

PART I.

A PRIVATE RECORD.

CHAPTER I.

IN EARLIER DAYS.

WHEN, before resorting to extreme measures to obtain what the Uitlanders deemed to be their bare rights, the final appeal or declaration was made on Boxing Day, 1895, in the form of the manifesto published by the Chairman of the National Union, President Kruger, after an attentive consideration of the document as translated to him, remarked grimly: 'Their rights. Yes, they'll get them—over my dead body!' And volumes of explanation could not better illustrate the Boer attitude and policy towards the English-speaking immigrants.

'L'État c'est moi' is almost as true of the old Dopper President as it was of its originator; for in matters of external policy and in matters which concern the Boer as a party the President has his way as surely and as completely as any anointed autocrat. To anyone who has studied the Boers and their ways and policy—who has given more than passing consideration to the incidents and negotiations of the present year¹—it must be clear that President Kruger does something more than represent the opinion of the people and execute their policy: he moulds them in the form he wills. By the force of his own strong convictions and prejudices, and of his indomitable will, he has made the Boers a people whom he regards as the germ of the Africander nation; a people chastened, selected, welded, and strong enough to attract and assimilate all their kindred in South Africa, and then to realize the dream of a Dutch Republic from the Zambesi to Capetown.

¹ Written in 1896.

In the history of South Africa the figure of the grim old President will loom large and striking—picturesque, as the figure of one who by his character and will made and held his people; magnificent, as one who in the face of the blackest fortune never wavered from his aim or faltered in his effort; who, with a courage that seemed, and still seems, fatuous, but which may well be called heroic, stood up against the might of the greatest empire in the world. And, it may be, pathetic, too, as one whose limitations were great, one whose training and associations—whose very successes—had narrowed, and embittered and hardened him; as one who, when the greatness of success was his to take and to hold, turned his back on the supreme opportunity, and used his strength and qualities to fight against the spirit of progress, and all that the enlightenment of the age pronounces to be fitting and necessary to good government and a healthy State.

To an English nobleman, who, in the course of an interview, remarked, 'My father was a Minister of England, and twice Viceroy of Ireland,' the old Dutchman answered, 'And my father was a shepherd!' It was not pride rebuking pride; it was the ever-present fact which would not have been worth mentioning but for the suggestion of the antithesis. He too was a shepherd, and is—a peasant. It may be that he knows what would be right and good for his people, and it may be not; but it is sure that he realizes that to educate would be to emancipate, to broaden their views would be to break down the defences of their prejudices, to let in the new leaven would be to spoil the old bread, to give unto all men the rights of men would be to swamp for ever the party which is to him greater than the State. When one thinks on the one-century history of the people, much is seen that accounts for their extraordinary love of isolation, and their ingrained and passionate aversion to control; much too that draws to them a world of sympathy. And when one realizes the old Dopper President hemmed in once more by the hurrying tide of civilization, from which his people have fled for generations—trying to fight both fate and Nature—standing up to stem a tide as resistless as the eternal sea—one sees the pathos of the picture. But this is as another generation may see it. To-day we are too close—so close that the meaner details, the

blots and flaws, are all most plainly visible ; the corruption, the insincerity, the injustice, the barbarity—all the unlovely touches that will by-and-by be forgotten—sponged away by the gentle hand of time, when only the picturesque will remain.

In order to understand the deep, ineradicable aversion to English rule which is in the heart and the blood and the bones of every Boer, and of a great many of their kindred who are themselves British subjects, one must recall the conditions under which the Dutch came under British rule. When, in 1814, the Cape was finally ceded to England, it had been twice acquired and held by conquest. The colonists were practically all Dutch, or Huguenots who had adopted Dutch as their language, and South Africa as their home. In any case they were people who, by tradition, teaching and experience, must have regarded the English as their enemies ; people in whom there must have been roused bitter resentment against being handed over with the land to their traditional enemies. Were they serfs or subjects ? has been asked on their behalf. Had Holland the right, the power, over freemen born, to say to them, 'You are our subjects, on our soil, and we have transferred the soil and with it your allegiance to England, whose sovereignty you will not be free to repudiate.' The Dutch colonist said 'No.' The English Government and the laws of the day said 'Yes.'

