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THE CHARTERED MILLIONS

THE CHARTERED MILLIONS

RHODESIA AND THE CHALLENGE
TO THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

BY

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Dedication

AUGUST THE FOURTH, nineteen hundred and fourteen, will throughout history be a memorable day for Great Britain, because on that day the mightiest Empire known to history was assailed from without by the Central Powers. By an extraordinary coincidence and almost unnoticed by the public, the British Commonwealth was on that same day formally assailed from within by the late Sir Starr Jameson, as the President of the British South Africa Company, who, appearing through Lord Finlay before the highest tribunal of the Empire—the Judicial Committee of His Majesty's Privy Council—advanced claims which challenged some of the most sacred principles upon which had been erected the Colonial structure of Britain's Overseas Dominions.

In admiration and gratitude this book is humbly, but without permission, dedicated to the Right Honourable Lord Harcourt, whose discerning eye had early divined the grave issues which were being raised by the late Sir Starr Jameson, and who, with true statecraft and characteristic energy, decided to uphold at all costs those traditional practices which have made for all that is best in the British Empire.

For the moment, the far-reaching issues may appear somewhat obscure, but future historians of Britain's Colonial policy and development will look upon this struggle as being one of the greatest events in our Colonial history, whilst they will assuredly place foremost in the ranks

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of our Colonial statesmen the one who in 1914 scented danger from afar and decided to test the issues in the boldest and most formal manner.

It would seem, from available material, that Lord Harcourt realized that a wrong had been done to several parties, that a grave deviation in Colonial policy was threatened, and that this, if deliberately pursued, could only lead to national embarrassment and Colonial disaster. If this reading of the situation is correct, the British public should be awakened to the danger of allowing the pursuit of any policy which entrenches the wrong and upholds injustice, whether that injustice be to the shareholders of the Chartered Company, to the British taxpayers, to the white settlers, or to the inarticulate and helpless natives of Southern Rhodesia. The action of Lord Harcourt threw into conflict Ethics and Expediency; it is for the British nation to choose which of the two it will uphold.

PREFACE

THE object of this book is not an exposure of the Chartered Company's methods; it is not an attack upon the present Directors of the Company; it is least of all a criticism of the unfortunate shareholders. It is a plain record of facts which it is hoped will be pondered in official circles, by the Company's Directors and shareholders, and by the public, in the hope that justice will be done where injustice is established—that amends will be made where they are possible.

If the facts are disturbing to the national conscience, the fault lies with those who brought about these facts, and thereby sullied the name of Great Britain, prejudiced their shareholders, and wronged the white and coloured people of Rhodesia, and not with the author, who has only attempted a truthful record of such facts. Finally, the facts are not recorded for the enlightenment of those who see nothing good in British Colonial expansion, neither are they published for those who see in the Chartered Company nothing but evil, for the author has seen and appreciates some good work they have accomplished.

These facts are published with the object, first, of showing how grave has been the injustice to 800,000 native peoples of Southern Rhodesia, and how urgent is the need for such reparation

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as may still be possible; secondly, in order that the public of the British Commonwealth may understand the Rhodesian situation, which will probably prove the determining factor in the forthcoming political and economic evolution of South Africa.

The immediate necessity for this publication arises from the various claims which the British South Africa Company has set up against the British Crown, the Rhodesian settlers and the native tribes inhabiting the territories south of the Zambesi.

These claims set up against the subjects of the British Crown, and against nearly one million natives who are not subjects of the British Crown, are of transcendent importance to the British public. They are without precedent in British Colonial history and affect ultimately, not merely British Colonial statecraft in South Africa, not merely administrative policy in every British colony, but the traditions and principles upon which the British Empire has been erected—principles which so magnificently justified themselves during the Great War.

To the Judicial Committee of His Majesty's Privy Council was originally referred the initial question of the commercial ownership of lands nearly as great in extent as those of Great Britain. The advice of this supreme tribunal of Law Lords, which they tendered in 1918 to the Imperial Government, only affects one part of the claim, and but a few of the far-reaching issues which are involved by the Chartered Company's contentions. The British Parliament and public, engrossed as they have been in the Great European War, may be excused from following during that period an intricate Colonial problem, but no time must

be lost in realizing that the advice given by the Judicial Committee and the subsequent steps to be taken by the Imperial Parliament will also vitally affect the stability of British administration in all tropical and subtropical dependencies.

There has been no attempt in this book to enter into a mass of scientific detail upon the technical problems of the mining, agricultural and other industries, but an effort has been made to excite the interest of the ordinary reader in the progress of Rhodesia. In dealing with the political history and problems of Rhodesia every statement has been fortified, so far as possible, with references or quotations; whilst in outlining the claims of the British South Africa Company, and the attitude of the opponents to those claims, the arguments brought forth are those which it is hoped will appeal to the British public as being based upon common sense and sound policy. As the author is but a layman in legal matters, any attempt to base argument upon legal subtleties would savour of impertinence, and therefore no such attempt has been made.

Throughout the book every effort has been made to look at the different historic incidents from the Company's point of view, and to a plain statement of fact. It has not been easy to avoid declamation, and at times it has been difficult to restrain one's pen, but the stinging word and the burning phrase which a hundred times have surged through the brain have remained unwritten.

The history of the Chartered Company's activity has from the beginning circled round those stormy personalities, Cecil Rhodes and Leander Starr Jameson. The measure of criti-

cism expressed on the one hand, and admiration on the other, for their conceptions, will vary according to individual perspective. The writer knew neither of them, has had no connection whatever with the Company, nor any financial interest to serve either in connection with the Company or with Rhodesia, but he has seen their work and compared it with that achieved in other parts of the African continent. He has also given long study to the publications of the British South Africa Company both in England and in Rhodesia, and also to a long series of State documents. This research has provided an absorbing occupation, whilst the problems now raised are of exceptional interest to all students of Colonial affairs.

It would be as foolish to ignore the breezy Imperialism and the bold conceptions of Cecil Rhodes as it would be to ignore the fact that "Dr. Jameson" never hesitated to "rush in where angels feared to tread." But issues are now raised in a region where sentiment has no place, where every act and every argument must pass before the searching scrutiny of public opinion and criticism.

This book is but a modest endeavour to lay before the British public at home and abroad the past, present and future of Southern Rhodesia, the rights and wrongs, real and imaginary, first of the British people themselves, and secondly, of those native races who have been dispossessed of all their just rights in the country which for generations had been their own.

In the preparation of this book I am indebted to many individuals for counsel and help. The speeches, writings and counsel of Rhodesians have been of enormous assistance, and I tender heartfelt thanks to Sir Charles Coghlan, the late

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J. S. Moffat, the Revs. Shearly Cripps and John White, Messrs. H. U. Möffat, H. Longden, R. A. Fletcher, A. D. Brade, A. C. Raymer, and to other administrators, settlers and missionaries. I am especially indebted to my friend Sir Charles Tarring for the patience and care which he has devoted to the manuscript. He has brought to bear upon the pages of this book the critical mind of an Imperial servant of high judicial authority in Colonial and foreign affairs, coupled with a long personal experience in overseas territories under Great Britain and other Powers, including a visit to Rhodesia. This authoritative collaboration has saved the author from many a pitfall, and for this he tenders his humble and grateful thanks.

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