his chief of staff, was in his prime, forty-seven years of age, and known to the world as the tireless organiser of the Sudan campaign that had avenged Gordon, and the hard victor of Omdurman the previous year.[2]

[1] In that black week the theatres in London were almost deserted—all save one, where it happened that *King John* was being played. The magnificent message of the closing lines of the drama so cheered men that the house was crowded night after night.

[2] Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iii.

The two men arrived together at Cape Town on 10th January 1900; but it was some time before any advance could be made. The past three weeks had shown little change; Methuen and Gatacre had sat tight in their positions, the enemy had shown little energy and taken no advantage of their victories. Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking were invested as before, and one insignificant success alone had fallen to the Boers. The petty settlement at Kuruman on the borders of the Bechuana desert, which in happier days had been an outpost of the Christian teachers in the wilderness,[1] had been attacked; after a brief but not inglorious resistance, it had surrendered, and now flew the flag of the Republic. Apart from this the Boers had achieved nothing: but the abrupt departure of Buller for Natal, and the diversion of so many troops to the relief of Ladysmith, had left the main British plan of the war stranded; for awhile, therefore, Roberts and Kitchener were engaged in bringing order out of chaos in Cape Colony and preparing for an advance into the enemy's country.

The Surrender of Kuruman.

But before the main army had started on the march that was to end at Pretoria, Buller was again on the move. Early in January he found what he should have found before, a way round the Tugela across Potgieter's Drift; but still little real progress towards Ladysmith was made. And now came an indefensible disagreement that led directly to another blunder and more delay. Sir Charles Warren, a soldier of great South African experience,[2] was sent by the War Office to Natal; and Buller, piqued by the implied suggestion of his own inadequacy to the campaign, practically handed over for a time the command to Warren, without, however, giving his subordinate definite control, and occasionally criticising or actively

Buller's Advance in Natal, January 1900.

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. ii.

[2] He conducted the Bechuana expedition in 1885, and had been employed ten years previously in determining the boundaries of the country (bk. xxiv. ch. iv.).

interfering with Warren's plans. He would neither take nor give full responsibility—and the result was Spion Kop.

At one moment Buller threatened to withdraw behind the Tugela the troops which Warren had brought forward; to save an ignominious retreat Warren proposed to occupy Spion Kop, a height immediately north of the river; Buller consented—and the unsound compromise became the policy of the campaign.

Spion Kop, 23-24 January.

The taking of Spion Kop might have been a brilliant success, for it held the key of the Boer position, and the Boers themselves were now wearied with a month's incessant fighting and preparation for more fighting. But only the rear crest of the hill was held by the British, and that alone was worthless: the trenches they made in the night were inadequate; and when the heavy fog that had disguised their operations lifted, it was found that the Boers were determined on attack. It was a difficult situation for the burghers, but for the British it speedily became impossible. The artillery were badly placed, and had no direction as to the position of the enemy; the troops were presently exposed to a terrible cross-fire from the Boers on both sides of the hill, and General Woodgate, who was in command, was killed early in the day. The Boers were now cautiously scaling the height, a daring piece of soldier-craft which was to be justified by its success; and it seemed clear that Spion Kop was to be a replica of the disaster at Majuba nineteen years before.

Shot after shot from the slowly advancing enemy found its human mark; an anxious spectator beneath, watching his countrymen caught in the deadly trap of their own making, and falling steadily one by one, described the terrible hill as 'an acre of massacre, a complete shambles, at the top of a rich green gully with cool granite walls—a way fit to lead to heaven.'[1]

A way to heaven perhaps; but the road thither ran through

[1] Atkins, *The Relief of Ladysmith.*

hell. The British troops stood fast in their impossible position, but there were fearful happenings in their ranks. Many of the men were blown almost to pieces by bursting shell and shrapnel; one was noticed with both eyes gone, and most of his face shot away; others had their jaw shattered or carried clean off by the deadly fire. A few were so exhausted that they fell asleep in the very thick of battle, dreaming perhaps strange peaceful dreams of home on that dreadful eminence; but most simply lay behind the trenches and sent back what fire they could.[1]

In time the Boers had nearly scaled the hill, and called upon the British to surrender; but Thorneycroft—whom Buller, interfering in Warren's plan, had placed in command when Woodgate fell—refused, crying loudly that he would see the Boers in hell before he gave way; but the enemy were by now swarming among the British, and there seemed little fight left in the defence. Yet Thorneycroft had saved the British for the time; reinforcements arrived, and the Boers were driven off the crest of the hill; but the Boer artillery again opened fire, and the British soldiers lost their heads and broke back in retreat. Rallied by their officers at this desperate moment, they held the hill, and once more the fight was saved. Hour after hour the battle raged, remaining critical but not disastrous on the British side; night fell and Spion Kop was held.

Abandoned by the British.

But the men were finished. They had neither food nor water; they had fought for hours without a break at the top tension of anxiety; and another day without assistance would mean inevitable defeat. Thorneycroft had no belief that assistance would come, and he knew that the divided command of Buller and Warren had prejudiced the day; and with this knowledge he gave the order to retire. By dawn next morning Spion Kop was abandoned.

[1] Treves, *Tale of a Field Hospital.*

Thorneycroft's action was criticised and condemned; but it was at most the error of judgment of a brave man in a difficult position, and the real responsibility for his decision must lie on the divided counsels and divergent aims of his superiors, Buller and Warren. It was due to Thorneycroft, and to him alone, that the British troops on Spion Kop had not surrendered to the Boers early in the day; he believed that as things were, short of ammunition, many of his men wounded and dead and the rest exhausted, he could not hold the position any longer against attack. He could not know that the Boers for their part were as exhausted as the British; the burghers were utterly wearied with the fight, and after the day's work General Botha and his secretary were both found asleep in their tent in the act of writing their official despatch describing the battle.[1]

All that night, while the two armies lay slumbering, the Kafirs were looting the bloody field; but the next day, when the burghers found to their surprise that the British had evacuated Spion Kop, they reoccupied the hill. The victory was theirs by consent.

The Boer victory was admitted by themselves to be a fluke;[2] our salvation, a Boer general is reported to have said, was the astounding inefficiency of the British artillery.[3] Their real salvation was the division of control among the British leaders.

The losses were heavy. The Boers admitted 300 casualties; the British had 322 killed or died of wounds, 563 were wounded and recovered, and 300 were prisoners. The dead were simply and roughly buried in the trenches where they fell; but before the earth covered them, somebody on the Boer side took a photograph of the poor fellows who had fallen, and the horrid picture was found on sale in the Pretorian shops months afterwards by the British.[4]

[1] Davitt, *The Boer Fight for Freedom.*
[2] Viljoen, *Reminiscences.*
[3] Davitt.
[4] The sale of this photograph was at once prohibited by Lord Roberts.

The blame for Spion Kop was fixed by Buller on Sir Charles Warren, and an angry controversy arose in England between the champions of the two generals;[1] but Buller could not be acquitted of the chief share in the misfortune. His failure either to support Warren properly or to veto the Spion Kop operations altogether proved him again, as at Colenso, unequal to the full responsibility of directing a great campaign.

He now returned to his own plan, an advance towards Ladysmith by way of Vaal Krantz, a scheme which Warren's operations had interrupted. After a few days' rest, the army advanced and seized Vaal Krantz on 5th February; but the place was then discovered to be useless, perhaps even dangerous, and two days later it was evacuated and the troops fell back once more—an astounding and purposeless evolution that was construed as one more success for the Boers.

Vaal Krantz, 5th February.

Again Buller had showed infirmity of purpose and incapacity of taking full responsibility. On 6th February, while holding Vaal Krantz, he had appealed to Roberts whether 'the chance of the relief of Ladysmith was worth the risk,' and Roberts replied insisting that White must be relieved. Further telegrams between the two men followed, in which Buller's attempt to shirk the work before him was again plainly visible: but Roberts was now beginning his own great march into the enemy's country—the disaster at Spion Kop had determined him to hasten—and his advance had some effect in reducing the Boer pressure on Natal.

Buller's Irresolution.

But at last Buller was discovering the way to relieve Ladysmith—not by general engagements against the Boers in positions where the enemy had chosen their own ground, but in steady pressure against them from all quarters, and an uninterrupted series of small actions by

His Final Advance.

[1] See *Sir Charles Warren and Spion Kop: A Vindication by Defender* (1902) and the evidence before the Royal Commission on the War.

which the larger force tired out the smaller. After crossing and recrossing the Tugela three times between December and February, Buller at last broke through on a practicable route; a fortnight of continuous fighting in the neighbourhood of Colenso exhausted the Boers, and at last, on 27th February, the burgher levies were seen in full retreat, and the road to the besieged city was free.

Meantime the siege of Ladysmith[1] went slowly on through the hot South African summer. 'Gentlemen, we have two things to do,' said Sir George White to his garrison, 'to kill time and to kill Boers—both equally difficult.' Kill time they did, but time also killed some of the garrison. The water was bad—for the enemy had cut off the main supply from the Tugela River, and the town had to depend on the muddy Klip River[2]—and enteric and dysentery broke out. A hospital was fitted up in the Town Hall for sick and wounded, but this was presently abandoned, as the Boers, in defiance of the red flag above the building, persistently shelled the place.[3] The sick and wounded died steadily from day to day, but more were added day by day, and the grave-digger was presently the busiest man in the place. **The Siege of Ladysmith.**

No attempt was made by the enemy to storm the town, but it was shelled persistently and regularly by the Boer gunners from the heights around with the steady monotony

[1] Ladysmith was fortunate in its historians. *From Capetown to Ladysmith*, by G. W. Steevens, is the brilliant impressionistic work of one who might have made a mark in literature as well as journalism, had enteric not killed him in this siege; Nevinson's *Ladysmith: The Diary of a Siege*, is an able book; Atkins, *The Relief of Ladysmith*, may also be added.

[2] Mentioned in *Naval Brigades in the South African War*, by T. T. Jeans.

[3] Nothing caused more ill-feeling than this action, which was clearly intentional, and in ugly contrast to the amenities which in other respects marked this first stage of the campaign. Each side was kindly and considerate to the enemy's wounded; and once, when the Boer ambulance ran short of chlorodyne, it sent a request for a supply to the British lines. The request was granted.

of a machine. Every week-day, with short intervals for meals, the bombardment continued; only Sunday was a day of rest for the enemy, of peace for the inhabitants.

At first the shells caused terror, and the inhabitants of Ladysmith fled from their homes to caves and cellars, but it was soon discovered that shell-fire was capricious in its effects, and casualties were few. In a fortnight's bombardment the casualties were only three men, one horse, two mules, one wagon, ten houses, and a fragment of a church;[1] thereafter the people became careless, and more were killed. But it was chiefly disease that did the work of death in the beleaguered city.

Sorties in force were made from time to time; a Boer gun would be captured, a few Boers killed in a night surprise; but the British loss was also heavy.[2] And presently the garrison grew too weak for further sorties, the horses of the troops collapsed with fatigue, and there was nothing to do but await relief. Vague rumours of Buller's advance were sometimes heard, then more certain tidings of defeat; then came monotonous silence, and rations were cut down. At last the trek-oxen and the horses of the cavalry were slaughtered to make soup,[3] and starvation came measurably

[1] The archdeacon was so enraged by the Boers firing at his church that he preached a sermon the next day in which he declared that the English had been appointed by God to scourge the Boers. A *non sequitur*.

[2] After one of these night attacks, a British trooper fell asleep on the veldt, apologising to the man next him for making a pillow of his legs. When he awoke he found his companion had been a dead man, his head smashed and lying in a pool of blood.

A less gruesome story is of one of the Naval Brigade, severely wounded in the leg, whose only remark was 'This will stop my cricket.' On the way to the hospital he stopped the ambulance, asked for a match to light his cigarette, and died the same evening.

Churchill tells of finding a dead Boer who had been shot in the leg, and bled to death unattended. In his hand he was holding a letter from his wife.

An officer's servant was badly hit by a shell as he was preparing a meal. His last words were, 'I hope you get your breakfast all right, sir.'

[3] The mixture was called Chevril, and labelled *Resurgam* on the bottle. A bilious jest.

near; a chicken cost a sovereign and eggs fetched from thirty to fifty shillings the dozen.

Still the garrison kept heart, as they smoked the used tea-leaves which were a poor substitute for tobacco; a newspaper—the *Ladysmith Lyre*—was started to relieve the monotony, at Christmas an entertainment with a Christmas tree was provided for the children; but January and February went by and nothing happened save an occasional alarm and the sound of Buller's guns to the south. At one time the idea got afoot that Ladysmith was to be sacrificed, and the whole British strength to be diverted to the campaign in the west; but a message from Roberts relieved that fear, and when towards the end of February the Boers were seen in flight, it seemed that the siege might yet be raised. Still nothing was known for certain; only on the last day of February a ragged, dust-stained regiment was seen approaching, and it was found that they were British. Buller had at last broken through, and on 1st March, after a brave defence of 118 days, Ladysmith was relieved.

Even now northern Natal was still in the hands of the Boers, and it was Buller's heavy task to drive them from Glencoe and Dundee, through Newcastle and across the mountains into the republics; but now that Ladysmith was relieved the campaign in Natal had once more sunk to its proper place as a minor phase of the operations in South Africa.

On the morrow of Spion Kop, Roberts had finally decided to strike his main blow directly and in quick succession at the two Boer capitals of Bloemfontein and Pretoria; on 6th February 1900, all being ready for the advance, the Commander-in-Chief and Kitchener quietly and unobtrusively left Cape Town for the front. Within the next three weeks the whole face of the war was changed.

Roberts advances, 6th February 1900.

Roberts saw that with a mobile enemy who chose his

positions so carefully and by preference waged defensive war, as did the Boer, two things were necessary—greater mobility among the British, and an abandonment of the frontal attacks on strong positions, which Buller and Methuen had favoured. Secrecy was likewise desirable, but this, in a country swarming with spies or sympathisers with the Boers, was difficult of attainment; surprise attacks, however, might be achieved by rapidity of movement. To these ends Roberts worked.

Within a few days the first success was won. A cavalry raid and quick cavalry charge at Klip Drift by General French —who had learnt his lesson in the first months of the war, and was now the best cavalry leader in South Africa—forced the Boers to abandon the siege of Kimberley in the middle of February; the British horse then swung round on Cronjé, who still lay impassive in his great laager at Magersfontein.

Siege of Kimberley raised.

His own people now began to realise the danger of his position, and advised him to retreat and concentrate his aim on defending Bloemfontein; but Cronjé was stubborn and proud. He would listen neither to reason nor argument in a council of war; the only answer he would deign his juniors was the short question, 'Am I general or you?' Like a good Boer, he ascribed his victories to Providence; but he expected his burghers to recognise how manifestly Cronjé had assisted Providence. He had the same contempt for the British that Buller had for the Boers; and with Cronjé as with Buller, that contempt proved his downfall.

Cronjé's Peril and Obstinacy.

One move indeed he made. The Boer army was shifted from Magersfontein Hill to Paardeberg; and there in the bed of the Modder River, Cronjé took up his position, entrenched himself, and awaited attack. The tactics which had been moderately successful against Methuen were to be repeated against Roberts.

And now the great British force began to surround the Boer camp at Paardeberg. There were women and children in that camp, and these, as De Wet foresaw, would add to Cronjé's difficulties; but the older man would not heed advice. In a few days the Boer army was nearly surrounded; De Wet again appealed to Cronjé to abandon the position while the opportunity of escape was still his, but without result. Cronjé sat tight, satisfied that the British could never dislodge him. De Wet advised his senior to abandon his laager, stores and wagons in this last extremity; but he might as well have spoken to a wall. To Cronjé, with the fighting instincts of the Voortrekker to whom a laager and the wagons were an essential of the defence against Zulu or Matabili, the abandonment of the laager was unthinkable; and the last chance was suffered to lapse.

Paardeberg, 27th February.

De Wet now hung upon the British flank, attacking where he could; but he could do little. And Cronjé's position was desperate. His laager had water from the river, and was placed in a natural fortress; but he was surrounded. The British suffered considerable loss when they attempted to storm the place; but the steady pounding of the artillery began to take effect on the doomed Boer army. So the thing stood some days: Cronjé still hung out doggedly, and he had brave men under him. On 19th February he asked an armistice; it was refused, and Roberts demanded unconditional surrender. Six days later came heavy rains, and the Modder River rose seven feet in a few hours; its flood swept out the dead bodies of men and oxen from the Boer camp; but it also made the camp impossible. There was nothing for it but surrender.

A brave charge by the Canadian troops in the British army against the Boer position ushered in the 27th February. But Cronjé had already decided that nothing more could be done; he was caught in the trap of his own making. A flag

of surrender was sent into the British camp; terms were arranged; and Cronjé and his men came out of their deadly home. 'I am glad to see you; you have made a gallant defence, sir,' said Roberts kindly to his beaten foe: but Cronjé made no answer. His day was done; his obstinacy had quickened the fall of his country's independence.

There was no mistaking or disguising the greatness of the British victory. One of the main Boer armies, 4105 prisoners in all, was wiped out at Paardeberg; the moral effect of this disaster, coming as it did almost on the day that the Boers were driven back from Ladysmith, was incalculable. If God, as a Boer woman said, had punished Cronjé for being too ambitious,[1] it seemed to follow in their simple theology that the people themselves had also fallen under the divine displeasure. Two months before, and the national festival of the Boers on Dingaan's Day had fallen on the morrow of Colenso amid great rejoicing; but now Paardeberg was decided on the very anniversary of Majuba. The coincidence of dates was not lost on either army.

British march on Bloemfontein.

The fruits of victory were quickly plucked. True to his belief in rapid movements, Roberts marched forward within a week after Paardeberg towards the Boer capital of Bloemfontein. On the road thither lay De Wet with six thousand burghers at Poplar Grove. Now that Cronjé was a prisoner De Wet was the main hope of the Free State, and he had not lost hope; but at that moment he could do nothing. The aged President Kruger, depressed but not disheartened, was in conference with De Wet at the very moment when Roberts began his advance; the presence of the Transvaal President might have done something to inspirit the Boer forces, but he now had to leave hastily lest he should fall into the hands of the enemy, and De Wet could not at that crisis bring his followers to the fighting-point. 'I cannot catch a hare with unwilling dogs,'

[1] Menpes, *War Impressions*.

was his emphatic answer when a remonstrance reached him for not attacking the British; a panic had broken out, and the burghers were so demoralised that they received, what they would certainly have taken without leave, permission to go to their homes. The road to Bloemfontein was clear.

The Free State capital was not defended, and its keys were brought to Roberts in token of submission as he lay encamped a few miles off. The British now moved quickly forward, and on 13th March their triumphal entry was made into the pleasant little town. It was a dramatic moment. Forty-six years before the British had abandoned all claim to the Orange River Sovereignty,[1] and the Union Jack was hauled down from Bloemfontein; the boundaries of empire had temporarily shrunk, and the small British population north of the Orange River had been abandoned. A few British residents now living in the Boer capital could perhaps recall that evil day; all had heard the story of surrender. And many had watched since then the advancing rule of their own people north of the Boer republics, as British hunter, missionary, and trader had established themselves among the Bechuanas, the Mashonas, and on the very shores of Lake Nyasa, lands that were unknown when Bloemfontein had been surrendered; but in Orangia the independent flag of a Boer republic had seemed firmly fixed. On the whole the British residents in the Orange Free State had lived in amity with their neighbours under President Brand, whose sympathy with the British had been unconcealed during his long term of office; but under Steyn their position had become continually more difficult. Yet Bloemfontein had remained half an English city, and now that British troops had come to take possession its people made no concealment of their leanings. Many of the Boers retired from the town which they had lost, or, in that sad moment of their destiny, kept behind closed doors; the

Entry into Bloemfontein, 13th March.

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. i.

English population remained, and acclaimed the entry of Lord Roberts at the head of his troops with tumultuous rejoicings.

The capital was taken, but the territory remained unsubdued, and the Transvaal was untouched; the most difficult part of the campaign lay ahead. A halt was necessary while stores, remounts, and such reinforcements as were needful were brought up, before the long march to Pretoria was begun; but the halt, which Roberts had intended should be short, was lengthened into seven weeks before the advance to the north was begun.

Seven Weeks' Halt.

The equipment of the army and the planning of the march took longer than had been expected; but the main reason for the delay was a sudden outbreak of sickness among the troops. The health of the men had hitherto been excellent; but now came a sudden epidemic of enteric which was far beyond the limited power of the army medical staff to control. One regiment, the 2nd Worcesters, had marched into Bloemfontein with only two men sick; in three weeks it had reported 278 cases of enteric. Nor was this an isolated instance: in time no fewer than twenty thousand men were down. It seems that warning of the danger had been received before the war, but little heed was given to the warning; a plentiful supply of surgeons had been sent out to deal with wounds received in battle, but few physicians were with the army. A small outbreak could have been dealt with; but neither the field hospitals nor the field staff were adequate to the strain, and even the regular and improvised accommodation of Bloemfontein, which was soon changed from a healthy town to a city of the plague, was insufficient. The disease died down in time, but was never wholly stamped out; and from that period enteric was as great an enemy of the British army as the burghers in the field.[1]

Sickness in the Camp.

[1] See Burdett-Coutts, *Sick and Wounded in South Africa*, and his articles in London *Times*, March-May 1900, a rather exaggerated account

But the face of the war was now completely changed. All opposition seemed to have died down before the advance of Roberts and Kitchener. Buller was making slow but certain progress through Natal; and on the other side of the theatre of war another isolated outpost, which had borne a longer siege than Ladysmith and not succumbed, was now relieved.

The Relief of Mafeking.

The little city of Mafeking[1] had been besieged since the first days of the war, a lonely centre of the British Empire on the far north-western frontier of the Transvaal. Vryburg and other places on the railway line up to Rhodesia had made no defence against the Boers;[2] the Cape Government had never contemplated the protection of Mafeking, and in the narrow neutrality which the Schreiner Ministry affected had done nothing to secure the place against attack. Mafeking had by good luck an extraordinary supply of food, laid in by the foresight of a private business firm; but its few guns were antiquated specimens of the Crimean period,[3] and its garrison, such as it was, consisted mainly of irregulars, many of whom knew little of discipline and less of war. And the population of Mafeking was like that of most frontier towns, a curious medley of traders of all nationalities—Germans, Yankees, Parsees,

—but strict impartiality was impossible to an indignant observer; the articles in reply in *National Review* and *Nineteenth Century*, 1901; the *Report of the Hospitals Commission*; and *A Civilian War Hospital, by the Professional Staff*, a most accurate and painstaking account.

[1] Mafeking, like Ladysmith, has abundant material for history. There are sketches of the siege in Lady Sarah Wilson's *South African Memories*; Hamilton's *The Siege of Mafeking*; and Filson Young, *The Relief of Mafeking*, is an admirable correspondence.

[2] Vryburg, a town of pronounced Dutch sympathies, had capitulated at once when summoned to surrender on 18th October, and the Boer who hoisted the republican flag over the place declared that it would fly there for ever. The British officer in command committed suicide in consequence of his failure.

[3] Later in the siege an ancient naval gun, which had been forged about the year 1770—a prehistoric period for artillery—was discovered and found to be of use. How it originally came to be at Mafeking was uncertain, but it was believed that it had been brought there on some private trading expedition to the interior many years before.

Jews, some British, and several Boers. Few of these people had any active interest in resistance, many had profitable trading connections with the Transvaal, had married Boer wives, and were inclined to look on the war as none of their business. Yet by the inspiring influence of one man, Colonel Baden-Powell, this mixed frontier community put up one of the most determined fights of the whole war.

The place was isolated by the Boers early in October, the telegraph lines being cut, the railway destroyed, and the town surrounded by a considerable force under Piet Cronjé. That general at once demanded unconditional surrender to save loss of life, but the retort at once went back that the first few days of bombardment had caused the death of no more than a single chicken.[1] From that time the siege began in earnest, and the Boers wasted much of the strength which they should have concentrated elsewhere in a useless investment of Mafeking. Heavy guns were brought up from Pretoria, and the town was steadily bombarded day by day; but here, as at Ladysmith and Kimberley, bomb-proof shelters and underground passages were constructed to protect the inhabitants.