Early in the century the Boers began to trek away from the sphere of British rule. They were trekkers before that, indeed. Even in the days of Van Riebeck (1650) they had trekked away from the crowded parts, and opened up with the rifle and the plough new reaches of country ; pioneering in a rough but most effective way, driving back the savage races, and clearing the way for civilization. There is, however, a great difference to be noted between the early treks of the emigrants and the treks 'from British rule.' In the former (with few exceptions) they went, knowing that their Government would follow them, and even anxious to have its support and its representatives ; and the people who formed their migrating parties were those who had no or insufficient land in the settled parts, those who were starting life on their own account, or those whose families could not be located

and provided for in the cramped circumstances of the more occupied parts. In the other case, rich and poor, old and young, went off as in the days and in the fashion of Moses or Abraham. They went without leave or help of the Government ; secretly or openly they went, and they asked nothing but to be left alone. They left their homes, their people, the protection of an established Government and a rough civilization, and went out into the unknown. And they had, as it appeared to them, and as it will appear to many others, good reasons for taking so grave a step. For, although the colonists of South Africa enjoyed better government, and infinitely more liberty, under British rule, than they had under the tyrannical *régime* of the Dutch East India Company twenty years before (against which the Boers had twice risen in rebellion) there were many things which were not as they should have been. A generation had grown up which knew nothing of the arbitrary and oppressive rule of the old Dutch Company. Simple folks have long memories, and all the world over injuries make a deeper and more lasting impression than benefits ; and the older generation of Boers, which could recall a condition of things contrasting unpleasantly with British rule, also remembered the executions of Slagters Nek—a vindication of the law which, when all allowance has been made for disturbed times, and the need of strong measures to stop rebellion in a newly-acquired country, seems to us to-day to have been harsh, unnecessary, and unwise in policy, and truly terrible in the manner of fulfilment.

The Boers have produced from their own ranks no literary champion to plead or defend their cause, and their earlier history is therefore little known, and often misunderstood ; but to their aid has come Mr. George McCall Theal, the South African historian, whose years of laborious research have rescued for South Africa much that would otherwise have been lost. In his 'History of the Boers' Mr. Theal records the causes of the great emigration, and shows how the Boers stood up for fair treatment, and fought the cause, not of Boers alone, but of all colonists. Boers and British were alike harshly and ignorantly treated by high-handed Governors, and an ill-informed and prejudiced Colonial Office, who made

no distinction on the grounds of nationality between the two ; for we read that Englishmen had been expelled the country, thrown in gaol, had their property confiscated, and their newspapers suppressed for asserting their independence, and for trifling breaches of harsh laws. The following extract gives the best possible synopsis of the causes, and should whet an appetite which can be gratified by the purchase of Mr. Theal's book :

Why, then, did these men abandon their homes, sacrifice whatever property could not be carried away, and flee from English rule as from the most hateful tyranny ? The causes are stated in a great mass of correspondence addressed by them to the Colonial Government, and now preserved, with other colonial records, in declarations published by some of them before leaving, in letters to their relatives and to newspapers, and in hundreds of pages of printed matter, prepared by friendly and hostile hands. The declaration of one of the ablest men among them assigns the following as the motives of himself and the party that went with him :

'GRAHAM'S TOWN,

'January 22, 1837

'1. We despair of saving the colony from those evils which threaten it by the turbulent and dishonest conduct of vagrants who are allowed to infest the country in every part ; nor do we see any prospect of peace or happiness for our children in a country thus distracted by internal commotions.

'2. We complain of the severe losses which we have been forced to sustain by the emancipation of our slaves, and the vexatious laws which have been enacted respecting them.

'3. We complain of the continual system of plunder which we have for years endured from the Kaffirs and other coloured classes, and particularly by the last invasion of the colony, which has desolated the frontier districts, and ruined most of the inhabitants.

'4. We complain of the unjustifiable odium which has been cast upon us by interested and dishonest persons, under the name of religion, whose testimony is believed in England, to the exclusion of all evidence in our favour ; and we can foresee, as the result of this prejudice, nothing but the total ruin of the country.