No attempt was made to rush the place—the attack, indeed, was usually from the British side and frequent sorties were made; but the Boer general, Snyman, who had replaced Cronjé, was not an energetic soldier, and the inhabitants and garrison of Mafeking suffered more from disease and eventually from shortage of supplies than from the enemy.

Week by week the siege dragged on, and the rumours of relief now grew few and faint; in February a message from Roberts requested the place to hold out until May, but

[1] This was not mere bluff; the varying and capricious effect of artillery fire were often noticed in this war. One British shell which burst in a skirmish at Bethlehem was found by De Wet to have killed twenty-five horses at once, all the animals there were at the place; yet Botha declared that not a single burgher was killed by the British shells at Colenso, although nearly two thousand were fired.

although the time was long the holders of Mafeking did not lose heart. By April provisions were getting low; wine and tobacco were there in plenty, but bread had now become a hard unpalatable biscuit; horses, cats, and dogs were eagerly devoured, and some gastronomic genius evolved a starch blanc-mange with glycerine syrup to vary the poor range of Mafeking diet.[1]

Sickness had broken out—malaria, smallpox, diphtheria, and enteric—the hospital was full, and it had now to be removed beyond the centre of the town, since the Boers had persistently shelled that building and the little convent where some pious women were attempting to relieve the horrors of the fight.

At last, in the middle of May, when it was clear that Mafeking could hold out little longer, the news came that a relief column was on the march. Even now the city had nearly fallen, for on the 12th May a violent attack was made by the besiegers, and under Commandant Eloff, a nephew of Kruger, the Boers penetrated within the British lines. The situation was critical; but either Snyman failed his colleague or Eloff played the coward, for the British turned the attack to their own advantage, and Eloff and his men tamely surrendered when the day might have been theirs. From that time the town was safe; and the relief column, after a forced march and two sharp engagements with the Boers, entered Mafeking on 17th May.

The siege had lasted seven months, and the little town bore the marks of its long resistance on every building and in every face. Hardly a house had not been touched or half destroyed by a shell;[2] the convent and hospital were in ruins; the

[1] Money was also running low, but Baden-Powell issued 'banknotes' made out of croquet mallet chips, to the face value of £6000. Stamps were also made when the postal stock gave out.

Ladysmith had its siege newspaper, the *Lyre*; Mafeking, not to be outdone, followed suit with the *Mafeking Mail*.

[2] It was calculated that from twenty-five to thirty thousand shells were fired at the town.

little cemetery was full of graves, and the total casualties by disease and battle numbered 476.

But the gallant defence of Mafeking had drawn the attention of the whole world to this little transport station and railway town of the South African interior; the news of its relief roused a wild outburst of enthusiasm in England, where the riotous rejoicings of the people through the night when the news was known and the day following added a new but short-lived participle to the English language. For some years afterwards, to go 'mafficking' was the usual term applied to unrestrained public rejoicing.[1]

Mafeking was an isolated episode in a great campaign, and neither its relief nor the occupation of Bloemfontein disguised the fact that the Boers soon showed signs of recovering from the shock of their defeat at Paardeberg. De Wet, relieved from the heavy hand of Cronjé, had rallied his men, and was now to come to the front as the daring leader of rapid marches and astonishing appearances and retreats. On 1st April, while Roberts lay at Bloemfontein, the Free State general won a big success. An outlying British force was surprised at Sannah's Post near the capital; three days later the operation was repeated, and in the two engagements De Wet captured one thousand prisoners, seven guns, and a large amount of stores. No effective answer was returned; but Gatacre, whom Roberts adjudged responsible for the second of these disconcerting episodes, was relieved of his command and ordered home.

Sannah's Post, 1st April.

These snap successes did not turn Roberts from his plans. On 30th April the first British troops marched out of Bloem-

[1] There was nothing like this after the relief of Ladysmith, the capture of Cronjé, or at the occupation of the Boer capitals. The dramatic note that touched the crowd was more conspicuous at Mafeking. Foreign observers and hasty English critics, founding a general principle on an isolated instance, suggested that the stolidity of the English character had changed; but the critics and observers were no wiser than the crowd. The behaviour of the people during the black week after Colenso was their answer.

fontein on the road to Pretoria; on 3rd May Roberts himself left the city. The march to the north was quick and steady, and the British leader struck straight for the Transvaal capital. In ten days Kroonstad was reached, 130 miles away, and occupied without resistance; the Boers hung on the British flank, but their numbers—3000 under Louis Botha, 5000 under De Wet—were inadequate for battle, and Roberts turned not aside from his path to pursue his elusive enemy. The invaders headed directly onwards to Pretoria.

The Advance to Pretoria, 30th April.

Just before the troops crossed the Orange Free State boundary into the Transvaal, on 24th May, Victoria's birthday, Roberts issued a proclamation annexing the Free State[1]; a week later, after an engagement at Doornkop, he entered Johannesburg without resistance. Some would have had him stay here awhile, but Roberts would not hear of delay at this last moment, and at once pushed on towards Pretoria.

Orange Free State annexed, 24th May.

Three weeks earlier, on 7th May 1900, the last session of the Transvaal Volksraad had opened in that city. It was a sad and gloomy meeting. Some of the members were dead, and mourning wreaths marked their old seats in the assembly; but the Volksraad itself was now dying, and its members knew it. 'I am standing alone,' said the aged President as he addressed his people there for the last time; 'Joubert is dead, Kock is dead, Wolmarans is dead. But God is with us! Shall we lose courage? Never! Never! Never!'

Flight of Transvaal Government.

The defiant pathos of an old man who sees his life's work undone at the last was in the words; Kruger knew that some among his people had already lost heart and were ready for surrender—all his hopes had failed save trust in God.

[1] Some months before, at the outbreak of the war, Salisbury, the Prime Minister, had announced to the world on behalf of the Imperial Government that 'we seek no goldfields, we seek no territory.' Happy England, to obtain what she had not sought.

There was no friendly foreign intervention, no change of government in England, no more chance of great Boer victories since Paardeberg: he had risked all and lost. . . .

And meanwhile the British army was coming nearer to Pretoria every day, and the question of making further resistance or defending the capital began to be discussed. For awhile no agreement was reached; then the peaceful instincts of the citizens prevailed, and it was decided that Pretoria should be handed over to the British without resistance.

On 29th May President Kruger left the capital and his aged wife, who was too old to travel, behind him. For some weeks he directed the business of the republic from a saloon carriage on the Delagoa Bay Railway, to which a telegraphic apparatus had been fixed; he moved with his official staff to and fro along the line, but in time even this movable headquarters became untenable, and he left for the coast on his way to Europe. He looked no more in life upon the country which he loved; his long career had spanned the beginning and the end of the republic whose mainstay he had been.[1]

Pretoria occupied by British, 5th June 1900.

A week after Kruger had left Pretoria the British under Roberts entered the city without resistance, if without enthusiasm from its inhabitants. The bold stroke had been successful: in thirty-four days the army had marched three hundred miles,[2] with no serious hitch save the loss of a large number of cavalry horses; and the British flag was at once run up over the Transvaal Legislature in token of possession.

[1] See Kruger's *Memoirs* and Davitt's *Boer Fight for Freedom* for these last days of the republic. The Queen of Holland placed a warship at Kruger's disposal to convey him to Europe. When he landed at Marseilles he was greeted with an ovation, and his progress resembled a triumphal tour. But his popularity in France was due less to real sympathy than to resentment against the English, the offspring of the Fashoda controversy and British criticism of the Dreyfus scandal.

[2] The march may be compared with the previous exploit of Roberts, in August 1880, when his troops performed the 303 miles between Kabul and Kandahar in 20 days. But that was done by a flying column, which maintained no line of communications; on the road to Pretoria the preservation of communications was vital.

Nineteen years before the same flag had been hauled down from the Boer capital, when the first annexation of the Transvaal was rescinded. On that occasion a few British residents in Pretoria, disgusted at the betrayal by their government, had buried the Union Jack in a coffin,[1] on which the following epitaph was inscribed :—

In Memory of
The British Flag
In the Transvaal
Which departed this Life August 2nd, 1881,
Aged 4 years.
In other Lands none knew Thee but to love Thee.
Resurgam.

The prophecy of resurrection, which on that melancholy day for the British in South Africa had seemed a far-fetched hope, had now fulfilled itself.

Five days after Roberts entered Pretoria, Buller at last cleared the Boers out of Natal, and crossed into the Orange Free State, a tardy success awaiting his long and tedious and often difficult operations in the mountains that divide the two countries. In some hopeful quarters the idea now prevailed that the war was practically over.[2]

The War considered at an end.

The taking of the enemy's capital, in highly organised communities, is the final triumph; when the brain is gone the body works no more. But the Transvaal was not a highly

[1] The flag was that of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and it was afterwards dug up by the colonel of the regiment, and brought back to England.

[2] Everybody in England accepted this opinion, and the newspapers diligently assured the public that it was so—until they found it was not so.

But they had some excuse. Villebois-Mareuil, the gallant French soldier who fought for the Boers, assured the republicans after Paardeberg that the war would be finished by July.

Even before this time a London firm of passenger agents had proposed to run tourist excursions to the South African battlefields. But Milner intervened.

organised community; and a rudimentary political organisation, like a low animal organisation, often connotes extra-ordinary vitality. A previous crisis thirty years before, when the British were also in possession of Pretoria, had shown that the capture of the capital did not paralyse resistance; nor did it now. Many burghers had indeed already gone to their homes, sullenly prepared to accept the rule which they could no longer resist; but large numbers were still in the field, and these were the stalwarts whom nothing could deter from fighting to the end. The defection of their fellows was indeed hardly a source of weakness, for those that remained were the very pick of the burghers, under better discipline, led by their ablest generals, and seasoned with the lessons of the past campaign. And in time others took hope again, dug up their arms—for they had surrendered old muskets and concealed their rifles from the British—and even where their weapons had been burnt, they made new butts for the rifles that were carelessly or imperfectly destroyed.

Fallacy of this View.

On the very day that Roberts occupied Pretoria, a meeting of the Boer leaders was held at Hatherley, some miles away, to consider their future action. Many favoured peace; but the staunch De la Rey threatened that if his comrades surrendered to the enemy, he for his part would set up an independent republic in the western Transvaal with his followers. Circumstances favoured his decision. Two days afterwards, when the informal conference re-assembled, news arrived that De Wet had struck another blow at the invaders in the Orange Free State; despondency now vanished, negotiations with the British were broken off, and it was decided to continue the war 'to the bitter end.' From that time the 'bitter-enders,' as they were called, were a class of irreconcilable patriots apart.

The 'Bitter-Enders.'

A new campaign was determined on, and new methods of attack, the keynote of which were absolute mobility and

alertness. The Boers could no longer attack in force, but they could fight a running battle; there was still the hope of cutting the British communications on the long and insecure route to the south; and as the Boers were always quicker than the enemy and knew their country better than the invader, they could attack him unawares, inflict some damage, seize his stores, and be away before he had recovered his surprise.

For the new campaign lightness, speed, and secrecy were essential; the Boer commandos must march by night, sleeping where they could and how they could, and they must march without the wagon beloved of the Cape Dutchman. In De Wet the Boers found the man they wanted, who proved himself a genius at this elusive game; his trouble through the next few months was less from the British than the persistence of his followers in bringing with them the slow ox-wagons which would have ruined all his plans.

The new campaign began at once. Only a few days after the triumphant British occupation of Pretoria the Boer forces were massed a few miles off, and the possibility of a serious attack was openly admitted.[1] For the moment none came; but the victors were not long before they realised that their conquest of the Transvaal was only nominal.

One man alone, somewhat wiser than his fellows, had foreseen this. 'Your real difficulties will begin,' said Lord Loch, a past British High Commissioner in South Africa, to the outgoing army, 'when you reach Pretoria.' He was now proved too true a prophet. The excitement of the war, the great battles, the outstanding successes of the campaign were over; there remained the dull ungrateful work of crushing disorganised resistance.

Two considerable successes only fell to the British arms. A large number of the Boers under Prinsloo were surrounded and compelled to surrender at Brandwater on 30th July,

[1] Wilson, *South African Memories.*

and another body at Bergendal; these victories induced Roberts to publish on 1st September a proclamation annexing the Transvaal, and to take the view, in which the Imperial Government concurred, that the war was almost at an end.[1] Many of the troops were now ordered back to England, Roberts himself returned to receive the applause of his grateful countrymen, and Buller followed in his wake;[2] Kitchener remained in South Africa to watch the dying embers of the conflict crumble into dust.

Transvaal annexed, 1st September.

But the embers were not dying; indeed, six months later Milner openly admitted that the position of the British was worse than when Roberts left the country. Cape Colony had been invaded, the British lines of communication had been cut, the railways destroyed, trains wrecked by dynamite,[3] British troops surprised and taken prisoner; and although a few small successes had been won, the Boers in the field were too elusive to be caught in any number. For the time they were more successful in this guerilla conflict than in regular war; and although it was a

Revival of the Boers.

[1] A general election was held in Britain in the autumn of this year, it being stated that the war was practically over, and that the Imperial Government, which had been much criticised, even by its own party supporters, during the first disastrous weeks of the campaign, required a vote of confidence to carry out the settlement of South Africa.

The Liberals protested against the time chosen by the Government, alleging that it was a 'khaki election' held during the war-fever. There was much ground for their protests, but they would not have been made had the Liberals had any confidence in their popularity. As it was, they were caught at a disadvantage, and lost handsomely, Chamberlain's election-cry, 'Every vote given to the Liberals means a vote given to the Boers,' carrying the country. The phrase was bitterly and justly criticised by Liberals who supported the war—quite half the party—but it had some foundation in the activities of Stead and the Stop-the-War Committee, all of whom appear to have been Liberals.

[2] Buller was appointed to the command of the first army corps at Aldershot, but relieved of his post a few months later in consequence of an injudicious speech in which he defended his idea of abandoning Ladysmith after Colenso. From that time he lived privately at his home at Crediton in Devon until his death in 1908.

[3] In one of these surprise attacks on trains Kitchener himself was nearly captured.

hopeless task that lay before them—for an army that cannot fight a battle can never win the day—the Boers persisted, buoyed up by the magnificent energy of their commanders and the faint hope that the British would be wearied of their long and difficult task. They had not then realised that the people they were fighting were as stubborn as themselves.

Severity of British Methods.

And now was enforced more strictly a system of warfare which had begun under Roberts when first the difficulty had been found of dealing with an enemy that could be a peaceful farmer one day and a burgher in the field the next. Orders were again given that if a shot was fired from any farmhouse at the British troops that house was to be burnt; if the railway or telegraph lines were destroyed at any point, the nearest farmhouse was to be burnt. And the orders were now strictly carried out.

For months the work of ruin was steadily pursued, for the lines were often cut by the Boers, and shots were often fired from farmhouses. At the best it was a tedious business, unpopular with the troops,[1] and much criticised in England;[2] at the worst it might lead, as in fact it did, to traps and small reverses.[3] But it was the only way of dealing with scattered resistance over a wide area; those who fight to the bitter end cannot complain if the means to that end are also bitter.

[1] A large number of private soldiers' letters written from the field is sufficient proof that they disliked the work—if proof is needed.

[2] Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, leader of the Liberal Opposition in Britain, strongly condemned the destruction of property. On 14th June 1901 he made the famous speech in which he said, 'When is a war not a war? When it is carried on by methods of barbarism in South Africa. . . . This is not a question of inhumanity alone; what is being done is only equalled by its infatuation.' And on 20th November of the same year he said, 'We have set ourselves to punish this country, to reduce it apparently to ruin, because it has ventured to make war against us.' Many of his followers, among them Lloyd George, echoed and strengthened these accusations; and their words were reproduced in the European press as corroboration of all the atrocities that were manufactured in newspaper offices to defame the British.

[3] The expression 'regrettable incident'—a euphemism for a minor British reverse—became proverbial at this time.

But the Boers likewise took their share in this work of destruction. Unwilling burghers were compelled to join the ranks again; if they refused their houses were destroyed, and they and their family were left homeless on the veldt. The whole thing seemed, wrote one Englishman,[1] a kind of domestic murder; the Boers hated the methods their campaign involved, the British 'could not help approving the policy, although it rather revolted most of us to be the instruments'; 'our course is marked,' wrote another, 'as in prehistoric ages, by pillars of smoke by day and fire by night.'[2]

Painful scenes were inevitably frequent in this work. Often when a house was searched it would contain none but women; they would swear that nothing was concealed—and rifles would be found hidden in the chimney or beneath the bed, or some patriot burgher discovered in an outhouse. In one such case, when the immediate destruction of the house was announced by the British officer in charge, its wretched mistress threw her arms around him and besought him to spare her home; when this was refused she pulled her bodice open, and shrieked, 'Shoot me then, I have nothing more to live for; my husband is gone, our farm is burnt, and all our cattle taken.'[3] In another instance, the woman turned upon her persecutors, and told them the flames they were making now were nothing to those they would suffer from hereafter: but in general the Boer womenfolk stood mute, silently and sorrowfully watching the destruction of their homes. 'We know it is war time,' said one of these, 'and we cannot expect much.'

There was less fighting of men than firing of farms in the year after the occupation of the Transvaal and the Free State by the British. It was the kind of work to demoralise an army; but although pilfering and marauding were sternly suppressed—court-martials were held on those discovered

[1] Filson Young.
[2] *With Rimington.*
[3] Hobhouse, *The Brunt of the War.*

looting, and sharp punishment inflicted[1]—there were many cases undiscovered when operations were spread over so large a territory.

Some evil deeds were alleged, and some no doubt performed, in the case of those charged with prisoners. Occasionally captives were reported lost, and it was suspected they had been shot—to save trouble; on occasion the shooting was admitted, and it was stated that the prisoners had attempted to escape. Often this was true, but nothing save the rising of the dead could prove or disprove the defence; but the stories were told of both sides, and the chivalrous courtesy that had held in the early stages of the war was dying out in these last desperate months.

Many of the Boers, it is true, found means of escaping their captors; and one hard-pressed British officer, who feared to lose the party he was guarding through the night, found a short way of disciplining them. He made his prisoners lie down full length on the open veldt at sunset, with the warning that any man who moved before sundown would be shot. They lay quiet.[2]

The Boers on their side often overwhelmed small British patrols or larger bodies, and took them prisoner. Their difficulty was that they could not keep them, and in most cases the British captives were released within a day or two. But the Boers now stripped their captives of clothing before they let them go—they were so ragged themselves that the slightly superior rags of the British troops were objects of envy,[3] and the released prisoners had the choice between the cast-off remnants of their enemy and nothing.

Roughness, insults, and brutality were reported of the

[1] One horrible anecdote sticks in my memory. An irregular soldier was condemned to death for theft. As he took up his position he coolly drew his cigarette-case out of his pocket and threw it to the executioner, saying, 'There 's my cigarette-case for you—it 's no more use to me, you see.'

[2] Lowther, *From Pillar to Post.*

[3] De Wet, *Three Years' War.*

British in dealing with the Boer women and children, and these accusations were eagerly believed;[1] but the stories mostly lacked corroboration, some were obviously invented by sympathisers with the enemy or European Anglophobes,[2] and while roughness and harshness inevitably accompanied such ungrateful work as the destruction of homesteads and villages, the subjection of the population was performed by disciplined troops acting under disciplined officers. Had there been many abuses or much brutality, the accusations would not

[1] Many such things were alleged at this time, in the Dutch or pro-Dutch press of South Africa, and the pro-Boer press in England, *e.g.* the London *Daily News*. See also the weekly issues of *War against War in South Africa*, and *Hell let loose in South Africa*, issued by the Stop-the-War Committee; the *Candidate of Cain*, and the *Best or the Worst of Empires*, in which one reads of 'nameless brutalities,' without proofs or details, and of the refugee camps founded by the British as 'established to torture by deliberately inflicted starvation.' All this was the production of W. T. Stead, an Imperialist turned sour, who also remarks in one of these pamphlets that 'the curse of South Africa has been the predominance of the bachelor.' Stead's faculty for judgment may be gauged by the fact that a few years later he published a pretended interview with the ghost of Gladstone. It was the fashion to say of him that he was an able journalist: but it seems to me that able journalism implies some degree of knowledge and restraint.

Certainly there is no hint of British brutality in an account by a Boer woman of her life among British troops during the war; see *The Petticoat Commando; or Boer Women on Secret Service*, by Johanna Brandt (1913). Yet she was actively helping her own countrymen.

[2] See, for example, an amazing book by Philippe Deschamps, *Les Horreurs de la Guerre Anglo-Transvaalienne, le plus grand crime de l'Univers* (1903). I translate the sub-title: 'Women shot down, young girls violated, children martyred, old people flogged, ambulances plundered, prisoners despatched on battlefield, farms burnt, houses pillaged and dynamited, prisoners buried alive, sepulchres violated, the dead despoiled, assassinations, hanging and atrocities committed in concentration camps, where 21,468 women, young girls, and Boer children died from hunger.' The author says that 114,376 women and children were killed by the British: the same writer wrote a book reciting a full tale of British misdeeds from the days of Joan of Arc. A stupendous task.

These things were the usual stuff sold on the Continent at that time. In 1902 I bought some picture postcards in Holland, one of which represented the British soldier kicking Boer women in the stomach; another gave a picture of Queen Victoria in hell, being prodded by little devils, while Mrs. Kruger was seen aloft in heaven, tended by the angels, and apparently talking to the Almighty with the easy familiarity of long acquaintance. To such lying puerilities can human beings sometimes descend.

have remained anonymous and dateless; the fact that only vague and general charges were brought was a tacit admission that the material for scandal was in itself deficient.

And now grew up, unnoticed at first, a feature of the war that in the end attracted more attention than the last desultory stages of the war itself. In August 1900 a few Boer women and children whose homes had been destroyed were taken care of by the British at Krugersdorp, and this was the nucleus of the first refugee or concentration camp.[1] Tents were put up for their accommodation, they were fed and clothed and guarded by their enemies, and presently others came, the camp was enlarged, and other camps were formed.

The Refugee Camps.

At first the camp grew rather slowly, and the new arrivals were chiefly refugees, Boers or their families who were tired of the war and wished protection from those of their own people who were determined to fight to the end. But as more farms were burnt and the system of destruction was made wholesale, another class was introduced, of unwilling refugees, the wives and children of the 'bitter-enders,' people who hated the British as much as their husbands and fathers. More camps were opened as this class grew in numbers, by the middle of 1901 there were nineteen main camps and several minor camps in the Transvaal, and about the same number in the Orange Free State, and by November of that year the enormous number of 48,083 Boers was being housed and fed by the British. This was the highest number reached; in the following month orders were given that no more refugees should be brought in unless it was clear that they would starve on the veldt.

[1] A considerable (and controversial) literature exists on this aspect of the campaign. On the one side is *The Brunt of the War*, by Emily Hobhouse, an extreme and anti-British view, quoting many anonymous allegations of ill-treatment; on the other *The Truth about the Conduct of the Boer War*, and Conan Doyle's *Great Boer War*. An impartial account is by Thomson, *The Transvaal Burgher Camps*.

A regular discipline and organisation was evolved, army officers or civilians being appointed to guard the captives, and to secure, so far as it could be secured in the rough round of war, that they should be comfortable, healthy, and not unhappy.

Unfortunately that end was not attained at first. The organisation had to create itself as it went along, and to create itself under grave difficulties; no sooner had it caught up with its work than the work was again enlarged, and new arrivals of refugees, willing or unwilling, were consigned to its care.

It was impossible to obtain the best administration, for the best administrators in South Africa were engaged in the war, and some of those who offered and were accepted as officials, nurses, and doctors seem to have been ignorant, incompetent, and hasty in their work. This was of no great importance at first, when the camps were small, and were believed to be in existence for a few weeks only; but later, when the numbers grew and the war went on interminably, the deficiencies were remedied by the importation of trained officials of the Anglo-Indian service, and the appointment of a better nursing staff; but even then the organisation had to overcome the natural distrust and prejudice of those under its charge, unwilling citizens of a temporary city in the hands of the enemy.

The life in the camps was at best hard and the accommodation rough, the existence abnormal and unnatural in that a free country people were confined to a city that was in effect a prison. But many of those in the camps made themselves fairly comfortable, using the household furniture they had rescued from the ruins of their homes and building walls round their tents as protection from the weather;[1] each camp was guarded by a blockhouse and soldiers, and sur-

[1] One family of inventive genius also made a floor out of empty condensed milk tins.

rounded by a fence of barbed wire; a hospital and a medical staff was a necessary provision, and every camp had its school, where many of the little Boers had their first introduction to humane letters from the foe who was denounced as a barbarous enemy.

There was a camp censor through whom letters could be sent—they could not always be delivered—and to whom complaints could be addressed. The main source of trouble was the rations, which were sometimes bad in quality and deficient in quantity. Poor management by the camp officials was frequently the source of these murmurs, and rascally contractors were not unknown; but the most usual cause of shortage in supplies was the destruction of the railway line by the Boers in the field, which not only inconvenienced the British but brought hardship on their own people as well.

At first the camps were fairly healthy, but as they grew more crowded sickness broke out, and the sickness fed on new arrivals. In many instances the refugees were in a physically poor condition when brought to the place, having lived for weeks perhaps on miserable food or lain hidden from the British troops; the journey to the camp was itself an ordeal, sometimes made in wagons, but often in open railway trucks under a burning sun by day and freezing cold at night.[1] Nothing better could be secured in the chaotic condition of the country, and the refugees had as good—or as bad—accommodation as the British soldiers; but food was also difficult to get on the journey, and at passing stations the guard of troops would take pity on the Boer children and

[1] Miss Hobhouse was very indignant over this, and spoke of the need for better accommodation on the journey. But there was an insufficiency of rolling-stock on the railways throughout the war.

Sometimes better accommodation was provided, and the women were taken to the camp on an armoured train. One such train was wrecked by Viljoen, and the baseless legend was propagated by the enemies of Britain that the troops secured the safety of their trains by transporting Boer women in them. I have a French pictorial illustration to this effect in my collection.

give them their own rough rations, saying 'I am a father myself, and I know what it is when the youngsters cry for bread.'

Their condition on arrival weakened the resisting power of the refugees to disease; but sometimes the sites of the camps, which were usually chosen by military men for military reasons, were unhealthy; in others disease only broke out when the camp grew too full. The primitive domestic habits of a solitary Boer farm were unsuited for a crowded city such as the camps had now become, and some difficulty was experienced on this score by those charged with the duty of sanitation.

But none were prepared for the terrible outbreak of disease which focused attention on the refugee camps as surely as the outbreak of enteric among the British troops had focused attention on the shortcomings of the Army Medical Corps a year before. The ratio of sickness in the camps grew month by month, the cause being partly traceable to the hardships which the people had undergone before their entry, and partly to defects in the camps themselves: but presently measles appeared, and in a camp crowded with infants and children the epidemic spread wholesale. Doctors and nurses could do little to check the disease, and soon the figures for infantile mortality raced above even the terrible death-rate of an English industrial city; for a time the camps were a veritable death-trap. Once the outbreak was abated of its force, the health returns were normal and not unsatisfactory; but the evil fame of the system had gone abroad, and was even exaggerated by report and lying prejudice; and the fact that four thousand women and sixteen thousand children had died in this captivity remained a solid immovable blot on these temporary cities of refuge in South Africa.[1]

The refugee or concentration camps were something en-

[1] The *British Medical Journal*, examining the available evidence fully in November 1901, admitted that the mortality was calamitous and

tirely new in the history of war. On no previous occasion had an army of invasion charged itself with the duty of housing and feeding the wives and children of those who were fighting against it in the field; and from a purely military point of view the camps were a failure, since they relieved the enemy of its non-combatant population, and shifted that responsibility on the attack, thereby tending to prolong the war.

The cost of maintaining the camps was enormous, no less than £90,000 a month in the Orange Free State alone,[1] but in this matter there was little thought of economy, far less of parsimony. The motive underlying the establishment of the camps of refuge was largely humane, since the British authorities felt that to have left these people whom it had dishoused from military necessity to starve on the veldt would have been barbarous; the motive was also partly political, for these people were destined to be subjects of the British Empire, and it was to the interest of their future rulers to treat them as well as could be, consistently with the necessities of war. If the system failed at the start, it failed largely through circumstances and inexperience; towards the close of the war it was an admitted success, and Louis Botha, an unimpeachable witness, admitted that the Boers themselves were pleased that their womenfolk were under the care of the British;[2] addresses of thanks and

unforeseen, partly the consequence of inexperience and ignorance, and partly the product of war and crowding in the camps.

Some of those who were loudest in condemning the bad conditions in the camps had spent their lives in England without realising that the condition of the poor in an urban slum was probably worse than the condition of a Boer in a refugee camp. Among these was Augustine Birrell, an English politician and the writer of some feeble literary essays that obtained a fleeting reputation under the title of *Obiter Dicta*. Birrell spoke of 'a smoking hecatomb of slaughtered babes' in South Africa; he had never raised his voice on behalf of the thousands of infants who died unnecessarily in England every year. Such is the lesser breed of party politician.

[1] Robertson, *Concentration Camps*.

[2] In the peace discussions at Vereeniging; quoted by De Wet, *Three Years' War*.

gratitude were sent to the superintendents and officials of the camps by the Boer inmates when the war ended, and some even of the inmates showed no excessive desire to quit the camps which they had entered with such reluctance.[1]

Native Refugee Camps.

Similar camps were also provided for the natives, who, indeed, were concentrated in even larger numbers than the Boers. By 1902 no fewer than 60,604 blacks were accommodated in this wise in the Orange Free State; but while their control presented fewer difficulties, their presence also raised less attention.[2]

Boer Prisoners transported.

Meantime the number of Boer prisoners of war was rising week by week. But few of these were accommodated in South Africa, lest they should escape and rejoin their commandos; mostly they were taken down to the Cape ports and transported to British colonies—Bermuda, Ceylon, and St. Helena—to await the end of the war. From Ceylon an occasional daring escape was made;[3] from the lonely Bermudas escape was nearly, from St. Helena it was quite, impossible. And here, where Napoleon had spent his last uneasy days, were accommodated the captured Boer generals, Cronjé and Viljoen, and many of their men; in that 'living grave,' as the latter rightly called it, where no news came of the outer world or of the struggle in which the Boer leaders had met their fate save through the occasional arrival of more prisoners of war, the prisoners fought old battles again, discussed among themselves the cause of their defeats, meditated on the inscrutable decrees

[1] The fear that a deterioration of moral fibre might set in, and a reluctance to rely upon their own exertions affect some of the inmates of the camps after the war, was present both to Boer and British.

[2] One would not gather from Miss Hobhouse's book that native refugee camps existed at all.

[3] De Wet tells of two Boer prisoners at Ceylon who made their way to the coast, swam seven miles to a Russian ship, were rescued by the skipper and taken to Holland, whence they made their way through German South-West Africa and the desert to their commandos once more. A magnificent exploit.

of heaven, and passively awaited the end of the struggle and the decision of their gaolers.[1]

So passed the year 1901, in a series of great drives of the Boer forces, operations which often failed, and the construction of blockhouses up and down the railway line and across the country which hampered the movements of the enemy more and more effectually. From time to time commandos were captured, albeit none of the leaders save Viljoen was taken; but Steyn, the lion-hearted President of the Orange Free State, who denounced any talk of surrender as unworthy cowardice, had more than one extraordinary escape. Once the town in which he and his colleagues of the perambulating Free State Government were sleeping was surprised by the British. Suddenly aroused from slumber, with no time to don his coat or doff his nightcap, Steyn galloped down the street, a British soldier at his heels; a shot rang out, but the President was untouched, and at the cost of his suite, his papers, and his treasury, he rode to freedom. Such escapades were frequent in the war, especially when the British learnt the lesson of sudden surprise attacks from their opponents and began to organise night marches: but for some time they seemed to have little effect. De la Rey was still leading a seasoned army in the Transvaal, Botha threatening Natal; and De Wet, one of the most amazing guerilla generals of history, made a dash into Cape Colony, failed to raise the placid colonists from sympathy to action, retreated, seemed caught in a trap between the British forces and the flooded Orange River, and finally made a hazardous escape into his own country after a chase that lasted more than a week of hard marching. The tale

The Guerilla War, 1901.

[1] Accounts of the Boer prisoners at St. Helena appear in *Longman's Magazine*, October-November 1901; and in *Nineteenth Century*, December 1900. In the latter Mrs. A. S. Green, the charming historian of Ireland, relates that some Boer prisoners ascribed their defeats to the Catholic belief of their French and Irish allies. They should have discovered the limited sympathies of their deity before the event.

of his exploits reads more like a boy's story of adventure than a record of fact: time and again he found a way for his commando through a net of soldiers drawn all round him, crossed the closely guarded railway line, passed unperceived through the blockhouses that dotted every mile of track; he would fire the grass of the veldt behind him to evade pursuit, and once, when pressed so closely that escape seemed impossible, he drove his men up the steep slopes of the Magalies Mountains rather than surrender. Only a baboon, the amazed Kafirs warned him, could climb such heights; 'This is a Red Sea and you are not a Moses,' doubted his men as they surveyed the work ahead—but De Wet drove them up the perilous path and down again another way, ready after a day or two of rest to dog the heels of the British once more.

Gradual Exhaustion of the Boers.

Truly such men deserved to win. The whole world rang with their exploits; the British themselves made of their foes popular heroes, and chuckled as they heard of their enemies' escapes. But the solid result of these guerilla tactics was small: for more than a year the war was conducted with extraordinary persistence, but slowly the Boers grew weaker. Many laid down their arms, exhausted by the struggle, convinced of the uselessness of further war; among such was Piet de Wet, a noted brother of the great Boer raider, and a large number of less determined men. These 'hands-uppers,' as they were called, were disparaged as weaklings by their comrades who were still irreconcilable, but the contempt, though natural, was undeserved: if they had given way before the bitter end, many had fought a good fight. But the contempt was changed to hate when some of the hands-uppers entered the British service against the bitter-enders, and, under the name of National Scouts, fought against their countrymen; it was a politic move of the conqueror, which served him in good stead, but even those who profited by the service of

the turncoats shared something of the feeling of the enemy towards these enemies turned friends for pay.

Blockhouses, night raids, scouts, and the indomitable persistence of Kitchener slowly reduced the stubborn enemy: but the spirit that kept the war alive was in the Free State, not the Transvaal, inspired by Steyn, who shared the perils of his burghers, not by the absent Kruger. Botha had shown himself not unwilling to make terms a year before, and a conference took place at Middelburg in March 1901 between him and Kitchener. The negotiation failed, but Botha, convinced that the end was inevitable, had opened the road towards peace. It was a road that his comrades in arms were yet unwilling to follow; but from that time opinion in the Transvaal turned more and more to his side. Two months later, in May 1901, an official letter was written from the Transvaal Government to the Orange Free State, advocating peace on account of the continual surrenders of the burghers, and calling attention to the growing lawlessness of the country and the weakening of authority; it pointed out that the leaders of the irreconcilables were falling into contempt, and the burghers were constantly demanding to be told what chance now remained of success. But the Free State leaders were obdurate: If we trusted in God at the beginning, said the indomitable Steyn, why should we not also trust Him now? And he reproached them that the Transvaal had called the Free State to its help, and then deserted its ally; 'It would be a national murder if we were to give in now.'

Negotiations for Peace, 1901.

These brave words prolonged the war, and Steyn assured Kitchener that only at the price of independence would his countrymen make peace; but six months more of gradual losses and increasing devastation drove its lesson home. Steyn's health broke down from his constant exertions, De Wet had seen his army shrink from week to week, the Transvaal was sick of the endless conflict, and some even of

the patriotic burghers, who had resumed their peaceful way of life, were turning against their fellows in the field. The Boers had put up a magnificent fight, which none admired more than their opponents; but the British will to win had never wavered since the ultimatum, and superior strength, allied with a purpose as unflinching as the Boers, had prevailed.

The Beginning of the End, March 1902.

By the first months of 1902 it was becoming clear even to the irreconcilables that the beginning of the end was approaching. Thirty thousand Boers were prisoners of war; the bulk of the non-combatant population was in the refugee camps. The whole country was in ruins; every other house had been burnt; out of a total of 11,772 farms in the two republics it was estimated that five thousand were now destroyed.[1] Supplies were running short; both the Boers in the field and the women who had eluded the British troops were nearly starving. The war was drawing to a close from sheer exhaustion.

One more brilliant exploit was performed, the last flicker of the now guttering candle of independence. Methuen was surprised and captured by De la Rey; and the Boer general, with a chivalry worthy of the fabled age of knighthood, courteously entertained his wounded prisoner and then released him. From that time till the end nothing more of note was done by the commandos, save cutting through the British line from time to time, dynamiting an occasional train, or surprising an isolated patrol.

Even the hardiest fighters now began to lose heart. De Wet was still uncaptured, but his force had sunk to seven hundred tattered, weary, and starving men, some of whom were openly ready to lay down their arms, and were only urged forward by their leader and his sjambok.[2] De Wet himself began to realise that 'to continue the struggle meant

[1] Beak, *The Aftermath of War.*
[2] De Wet, *Three Years' War.*

extermination'; the 'bitter-enders' saw that the bitter end had come.

On 15th May 1902 a meeting of the Boer generals and politicians was held at Vereeniging, a village of the Transvaal. After some debate, they decided sorrowfully that the struggle was hopeless, and nominated a commission of five—Louis Botha, De Wet, De la Rey, Hertzog, and Smuts—to proceed to Pretoria to negotiate for peace. Four days later the envoys entered into conference with Kitchener and Milner at Pretoria.

The Final Peace Negotiations, May 1902.

With some faint expectation of retrieving by negotiation a little of what they had lost in war, the five envoys put forward a proposal they should surrender only part of their territories to the British, and that the rest should submit to some kind of British control, and give up all relations with foreign powers. It was pointed out that this would create a hybrid political animal of a hitherto unknown variety in international affairs, and that nothing short of annexing the whole territory of the Transvaal and Orange Republics would be considered by the Imperial Government. To the victor are the spoils of war.

The remainder of the ten days' conference was largely occupied with minor details of the proposed settlement; and the envoys then returned to Vereeniging to discuss the whole question with the leaders of the commandos.

On 29th May the last meeting of the Boers as an independent people was begun. The solemn occasion, 'the burial of our nation,' as De Wet described it, opened with the customary prayer; then one leader after another spoke in this last National Convention of the republics. A few commandos, especially those from the Free State, were still in favour of fighting, pointing out that there were still eighteen thousand Boers in the field; several protested that their trust in God was still unshaken, and that in this hope they might yet carry on till heaven

The Vereeniging Convention.

came to their assistance; one or two even now relied on the intervention of European powers. But the bulk of opinion was clearly against a prolongation of the struggle. If the war was continued, said Du Toit, it would involve not only the national but the moral death of the nation; the strongest argument, said Hertzog, was that some of their own people had turned against them, and were fighting with the enemy, and a fear had also been expressed that a moral decay might set in among the Boer families in the refugee camps. Louis Botha announced that the hope of foreign intervention had long been baseless; the deputation from the Boers to Europe had wished to return to South Africa months before, but the Transvaal Government had advised them to remain in Europe, because their return would have been a death-blow to many of the burghers. And the brave and stubborn De la Rey, who had fought to the end, and would assuredly have fought still further had any hope remained, declared that 'the delegates might go away determined to fight, but the burghers would lay down their arms.' That frank statement, whose truth could not be denied, went far to decide the issue.

A resolution was decided on, declaring that the Boers only submitted under protest, and because they feared that, by continuing the war, the whole nation might die out; and a decisive word was now spoken by Schalk Burger: 'Fell a tree and it will sprout again; uproot it and there is an end. We are standing here at the grave of the two republics. We must be ready to forgive and forget; that part of our nation which has proved unfaithful to our cause we must not reject.'

With these noble words of hope rising out of resignation, the last National Convention of the Boer Republics drew to a close. Little more was said, and the conference closed, as it had opened, with solemn prayer. One day more, and the delegates ranked as British subjects.

The envoys at once returned to Pretoria, and here the final

agreement was drawn up with the British. No formalities or further discussions were necessary: the terms of peace had already been arranged at the previous conference three days before, and Milner had warned the Boer envoys that the proposed treaty could not be altered in any way, but must be accepted or rejected as it stood.

A few minutes before eleven on the evening of the last day of May 1902, the treaty of peace was signed at Pretoria.[1] It provided that all burghers who surrendered should lose neither their personal freedom nor their property; that prisoners of war who accepted the status of subjects of Edward VII. should be brought back to their homes, and that no judicial proceedings should be taken against the burghers for their action in carrying on the war, except in the case of certain deeds antagonistic to the usages of war. Further, the Dutch language was to be taught in the public schools of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, should the parents demand it; and it should be admitted in the courts of justice, whenever this was required for the better administration of justice. The possession of rifles was to be permitted to those persons who required them for their protection, on their taking out a licence. Military administration in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony should as soon as possible be followed by civil government; and as soon as circumstances permitted, a representative system leading up to self-government. Until a representative constitution had been granted, the question of a franchise for the natives should not be decided. No special landed tax to meet the expenses of the war should be imposed on landed property; and a Commission should be appointed in each district of the Transvaal and Orange

The Treaty of Pretoria, 31st May 1902.

[1] It was signed by ten Boer delegates, six representing the Transvaal and four from the Orange Free State.

The text of the treaty and the official correspondence preceding it is in Cd. 1096 (1902), *Correspondence respecting Terms of Surrender by the Boer Forces in the Field.*

River Colonies, on which the inhabitants of those districts should be represented, to assist in bringing back the people to their farms, and assisting those who were unable to provide for themselves to resume their previous callings. For that purpose a sum of £3,000,000 should be provided by the British Government as a free gift, and further advances in the shape of loans, free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years at three per cent. interest, should be given.

The terms of peace were not ungenerous; they were such as a brave people might grant to a brave people who had fought a good fight, and lost to superior strength.

'We are good friends now,' said Kitchener as he shook hands with his new fellow-subjects of the British Empire. The war of white supremacy was over.

CHAPTER III

RECONSTRUCTION AND RECONCILIATION: 1902-6[1]

AT the close of the War of Supremacy many serious-minded men on both sides asked themselves and each other a question as to the future of South Africa which only the future could answer. Peace had indeed been declared between the two European peoples who had striven for the mastery. But peace had also been declared between those two peoples after an earlier war twenty years before, and that previous peace had proved only the prelude to still more bitter enmity and a far more prolonged and serious conflict. Was the peace of

[1] The chief publications on this subject are by Buchan, *The African Colony, Studies in the Reconstruction*, a poor but honest work; Knight, *South Africa after the War;* and Beak's comprehensive book on *The Aftermath of War*, the best account in print. There are exhaustive official reports from each district of the work of repatriation, reprinted in the Colonial Blue-Books, particularly Cd. 1163 and Cd. 1553, April 1903. Worsfold's *Reconstruction of the New Colonies* was published after this chapter was in type.

1902 to be a lasting peace, or was it, like its predecessor, to do no more than usher in an unquiet interval while restless Briton and stubborn Boer were silently preparing another fight for the mastery of South Africa?

During the next few years of reconstruction and reconciliation that question was definitely answered. But already there were indications by which the observant might judge what the answer was to be.

The independent Dutch settlers had put forward their full strength against the British: they had won many brilliant victories, they had shown extraordinary resisting power; but in the end they had been worn down by a foe as stubborn and determined as themselves. The fight between Briton and Boer had in fact been fought to a finish. The Boers had learnt their lesson, the lesson that they could not drive the British from South Africa, by bitter experience; and the very length of the war had driven that lesson home as no short sharp campaign could have done. The last weary months of resistance had brought the cruel realities of war to every farm; and if the British had come to respect so tenacious an enemy, the Boers themselves were no longer prepared to prolong a hopeless conflict. The appeal to force was abandoned when every man could see for himself that another appeal to force could have but one result.

The Boers accept British Rule.

A large number of the Boers accepted the verdict of the struggle with natural regret but without rancour, and prepared to live for the future with the British on equal terms of citizenship. Whisperings and murmurings and occasional hot and angry outbursts there may still have been at times;[1] but no longer any revolt. The war had gone too deep for that. One stalwart Boer, for example, who

[1] A few of these things may be found—by those who desire to find them—reported in the South African Press of 1902-1907; and they were occasionally reproduced in the London papers of the day. There let them rest.

had fought with his family through the whole three years against the British, had at the end of the war one son a prisoner at Bermuda, a second at St. Helena, a third at Ceylon; his wife and the remainder of his children were in a concentration camp in charge of the enemy; and when he returned to his home alone, he found his farm had been burnt, his stock driven away, and his crops destroyed. A man so roughly handled in all his joints was not likely to underrate the strength or the extent of the British Empire again; and there were hundreds such men in South Africa, who had fought and lost everything, and were now assisted to start life afresh by a victorious but not ungenerous enemy.[1]

The Last Treks.

There were, it is true, a few last defenders of a lost cause, a few men whom the aged exiled President of the extinct republic would have commended for their devotion, a few irreconcilables prepared for another trek from the land which the British had taken from them. Over the example of such men the historian of fidelity to principle might love to linger; for theirs was now a hopeless enterprise. The days when a great trek into the wilderness was possible were gone for ever; there were no more unclaimed lands in the interior of South Africa.

It was the historic remedy of this people, the remedy that had been advocated in Holland itself three centuries before when foreign conquest threatened the motherland;[2] and usually it had served its purpose in South Africa. But of late years, and even before the war, it had failed more and more often; and that was a sufficient proof, not that the

[1] This example was mentioned by Lord Selborne in an unreported and private speech at the Compatriots Club in London in 1909. There is no indiscretion in reproducing it now.

[2] Vol. i. bk. iii. ch. iii. In the height of the struggle against Spain, when Dutch success appeared impossible, William the Silent prepared a scheme for emigrating his people bodily to North America. Had that scheme matured, a good deal of the world's history would have been changed.

pioneering qualities of the Boers had deteriorated, but that the old pioneering days of the country were nearing an end.

The Transvaalers had proposed two great treks, to the north and the west, during the first occupation of their republic by the British in 1878. The northward movement was abandoned when their country was restored in 1881;[1] still, however, the idea had lingered, but when it was actually begun some years later it was already too late—Mashonaland was British territory.[2] And if a trek into the Zulu countries in 1879 had fulfilled its purpose and enlarged the bounds of the South African Republic,[3] the several westward movements through Bechuanaland had all failed, and some had failed disastrously. The British had maintained the great mission road to the north through Kuruman and Khama's country,[4] along which trader and missionary from Cape Town passed on their business of souls or money; but in its maintenance nature itself had seemed to help the British and hinder the Boers. The great Boer trek into Damaraland in 1878 had gone westward of the British road to the north; Selous the hunter discovered its pitiful remains as he passed through a dreadful waterless wilderness in the Bamangwato territory —abandoned ploughshares, hencoops, boxes, broken wagons, and the skeletons of transport oxen.[5]

Death and disaster in the desert was the end of that endeavour; a similar enterprise into Angola in 1888 and later years fared but little better. Many of the trekkers perished; smallpox broke out, most of the horses and the sheep and cattle died on the way. A few reached the promised land, but they found not the liberty they desired under the Portuguese, and large numbers in despair returned to their old homes.

Even the treks that had proved successful settlements in the last years before the war had failed of independence:

[1] See ch. i. of this book.
[2] Bk. xxiv. ch. v.
[3] See ch. i. of this book.
[4] Bk. xxiv. ch. ii. and iv.
[5] Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings*.

Stellaland and Goshenland were swallowed by the British Empire in 1885,[1] and the Boers who crossed the Limpopo found here also the Union Jack before them in the British province of Rhodesia. Many more went thither after the peace of 1902, and established themselves in the old territories of the Mashona and Matabili, or prospected further north, in the tropic country of the late Barotsi kingdom.[2] The great plateau of this district appealed to them, as a land suitable for cattle, and not unhealthy or unfit for the white man's settlement; some also went still further north again, passing through the German colony of East Africa, and finally planting themselves and their families in British East Africa.[3]

These men perforce accepted British rule; the irreconcilables still sought another heritage, but found it not. Some crossed the border into German territory, some into the Portuguese dominions; a few, a very few, stayed there, when they found the new life not all that they desired. One pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, for example, who carried his opposition to Britain so far as to leave Cape Colony for German South-West Africa, when martial law was proclaimed in the colony, returned home a few months later. And in due course he explained to the doubting flock which he had abandoned that after a short experience of the two he preferred British martial law to German civil law.[4]

Even the malcontents, therefore, found in time that there were worse things in the world than British rule, while some of those who had proclaimed themselves irreconcilable rebels moderated their enmity into placid, sullen, or resentful acquiescence in their fate. They now realised that they could choose between the German flag, the Portuguese flag, and the British flag, but they could not again set up the Boer flag in South Africa.