'5. We are resolved, wherever we go, that we will uphold the just principles of liberty ; but, whilst we will take care that no one is brought by us into a condition of slavery, we will establish such regulations as may suppress crime, and preserve proper relations between master and servant.

'6. We solemnly declare that we leave this colony with a desire to enjoy a quieter life than we have hitherto had. We will 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.

'7. We make known that when we shall have framed a code of laws for our guidance, copies shall be forwarded to this colony for general information ; but we take the opportunity of stating that it is our firm

resolve to make provision for the summary punishment, even with death of all traitors, without exception, who may be found amongst us.

'8. We purpose, in the course of our journey, and on arrival at the country in which we shall permanently reside, to make known to the native tribes our intentions, and our desire to live in peace and friendly intercourse with them.

'9. 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 its interference in future.

'10. We are now leaving the fruitful land of our birth, in which we have suffered enormous losses and continual vexation, and are about to enter a strange and dangerous territory ; but we go with a firm reliance on an all-seeing, just, and merciful God, whom we shall always fear, and humbly endeavour to obey.

'In the name of all who leave the colony with me,

' P. RETIEF.'

But formal declarations such as the above are not in all instances to be trusted. It is much safer to compare numerous documents written at different times, by different persons, and under different circumstances. For our subject this means of information is as complete as can be desired. The correspondence of the emigrants with the Cape Government was the work of many individuals, and extended over many years. The letters are usually of great length, badly constructed, and badly spelt—the productions, in short, of uneducated men ; but so uniform is the vein of thought running through them all, that there is not the slightest difficulty in condensing them into a dozen pages. When analyzed, the statements contained in them are found to consist of two charges, one against the Imperial Government, the other against the agents in South Africa of the London Missionary Society.

The Imperial Government was charged with exposing the white inhabitants of the colony, without protection, to robbery and murder by the blacks ; with giving credence in every dispute to statements made by interested persons in favour of savages, while refusing to credit the testimony, no matter how reliable, of colonists of European extraction ; with liberating the slaves in an unjust manner ; and generally with such undue partiality for persons with black skins and savage habits, as to make it preferable to seek a new home in the wilderness than remain under the English flag.

The missionaries of the London Society were charged with usurping authority that should properly belong to the civil magistrate ; with misrepresenting facts ; and with advocating schemes directly hostile to the progress of civilization, and to the observance of order. And it was asserted that the influence of these missionaries was all powerful at the Colonial Office in London, by which the colony, without a voice in the management of its affairs, was then ruled absolutely.

In support of the charges against the Imperial Government, the emigrants dwelt largely upon the devastation of the eastern districts by the Kaffirs' inroad of December, 1834, which was certainly unprovoked by the colonists. Yet Lord Glenelg, who was then Secretary of State for the Colonies, justified the Kaffirs, and not only refused to punish them, but actually gave them a large slip of land, including the dense jungles along the Fish River, that had long been part of the colony ; and made no other provision against the recurrence of a destructive invasion than a series of treaties with a number of barbarous chiefs, who had no regard for their engagements. This event is the most prominent feature

in the correspondence of the emigrants ; it is fairly recorded, and the language used is in general much more moderate than that employed by the English frontier colonists when relating the same circumstance.

Next stands the removal of all restraint from the coloured population of the colony, without the protection to the whites of even a Vagrant Act. Several of the colonial divisions had been for ten or twelve years overrun by fugitives from the Basuto and Betschuana countries, who had been driven from their own homes by the troubles already recorded. These people were usually termed Mantatees or Makatees, from the supposition that they were all subjects of Ma Ntatisi. Towards the eastern frontiers Kaffirs, and after the war Fingos, wandered about practically wherever they chose. In the remainder of the colony Hottentots, free blacks, and mixed breeds came and went as they pleased. How is it possible, said the farmers, for us to cultivate the ground, or breed cattle, with all these savages and semi-savages constantly watching for opportunities to plunder us—with no police, and no law under which suspicious characters can be arrested and made to account for their manner of living ?