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. iv.
[2] *Report of British South Africa Company*, 1912.
[3] Cranworth, *A Colony in the Making* (1912).
[4] I quote Lord Selborne's private speech again.

The bitter fact that independent Dutch dominion in South Africa was now impossible was openly admitted in the last trek of all, whose promoters looked outside South Africa for the independence which their own land had denied them. Not long after the war was over, a leading pastor of the Dopper Church, to which Kruger had belonged, published several open letters in which he stated that but three courses were now open to the Dutch people of South Africa: either they must become English, or they must live as a separate community—or they must leave the country and find another home. The first course he held inadmissible, the second was clearly impossible, but the third he declared the true solution, and an organisation was founded to carry out his views. Those who followed him agreed to emigrate with him to Argentina, a country to which many had looked as a convenient field for political experiments;[1] and a number of the stark Boer burghers shortly emigrated thither.

To the Argentine: Last Trek of All.

But the enterprise was an unhappy one from start to finish. The land they chose for settlement was poor; their leader died, and many of the colonists fell ill; some returned to South Africa; and before ever it had found a solid hold on life the scheme collapsed. Such was the last trek of the last independent Cape Dutchmen in South Africa.[2]

[1] The Welsh, for example; vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. i.; and the Australian Socialists, vol. v. bk. xxii.

[2] These continual Boer treks gave rise in some quarters to the idea that the Dutchman is less attached to the soil than most Europeans, and more of a nomad by nature. I doubt it. Dutch houses, both in Holland and at the Cape, are built to last, and the old Dutch settlers drove their roots deep into Cape Colony. But the Dutchman in South Africa, instead of being cramped like his countrymen in a corner of Europe, found unlimited space before him, and made full use of it. Even the Great Trek was in one sense a following of the line of least resistance. In Europe the Dutchman would have fought for his own way; at the Cape he preferred to get it by moving inland. In some small degree the change may have altered his social habits, just as the Australian squatter differed in his way of life from his English brother: but in the broad lines of national character it made no real difference.

One by one the independent Dutch republics at the Cape had all gone down, from Graaff Reynet and Swellendam in 1795[1] to the Transvaal and Orange Free State in 1902; and they had failed, not from any radical flaw in their constitution, or incapacity of their founders, but for this fundamental reason, which dominated the whole political development of the country, that South Africa was not yet independent of European control, and could not by taking thought or simply issuing a declaration of independence emancipate itself or maintain neutrality.[2] That was the simple but sufficient reason why the cause of Cape Dutch independence had lost; it was doomed on the day that the effete Dutch East India Company ceased to rule at Table Bay, and with any people less tenacious than the Dutch it would have gone under in a decade, not have survived and fought a great fight with an Empire for a whole century.

Fundamental Reason why Dutch Republics failed.

Cape Town was still indeed in a sense, what it had always been from the first, the frontier fortress of India; the British holding India were forced to hold Cape Town; and being British they enlarged their settlements and frontiers in Cape Colony and the wider Africa beyond the Orange River, after the manner of our busy people in the world. Often against the will and despite the plain acts and declarations of the Imperial Government, the greater destiny of Empire had prevailed, and the outpost at Cape Town, which had originally been taken by the British as a safeguard of their road to the East at the very time when the forward policy under Wellesley

[1] Bk. xxiii. ch. iii.

[2] The idea came up again in 1911, when a Dutch South African newspaper, the *Volkstem*, stated that in the event of Britain being involved in war, South Africa would consider whether or not it should throw in its lot with the Empire, or issue a declaration of neutrality. This extraordinary heresy was echoed from Canada and Australia; but General Botha, as a sound soldier, repudiated it. It is the enemy that decides these matters; Natal might have declared itself neutral in the South African War, but the Transvaalers would still have invaded it as a British colony.

in India brought oriental politics close home to England,[1] became the nucleus of a growing British dominion in South Africa.

Cape Town was the key of the interior of South Africa. But it was likewise the key of the southern world outside Africa; and from this dual position resulted much of the trouble between British and Dutch. The South African Dutch had practically severed their connection with Europe in the eighteenth century; they were absorbed in their local affairs, and the politics of the outer world troubled them not at all. From their point of view they were right; but the British Government from its point of view was also right when it recognised that the governing factor of its policy in South Africa was to be found not in South Africa at all, but in India and Australia. Had the British not taken the Cape, South Africa would not therefore have been free from European control. Another power, France at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Germany at the close, would have possessed itself of Table Bay, and had its strength been equal to its ambition, have also seized South Africa from the sea to the Zambesi.

From first to last the development of South Africa was influenced by grave considerations of policy and power outside South Africa, which appealed not at all to the Dutch, and the troubles of this nascent European nation in the south were complicated not only by the controversy between the two rival peoples within, but by the larger forces struggling for the empire of the world without.

The Cape had many advantages from its geographical position—trade, intercourse, a share in the current of the great world's happenings which kept it from stagnation—but against these things it had to set certain obvious dis-

[1] Cape Town was taken by the British in 1795; Wellesley's forward policy in India was inaugurated in 1798 (vol. ii. bk. vii. ch. iv.). The coincidence of time is not merely fortuitous.

advantages. It could not develop as it would, in happy isolation, like Australia or New Zealand; to build a new nation in South Africa was as one should build a house upon a highway. The house was to be built at last; but the first foundations which Carnarvon laid collapsed, the unsafe walls of his federal scheme had crumbled almost before they were placed in position; even in the end, when South African union was at last accomplished, there were flaws and cracks and awkward subsidences in the great building which perturbed its inmates not a little. . . .

Changing Attitude of Imperial Government.

Looking back over the whole weary controversy between Boer and Briton, in which much bad blood was made and more good blood was spilt, it must be admitted that some part of the trouble was inevitable, the friction between two hard unyielding bodies brought unwillingly together. But part at least arose from these other outside causes, from the fact that the Imperial Government, to which India was more important than Cape Town, had always a natural tendency to look upon South Africa mainly as a strategical asset, a vital holding on the road to Asia and no more. At first it aspired to do no more in Cape Colony than regularise the administration; but having set its foot ashore on Table Mountain it presently began to take an interest in South African questions for their own sake, planting settlers there in Algoa Bay, and insisting on the social and economic revolution of emancipating the slaves; and from that time it could not turn back, although it often tried to do so. Year by year its energetic colonists, traders, and missionaries drew it deeper and yet more deep into local Cape affairs, and, spreading in due course beyond the Cape, into the wider politics of South Africa as a whole. Often the Imperial Government vacillated, one Cabinet pursuing a set South African policy, its successor reverting to the idea that the only interest of Britain in the colony was as a strategic safeguard on the road to India; and between

these inconsistencies the growing interests of British settlers were puzzled and annoyed, and the local Dutch, attracted neither by the strategic nor by the colonial side of the Imperial Government's activities, became sullen and rebellious, and from time to time set up again their own ideal of independence. This see-saw of British policy[1] and local friction might have continued indefinitely, each change of policy and each mistake aggravating the ill-feeling, had it not been for the strong expansionist movement in Britain during the last quarter of the nineteenth century[2] and the concurrent presence of Cecil Rhodes in Africa. That, and the discovery of wealth at Kimberley and Johannesburg, precipitated the crisis which the three years' war had settled.[3]

In future therefore the Boers had to live with the British in South Africa. They had already done so in the past, but now there was a difference. For in the past they had cherished the delusive hope of independence; the hope, which sometimes blossomed into expectation, that Britain might withdraw; but now that ideal and hope alike were shattered, and every Dutchman in South Africa was a subject, albeit often an unwilling subject, of the British Empire. And with the passing of the hope of independence for the Dutch there passed also the chief cause of friction between the two. The position was now clearly defined: Britain was in South Africa

[1] An amusing example of this see-saw of imperial policy may be cited. Sir George Grey, governing the Cape in the middle of the nineteenth century, was once reproved for 'direct disobedience' to the orders of the Colonial Office. The rebuke was deserved, but his answer was forcible. 'During the five years which have elapsed since I was appointed to my present office,' he wrote, 'there have been at least seven Secretaries of State for the Colonial Department, each of whom held different views upon some important points of policy connected with the country.'

[2] Vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

[3] One great factor in the expansionist movement in South Africa was the almost unbroken predominance of the Unionists in Britain from 1886 to 1905. The Unionists were convinced expansionists, which the Liberals were not, and continual changes in London would have weakened the forward movement in South Africa, just as a change of British Governments in 1880 had precipitated the crisis of 1881 in South Africa.

to stay, the theory which Cecil Rhodes had put forward for the British, of equal rights for all civilised men south of the Zambesi, had overcome the rival theory which Paul Kruger had put forward for the Dutch, of Boer exclusiveness and independence.

The fight had been a long one: and neither of the two chief figures in the last act of the great drama that centred round the struggle for South Africa had lived to see the curtain down.

The greater man was the first to go. Kruger lived well beyond the normal span of human years, Rhodes was cut off in his very prime; but he was not unprepared for the end before it came. In the year after the raid he had said in casual conversation to one who was almost of an age with himself, 'Why, you have drawn two of the greatest blessings in the lottery of life: you 've arrived at the age of forty-four, you have no disease which as far as you know is certain to kill you, and you are an Englishman.' At that time Rhodes was already suffering from a disease which he knew would kill him.

Death of Cecil Rhodes, 1902.

The weakness of the lung had not indeed returned, but the heart, never over-strong—far back in old Kimberley days he had a heart attack which left him blue and breathless—was now overstrained by constant work, and had become diseased.[1] Had he fulfilled his father's past desire and spent his days in the leisured duties of an English parsonage the trouble might not perhaps have shown; a quiet life might even yet have saved him. But that would have been no life at all to Rhodes; he spoke of himself as a man under sentence of death, but the shortness of his time only made him work the harder. Five years of incessant activities lay ahead, visits to Europe, a journey to Egypt, a constant

[1] Garrett states (Cook's *Garrett*) that once when Rhodes was walking up a hill in Mashonaland he fainted and lay as one dead for a day and a night. He does not mention the year.

press of politics and business, and ever the thought of his Rhodesians and their future was in his mind.

It was no longer a fight with any human agency but with time. He knew well that the colony he had planted in Central Africa was firmly rooted, but he wished to water it and see it grow. He farmed there himself, he helped the settlers in their farming by introducing new plants and trees—apples from California, olives from Italy—and he watched the growth of population with anxious care. Every time he heard a white man's child was born he was visibly pleased, for each new European child of Rhodesian birth was another proof his work was sound.

The disease progressed; still its unwilling host worked on, conscious that his days were numbered. 'The only awkward thing,' he remarked in one of those revealing speeches where he thought aloud, 'is the progress of time. We do get older, and we do become a little hurried in our ideas because of that terrible time.'[1]

Already in 1897 the great testament that was to startle the world was made. 'It would be very ridiculous to lose one's ideas by death,' he said to one whom he asked to read his will. 'I am almost superstitious. I knew Barnato would not outlive me, so I made no arrangement with him. If Beit had not made the arrangement with me he would also have died first. Now the thought has come that I might die first and my ideas be lost.'

As time went on the thought that he must shortly die grew into certainty. During the siege of Kimberley the disease made rapid progress; and he who in his great years of triumph had rejoiced in human life, and the pleasant hum of conversation round his table, now withdrew a little from the crowd that sought him. Often he would sit solitary on Table Mountain; it was an old habit of his thus to gaze

[1] Speech, 18th July 1899. He was wont in jest to allude to Methusaleh as a man who missed many chances.

silently on the broad ocean beneath, but now men and things had other values, and the ocean was itself a type of the shadowy voyage that lay ahead—if indeed anything lay ahead. 'As for myself I do not know,' he said to Barthélemy the Jesuit father doubtfully of a future life; then more certainly, 'Yes, in fact, if I was to go before the Almighty to-morrow, and He was to tell me that He thought I had acted very badly at times, and had wronged some people wittingly, say Kruger, for instance—well, I should be prepared to have it out with Him.'

The months passed, and the illness still grew graver. A medical specialist in heart diseases whom he visited in London in the summer of 1901 warned him of the seriousness of his condition, but told him also, in those gentle words with which physicians strive to soften the sentence they pronounce, that with great care and rest he might survive some time.

But sentence of death had been pronounced, and Rhodes knew it. 'At anyrate, Jameson,' he said to his old friend, 'death from the heart is clean and quick: there is nothing repulsive or lingering about it; it is a clean death, isn't it?' Too overcome to answer, Jameson turned his eyes away; within a year Rhodes knew the truth of that.

And now a further trouble came. An adventuress, the Princess Radziwill, who had followed Rhodes against his will, had forged his name to certain bills, and was now awaiting trial at Cape Town. His evidence was necessary: it could have been taken on commission, but he preferred as of old to 'face the music,' and returned to South Africa early in the year 1902, to appear in person against her. And that last effort killed him.

His brain was clear, his financial genius never more apparent; but the heart was done. He took up his residence at a cottage he had bought at Muizenberg near Cape Town, on the shore of the Indian Ocean; and there was fought the last struggle with a greater enemy than Kruger. He needed

air, and a hole was knocked in the wall of the cottage to admit the draught; but it was useless. It was heartrending to his attendants to see him gasp for breath, but nothing could relieve him; he was plainly dying.

The fretfulness and irritation he had sometimes shown in the early days of illness when things went awry was seldom seen now that the battle had gone against him; he was brave, cheerful, and unselfish, as he gave his last directions to the sorrowing friends around his bedside.

On the morning of the 26th March a lad in whose career Rhodes had taken much interest told the sick man that he looked much better, but was answered, 'No, my boy, this is my last day.'

It was true. On that afternoon, said Sir Lewis Michell, 'I sat for awhile by his bedside, while Dr. Jameson, worn out by persistent watching day and night, took a short rest. The patient was restless and uneasy. Once he murmured, "So little done, so much to do," and then after a long pause I heard him singing softly to himself, maybe a few bars of an air he had once sung at his mother's knee. Then, in a clear voice, he called for Jameson'—and within an hour was dead.

The Colossus had fallen.

His Burial.

The place of burial was already chosen. Some years earlier Rhodes had discovered in the Matopo Hills a wild height of great beauty. He called it in admiration the World's View; and here, perhaps with some presage of his early death, he had directed that he should be buried, lying down full length on the exact spot he had chosen 'to see how it felt.' 'Lay me there,' he said again and again as death drew near: 'my Rhodesians will like it. They have never bitten me.'

There he was laid according to his wishes, the place of burial being marked with a plain and massive slab of granite like the man himself, on which was written the simple epitaph, 'Here lie the remains of Cecil John Rhodes.'

Far other was the end of the great antagonist of Rhodes. The 'old lion of the Transvaal,' Paul Kruger, had come to plead his country's cause in Europe, but he found little sympathy in continental courts. The public cheered him as he toured through France, Germany, and Holland; but the republic over which he had presided had vanished, the cause for which he stood was dead, and statesmen in high office seldom waste their hours over dead causes. Presently, too, the public forgot him and his affairs; and the old man at last began to realise that his day was done. For some time he lived in retirement, at Utrecht and other places;[1] but the end was nearing. His wife was dead in the Transvaal since he had left the country. He had one last wish, the inevitable sad desire of dying men, the homing instinct of the human race, to look once more on his own country and to close his eyes among his own people; but his request was denied. The bitterness of exile, of strange faces and foreign tongues, was to be his portion to the end. Yet even this the old man preferred above submission to the British. In his last testament he thanked God solemnly that as it had been his fate to be born under the British flag, at least he should not die under it.

Death of Paul Kruger, 1904.

Early in the year 1904 the aged and sorrow-stricken man took up his abode in Switzerland; and there, in the village of Clarens, on 14th July 1904, he died. He was in the eightieth year of his age, and during his long life he had seen both the founding and the extinction of the republic of which he had been so long the head.

The British Government had refused his request to end

[1] I happened to be in Holland at the time Paul Kruger was there; and I well recall that, although public honour was done him in due measure, private citizens who were in full sympathy with the Boers told me that they had no great belief in his probity or disinterestedness. Many stories, indeed, were current of the wealth he had brought with him from South Africa, and the means by which it had been obtained. Men respected his stubborn resistance, and pitied his exile; but the real honours, they held, lay with the Boer generals, above all with Botha.

his days in the Transvaal, lest his presence should disturb the gradual healing of the wounds left open from the war. But if his opponents feared Paul Kruger while alive, they respected him when dead; and his last appeal of all, that his remains should rest beside his dead wife in Pretoria, was gladly granted. The body of the man who had fought all his life for his people was transported back to the country he had loved, and there buried in Pretoria with military honours, the flag of the Transvaal Republic descending together with him to the last resting-place of both.

Rhodes and Kruger were gone, and some perhaps may hold that the death of two such stubborn men, the true leaders of the two opposing sides, made the task that fell to their successors a more easy one. The work of reconstruction and true union which now lay urgently before South Africa would have found no friend in Kruger; Rhodes would perhaps have been too big a figure for his fellows in the next few years. He died, it is true, before his work was done—but would it ever have been done? Enough that his ideas had triumphed—for his own colony of Rhodesia was now firmly planted, the British flag reached from Cape Town far north of the Zambesi, the foundations of European civilisation were rising on the shores of Lake Tanganyika,[1] the future union of British South Africa was accomplished largely on the lines he had advocated, and the policy of equal rights for all civilised white men was to be secured. The Colossus that had dominated South Africa for twenty years had stamped his mark ineffaceably on its development.

[1] The outpost at Abercorn, fifteen miles from the southern end of Tanganyika, and the most northerly settlement of British South Africa, was founded in 1893 by a British official who 'built a single house of wattle-and-daub and began the government. At present (1913) there are a magistrate and his officials, a postmaster, a storekeeper, and a government doctor. No others, no churches, no newspapers.' I quote a letter to myself from the best authority on the subject, the founder of Abercorn, now head of the larger settlement at Fort Jameson in northern Rhodesia.

Most men outlive their little work; many who have done things greater than their fellows have lived—it is an unhappy fate—to see their work undone. Among such unfortunates was Paul Kruger. And there are others, whose work, for good or ill, survives them. Among such was Cecil Rhodes; but he belonged also to that more chosen few of whom it holds that not their achievements alone survive them, but the spirit and very essence of their work, that which we call their inspiration, still inspires their fellows when they are gone. The guiding principle of Rhodes in politics and commerce had always been amalgamation and co-operation; and it was on this sound basis of amalgamation of interests and co-operation between Boer and Briton that Chamberlain and Milner now founded the new South Africa on the ruins of the old.

Milner's Work of Reconstruction.

Within a few months of the finish of the war, Chamberlain visited South Africa, and travelled through the country, seeing for himself the wreckage that had to be repaired, so far as it could be repaired, by its new rulers; but the main work fell on Milner, who had already begun the herculean task of reconstruction even before the fight was through. It was an occupation that appealed to him by nature and past training far more than the previous years of strife; there was in him, as always in the greater type of ruler, something of that delight in creation and creative work for its own sake which makes man hold that the highest of his species are moulded in the very image of the great Creator of all things.

Greatness of the Task.

The task which faced Milner was indeed gigantic; it was nothing less than the founding of a new civilisation on the ruins of the old. The men indeed were there; but the houses, crops, and stocks were gone, and in many places the desolate and deserted countryside had reverted to wilderness.[1] But great as was the work before

[1] One curious result of the war was that many tame animals had become wild, and wild animals had lost the fear of man; wild hares were

him, Milner had not delayed to start. Already in 1901, when the war was dying but not yet dead, some kind of civil administration had been established in the Transvaal; new administrative machinery was devised, and several young Englishmen from Oxford University were brought out for the new civil service. As the work of reconstruction enlarged its scope, more were sent for, and in time this numerous class of administrators became a marked feature of the new South Africa. The inexperience and rashness of youth, and the novelty of the work in a strange country, made them commit some blunders which older men who knew South Africa and the world might probably have avoided; the need for speed in the work of reconstruction was the cause of more mistakes, all of which were pointed out with joy by the enemies of Milner and his 'Kindergarten,' as the new civilians were derisively called. The mistakes were perhaps exaggerated, the good work decried, the difficulties of every forward step unperceived or wilfully forgotten by the onlookers: but in the end most of these young men under Milner's leadership justified themselves and their leader, and the more able occupants of the Kindergarten had considerable influence on the formation of the future political union of South Africa.[1]

For the time being, however, it was not high policy, but the sheer work of resettlement and rebuilding that engaged their energies. Agriculture in the two republics was at a standstill; only a few mines on the Rand had reopened; the British population was coming back slowly, the Boer population, mainly prisoners of war and mostly bankrupt, was not coming back at all.

found in the streets, and wild dogs in the hills (Smithfield District Report). The philosophic naturalist might have founded some curious speculations on these facts.

But whatever else they prove, they show that the war had practically destroyed the old civilisation of the two republics.

See the next chapter.

There were over two hundred thousand persons in the concentration camps, of whom more than half were Boers and the remainder natives, and several thousand prisoners of war in various British colonies. All the former, and nearly all the latter, had to be repatriated; where their farms had been destroyed they were rebuilt, when their stock or their crops had been taken they were compensated, and given the means to start life afresh.

Cost of the Reconstruction.

This work, which in effect was the repatriation of a whole people, the British undertook; the expense of the resettlement was enormous. Two and a half millions sterling was paid for debts contracted during the war, and two millions more as compensation to British, foreign, and native subjects. In addition, the large sum of ten millions was provided for the repatriation of the burghers—five millions direct from the British taxpayer, and five millions as a loan from the Imperial Treasury, the repayment of which was not pressed. Beyond this a further sum of two and a half millions sterling was devoted to extinguishing the debt of the Transvaal Republic, thirteen millions to buying out the Netherland Railway of the Transvaal and other railway companies, and an additional five millions on new railways—a total of thirty-five millions sterling in all.

Truly the British Empire spent its wealth on its new provinces with an imperial hand; if it had destroyed wholesale during the war, it rebuilt wholesale when the war was over. The sum was no insignificant one, even for so wealthy a country as Britain; but it was not too much, and the event proved that it was not enough, to revive South Africa.

It was not the least of Milner's virtues as a governor that he was an able and experienced financier, who had learnt in a poor country like Egypt to get full value for his money: here in South Africa the need for economy was less, but the need for haste was more. It was good that the work should be well done, but it was essential that it should be quickly

done': 'It was rough, no doubt, a great deal of it,' said Milner when the task was over; 'there was no time for trimming or polishing. But if rough and showing many traces of haste, it was solid and bore few signs of scamping. Much of it was costly work, but then one always has to pay extra for extra pace, and we have gone full steam ahead the whole time. The one thing essential, the one thing imperative, when we took over this country, a total wreck, with half its population in exile, with no administrative machinery whatever, was to make it a going concern as soon as possible. We could not stand fiddling over small economies while people starved.'[1]

Repatriation of Burghers, 1902-3.

The excuse was valid, the boast justified. When Kitchener left South Africa on 20th June 1902, Milner was faced with the task of repatriating the Boers on their lands in mid-winter, when the veldt was bare, with prices high after the war, the railways choked with military transport, half the farms in ruins, and the people in concentration camps or in captivity in St. Helena or Ceylon. All these were to be helped to start life afresh; and families were sent out one by one from the camps, equipped with tent, bedding, and rations for a month, transported by Government ox-wagon to the remains of their old home, and there set down to re-house themselves as best they could. This part of the work at least was quickly done; by December 1902 the population in the camps was reduced to

[1] There was, of course, much criticism of the work, and some room for criticism. A few defalcations were proved in the administration of funds, and prosecutions were instituted; there was much grumbling among the Boers, and some no doubt was justified. But to say, as Louis Botha did in the London *Times* of 15th July 1903, that 'the work of repatriation is a complete and dismal failure,' was absurd; the bulk of the people were back on their farms, not indeed recovered from the war, but in the way of recovery. But there are various indications that the cautious Botha had not at that time decided to ally himself closely with the British. Charges of wholesale official corruption in dealing with the repatriation funds were made; but a committee appointed later by the Transvaal Government under Botha disproved these allegations.

ten thousand; three months later the last refugee had left, and the camps were finally closed.

Meanwhile the prisoners of war who had been transported were returning. Few gave much trouble as to taking the oath of allegiance, but some refused for awhile to believe that the republics had consented to a peace which signed away their existence. Only a visit from De la Rey convinced these suspicious irreconcilables that their cause was ruined; but from that time these also were quickly repatriated.

It would have been little use, however, simply to set the people back on the land with no more resources than a month's supplies. Their houses they could rebuild from materials near at hand, but they could not replace the stock driven off in the war, they could not live on air till harvest came, and unless they had Government assistance to obtain the seed there would be no sowing and no harvest.

But these things the new Government did for them. It obtained stock and seed, which were sold to the farmers at extremely low rates;[1] and when it was discovered that the repatriated farmers were short of oxen for their ploughing, it sent round a Government team from farm to farm to plough the soil. Then indeed the Boers were convinced that their new rulers were sincere in their professions of goodwill. They had been suspicious over their dealings with repatriation officials in the matter of stock and crops and loans and compensation, but free ploughing was an extra none had looked for. The aid was accepted, not as of right, but as a boon: the touring plough was worth a thousand proclamations in the new work of reconciliation in South Africa.

It was characteristic of Milner's thoroughness and the enthusiasm of his young assistants that he should not merely want to rebuild the old fabric of rural industry in the Trans-

[1] The farmers grumbled at the cost and the quality supplied, and this was regarded as a peculiar ingratitude of the Boers. But when does not a farmer grumble?

vaal and Orange River Colony, but that he should wish to rebuild it on a better plan. The Dutch methods of agriculture and stock-breeding in South Africa had always been primitive and unscientific; no attention had been paid to improving the breed of sheep or grading the wool, which had in consequence fetched lower prices in the markets of the world than the produce of Australia; the same applied to Cape wines,[1] and indeed to almost every product of South Africa. The lassitude which the Dutch had shown in politics and war had also marked their farming, to the great economic loss of the community.

These things Milner took as a reproach upon the country which he tended; and he had now a unique opportunity to rebuild on a better basis. An attempt was made to spread the knowledge of improved agricultural and stock-breeding methods by the establishment of experimental farms under Government control, after the Australian model, and an institution was founded which afterwards developed into an agricultural training college.

Improvement in communication was another essential of the new South Africa of Milner's dream. The Boer ideal flourished in isolation; the more restless Briton needed not only space but movement, quick and easy transport for his trade, good roads such as hardly

Roads and Railways.

[1] See Bk. xxiii. ch. iv. for the early Cape wines and brandies, and their defects. The delightful Hamilton-Browne, in *A Lost Legionary in South Africa*, remarks that he bought a bottle of Cape brandy for ninepence. The Cape produced better liquor than that, but the fact that such poison was on the market gave the whole product a bad name.

Prior to 1860, however, a good deal of Cape wine was drunk in England, owing to the fact that it only paid 2s. 10d. per gallon import duty, in comparison with the 5s. 6d. per gallon duty on foreign wines. In that year the preference was abolished as contrary to free trade policy, and the export of Cape wine quickly fell from over a million gallons yearly to half the amount.

Before that time the great English wine-importing house of Gilbey had it in mind to purchase and develop large vineyards at the Cape, but the idea was abandoned when the preference was abolished. The concession to free trade was a grave blow to colonial industry; it was not for that reason less popular with Cobden (vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.).

yet existed in South Africa, and more railways. Both these matters were attended to, bridges were built over the river drifts to avoid delay in flooded seasons, and a great scheme of railway enlargement, such as Rhodes himself might well have envied, was planned and partially achieved.

British Land Settlement.

But the work of reconstruction was not to be confined to the Boers. It was an essential of Milner's scheme that the old Boer isolation and exclusion on which the Krugerian system had built itself should be broken up for ever; new blood was to be infused into the new colonies, and a comprehensive scheme of land settlement by British colonists was sketched out and partially accomplished. Emigrants of good class families were sought from England, women as well as men were encouraged to come out, and it was hoped that these scattered parties of agriculturists would take deep root in the Transvaal and play their part in lessening the solidity of the old Boer racial feeling.[1]

The Disease and Drought of 1903.

Unhappily the great task which Milner set himself was delayed in its completion by a cause beyond his control. Practically all the work that had been done was rendered void by the outbreak of disease among the horses and cattle, and a severe drought and the consequent failure of the crops in 1903. At great expense the business of reconstruction had to be begun over again, seed distributed afresh, the farmers and their families supported through another winter by Government rations. The Boers were angry and disappointed, the British on their side disheartened at this delay. 'Repatriation was frequently a thankless task,' said one of the officials charged with

[1] There were 4864 British applicants for land in the Orange River Colony by February 1903; of these, 660 had been allotted land by June 1906. A few of these afterwards left, and the Orange Government can hardly be said to have encouraged British immigration. Here, if anywhere, was seen a resurgence of the Boer exclusiveness of old days.

the work; 'disease made it appear at times a hopeless one.'[1]

Even this setback was turned to profit by the new rulers. It led directly to the visit of an authority on irrigation, who pointed out the waste of water carried off by the South African rivers in flood at the very time when a country whose character showed a tendency to recurrent drought and perhaps increasing desiccation[2] most needed moisture. 'When rain is wanted it is generally not there,' said Willcocks in his report; 'when it is not wanted it is invariably present.'[3] Artificial regulation of the rivers and an irrigation system after the model of Egypt and India was the clear solution of that problem.

Irrigation Schemes.

It had been easy to raise money on the credit of the Empire, but the only solid basis for the future was a steady revenue within South Africa. That revenue could not be raised from the land, for agriculture was, and was likely to remain for some years, in a depressed condition; revenue could only be raised from the mines. The Rand must finance South African administration; but the position on the Rand itself presented difficulties. The tax of ten per cent. on the annual produce of the mines, which was imposed for revenue in 1902, had not produced a large amount; the mines were not yet working steadily, many had not been reopened at all, and it was found that they could not be reopened until more labour was available. But the natives who had worked the mines before the war

Revenue from the Rand.

[1] Beak, *The Aftermath of War*.

[2] Certainly in the north of South Africa, where Lake Ngami was diminishing year by year, and the deserts themselves were but fertile lands denuded of their water. Bk. xxiv. ch. ii.

[3] Willcocks, *Report on Irrigation in South Africa*. A few years later an attempt was made to grow rainless wheat in South Africa, after the system in vogue in part of the dry region of the United States. A paper was read on the subject before the Royal Colonial Institute in 1913.

were now engaged in other public works, constructing railways and rebuilding farms; there was a labour famine on the Rand, due to the exceptional demand elsewhere. Native labour was sought in Rhodesia and Nyasa with little effect. The Portuguese Government of Mozambique recruited men within its territories, but not sufficient to supply the demand. An experiment was made with unskilled white labour in the mines: had it succeeded, the whole difficulty would have been solved and much future trouble avoided; but the employment of whites was declared, somewhat too hastily, to be too costly.[1]

Indentured Chinese Labour imported.

Faced with this difficulty, that the public revenue must suffer until the mines were working, and that the mines could not resume work until more labour was provided, it was determined to recruit indentured labour from outside. The system was well known and understood: it had been adopted with more or less success in British Guiana, the West Indies, and elsewhere.[2] Application was therefore made to the Indian Government for kulis for the Rand; but that Government, following in this respect the precedent set when it refused a similar request from Australia,[3] declined. It was then that the South African Government decided, and the Imperial

[1] Some years afterwards the question was inquired into by an important Select Committee on European Employment, which was appointed in 1913. It reported that there was no actual hostility of the mine-owners to white labour, but that they were far from sympathetic to its introduction. That attitude was enough to damn the earlier experiment.

Their attitude was dictated partly no doubt from conservatism, but mainly, I think, from the fact that coloured labour was cheaper than white. It was perhaps unreasonable to expect the mine-owners to employ dearer labour when cheaper could be obtained; but Milner was at fault in not insisting that the experiment of employing white labour, difficult as it undoubtedly was, in the mines, was not given a longer trial. He was dominated by the necessity of getting the mines to work, and thought too little of the means to the end. The event showed that the means were of considerable importance.

[2] See vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. i. and ii.

[3] See vol. v. bk. xx. ch. iii.

Government reluctantly consented, to recruit Chinese labour.[1]

Its Unpopularity.

Now it is an unfortunate peculiarity of the Chinaman that he is equally disliked for his vices and his virtues. His vices, which are numerous and nauseating, need no condemnation; his virtue, which consists mainly in working harder than another man works for a less wage than another man can live on, obtains no praise except from his employer. The immigration of Chinamen was therefore unpopular in South Africa; but it was also unpopular for another reason. South Africa had already its own racial problems, and it had seen with some disquietude that the Indian labourers who had settled in Natal had made that colony a semi-Asiatic country;[2] it was also unpopular

[1] When Chamberlain was at the Colonial Office he refused Milner's request for Chinese labour. He foresaw, as an old politician skilled in the arts of the electioneer, the use that could be made of the topic by political opponents, even if a provision was inserted in the indentures that the Chinese should be repatriated, as was eventually done. But Alfred Lyttelton, Chamberlain's successor at the Colonial Office, gave way to Milner's persistence, and his party as well as Milner paid the penalty that Chamberlain had foreseen.

When Chamberlain retired from the Colonial Office, the post was offered to Milner. To his honour he refused, determined to return to his difficult task in South Africa; but his acceptance would equally have meant Chinese labour in the Rand.

[2] The kuli system had been introduced in Natal in 1865, and regular plantations worked by indentured Indian labour, after the manner of the West Indies, subsequent to the emancipation of the slaves, became the economic basis of Natalian industry. The kulis, after their indentures had expired, did not return to India, but settled in Natal as traders and small shopkeepers, with the result that their competition was harmful to the whites, and great feeling was consequently aroused, which led to legislative action to prevent the immigration of more race-aliens. The Natal Exclusion Act of 1897 was the basis of Australian legislation for limiting Asiatic immigration, and the main provisions of the statutes in the two countries are entirely similar (see vol. v. bk. xx. ch. iii.).

An attempt was made about the same time that the first kulis were introduced into Natal to increase the white population of the colony, many English immigrants from Yorkshire being sent out, and subsequently some fifty Norwegian families being granted free passages to Durban and other privileges. But many of these immigrants only stayed a short time in Natal, being seduced to Australia by the greater attractions of that country; and the experiment as a whole was unsuccessful. Low-class cheap labour, being given free play, drove out

in other parts of the Empire. The people of Australasia raised their voices loud in protest at this unforeseen consequence of a war in which Australasians had fought for the Empire; the people of England likewise disliked the idea of aliens doing the work which should, in their opinion, have furnished white men with good employment.[1]

Its Success.

But the employment of Chinamen saved the situation in South Africa: for the production of gold from the Rand rose steadily from twelve millions sterling in 1903 to twenty-nine millions sterling in 1908. The justification of the unpopular expedient of employing Chinese labour at Johannesburg was the fact that it helped to make South Africa self-supporting in finance, and in the long run led to the employment of more white labour on the mines. Whether, in view of the universal prejudice against Chinese labour and the certainty of a violent agitation against its employment on the Rand, it would not have been better to have insisted on white workers, even at the expense of some profit to the mines and some delay in the development of South Africa, is a matter of opinion.[2]

Denounced as Slavery in England.

But there is another side to the story. The employment of Chinese in South Africa was seized on as an election cry in Britain: Milner, whose work had been persistently attacked and maligned by the Liberal party to which he had once belonged and which he had never repudiated, was denounced for proposing it;

the more expensive white man here as in the old American colonies and the West Indies (vol. i. bk. iv. ch. iv. and vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. iii.).

[1] Several Unionist politicians had used the argument that the new colonies would offer a large field of employment for Englishmen after the war. These speeches were dug up from old newspaper files and effectively used against them by their Liberal opponents when Chinese labour was introduced.

[2] One grave difficulty in the way of white labour in the mines was not then realised—its unhealthy character. By 1913, when a large number of whites were employed in the Rand mines, miners' phthisis of a very fatal character was found to be frequent. Disease was set up by the hard rock dust of the mines.

and, what was of more local and immediate importance from the party point of view, the Unionist Government which had consented to the expedient was condemned by its opponents for permitting the immigration. It was suggested, but without the least vestige of truth, that slavery had been re-introduced in South Africa; and it was hinted—a deadly lie—that if the Unionist Government remained in power the same slavery would be introduced in England.[1] The cry which some Liberals had disliked and some had thought would be ineffective,[2] was amazingly successful: an atmosphere of prejudice was created with which it was impossible to contend; and the Liberal party, which would probably have obtained a good victory by honest means at the general election of 1906, obtained an overwhelming majority by a shameless but useful lie.

By that time Milner had left South Africa, and he saw the attempt to undo his work with the bitterness natural to a man who had striven long and honestly to give the best

[1] One Liberal speaker hinted that Chinese labour was to be introduced in the Welsh slate quarries; and a Unionist speaker at the general election of 1906 told me that he had the utmost difficulty in persuading a rural audience of farm labourers in Kent that a large farmer had not already imported Chinamen to take their places at field work, as soon as the election was over. The story had been put about by the local Liberals that the Chinese labourers were concealed in a barn on a remote part of the farm. Compare Lloyd George, reported in *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 19th Jan. 1906: 'What would they say to introducing Chinamen at a shilling a day in Welsh quarries?'; and again, the Chinese labourers were 'kept like dogs in a kennel, treated as very few men treat their beasts.'—(London *Times*, 17th Jan. 1906).

[2] 'When an agitation against the importation of Chinese contract labour into South Africa was proposed, an important personage said that there was not a vote in it' (Graham Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics*).

The most effective illustration in this campaign was a picture, representing the ghosts of two British soldiers looking at a number of Chinamen walking in chains; the soldier was represented as saying, 'That's what you and I and twenty thousand other soldiers died for.' The picture originally appeared in the *Star*, a low-class London evening newspaper; it was slightly modified—the chains were made less conspicuous—when it was officially adopted by the Liberal party, and placarded on every hoarding.

That picture did more than anything else to win the election of 1906.

that was in him to the country for which he had accepted responsibility.[1]

The Work of Reconciliation.

It was on the measures which Chamberlain had sanctioned, and the way in which Milner carried them through that the future settlement of the country and its two white peoples depended. The British were the rulers, the Boers more deeply rooted; yet Boer and Briton were irrevocably mixed in South Africa. In the most British districts, in the eastern province of Cape Colony, in Natal, and in southern Rhodesia, were many Boers; in the most Dutch part of the country, in the Orange River Colony and the rural districts of the Transvaal, were several British. The two had to live together; it remained for the next few years to show if they could work together.

There were many sullen irreconcilables among that dogged people, but there were also many, perhaps even a majority, who were prepared to become loyal if not enthusiastic subjects of the British Empire if they were fairly treated. Straightforward consistent methods, such as had not always characterised British policy in South Africa, might win them in the end; but for the time they were waiting in silent expectation—those at least that had not already trekked beyond the limits of the Union Jack—for the British Government to show its hand. They had accepted British rule perforce, but as yet they had done nothing more.

A policy that was mean or niggardly or vacillating, that repeated in another form the mistakes of the emancipation period,[2] or of the first annexation of the Transvaal,[3] or a policy that attempted to break the pledges given at the peace, would have driven the silent majority to sympathise, and perhaps to assist the irreconcilables among their own people.

[1] I heard Milner make a speech at the London Guildhall in April 1907, two years after his return from South Africa. The concentrated bitterness of his manner, even more than the matter of his words, told how deeply he resented the attempt to undo his work.

[2] Bk. xxiii. ch. iv. [3] Bk. xxvi. ch. i.

So far as that was concerned, the lavish generosity of the Imperial Government had not failed of its effect. The work of reconstruction was largely done in the three years after the war, and on the whole it was well done; but there yet remained the task of reconciliation. The one was the corporal body, the other the intangible soul, of statecraft.

Milner's Capacity for the Work.

For the primary work of reconstruction few men were better fitted by character and training than Milner; for the more delicate and difficult task of reconciliation he was hardly so well equipped. He had not the easy humanity of Rhodes, he lacked the magnetism with which Carleton, whose task a century before had resembled his, had won the French in Canada:[1] he had no natural gift of popularity. The innate starkness of his nature, which had survived the editorial chair of a London newspaper, had hardened into aloofness in his Anglo-Egyptian career; he stood somewhat apart from the ruck of the world. Invaluable as his unbending character had been in the dealings with Pretoria and Bloemfontein in the days before the war, its virtues were less conspicuously manifest when the struggle was at an end. A natural charm of manner in private life made him loved by his intimate friends, but unfortunately that charm was confined to intimate friends; in his official career there showed a tautness of disposition, a reserve and occasional curtness which was not too well calculated to gain the hearts of the new British subjects in South Africa. Milner was always the governor among subjects, seldom the man among men: and governors win respect where men win love.

The Education System.

The education system which he introduced in the new colonies was hardly a good beginning of the work of reconciliation. It is true that it was a better and more comprehensive system than had prevailed under the Dutch republics, and it was the logical outcome

[1] Vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. vi.

of the concentration camp schools, where more Boer children had been taught by the English, even during the war, than had ever been taught by the Dutch republics in time of peace; but Milner made English the basis of instruction; and although the Dutch Taal was not prohibited and was indeed specifically allowed in the schools, it could be represented, and was in fact represented, that the new rulers intended to anglicise the rising generation of South African Dutch. Now there are few things a conquered people holds to so tenaciously as its speech, and the time came within a few years when the Dutch attempted to reverse the position of the two languages, and Hertzog in effect attempted to give the Dutch Taal the same advantage over English that Milner had sought for English over Dutch.[1] The reaction was the natural response to Milner's forward policy of anglicising the schools. A basis of complete equality would have been more difficult to attack.

Political Reform.

Nevertheless Milner's honesty and that of the Imperial Government in dealing with this stubborn people were not without effect. The mistakes of Shepstone, Wolseley and Lanyon in 1877 in leaving the Transvaal without a constitution[2] were not repeated; political reform lagged not far behind the work of social and industrial reconstruction, and the representative institutions to which the British Government had pledged its word at the peace in 1902 were not delayed.

The first step was the creation within less than a year of a nominated Legislative Council in the Transvaal, on which not only the old Uitlander leaders, Sir Percy Fitzpatrick and

[1] There was a great controversy, in which Hertzog took the lead, over education in the Orange Free State and Cape Colony, and the question of a South African University, in 1912-13. The question caused considerable embarrassment to the Botha Ministry, and led to some revival of racial feeling and a political and educational deadlock.

So strong had been the feeling against the English schools in Milner's time that opposition Dutch schools were opened.

[2] See ch. i. of this book.

Sir George Farrar, found a place, but the Boer generals, Botha, De la Rey, and Smuts, were also invited to join. The invitation to these past opponents of the British, at the direct request of Lord Milner, was sufficient testimony that the victor in the war desired to lay aside old controversies, and to give the new British subjects in South Africa the full benefit of equality under the flag; it was a proof, and in some quarters it was taken as a too hasty proof, of the sincerity of the conquerors. But it was a proof that repaid the victors handsomely, for it assumed and therefore went far to ensure the part co-operation of the Boers in the work that lay ahead.

The Transvaal Legislative Council, 1902.

For the moment indeed the Boer generals refused to join, preferring to maintain an attitude of aloofness to the new Council which left them free to criticise without accepting responsibility. But events were convincing them of the need of co-operation with the British. Immediately the war was over they had gone to Europe,[1] leaving Milner and his officials to the work of reconstruction; but in Europe they found, to their surprise, less sympathy than in England. They discovered, what most Englishmen had long since realised, that the loud-voiced sympathy of the Continent with the Boers had sprung from dislike of the British rather than from any real love of the two petty republics in South Africa, and now that England had won the day the Boers were cast aside. An attempt to raise a fund for the Boers who had suffered by the war brought in a paltry £105,000, a mere drop in the ocean compared with England's huge contribution for reconstruction; of political aid to undo the Peace of Pretoria was not a sign. The real enthusiasm for the Boer soldiers who had fought a hopeless

The Boers hold aloof.

[1] Reitz, Steyn, and Lukas Meyer went first to Europe; Botha, De la Rey, and De Wet followed. Lukas Meyer died in Europe shortly afterwards; Steyn, whose heroic exertions in the war had brought on an absolute physical collapse immediately before the Peace of Pretoria, lay seriously ill for many months in a villa at Scheveningen in Holland.

fight came from the English crowd, which gave an ovation to the men whose long resistance had touched their generous sporting instincts.

The Boer generals were not the men to receive so spontaneous a welcome from their old enemies untouched; but they nevertheless held to their purpose. A request was made that the Colonial Office should revise the terms of peace, by reinstating the officials of the old republics, compensating the burghers in full, and granting full amnesty to all rebels.[1] To those preposterous demands Chamberlain could not concede, and said so with his usual frankness; to have given way would have undone half the work of the war, and to have reinstated the old officials would have rendered Milner's task of reconstruction impossible.

The generosity of the London crowd and the firmness of the Colonial Office in refusing to change the terms of settlement convinced the Boer leaders of what, perhaps, they had not seriously doubted, the irrevocability of the Peace of Pretoria; and with the certainty of a constitution being shortly granted for their country, they prepared to organise their own people in readiness for co-operation with the British.

Their New Political Organisations.

A political organisation was founded for the Transvaal Boers, under the name of *Het Volk*—the people; and a second for the Orange River Colony, with the title of *Orangia Unie*—the Orange Union. There were some among the adherents of these two associations who hoped to foster racial hatred, and to intrigue against the British; but the Boer leaders, to their lasting honour, set their faces sternly against sedition or revolt. In his first speech to the new association of his people, Louis Botha stated plainly, in a fashion none could mistake, that the

[1] As a fact, the punishment of the rebels from Cape Colony was extremely light. They were merely deprived of the franchise for a term of years.

question of the flag was settled once for all; irresponsible irreconcilables were discouraged and even admonished for their indiscretions; and De Wet, for his part, had already said the same. 'To my nation,' said that admirable soldier, when peace was concluded, 'I address one last word. Be loyal to the new Government. Loyalty pays best in the end. Loyalty alone is worthy of a nation which has shed its blood for freedom.'[1]

These were noble words, which honoured both the speaker and his people; nor were they disregarded. Although feeling ran high at times and hard words were said in private meetings, only one case of sedition was discovered in the three years after the war; the Boer leaders themselves accepted, as honourable men on behalf of an honourable people, the verdict of the war. And with that acceptance the time had come for constitutional rule.

Their Loyalty to the Empire.

The Legislative Council was only the beginning of the new policy of trust. A large party among the British in the Transvaal was already pressing for a constitution giving responsible government after the fashion of other self-governing colonies; the Boers were not less expectant of the representative institutions which had been promised at the peace; and within three years the Imperial Government announced that in its opinion the time had come, not yet for full self-government after the Canadian model, but for the convenient half-way house of representative institutions under the control of the Lieutenant-Governor.

The First Transvaal Constitution, 1905.

The new Transvaal constitution,[2] dated 31st March 1905,

[1] De Wet, *Three Years' War*.

[2] Familiarly known as the Lyttelton constitution, from the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, who had succeeded Chamberlain as British Colonial Secretary in 1903.

The full constitution is given in the official paper Cd. 2400 (1905), and supplementary explanatory despatches in Cd. 2479 (1905).

provided for a single Legislative Council of one chamber containing not fewer than six or more than nine members nominated by the Government, and not fewer than thirty or more than thirty-five elected members. It enacted that the colony was as far as possible to be divided into constituencies of equal populations, and the qualification for the franchise was fixed so low that in practice every European in the country could claim a vote.

The act was a bold one, for the British and Boer populations of the country were nearly equal, and it was possible, and not indeed improbable, that owing to the better political organisation of the Boers and the fact that some of the British inhabitants of the Transvaal were known to support them, a Boer majority might obtain control of the first Transvaal Colonial Parliament within four years of the conclusion of the war. The chance was admitted by the Imperial Government, but it wisely took the risk, believing that the constitution would be accepted as a guarantee that the imperial policy of trust and equality was sincerely meant; and in that respect the boldness of the new constitution was fully justified.

There were, however, limits to the daring of the Imperial Government. It recognised that the British in the Transvaal would claim full responsible government as their right, but decided that the complete autonomy to which it looked forward must be preceded by this probationary period; and in the Orange River Colony, where the Boers were in an enormous majority over the British, and where it happened that the old feelings of enmity had survived more conspicuously than in the Transvaal, it held that Crown Colony government must continue indefinitely.

The Transvaal constitution, with its nominated official element and certain definite limitations on the power of the elected representatives,[1] was confessedly a provisional one,

[1] The articles provided that no financial measure could be passed unless it had been previously recommended by the Governor.

to be superseded as soon as the time had come for full self-government. But circumstances outside South Africa once more influenced the internal policy of the country, and the incidence of a general election in England rendered this first Transvaal constitution abortive.

Change in Imperial Policy, 1906.

The long period of Unionist Government in England, which had lasted with one short break for twenty years, and had seen the expansion of the British in South Africa over Rhodesia and the extinction of the two Boer republics, was nearing its end in 1905. The Transvaal constitution was its last important act,[1] and the new Liberal Government, which assumed office in December 1905, had made known in advance its distrust of temporary measures such as this, and urged a quicker and more daring policy. It determined to annul the existing constitution, and to introduce without delay self-government not only in the Transvaal, where the Unionists admitted it was only a question of a few years between them, but in the Orange River colony as well.

The decision surprised most people out of England, and not a few in England.[2] If the policy of the Unionists had been criticised by cautious politicians as too daring, the

[1] A proposal for the redistribution of seats in the United Kingdom was put forward subsequently in the British House of Commons, but not persisted in. The driving force of the Balfour Government was dead.

I well remember that when I returned to England in 1905 after an absence of over three years on the Continent, I was amazed to see the attacks on the Balfour Cabinet, and to discover that the Cabinet, which I had believed to be strong and active, was itself moribund. The explanation was simple. The Cabinet had maintained and even increased British prestige in international politics, which were discussed at length in the Continental press; its conduct of internal affairs, which was the main topic in political circles in England, was ignored on the other side of the North Sea.

[2] But not the late members of the Unionist Government. On 26th April 1904, Lyttelton wrote to Milner, 'When the other side come in they will be confronted with their dishonest and insincere utterances about Chinese labour by the ignorant and sincere of their followers, and I am convinced that they will extricate themselves from a painful dilemma by granting self-government to the new colonies *sans phrase*.' A prophecy that hit the mark.

policy of the Liberals was openly condemned as foolhardy rashness, and the condemnation derived some support, not only from the memory of the disasters that had sprung from past reversals by the Liberals of their opponents' policy in South Africa[1] — the remembrance of Gladstone and Majuba above all — but also from the folly of some Liberals at that day, who insisted that the work of the war must be undone and South Africa be restored to the Boers.[2] These curious but unimportant people could not understand that the work of the war could not be undone; and if there were some members of the new Cabinet who could be suspected of Little Englandism, there were others whose imperialist leanings and past record were above reproach.[3]

But fortune, as the proverb has it, favours the brave, and favours them not only in love and war, but in the dusty and less attractive regions of high constitutional polity. The Unionist constitution for the Transvaal was sound statecraft; the Liberal constitution, judged by its results, was, by accident or design, great statesmanship.

By happy accident, perhaps, as much as deliberate design. It is true that the grant of full responsible government was consonant with the great Liberal tradition of colonial rule, and that the new Liberal policy in the Transvaal could be

[1] See ch. i. of this book.

[2] This was said, for instance, by W. T. Stead, editor of the (London) *Review of Reviews* and organiser of the Stop-the-War Committee.

I seem to remember that something of the same kind was said in several Liberal election addresses in the general election of 1906. But I hastily abandoned the attempt to prove the point when I began to look through some of these undistinguished documents.

[3] Asquith, Grey, and Haldane were members of the Cabinet who belonged to the imperialist wing of the Liberal party. But the Unionist opponents of the Government naturally concentrated their attention on the speeches of Campbell-Bannerman, Birrell, and John Burns, who had generally opposed and criticised the conduct of the war. Balfour and the whole Unionist party of course denounced the new constitution as mischievous and premature. But it would be cruel to exhume their speeches on the subject, even in a footnote.

justified from the speeches of old Liberal leaders.[1] But it is also true that the new policy of immediate self-government for the Transvaal relieved the British Cabinet of an awkward embarrassment, for the new ministers now found themselves confronted with their own election cry. They had declared Chinese labour in the Transvaal to be slavery, and were quickly forced to modify that view when confronted in office with the facts they could so easily have discovered for themselves before the agitation; they had proclaimed Chinese labour to be unnecessary, and they discovered that that also was not altogether true.[2] Here then was a predicament. To have repatriated the Chinese at once, as election pledges seemed to demand, would have forced a grave economic crisis in the Transvaal; to leave them working in the mines would lay the British Cabinet open to the charge, which the sound party politician must at all hazard avoid, of revising their policy in the light of further information, perhaps even to the more scandalous charge of being influenced by the mercenary mine-owners whom they had denounced in opposition. And there was the additional trouble that many excellently honest if ignorant Liberals who had believed the fiery denunciations of slavery could not be convinced, what they readily believed somewhat later in the life of the Cabinet, that the ministers whom the divine voice of the people had chosen had blundered.

A way out of this predicament was sought and found: with much adroitness the paths of liberty and party advantage were made to coincide; the Transvaal received respon-

[1] With perhaps one prominent exception. Lord Durham, while advocating responsible government in Canada, made it a fundamental condition that a British majority should be the first consideration. (See vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iv.)

[2] Lord Elgin, the Colonial Secretary, openly admitted the fact in the House of Lords; Winston Churchill, then holding the first official position of his brilliant career as Under-Secretary for the Colonies, confessed to the Commons that the term slavery as applied to Chinese labour was a 'terminological inexactitude'—a pleasant euphemism that robbed truth of half its terror.

sible government, and being responsible for its own affairs, was necessarily charged with the administration of its own labour question. A clause was introduced in the new constitution prohibiting servile labour, to save the face of the Liberals; and the difficult question of slavery on the Rand was conveniently forgotten in the contemplation of the glorious dawn of Transvaal liberty.[1]

The Second Transvaal Constitution, 1906.

The new constitution, as introduced in the Imperial Parliament on 31st July 1906, and passed without substantial alteration, necessarily differed in many respects from the elder half-brother whose inheritance it had usurped.[2] It gave full manhood suffrage instead of the low qualification that its predecessor had fixed; it provided for two chambers instead of one, a nominated Council of fifteen forming the Upper House, a Legislative Assembly of sixty-nine constituting the popular element. In the event of the two Houses disagreeing, it was provided that after the Council had rejected a second time the same Bill from the Assembly, or had amended it in such a manner that the Assembly could not agree, a joint sitting of the two Houses should be held—in which event the will of the popular

[1] The end of the Chinese labour controversy may be relegated, for the benefit of modest Liberals, to the dim obscurity of a footnote. In 1904 there were 9668 Chinese on the Rand; in 1905, 39,952; in 1906, 51,427; in 1907, when the first indentures expired, 49,302; in 1908, 21,027; in 1909, 6516; in 1910 the last Chinaman departed. The effect of their employment was that white labourers increased from 13,207 in 1904 to 17,593 in 1908.

When responsible government was granted to the Transvaal Botha refused to consider the immediate repatriation of the Chinese, which would have crippled the mines and very seriously diminished the Transvaal revenues; but he made it known that if the Imperial Government took certain steps he would not seek to renew the indentures. The Imperial Government in response guaranteed a loan of five millions to the Transvaal, and the Chinese were repatriated as their indentures expired. The decision caused some depression on the Rand, but by that time the lessened demand for native labour elsewhere, in consequence of the work of reconstruction being done, improved the prospects of the mining industry.

[2] The second Transvaal constitution is given in the official paper Cd. 3250 (1906).

assembly was almost certain to prevail—or, if it was within six months of a general election, at the option of the Governor of the colony, the parliament should be dissolved, and a general election held.

However mixed the motives that led to the new constitution, it was a pronounced success. The first Transvaal Parliament under the British Empire opened on 31st March 1907,[1] and to the amazement of the whole world, General Louis Botha, the victor over British troops at Colenso and Spion Kop seven years before, became the first Prime Minister of this self-governing British province. The old enemy of Britain was on the threshold of a new career as a British statesman; and in the same year that he became Prime Minister he attended a meeting of the Imperial Conference in London. His cue was mainly that of the attentive listener; but when he intervened in a debate on Imperial Defence his words were listened to, as was his due, as those of one who spoke with a unique authority.

Louis Botha, First Transvaal Premier.

By that time Milner had already left South Africa two years; but in his farewell speech he had clearly stated the position of the two peoples in the future. 'The Dutch,' he said, 'can never own a perfect allegiance merely to Great Britain. The British can never, without moral injury, accept allegiance to any body politic which excludes their motherland. But British and Dutch alike could, without loss of dignity, without any sacrifice of their several traditions, unite in loyal devotion to an Empire-state in which Great Britain and South Africa would be partners, and could work cordially together for the good of South Africa as a member of that great whole.'

Milner's Farewell Message.

In that noble spirit of exalted patriotism, and mutual co-

[1] The first Orange River Colony Parliament was opened a few months later, on 18th December 1907.

operation and forbearance, old foes began to work together for the common good of their common country.

Such was the beginning of the work of reconstruction and reconciliation that was to end in political union in South Africa. Old sores were healing, old scars sloughing, in these years; the quarrels of the past were buried by consent, and the only thing, said one observer of the changing time, which men now remembered or wished to remember about the war was the treaty of peace which ended it. The rough surgery of battle had cut out the cancer of racial discord—if it did not grow again from some small hidden root of hate. . . .

Happily the wound was clean, and the riven flesh of Boer and Briton at last began to draw together in healthy union.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA: 1906-10

It was remarked in the year 1909 by a South African writer of no great authority that 'Union was stamped on the very soil of South Africa, and every element of nature seemed to deride our political separatism.'[1] Unfortunately the author of the remark only discovered the fact after the event, when the political union of British South Africa was already assured; and several previous attempts to join the three white peoples of the country in one political union, on which benignant nature must equally have smiled, had each proved unsuccessful. During the whole nineteenth century, indeed, the soil on which union was stamped had remained obstinately divided.[2]

[1] Fremantle, *The New Nation*.

[2] As it had likewise in Australia (vol. v. bk. xix. ch. iii.), and even more conspicuously in Spain and Portugal. I have not much faith in these political arguments that rely on geography; they are not much more convincing than an affidavit.

More than one effort, it is true, had been made to secure a general political union in South Africa. Attempts had been made to bring the Portuguese colonies on the Indian Ocean under the British flag by purchase;[1] none had succeeded. Attempts had also been made to unite, by means of persuasion or conquest, the Boer republics north of the Orange River with the British provinces south of that river; none had permanently succeeded. Sir George Grey and Carnarvon had both tried their hand at the federation of South Africa, and both had failed.[2] And since their failure an already difficult task had become apparently impossible of achievement: for to the three European peoples in South Africa a fourth was added when Germany annexed Namaqualand and Damaraland in 1884; and the German Imperial Government, already reaching out in ambitious rivalry of Britain, was still less likely than either the Portuguese or the Dutch South Africans to consent to a union of all South Africa under a single flag. At that moment disunion seemed the permanent political destiny of South Africa.

Early Attempts at Union Fail.

The idea of union was, it is true, again put forward, in more or less responsible quarters, and in more or less impracticable form, during the next few years. One political prophet suggested a union on a republican basis under the British flag;[3] a second proposed a voluntary union of the two Dutch republics,[4] which had at least this merit, that it bore some relation to the facts; and several others consoled themselves with the reflection that if the cause of union appeared to make but little progress, the old racial difficulties were becoming less acute.[5]

The facts were otherwise. For in these years the contro-

[1] Bk. xxiii. ch. vi. [2] Bk. xxvi. ch. i.
[3] Murray, *Disunited States of South Africa*, a London pamphlet of 1896.
[4] *United States of South Africa*, a Durban pamphlet of 1882.
[5] Carnarvon in *Fortnightly Review*, 1888; Bryce, *Impressions*; and Lord Randolph Churchill.

versy between Boer and Briton, countryman and townsman, farmer and miner, republican and imperialist, was growing more acute; and the Jameson Raid of 1895, which finally brought old quarrels to a head, definitely shattered any chance of voluntary union as it had been conceived by the politicians of the later Victorian period.

Causes of the Failure.

The reason for the failure of these excellent schemes lies on the surface. It is difficult to federate with an ever-shifting frontier; it is impossible to federate when the desire for union is not general. And the remarkable fact about these early plans for union was not that they were premature—anything which fails is always condemned as premature—but that in each case the project came from the youngest of the first three European occupants of South Africa. The Portuguese naturally opposed a policy which would have lost them their national flag. The Cape Dutch, an essentially conservative people who distrusted all new movements, particularly when those movements were advocated by the quicker-moving British, had always favoured local self-government above a centralised control; a loose series of separate republics, such as was in germ in Graaff Reynet and Swellendam,[1] and such as afterwards sprang up north of the Orange River after the Great Trek, was their unexpressed political ideal—an ideal natural to the pioneer who wishes full freedom to develop the heritage that he has won.

Only the British were in favour of federal union in South Africa, and not all even of the British. The people of Natal, the most English of all the South African colonies, had no wish to join Cape Colony; in Cape Colony itself the eastern province, the most English portion of the colony, openly favoured separation from Cape Town:[2] and in each case a

[1] Bk. xxiii. ch. iii.

[2] See, for instance, *Reports of the Eastern Province Separation League* from 1860 onwards. The agitation persisted after the Union was accomplished.

collision of commercial interests between Durban or Port Elizabeth and Cape Town that seemed permanent and irreconcilable was one main factor in the division of British colonial opinion. The advocates of union, in short, were British politicians, usually far-sighted politicians who looked ahead, worked for the future, and sometimes forgot the problems or prejudices of the present; the advocates of continued separation were the general public, British as well as Boer, who did not look ahead, and who had nothing but present and parochial and often personal interests for their guidance.

The South African Dutch again, divided among various colonies, independent republics, and petty semi-independent settlements such as Stellaland and Goshenland, would take no part in these British schemes of union; but nevertheless they recognised a general unity of sentiment among themselves. The old Cape Colonist who had no quarrel with the British Government and the Transvaal burgher who cherished an irreconcilable hatred of British rule were brothers in speech, often brothers in blood, sometimes brothers in interest, and from time to time the idea of a national union of all Dutch South Africans would appear. But it was a union on a republican basis, and usually although not always a union without the British flag, that was latent in the mind or even openly confessed in the policy of the Afrikander Bond of Cape Colony.

From these various conflicting forces emerged this curious anomaly, that there was more union of sentiment among the Dutch population than the British, and more political unionism combined with more commercial separatism among the British than the Dutch. The net result was impotence or deadlock.

There was one fatal flaw in the British schemes of union, that they had no popular driving power behind them; an equally fatal flaw killed the Dutch ideal as Paul Kruger embodied it in his policy. It postulated an exclusive, not an

inclusive union; it had no room for the British people in South Africa; and the British people were in South Africa to stay.

This was the fundamental mistake of a slow-moving people who had come to believe that their more ancient holding in the country had given them a firmer hold on South Africa than its newer and quicker rulers.[1] They failed to recognise, or rather they stubbornly refused to recognise, the common-sense truth of a remark by one who knew both Dutch and British South Africans intimately. 'Neither race,' said Selous, 'can get away from or do away with the other, and therefore both must try and rub off their mutual prejudices, and live harmoniously together.'[2]

It was the truth, but a bitter truth which the Boer found it hard to admit. The Boer attitude was defined by Joubert years before the war—*Daar is nie plek in Zuid Africa ver twee base*—'There is no room in South Africa for two masters.'[3] That, and the implied determination of the Dutch that they and not the British should be masters in South Africa, made union impossible.

The War leads to Union.

Yet Selous was right, Joubert wrong, in this matter. The war proved Selous's statement that neither white people could do away with the other; if Joubert's dilemma of two masters in one country still remained, it was clear that the two people must unite to make one master. The Union of South Africa sprang, indeed,

[1] It was a stubborn belief which persisted after the war, even after the Union. Some years afterwards General Hertzog, a Free Stater and a member of the Botha Cabinet, compared the British in South Africa to the dung plastered on the kraal wall. (Dung was often plastered on the wall to dry for fuel.) The unsavoury simile caused a political crisis, and the elimination of Hertzog from the Cabinet.

[2] Selous, *Sunshine and Storm in Rhodesia* (1895). He foretold the federation of South Africa, but doubted under what flag, and suggested a compound flag, half-Dutch, half-British, 'with a bit of a French flag let in to represent the Huguenots'—rather too fanciful an idea. Another suggestion, the formation of an association to diminish racial bitterness, was a better but not more practical idea at that time.

[3] Walton, *Inner History of the National Convention.*

directly from the War of Supremacy—war and the aftermath of war. It was the war with its final British victory, and nothing else, which shattered the vision of Dutch supremacy in South Africa; the very length of the war, the memory of its miseries of burnt and ruined homesteads seared upon the mind, the years of commercial and agricultural depression which followed the war played their part in preventing another contest for the mastery.

Possibility of Union without War.

Whether without the war there would in the end have been a union is a question that will often be asked and can never be answered. The might-have-beens of the past are even less capable of demonstration than the forecasts of the future; for the latter may in time fulfil themselves or be discredited, the former are never more than suppositions. Had war been avoided a few years, a different policy might have followed in the Transvaal on the death of Kruger, and the younger generation of the Boers, many of whom had abandoned some of the narrow exclusiveness of their parents the trekkers, might have agreed to a more liberal if less national policy. There were some who believed that the domination of the Transvaal by the British majority within its borders would ultimately have been brought about by peaceful means, and that when the basis of the republic was once shifted by a change of franchise, its federation with British South Africa would not be long delayed.[1] Such might have been the case; but it seems more probable that Boer patriotism would have survived the death of Kruger, and

[1] Transvaal Boers who fought in the war have suggested this as a possible solution to me, when discussing the South African political question. 'The war was such a pity, such a waste,' said one sadly to me in Holland in 1905, 'England would have had our country in the end without fighting, had she only waited a little.' The Kruger policy appealed more to the old President's contemporaries; the younger generation, some of whom had been educated in Holland and had visited England, were less certain of its wisdom. It was the Jameson Raid that made them throw in their lot with the elder men. But the strength of Hertzogism after the Union makes one doubt if union could have been achieved without war.

that the exclusive tendencies of this people, which even after the long agony of the war were still shown by repeated treks into new territories,[1] would have survived a peaceful revolution.

It is true, therefore, that the war made the Union; but not without a reservation. For in the busy years of reconstruction which followed under Milner, the Transvaal with its minerals recovered far more quickly from the war than the agricultural provinces of the Cape; and there was for a time a danger that the north would again break away from the south of South Africa, even under British rule. It was partly the consciousness of that danger, and the fear that the cause of union might go by default, which hurried on the plans for union.

Separatist Influences persist after War.

A policy of drift would have seen the years pass, might have seen old ambitions revive in different form, and the Union, delayed too long, might have passed once more out of reach. There were two or three critical years, from 1905 to 1907, when this unhappy failure seemed not unlikely; there were forces making against union in these years which might conceivably have grown too strong for the advocates of union to reconcile with their policy. If the original trouble of Boer against Briton was no longer acute, there was the continued jealousy of the new north against the older south, the sharp consciousness of prosperity in the Transvaal set against the bitter feeling of continued economic adversity at the Cape,[2] the immemorial difference between the miner and the agriculturist; and with all, there was a re-emergence of the railway and customs disputes of the times before the war.[3]

[1] See ch. iii. of this book.

[2] Jameson was Premier of Cape Colony in these days of depression. He outlined, and did his best to carry out, an ambitious programme of agricultural advance, but was hampered throughout by the lack of money for the work.

[3] See, for example, Selborne's memorandum of 1907, which deals with railway and customs difficulties.

These or similar differences, even without a racial question, had been sufficient to delay federation several years in Australia;[1] they might probably do as much in South Africa. But there was now always one decisive force urging towards union in South Africa that Australia had never known: that force was the memory of the war, an overpowering sense of the disaster that another war would cause; and it was this force which converted South Africa to close union in 1909 when it would not touch a loose federation in 1859 or 1875.

Yet the need for union was at bottom an unspoken consciousness, a silent sentiment rather than an open confession of political faith: South African opinion as a whole appeared passive, stagnant and inert, in face of this great issue, like soil that has been turned with a heavy plough and left to lie fallow for awhile; the Imperial Government, which afterwards claimed full credit for its share in the making of South African union, had at the time no perceptible share in the matter at all.[2] The failure of Cardigan's policy of thirty years before had at least this one result—it taught the Imperial Government that union could not be imposed from without, but must come from within.

The soil lay fallow, but ready for the seed; fortunately the sowers were also there. It was from Milner that the first impulse came towards union. He made no secret of his view that the proper destiny of the new South Africa was a political union of all the states under British rule; the earliest tentative step towards that goal was taken when an Inter-Colonial Council was founded in the very thick of the work of reconstruction after the war. And within a year of the Peace of Pretoria a general confer-

Milner supports Union.

[1] Vol. v. bk. xix. ch. iii.

[2] British Ministers took, as they were entitled, credit for the success of the Transvaal constitution of 1906, which was entirely their own act. But I can find no reference in their speeches at this time to the need of South Africa as a whole for union. The most that can be claimed for the Imperial Government is that it offered no opposition to the movement for union; and I am afraid that wisdom in this case came after the event.

ence at Bloemfontein had unanimously expressed the hope that a future conference would provide for 'the union under one central federal administration of the whole of the colonies and territories under British rule, and the establishment of the Commonwealth of South Africa.'

With this clear reference to the federal union of the Australian Commonwealth, which had been consummated three years before,[1] the work of union in South Africa was begun. For the moment there could be little more: the seed had fallen but not yet sprouted, and it had yet to prove that it had life. In like manner Grey and Carnarvon had dropped their seed of union, but it had fallen on a sterile ground; time had to prove if Milner's work would hold.

He advocates Complete Legislative Union.

But Milner was ready to go further than his predecessors. They had been dominated, consciously or without their knowing it, by the example of the United States or Canada,[2] where the individual states or provinces were left with many powers that might conflict with the central authority;[3] Milner had in mind the complete union of the United Kingdom, where the individual provinces or kingdoms had sunk their powers, if not their individuality, in the central organisation. To the logical mind of Milner, gripped by the strong man's love of power centralised in one authority, and not unconscious of the patent disadvantages of the diffused powers inherent in a federation, full union was by all tests the sounder way. 'Why stop at federation,' said Milner when discussing the future of South Africa; 'why saddle a country of barely a million white people and no natural divisions with the complicated machinery of a federal constitution? Why not simply unify South Africa as New Zealand or the United Kingdom was unified?'

[1] Vol. v. bk. xix. ch. iii.

[2] In the case of Grey, probably by the example of the United States; in that of Carnarvon, certainly by that of Canada.

[3] See vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv., and bk. xi. ch. v.

On that basis, in fact, the work was to be done, and Milner was therefore in that sense the true parent of South African union. But he was not to be present at the birth of the political child he had begotten; his career in South Africa was drawing to a close. Once more the swing of party politics in England influenced events in South Africa: the Unionist Government in Britain knew that its term of power was nearly over, and that Milner, who had been denounced on every Liberal platform from Edinburgh to Plymouth, would be hastily recalled by its successor; and it therefore deemed it wise to relieve Milner of his labours before they were completed, and to place in South Africa a man of Unionist principles indeed, and one who would continue Milner's work, but a man whose past record would not offend a Liberal Cabinet in Downing Street. The work was to continue, but its human instrument was changed.

He leaves South Africa, 1905.

The Earl of Selborne, the new High Commissioner, had a good administrative record in British politics as successively Under-Secretary for the Colonies and more recently First Lord of the Admiralty. In the very prime of life—he was forty-six years of age—he had the great advantage that he came fresh to his work; there was no remembrance with Selborne, such as the Dutch had always had with Milner, of the long diplomatic struggle with the Transvaal that preceded the war; the fencing-match with Kruger had begun to recede into history when the High Commissioner who had been a party to it left South Africa. And if Selborne was a man of less decisive force of character than Milner, he had a greater easiness of manner and a frank interest in country life, two priceless assets with a community of Dutch farmers that stood him in good stead.

His Successor, Selborne.

Milner was gone, but Selborne carried on his work; and Milner's men, the masterful 'kindergarten' he had founded, remained. They were convinced, like their old leader, that

union was necessary; and their enthusiasm furnished the driving force that brought the work to issue.

The Unionist Movement, 1905-8.

Among their number, one, Lionel Curtis, was more conspicuous than the rest. A graduate of Oxford whose bent attracted him to politics, he had come out to South Africa on Milner's invitation as one of the new civil service, in which capacity he took the post of town clerk of Johannesburg. There have been better town clerks than Curtis, whose mind was not made for every business detail; but what the municipality lacked in its chief official South Africa gained as a whole. Curtis adopted Milner's views on union, and after Milner went he carried on a propaganda of his own. He drew up a clear statement of the case for union, which became the basis of future discussion; friends of the same views with himself co-operated with him, and published books and newspaper articles adopting his point of view;[1] closer union societies were founded to advocate the cause, debates were held, and means were taken to interest the leading politicians of the country in their views.

The movement soon bore fruit. In July 1907 Selborne published a long memorandum on the political, economic, and social problems before South Africa which incorporated much of the Curtis doctrine; in May of the following year the Inter-Colonial Conference on Customs and Railways when in session at Pretoria stated that the problems before it were insoluble without political union, and advocated the calling of a National Convention to draw up a constitution for the union of South Africa.

The British and Union.

Success now lay in sight; there was little opposition to the advocates of union, and no organised opposition to their views. The propaganda of Curtis and his fellows, the support of Jameson, the approval of Milner and Selborne, convinced the majority of the

[1] *The Government of South Africa*, *The Framework of Union*, and articles in the South African press.

British population in Cape Colony, the Orange River Colony, and the Transvaal of the need of union; in Rhodesia and Natal local circumstances forced a different view.

The active work of advocating union was necessarily done by the British. Whatever they had been in the past or might again be in the future, they were for the time the masters of South Africa; theirs was the more active spirit; and their old political tradition inclined them more to union than the Dutch, whose natural instincts, both in Holland and South Africa, disposed them to a more fluid form of political organisation. No large community of Englishmen had ever lived long side by side without attempting union, whether in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand; the Englishman abroad retained old ties of race and blood and the old allegiance, so far as he could retain them, by his natural conservatism,[1] forming new ties at the same time by his own constructive instinct: but the Dutch for their part were more inclined to subdivision.

Yet without support from the Dutch population of South Africa no union could be lasting. It might be forced without their consent; it could not be permanent unless the union was between Dutch and British as well as between province and province. Fortunately it happened that the Dutch were willing to assist in the work of union. If their old dream of a united South Africa without the British flag had vanished, union itself was still possible under the new conditions; indeed there were Dutch as well as English in the Inter-Colonial Conference which had declared that anything else but union was impossible.

The Dutch and Union.

With the grant of constitutions for the two new colonies the Dutch leaders had abandoned the attitude of aloofness they had taken immediately after the war was over; they

[1] Even the United States had retained after the Imperial Civil War a large part of their old traditions, common to the English stock from which they had sprung.

now worked as heartily as the British for the union of all South Africa. If Jameson on the one side expressed approval, Botha and Smuts were not less certain on the other; if the leading English newspapers held that union was necessary and urgent, the leading organ of the Dutch, *Ons Land*, preached the same political gospel in its columns.

Separation on Provincial, not Racial Lines.

The clash of contrary opinion, in fact, was territorial rather than racial. Cape Colony was divided in its view as to the merits and advantages of union with younger and, as it held, less important colonies; the Transvaal was favourable, provided always that the terms were satisfactory; the Orange River Colony was dubious; but Natal alone of the older units was solidly averse, an island of state individualism and English separatism in a half-continent of unionism. Its opposition was due partly to the historical fact that since its foundation it had been isolated from the remaining colonies, and isolation had become a tradition which even the war, with its Natal campaign isolated from the main operations, had not sufficed to break; but it was partly also due to the fear that Natal would lose its economic advantages as a nearer commercial port to the Transvaal than Cape Town, and to that natural and besetting dread of small communities, the dread of absorption in a larger political unit.[1]

The National Convention, 1908.

It was partly to relieve that local dread, and in compliment to Natal, that the National Convention which was arranged as the outcome of the Inter-Colonial Conference to consider the whole question of South African union agreed to hold its opening session in Natal. The meeting was fixed for the closing months of 1908, the

[1] The student of comparative politics may contrast the kindred example of Prince Edward Island in Canada (vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. v.), Rhode Island in the United States (vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv.), and Tasmania in the Australian Commonwealth (vol. v. bk. xix. ch. iii.). The municipal history of London, and of many other large towns, could also be cited in proof.

delegates chosen from each colony of South Africa; and it was noticed, as a curious and somewhat regrettable fact, that when the names of the delegates were published, none of the small band of workers for union which Curtis had headed found a place upon the list, and Selborne himself had not been asked to preside over the deliberations.

Yet none could say that the members of this Convention were unworthy of their task. Thirty-three delegates in all had been appointed to this remarkable assembly—twelve from Cape Colony, eight from the Transvaal, five each from Natal and the Orange River Colony, and three from southern Rhodesia. The ruck of South African politicians were neither better nor worse than public men elsewhere; they were often small-minded, occasionally mean, frequently mere selfish careerists. But these thirty-three delegates were not unworthy of the high occasion: the very pick and flower of the troubled public life of their country, they could challenge comparison, both in character and brains, with the men who had made Canadian and Australian union, and in variety of origin and training for their work they as certainly surpassed those earlier nation-makers of the British Empire as this last work of union surpassed in difficulty the task that faced the conventions at Ottawa and Sydney.

Among them were Sir Henry de Villiers, a man of old Huguenot stock, whom sheer ability had made the first lawyer of the country; the brilliant if erratic Merriman, a better critic perhaps of other men's work than builder of his own, now Prime Minister at the Cape; Farrar and Fitzpatrick, the leaders of the British mining interests on the Rand; Steyn, the last President of the Orange Free State, a noble and pathetic figure, who had not yet recovered from the hardships of the war, and whose long illness had left him weak and crippled, but with keen intellect and brain unclouded. There, too, sat Jameson, the leader of the raid and a few years back the best-hated man in the country, since then Prime Minister

of Cape Colony, side by side with four generals of the Transvaal army—Louis Botha, Smuts, Burger, and Delarey—and Generals Hertzog and De Wet from the Orange River.

The mere presence of these old opponents at a single table was a proof that old enmities were dying if not yet dead: the National Convention was an assembly of reconciliation, men come to make a pact that was to last, so far as human institutions may last, for ever.

The first meeting of this Convention, which was to settle the momentous question of the political future of South Africa, was held at Durban in Natal on 12th October 1908—nine years almost to a day since the opening of the war. Perhaps some of those assembled in that seaport of Natal may have recalled the past Empire of the Portuguese, which had named that very colony as Latin territory, had indeed once claimed all Africa and more, and was now shrunk to two bare provinces; and they may have wondered, as they recalled old Albuquerque and other statesmen of renown who had sailed past the spot on which they stood, if their own work should prove more lasting. The dead ghosts of old, forgotten, and decaying Empires may pass before the builders of new nations in silent salutation and with unspoken warning that the very stability of human institutions is itself instability. . . .

Yet it was in a spirit of hopefulness and conciliation proper to the occasion that they began their task of making a final settlement of the uneasy politics of their country.

It was unanimously decided by the delegates that their work should not be placed before the public which was to judge them until it was complete, and that no details of their daily discussions should be published, lest outside criticism should embarrass their proceedings. Greater freedom was secured behind closed doors,[1] and this preliminary being settled

[1] The same secrecy had been observed in the Conventions that discussed the constitutions of the United States, Canada and Australia. The official minutes of the proceedings of the South African Convention were published subsequently. These are so bald as to be of little use;

the Convention entered straightway on its work of drawing up a constitution.

The first question before the delegates was of grave importance, since it was to determine the fundamental political basis of the new Commonwealth. If the Convention disagreed on this, its labours were in vain; if they could settle the foundation of the new state, there was a reasonable probability that they could agree as to the superstructure.

Union or Federation?

Three types of political combination are known to human communities—the first and least enduring, a simple league for mutual defence or some other external common purpose, which involves no radical alteration of the internal organisation; the second, a federal union, which postulates a definite and permanent cohesion of states, a subordination of individual units to a central organisation; the third, a complete legislative union, which elevates the central governing body high above the inferior provinces.

Both Canada and Australia, as well as the United States —the three great English constitutions overseas—had preferred federation above union, the loose skirts of local freedom to the shackles of a centralised control; and there was a school also which advocated federation in South Africa, either as a good thing in itself or as the lesser of two evils. Its teachings were not without force; it could quote Sir George Grey and Carnarvon and Cecil Rhodes in its behalf, the example of the United States as well as of the British dominions; and it could urge against the advocates of legislative union, whose great pattern was the United Kingdom, the example of a discontented Ireland. The advocates of federation could, moreover, claim that local interests would suffer in a centralised government, and that a valuable diversity

Walton's *Inner History of the National Convention*, written from notes of speeches taken by himself as a delegate, although none too full, is a far more valuable account.

of character and institutions could be obtained under the looser system which would be impossible under an absolute union.[1]

But the war had settled this matter of the form which the new union should take in South Africa. The people of Australia, who had never known a civil war or internal danger or racial strife, had been insistent on limiting the authority of the central organisation; the people of South Africa, who for a century and more had known little else but civil war and internal danger and racial strife, now realised the dangers of disunion so strongly that they insisted on the closest form of constitutional union, not the medium bond that the United States and Canada and Australia had chosen. By the decision of the Convention, which was subsequently incorporated in the Act of Union, the four colonies of the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange River Colony were declared to be 'united in a legislative union under one Government under the name of the Union of South Africa.'[2]

The Delegates decide on Union.

That fundamental decision being determined, the delegates proceeded to consider the details of their national legislative union.

The titular head of this national legislative union was to be a Governor-General, appointed by and representing the King. His functions were substantially those of other Governors-General of other British dominions; he was commander-in-chief of the naval and military forces, he could prorogue and dissolve parliament,

The Governor-General.

[1] This argument is admirably put forward by Olive Schreiner in *Closer Union* (1909), an excellent political pamphlet.

[2] It was said that the preference for union over federation was caused by the fact that many of the delegates and workers for closer union had read Oliver's then recently published *Life of Alexander Hamilton*, which is in effect a biographical argument of the advantage of political unionism over federation. The book is a brilliant piece of work, but I think this rates its influence rather too high. Many of the Boer delegates preferred union to federation; I doubt if many had read the *Life of Hamilton*.

Surely the war is sufficient explanation of the close form of union.

assent to or reserve consideration of Bills; and the appointment of civil servants and other public functionaries was vested in the Governor-General in Council, which in practice meant the Governor-General acting on the advice of the Cabinet with a majority in parliament.

The functions of the Governor-General being a non-controversial matter, there remained the knotty problem of the constitution of a parliament, and the representation of each province in the central legislature. In this South Africa followed the invariable practice of all English representative institutions by adopting a two-chamber parliament:[1] the upper house was called, after the example of the United States, a Senate, the lower the House of Assembly; the general title of the parliament was derived from South Africa itself, where use had consecrated the words Legislative Assembly.

The Legislative Assembly.

The Senate followed in the main the pattern that had become conventional among the new English nations overseas. Although a few of the delegates held such a body to be unnecessary or embarrassing to South Africa,[2] the general opinion of the Convention insisted that some authority to check or delay the too hasty judgment of the popular House, some power which might be expected to represent the considered opinion of the country, was as necessary to the Union as to the United Kingdom;

The Senate.

[1] Meticulous accuracy would except the little parliament of Pitcairn Island (vol. v. bk. xx. ch. i.). But I doubt if South Africa knew much about the affairs of that petty community.

[2] In the very year that this constitution was drawn up, and a few months after the sitting of the Convention, the British House of Lords, by rejecting the Budget, precipitated the conflict with the Commons that had been long preparing, and paved the way for the Parliament Act of 1911, which destroyed its ancient character.

South Africans could not prophesy the future of the British House of Lords; but by a curious coincidence a similar crisis had arisen in Cape Colony, where the Upper House had refused to pass the estimates for the year. This act, and the well-known democratic tendencies of a colony, tended to make some of the delegates single-chamber constitutionalists.

and since South Africa, like other colonies, had no landed aristocracy from which a House of Lords could be created, it was compelled to evolve a system of its own. But the Convention cannot be said to have shown much originality in this part of its work. It combined the nominated Senate of Canada with the indirectly elected Senate of the United States, providing that eight senators should be nominated by the Governor-General, and eight senators elected from each of the four provinces of the Union by the provincial legislatures—a body of forty men in all.

No senator was to be under thirty years of age, and each senator was to be a British subject of European descent. No property qualification was insisted on in the case of the eight senators nominated by the Governor-General—four of whom were to be 'selected on the ground mainly of their thorough acquaintance with the reasonable wants and wishes of the coloured races'; but in the case of the thirty-two elected senators it was provided that each should be 'the registered owner of immovable property within the Union of the value of not less than five hundred pounds over and above any special mortgages thereon.' To this poor shadow of the British House of Lords had the youngest of its imitators sunk: nomination or election instead of proud hereditary right, and the possession of a bare five hundred pounds in place of the territorial power of an ancient aristocracy.

But the Union Senate was essentially a makeshift body, the creation of men who felt they needed a second chamber but were uncertain on what lines to construct it. And the Convention honestly recognised that this part of its work was tentative, and might prove unsatisfactory, by making it subject to revision. It was provided in the articles of union that the Senate was to be tried for ten years as it stood, and after that time the Union Parliament should decide as to its future constitution.

Its Tentative Character.

The real power in the Union, and therefore the real struggle in the Convention, rested with the lower or popular House. As to the number of members in the South Africa House of Commons there was indeed little disagreement: 120 was suggested, 121 was finally approved as a convenient number of representatives of the million white people of the Union: but regarding the basis of the franchise, the method of election, and above all, the distribution of seats was sharp disagreement. The House of Assembly.

The existing franchise differed in the various colonies—in the Cape a substantial qualification test was imposed, in the new Transvaal constitution of 1906 manhood suffrage had been given; if the same difference of franchise was preserved in the Union constitution, the Cape with a white population of 569,000 would have fifty-two members, the Transvaal with a population of 288,000 would have forty-three members—a serious disproportion. On the other hand it was argued that the Transvaal had some right to be favoured in this matter, since that colony was making great financial sacrifices to enter the Union; but even with that argument admitted, the disproportion was altogether too much for the three other colonies, and one of the Cape delegates, tired of the argument, perhaps somewhat too freely used, that the Transvaal alone was making sacrifices for the Union, remarked that the Cape could get along well enough as things were, without any Union at all. Had that spirit persisted, the Convention must have broken up without result, but in time a compromise prevailed. Every delegate engaged on intricate calculations, which sometimes cleared and as often confused the issue; the real agreement, said one of their number afterwards, was arrived at, not in the Convention at all, but after the official sittings, and when the representatives of the different colonies dined and smoked together.[1]

[1] It it worth noticing that there was no racial division in this disagreement. British and Boer delegates from the Transvaal both sup-

Other difficulties, however, arose which had to be surmounted. Neither Natal nor the Orange River Colony—which it was agreed was in future to revert to its old title of the Orange Free State[1]—was prepared to see itself swamped in the new Union Parliament by the greater states; yet the few members to which they were entitled on any basis of calculation would in fact have rendered them impotent.[2] It was suggested that each of the two greater colonies should give up some of its rights and members to the two smaller; but for the moment this appeared to precipitate another crisis, since the Orange River settlers obtained more members than Natal, and the delegates of Natal would hear of no scheme that did not at least give them equal rights with their neighbours. The difficulty was finally adjusted by Natal receiving as many members as the Orange Free State.

The Assembly was the originating, the Senate the revising, chamber of the Parliament. Money Bills alone the Senate could not touch; all other Bills it could amend at pleasure. In the event of disagreement between the two Houses, however, it was provided that if the Senate should in two successive sessions refuse to pass a Bill agreed to by the House of Assembly, or if the Senate should pass such a Bill with amendments to which the House of Assembly disagreed, then a joint sitting of the two Houses should be held, and the bare majority of the two in common session should be held to constitute the constitutional passage of a Bill through both Houses.[3]

Relations between the two Houses.

Thus the ultimate power was secured to the popular House, since the Senate numbered only forty, against the 121 members of the House of Assembly. A Cabinet with a large

ported the demand for preferential treatment for that colony; British and Boer delegates from the Cape both resisted the demand.

[1] On the motion of Jameson, to obviate any suspicion of racialism.

[2] The same difficulty, of the small state in confederation with larger ones, had arisen in Rhode Island in the United States.

[3] This provision, which found a place in the Transvaal constitution, was borrowed from the Australian Federal constitution.

majority in the Assembly could immediately override the unanimous opposition of the whole Senate; a Cabinet with a normal majority in the Assembly could be certain of success in any conflict if it obtained any support at all in the Senate; only a Government with so small a majority in the Assembly that it had no real backing in the country, and therefore no real power, would fear the test of a joint sitting with the Senate.[1]

The check of the revising chamber therefore existed, but it was not a very real one. It could delay a measure during one session, but no more—a check that was of real strength only during the last session of a parliament; apart from this, the action of the Senate could only be guaranteed when it was least needed, when the Government in the Assembly had little power, that is to say, to pass Bills of which the Senate might disapprove; when the Senate was most likely to be wanted, that is, when a strong Cabinet was using its power to pass legislation through the Lower House of which the country might not approve, the Senate was certain to be useless. The real check on arbitrary government or revolutionary proposals in South Africa lay in the traditional conservatism of the people, not in the existence of a Senate.[2]

The question of a uniform franchise, said one of the delegates afterwards, was shelved; it was one of those points on

[1] Four examples will suffice to demonstrate this. If the Government held 90 seats in the Assembly, the Opposition and the whole Senate would number only 71—a minority of 19. If the Government held 70 seats in the Assembly, and could rely on 15 Senators, while the united Opposition and the remainder of the Opposition opposed it, it would still number 85 to 76; on the other hand, if with the same majority in the Assembly it could only obtain 10 Senators on its side and the remainder voted with the Opposition, it would be in a bare minority—80 to 81. If the Government numbered 63 supporters in the Assembly—a majority of 5—it would be powerless against the Senate. But with a bare majority of 5 it would be powerless in any case.

[2] The South Africa Act was discussed and passed under the shadow of the conflict between the two Houses of Parliament in Britain which led to the Parliament Act, and these provisions for overriding the Senate, which are not to be found in the constitutions of the United States,

which the Convention agreed to disagree. In each colony the franchise differed from the next, a possible source of friction in the future; in each colony also the electoral areas had to be settled after the union, and there were other difficulties as to the representation of sparsely populated rural districts, which under a mere counting of heads would have become of unwieldy size, that had likewise to be determined later. In order to secure impartiality judges were appointed to the work by the politicians, who distrusted their own or their colleagues' capacity to rise above party or local considerations.

The Franchise.

The division of authority between the individual states and the central power is ever a matter of contention in a federal system. The conflict between minor and major power had come near to wrecking the United States, both immediately after the constitution was drawn up [1] and in the civil war of 1861; something of the same difficulty on a smaller scale was seen in Canada and Australia, where the central power also gained at the expense of the provinces.[2]

Local Government.

In an absolute legislative union, such as South Africa determined on, the difficulty is felt in less degree, since the

or Canada, or any of the older English colonial constitutions, such as those of Barbados and Bermuda, show some signs of the British political crisis of 1909.

A year or so later, the South Australian Lower House, involved in a conflict with the Upper House, appealed to the British Colonial Office to override the Upper House, and was sharply rebuked for desiring an unconstitutional interference by the imperial authorities in an internal matter which did not concern them. There was an element of humour in the episode, for the British Colonial Secretary at that time was a member of the Cabinet that passed the Parliament Act of the United Kingdom and sanctioned the South Africa Act.

[1] Vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv.

[2] In Canada there was friction at various times between the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the federal authority at Ottawa; in Australia the Federal Labour Government proposed in 1912 to reduce the rights of the States and increase the power of the Federation. The proposal was rejected by the electors on a referendum being taken; but despite the popular will, the tendency towards centralisation persisted as inevitably as in the United States.

provinces retain no sovereign rights; but even here it is felt, particularly in the smaller provinces whose voice will count for least in the central parliament, although they may be not less attached to their institutions and proud of their autonomy than the greater units.[1] This reluctance, which became plainly observable in the proceedings of the Convention, had to be faced and reasoned with; but here again the ever-present memory of the evils of the war played its part in breaking down resistance, and the hand of the delegates was clear and firm in this division of their work. Once it was granted that full union was desirable, it was necessary that the authority of the individual colonies should not only be diminished, but that the fact should be emphasised by reducing their official titles and dignity; they were in no respect to resemble the states of a federation, but were to partake more of the altogether lower character of the counties of the United Kingdom. In a federation the head of the state or province is known as the Governor or Deputy-Governor; in the Union of South Africa the heads of the four provinces took the lower title of Administrator. In a federation the local parliaments persist, somewhat shorn, it is true, of their powers and dignity; in the Union of South Africa the local parliaments were abolished, and elected provincial councils were set up in their stead.

If, however, the titles were reduced in the majesty of their name, so that none should mistake the real predominance of the Union Parliament, the powers delegated to the local councils were not inconsiderable, resembling closely, but on a slightly magnified scale, those of a county council in Eng-

[1] This was especially noticeable in Natal, whose delegates openly stood for federation, which would have retained their parliament, rather than union, which abolished it. Having failed in their aim, they bowed to the will of the majority, and loyally accepted the system of union; but their influence was thereafter steadily given to reducing the power of the Union and increasing the power of the provinces. And even after the Union was in operation there was a strong agitation in favour of converting it to a federal basis in Natal.

land. The provincial councils were authorised to levy local taxes, to raise money on the credit of the province, to deal with education other than higher education,[1] with agriculture subject to the conditions defined by the Union Parliament, with hospitals, charitable institutions, municipal affairs, local works and undertakings other than railway works and harbours, roads, bridges, markets, fish and game preservation, and all affairs which, in the opinion of the Governor-General in Council, were of a merely local or private nature.

The Judiciary.

The constitution of the judicial system gave little trouble. The administration of justice already adopted in Canada and Australia was admittedly satisfactory, and the example of these countries and of Britain served the delegates as their patterns. The same safeguards for securing that the judges should be independent of the executive, which long use in England had shown to be invaluable, were adopted in South Africa, it being provided that the salaries of judges should not be diminished during their term of office, and that they should be removed from their position only on a combined address from both Houses of the Legislature.

Provincial courts of justice were to be set up under the Union, with a Supreme Court to exercise appellate jurisdiction at Bloemfontein, which therefore became in a sense the judicial capital of the Union. There was to be no appeal from the Supreme Court to the King in Council, but that was not 'to impair any right which the King in Council might be pleased to exercise to grant special leave to appeal from the Appellate Division to the King in Council.' The Union Parliament might make laws limiting the matters in respect of which such special leave could be asked, but Bills containing any such limitation should be reserved by the Governor-General for the royal assent.

[1] For five years only, or as long as the Union Parliament should provide—a wise provision, seeing that education was a matter on which racial controversy might—and did in fact—arise.

A far more controversial problem than the administration of justice was the question of language. South Africa was a country of two languages as well as people, and there had been many heartburnings and much bad blood in the past over the rivalry of English and the Cape Dutch dialect.[1] English had become the language of commerce, of the newspaper press, and of such small literature as South Africa could boast; the Cape Dutch Taal, repudiated by the educated Hollander as a degraded barbaric version of the Netherlands tongue, had little literature, either periodical or permanent, but it had the astonishing persistence of the peasant's speech in all parts of the world, and some patriotic Afrikanders still hoped that it might yet emerge from its provincial obscurity and corruption, and boast a classic literature of its own. In such manner the Czech language of the Slav peasantry of Bohemia had revived, the native tongue of Ireland had seen a literary renascence; even the Ruthenian dialect of eastern Europe, reviled by the Poles and proscribed by the Russians, had produced some pleasing and not unambitious work; in such manner the beautiful Italian and majestic Spanish tongues had developed from Latin corruptions several centuries before.

The Language Question.

Such was the dream of the future, hardly the hope of the present; but as it was, South Africa was largely bi-lingual, for almost every Dutchman save the remotest back-veldt Boer spoke some English; many Englishmen, particularly if they moved about the country, knew some Dutch,[2] and each language as spoken in South Africa had borrowed words and phrases from the other. To have ranked English officially below the Dutch would have been ridiculous in a province of the British Empire; to have ranked Dutch below English would have been an insult to the tenacious patriotism of

[1] See bk. xxiii. ch. iv.

[2] Curiously enough, Cecil Rhodes could speak no Dutch, Paul Kruger could speak no English. These were two outstanding exceptions; in Cape Colony at least bi-lingualism was widespread.

the Dutch. Only on a basis of equality, such as existed in Canada and Cape Colony,[1] could there be peace between the two; and equality was decreed by the Act of Union. Members of the Union Parliament could speak in Dutch or English as they chose; all records were to be kept in Dutch and English, all official transactions set out doubly;[2] the civil servants of the Union were to speak both languages.[3]

The Union Capital.

A question of some inevitable difficulty and local jealousy was the choice of the capital for the Union, and several claimants disputed the civic dignity and profitable honour of housing the new central parliament and the new administration. There were already four capital cities in the four colonies—Cape Town, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, and Pieter Maritzburg—and while none of these thought itself unworthy of the headship, none admitted that its rivals had any claim to be considered; none wished to see its own rank degraded to the secondary position of a provincial town.

Cape Town naturally claimed the best position for itself

[1] Only English had been permitted in the early years of the Cape Parliament, but in 1882 the law was amended to permit Dutch. The change, being made at the instance of the Afrikander Bond, which was at that time strongly anti-British, and at a time when the British were still smarting under the defeat of Majuba and the retrocession of the Transvaal, provoked much criticism: but in the abstract its wisdom could hardly be disputed. But political changes are hardly ever discussed in a vacuum.

[2] Even the postmark was made bi-lingual, stamps being cancelled with the name of the town and the words 'Union of South Africa' and 'Unie van Zuid Afrik.'

[3] Unhappily the question was not so easily settled, and Hertzog, speaking for the Orange Free State, where the use of English was a source of friction, led an acrid agitation after the Union on this matter. It was also proposed that at the South African University all instruction should be bi-lingual, which would greatly have increased the cost of instruction, and have prevented some European professors, who naturally spoke not a word of Dutch, from accepting posts there. In other words, it would have limited the University to South African Dutch professors, and thus have reduced its scope and breadth.

The whole unfortunate agitation was a re-emergence of racialism: but the weakness of the Dutch tongue was proved by the fact that the agitation was inaugurated at all. Those who are naturally strong do not agitate for equal rights.

as the oldest of all European cities in South Africa, the most beautiful in situation, the most easily accessible; every white man in the country recognised it as the premier city, the centre of learning and the home of the most cultured society: it was at Cape Town, too, that the first parliament had met, and, thanks to the presence of successive High Commissioners, here was already in existence much of the machinery of government.

Cape Town was the true metropolis, and as it seemed the capital by right of history if not geography; but other cities were able to advance their claims in a manner that weighed with the Convention. Pretoria, it is true, had neither the past memories nor the present beauty of Cape Town; in age it was a mere stripling; but it could claim to be the capital of the most flourishing province of the future Union, and its spokesmen, who remarked in homely phrase that the nearer they were to the fire the warmer they would be, urged that the Transvaal had sacrificed so much for the Union that this compensation should not be denied its people.

Between these two cities was the chief contest waged for supremacy; but the Orange River delegates, who advanced the claims of their own Bloemfontein, laughingly suggested that while the two big dogs were quarrelling over the bone the little dog might slip in and seize the prize. And there were indeed several little dogs not without hope in this matter, who raised as much noise among themselves as the two leading combatants: Kroonstad boasted its water supply as an irresistible attraction, Parys on the Vaal River modestly drew attention to its beauty; Potchefstroom, Fourteen Streams, and even dusty little Mafeking put in a claim. Hardly any township in South Africa, in fact, was too remote or insignificant to urge its title to the rank of capital.

Clearly none of these minor ambitions had any real basis, and the Convention did not adopt the solution chosen by

the United States, Canada, and Australia when faced by a similar difficulty, of creating an entirely new city for the capital. Feeling ran high, both within and without the Convention, but in time a compromise was found. Pretoria was declared the administrative capital, but the Union Parliament was to hold its session at Cape Town; each city therefore could boast a victory if it chose, and consider its own share as elevating it above its rival.

The compromise, like most compromises, was illogical and in many ways unsatisfactory. It divided the authority where the main desire was to avoid division; it increased the administrative expenses where the great necessity was administrative economy. The division proved that the old rivalry between north and south was not yet extinct, and showed that local patriotism was still a sturdy plant, by no means uprooted by the new desire for union; but the delegates were agreed that on no other basis save a division of authority could agreement have been reached; and to save the situation the expensive absurdity of a perambulating capital was incorporated in the Act of Union.

The Union Constitution.

Such was the constitution of the Union of South Africa, with its excellences and imperfections, its limitations and omissions. The original draft issued by the delegates was criticised, in some cases severely criticised, by the press and public in South Africa, and less closely scrutinised in England;[1] a few alterations were

[1] My impression at the time, which I have since confirmed by glancing over the newspaper files, was that the English public, while generally approving the project of South African union as a matter of principle, took little interest in the actual details. The press criticism was very perfunctory, with party prepossessions not far from the surface. Liberal journals were no doubt embarrassed by the fact that they had to approve the Union as 'a triumph for the Liberal Government which had worked this miracle'—or was said to have done so by faithful newspaper hacks—while the Union conflicted in some respects, notably as regards the native franchise, with fundamental Liberal principles; the fact that it was a legislative union, whereas Liberal policy in the United Kingdom advocated Home Rule for Ireland, was also a stumbling block. The

made in subsequent meetings of the Convention at Cape Town and at Bloemfontein, but in its vital aspects the work of the delegates was left as they had framed it, and the new constitution was proclaimed on 31st May 1910—a date happily chosen as the eighth anniversary of the Peace of Pretoria.

The constitution in its final shape owed much to the august example of the United Kingdom, whose fundamental form of union it had copied, whose disregard of logical symmetry and perfection it had likewise imitated, and whose spirit of compromise showed in many clauses of the daughter Union. It owed something, but not very much, to the constitutions of the United States, Canada, and Australia; curiously enough, its framers owed still less to the constitution which in some ways their own work most resembled, the Union of New Zealand.[1]

But most of all the South African constitution owed its basis, as was but right, to the circumstances of the country in which it was to work. Its machinery it borrowed from the now standardised pattern of constitutional self-governing institutions[2] with the one doubtful exception of an experiment in proportional representation as the means of electing

Unionist press made play with the party inconsistency, and sometimes forgot the higher aspect of the matter.

But no doubt the real explanation of the indifference was the fact that a great party conflict was raging in England over the Lloyd-George Budget in 1909, and the contest of the Asquith Government with the House of Lords was already in sight.

Curiously enough, the Australian Commonwealth constitution had also attracted little notice in England ten years before, owing to the fact that public attention was then concentrated on the crisis in South Africa. Perhaps some day we shall achieve Imperial Federation in a fit of absence of mind, while popular attention and the newspaper press is concentrated on some portentous question of handicapping at golf.

[1] The example of the United States and Australia was often cited by the delegates; I cannot discover that the New Zealand constitution was much studied.

[2] So far had the great English constitutions of the United Kingdom and the United States become standardised as the proper example to be copied, that the Chinese Republic, founded three years later, imitated both in many of its main clauses.

the Senate;[1] its direct inspiration came from the soil of South Africa. In every line of this constitution the influence of the war was seen; its very title, the Union of South Africa, emphasised the determination to have no more racial divisions; the compromise over the capital and the admitted failure to touch the native question showed that where agreement between the two peoples or the two geographical divisions of the country could not be reached the matter in dispute must stand over rather than the essential union be delayed.

Limitations of the Union Constitution.

A critic of the Union might have complained that it was not only imperfect within, but incomplete without. The Union of South Africa comprised not all South Africa, not all even of British South Africa. The old idea that colonies of other empires might join a general federation of the whole of South Africa,[2] which was never more than a bare possibility, was absolutely untenable when a close legislative union was determined on: Portuguese East Africa and German South-West Africa stood out of the Union. And the young British colony of Rhodesia, although represented at the Convention, likewise stood out of the Union.

These geographical limitations were the final proof that the Union sprang from war.[3] Only those four states which

[1] This modification was introduced as a tentative experiment, after the delegates had been bombarded with literature advocating the change by the active Proportional Representation Society in England. Theoretically the system is perfect; but after seeing a test election on these lines in the British House of Commons in the autumn of 1912, I confess myself unconvinced of its practical utility. And several of the members with whom I discussed it agreed with me.

[2] It was suggested by Bryce, and tentatively adopted by Rhodes in one of his speeches. See ch. i. of this book.

[3] Incidentally also they were a refutation of Fremantle's view that union was stamped on the very soil of South Africa. It is history, not geography, which determines such matters. The United Kingdom overleaps the Irish Sea, while two kingdoms divide the compact Iberian Peninsula; the Dominion of Canada, with its vast east and west and narrow middle, laughs at geography, while the great plain of northern Europe accommodates Russia, Germany, Holland, and Belgium, without a single mountain chain to divide those states.

took a direct and active part in the war joined the Union; the remainder, whether British or foreign, remained, whether temporarily or permanently, outside the pact.

The opportunity of acquiring the territories of the Portuguese and Germans for British South Africa had been missed,[1] and the Union was therefore circumscribed both east and west; the north was not yet ready. The tropical protectorate of Nyasa was too remote and still too young to join the Union; the great chartered colony of Rhodesia was still in the primary stage of its development, faced by its own peculiar difficulties, slowly struggling to obtain the individual state-consciousness which normally precedes a federation with another group.[2] European settlement in Rhodesia was a bare twenty years old; ten years before the work of colonisation, according to a witness on the spot, 'had gone little further than breaking the ground, industry was in its infancy, mining had only reached that stage which vindicated further enterprise, and agriculture was in no better condition';[3] even when its delegates attended the National Convention, it was admitted that the country had 'no politics and scarcely any public opinion.'[4] And if its people still looked for the fulfilment of its great founder's boast, that 'Rhodesia would some day be the dominant factor in South African politics,' they were not inclined to forget his warning that 'all the other states would court her, but she must be wary of accepting their advances.'[5] The Rhodesians

The Position of Rhodesia, 1902-13.

[1] For Delagoa Bay, bk. xxiii. ch. vi.; for German South-West Africa and the failure of Cape Colony to acquire that country, bk. xxiv. ch. iv.

[2] For Rhodesia, bk. xxiv. ch. v. The exceptions to the rule were the states of the American Union which were founded after the constitution was drawn up. But these states, with certain exceptions, such as California and Utah, where special conditions prevailed, had never the same state consciousness as Virginia and Massachusetts.

[3] *Reform Movement in Rhodesia*, published at *Rhodesian Times* Office, 1903. The reforms urged were not political, but more railway construction and lower transit rates. Construction was proceeding apace (bk. xxiv. ch. v.); lower rates were another matter.

[4] *Rhodesia Journal*, 1911.

[5] Cecil Rhodes in 1897; see Michell's *Life*.

were fully conscious that as yet their time had not yet come: they sent delegates to the National Convention that they might have some hand in the shaping of the Union which, on some day of their own choosing, they were not unready to enter; but for the time they were equally determined not to enter, lest their nascent individuality should be swamped. For the next few years their purpose was a parliament of their own, under the direct rule of the Crown—they had begun to realise that a conflict might arise between the interests of the capitalists in Britain and their own people[1]—and they refused a union with the Union of South Africa.

The Union, therefore, was geographically incomplete, and in this respect it was at a disadvantage with the Commonwealth of Australia, which embraced an entire continent, although the Union might have been not inaptly compared with the Dominion of Canada immediately after confederation, when several provinces of British North America still hesitated to join.[2] But in another respect the Union of South Africa had a considerable advantage over its two elder brothers. The machinery of its government was less expensive: it could not boast so many parliaments, but at least it could claim that the business of legislation is sometimes as adequately managed by one as by six or more assemblies, each jealous of the other's dignities and powers; and its electors, unlike those of Australia, were able to concentrate their minds upon a single issue, unperplexed by such a multiplicity of parliaments, referenda, elections and candidates

[1] See, in proof of this, the meeting of the Rhodesian Agricultural Union Congress, reported in the *Rhodesia Journal*, 24th April 1913. I have often heard settlers in Rhodesia complain that the Chartered Company was too grasping, but the fact of the matter was that it, as well as its settlers, had a hard struggle. Revenue and expenditure did not balance until 1913; the Company was not a trading corporation, but raised its money from the sale of land and mineral rights; the shareholders received no dividend for the first twenty-four years of its existence; and unless attention had been paid to raising income, the Company would have been bankrupt.

[2] See vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. v.

that democracy became sick of its own burden, and from very boredom refrained from voting. A wise economy of political parts characterised the machinery of the South African constitution.

For some time after union was assured, and the popular verdict had been given generally in favour of the work of the Convention, there seemed a chance that this latest-born of the children of democracy might rise to heights too seldom reached among self-governing communities. A desire existed to unify not only the provinces but the parties of the State; it was openly suggested, and the idea found much support, that party politics should be laid aside for the first few years of union until the constitution was firmly rooted, and a Coalition Government be formed representative of the best political capacity of the country. Unhappily the chance was lost, or wrecked. The envious Merriman would not support a Botha-Jameson Cabinet of all the talents which left himself—it was a cruel fate—outside; in one speech after another, of equal ability but increasing bitterness, he attacked the idea of this final consummation of the union he had espoused; and an acid tongue has not less dissolvent power in South Africa than elsewhere.

Prospect of a Coalition Ministry.

The idea, which had been largely supported as a means of giving the country rest from the too great strife of parties, and of preventing, so far as it was possible by delay to prevent, a division of political parties on racial lines, was tacitly abandoned as impossible, and the country saw itself faced once more with the possibility of danger from a racial division stereotyped in the form of two opposing parties of Boers and British. The new Nationalists, who were mainly Dutch, elected Botha as their leader, the new Unionists,[1] who were mainly British, elected Jameson;

It Fails.

[1] The two parties at first styled themselves South African and Progressive; but the names were afterwards changed to Nationalist and Unionist.

and a small majority made Botha the first Prime Minister of the first Union Government of South Africa.

Happily the good sense and moderation of the leaders and many of their followers kept the racial division as far as possible in the background; and the first Union Parliament, which was opened at Cape Town on 4th December 1910, by the Duke of Connaught as representing the King, amid scenes of enthusiasm proper to the occasion,[1] might be held to signalise the birth of a new nation within the British Empire.

Botha, First Prime Minister of the Union, 1910.

The union was accomplished; and on the whole it bore the strain of use and daily wear during the first few critical years. Difficulties indeed there were yet to be faced, and the inevitable backwash of provincialism against the achievement of national union, which in this case took on the menacing complexion of a partial Dutch revulsion against a union of British and Dutch: and this movement appeared for a time the more serious from the fact that it was led by General Hertzog, who was for some while a member of the Botha Cabinet, and was strongly supported in the Orange Free State, now the home since the war of the retrogressive element in South African politics. But the day for Hertzogism was gone: the movement was an anachronism, not unexpected by those familiar with previous national unions,[2] but hardly considered critical by cool

The Backwash of Dutch Provincialism.

[1] The usual kind of poetry was produced on this occasion by the usual kind of poet. The South African muse at best is more like a thievish magpie stealing stray couplets of greater verse, than the high-soaring lark; and the most daring of its flights have not been in the patriotic vein.

I append a sample:

'Thy name
Shall blaze in history's later page;
Thy birth-time is the last great age
And earth, decaying earth, shall see
Her proudest, fairest child in thee.'

[2] See, for example, the backwash of provincialism in Canada against federation: vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. v. The same thing occurred in Australia after federation in 1900.

judges. To have been consistent Hertzogism should have revolted against the British connection, but from this definite and logical standpoint Hertzog definitely dissociated himself;[1] to have been effectual it should have obtained the support of a large majority of the Dutch—but it was instead denounced by Botha as Prime Minister and not seriously supported by the bulk of Dutch opinion outside the Orange Free State, the bulwark of recrudescent racialism. The conservatism of this people, indeed, which had kept them from accepting British rule so long, slowly but surely repelled them from the revolution which Hertzogism as a logical system would have contemplated in its campaign against the rule of British and Dutch together.

New Issues before South Africa.

And South Africa as a whole now began to turn from the settled subject of union to those other issues, of economics and industry and agricultural or trade development, from which attention had been too long diverted by the white men's quarrel. If the country was a composite nation of two mingled or slowly mingling European peoples, most of whom were now, in the phrase of Cecil Rhodes, content to let the grass grow over the past,[2] it was still only on the threshold of a national existence and hardly yet a nation; and beyond its constitution were other and not less urgent matters awaiting the decision of its statesmen.

The Native Problem.

A new white nation British South Africa might or might not be, but in any case it was a white nation scattered among more numerous black people; and while the mutual relations of the whites were settled, there

[1] General Hertzog's declaration, reported in the London newspapers of 18th February 1913. 'I desire,' he said in answer to a question, 'the development of South Africa as an integral part of the Empire and under the British flag, and I intend to work politically in accordance with this view.' That some doubt existed as to his views may be gathered from the fact that such a question was necessary. It was not necessary with Botha.

[2] Speech by Rhodes, 4th August 1898.

remained the problem of the native population, the black background of all the country's politics, to be considered, and the still uncertain position of that native population in the future commonwealth to be decided.

But here the past experience of other lands was of little value as a guide. The miserable blackfellows of Australia had neither part nor lot in its new federal constitution or national existence.[1] The Maories of New Zealand, a picturesque survival rather than a menace to the whites, had a nominal but no real share in the political life of that dominion.[2] The Canadian statesmen who had formed the federation of 1867, which had furnished an example to Carnarvon and the earlier advocates of union in South Africa,[3] were not seriously concerned with the redskins as a factor in their calculations; the aborigines had already receded to the remoter west, and even the constitution of the United States eighty years before[4] bore no trace of the red man who had fled before the white invader.

But in South Africa the native had not fled before the white invader. A few tribes had certainly died out, or been amalgamated or absorbed, in the two centuries and a half since the European invasion; no less would have happened had the country never seen a white man. All, or nearly all, the tribes had been subdued by war or treaty, but they still lived among their rulers, they did most of the manual work of the country at a low rate of wages, and to that extent kept white labour out of the country; and so far from dying out, they inclined to increase in numbers.

That increase of the black man, in face of the white man's invasion, was the root fact of the situation. It put the white South African nation of the future on a different basis from the other European nations overseas; for where the United States and Canada and Australasia could look on the abori-

[1] Vol. v. bk. xix. ch. iii.
[2] Vol. v. bk. xxi. ch. iv.
[3] Vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. v.
[4] Vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv.

gines as a diminishing and finally a negligible factor in their hegemony, South African statesmen could not. 'What is the use of talking about a united South Africa if the native question remains undealt with,' asked Cecil Rhodes several years before;[1] and although the union was in fact accomplished without the native question being settled, the leaders of the new South Africa were quickly forced to grapple with that difficulty.

In the long run the people who do the work of a country will tend to rule that country, by the sheer weight of their numbers; only the definite and continued inferiority of the manual workers to the master race, their lack of organisation or non-capacity of intellectual advance, will avail to nullify their influence and to hold them definitely in an inferior position. Now the South African aborigines were certainly inferior to the whites in mental attainments. But they were not necessarily inferior in mental capacity; they were by no means incapable, as some of the older and many even of the later Dutch settlers maintained, of intellectual advance. Even the stupid Hottentots had made good soldiers under European leadership; the Zulus and their cousins the Matabili and the Ngoni of Nyasa had shown themselves brave warriors with an effective military organisation of their own; the Basutos had been defeated from time to time, but their power was never broken by a wholesale disaster.

The existing native military organisations, it is true, had been smashed or had collapsed from within, partly by internative or European wars, partly by white invasion or settlement, partly by the labours of the missionaries; no great native chief now survived to rule his people—all had vanished from the land, from Tshaka and Dingana in the south to Lo Bengula and Lewanika in the north. Everywhere the European was triumphant: yet the very triumph of the whites

[1] Speech, 23rd June 1887.

had helped to give the natives a sense of the need for union against the European which, in the days of inter-tribal wars, they had never known.

The numbers of the natives were increasing, and the cessation of the old native wars by which Zulu and Matabili had depopulated whole territories assisted their increase. And with their increasing numbers went increasing capacity: many tribes had learnt much from the missionaries,[1] the Kafirs and others had lately shown a sudden passion for education,[2] they had seen something of the advantages of organisation and union from their European masters, and that example was not unobserved;[3] the Ethiopian movement likewise showed an anti-European bias,[4] and there was some prospect, as that movement proved, that the disunited blacks might attempt to imitate the union of the whites and drive them from the land they had conquered. The old Dutch settlers on the soil had often raised the cry of Africa for the Afrikanders against their newer British rivals; but to the aborigines the Dutch no less than the British were European aliens in Africa, and the cry of Africa for the Africans which they would have raised would have embraced both Dutch and British as foreigners and enemies.

The peril of a black union and an organised Ethiopian rebellion against the European was perhaps remote; but nevertheless it existed, and it forced itself to the front on every occasion of unrest.[5] Behind every trouble among the

[1] Bk. xxiv. ch. ii. and bk. xxv.

[2] Pratt, *The Real South Africa*—a poor and hasty and superficial book. But on this point the author was correct.

[3] Particularly after the downfall of Lo Bengula, the last great native military chief.

[4] Bk. xxv.

[5] There was a serious mining strike on the Rand in July 1913, when Imperial troops were employed by the Botha Government to quell the disturbance. The means adopted were prompt, severe, and efficacious, 270 persons being killed and injured; but at once symptoms of restlessness were seen among the natives.

whites, whether on the land or in the industrial districts of the Witwatersrand or Kimberley, lay the spectre of a possible black rising; and it necessarily claimed the attention of the new Union Government, which sought as one safeguard to increase the number of Europeans on the land and in employment,[1] and as a more essential means of defence established a citizen army founded on the principle of universal service by the whites of South Africa.

These measures could hardly be said to settle the native problem, save in so far as they increased the strength of the whites; but at least they tended to increase the strength of the whites, and to that extent justified themselves in the eyes of the European masters of South Africa. But the real question at issue still stood over for the future; and the solution of that problem was not to be found, either in the old Boer theory that the aborigines were no better than baboons, or yet in the old British missionary theory that the aborigines were the undeveloped equals of the white man.

[1] See the report of the Select Committee on European employment, printed in *Cape Times*, 28th May 1913, an invaluable statement of the position of the poor whites in South Africa. The Committee reported that the old prejudice against European employment on the land was breaking down through force of circumstances, and recommended the Union Government to take the matter up, to provide better agricultural education, and to place land in small holdings at the disposal of the poor whites. It further reported that these were not hopeless folk (as the landed whites sometimes declared), they worked hard, if fitfully and without system; their sons and daughters also worked, but as a whole the class was deplorably backward. The community was a kind of byword for thriftlessness; but 'it was no use to tell a poor man to cultivate his little plot in a place where he could not get his goods to any market.' The Committee therefore advocated more railways.

The prejudice of the whites against domestic service—this a relic of old slave days—was responsible for much; the Committee lamented the paradox that even in Johannesburg, 'where thousands of families were compelled to employ the dangerous and unsavoury substitute of male servants only just emerging from barbarism, and whose wages were at least as high as in any place in the world, there should be hundreds of European girls content to live in squalor and to seek all kinds of dubious employment.' An expression of opinion that might have been more strongly phrased.

The nineteenth century, in short, had settled the position of the two white peoples in their relations to each other but not to the blacks; the twentieth century was to settle the more momentous question of the relations of the whites with the blacks in a country which both could claim to possess.

THE END

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