Much is said of the reproofs of Sir Benjamin D'Urban by the Secretary of State, and, after 1838, of the dismissal of that Governor. (1) The emigrants asserted that he was the best Governor the colony had had since it became subject to England ; they dwelt upon his benevolence, his ability, his strict justice, his impartiality to white and black, his efforts to promote civilization ; and then they complained, in words more bitter than are to be found when they referred to any other subject, that the good Governor had been reproved, and finally deprived of his office, because he had told the plain truth, regardless of the London Missionary Society ; and had endeavoured to mete out to black criminals the same justice that he would have meted out had they been white. There is now no one in South Africa who does not agree with the emigrants in this matter. Nearly half a century has passed away since Sir Benjamin D'Urban was forced into retirement by Lord Glenelg ; and during that period the principal measures which he proposed have been approved of and adopted, while the successors of those missionaries who were his bitter opponents are at present among the strongest advocates of his system of dealing with the natives.

Sir Benjamin D'Urban remained in South Africa, after being deprived of office, until the reversal of his policy towards the natives was admitted by most people even in England to have been a mistake. He did not leave the Cape until April, 1846, just after the commencement of the War of the Axe.

Concerning the liberation of the slaves, there is less in this correspondence than one might reasonably expect to find. Many scores of pages can be examined without any allusion whatever to it. Nowhere is there a single word to be found in favour of slavery as an institution ; the view of the emigrants, with hardly an exception, being fairly represented in the following sentence, taken from a letter of the Volksraad at Natal to Sir George Napier : 'A long and sad experience has sufficiently convinced us of the injury, loss, and dearness of slave labour, so that neither slavery nor the slave trade will ever be permitted among us.'

[The allusions to the emancipation of slaves, and to slavery as an institution, will be considered by many to need some

modification or explanation. The Dutch even to-day speak of the emancipation as the real cause of the great exodus; and the system of indenture, and the treatment of natives generally by the Boers, cannot fairly be regarded as warranting the view expressed by Mr. Theal in connection with this letter to Sir George Napier.]

It is alleged, however, that the emancipation, as it was carried out, was an act of confiscation. It is stated that most of the slaves were brought to the colony in English ships, and sold by English subjects; that when, in 1795, the colony was invited by English officers of high rank to place itself under the protection of England, one of the inducements held out was security in slave property; at the same time those officers warning the colonists that if France obtained possession she would liberate the slaves, as she had done in Martinique, thereby ruining this colony as she had ruined that island; that the English Government had recently and suddenly changed its policy, and required them to conform to the change with equal alacrity, whereas they were convinced that gradual emancipation, with securities against vagrancy, was the only safe course. The emancipation had been sudden, and the slaves had been placed upon a perfect political equality with their former proprietors. The missionaries applauded this as a noble and generous act of the Imperial Government, and they were told that by everyone in England it was so regarded. But at whose expense was this noble and generous act carried out? Agents of the Imperial Government had appraised the slaves, generally at less than their market value. Two-fifths of this appraisal, being the share apportioned to the Cape out of the twenty million pounds sterling voted by the Imperial Parliament, had then been offered to the proprietors as compensation, if they chose to go to London for it, otherwise they could only dispose of their claims at a heavy discount. Thus, in point of fact, only about one-third of the appraised amount had been received. To all slave-holders this had meant a great reduction of wealth, while to many of those who were in debt it was equivalent to the utter deprivation of all property.

As regards the missionaries, a crusade was organized by some of these worthies, who had themselves married Kaffir women, and who spared no effort and showed no scruple in blackening the name of colonist.

The views and interests of the colonists and of these men were so different that concord was hardly possible. The missionaries desired that the blacks should be collected together in villages: the colonists were unwilling that they should be thus withdrawn from service. 'Teach them the first step in civilization, to labour honestly for their maintenance, and add to that oral instruction in the doctrines of Christianity,' said the colonists. 'Why should they be debarred from learning to read and write? And as there can only be schools if they are brought together in villages, why should they not be collected together?' replied the missionaries.

Then came another and a larger question. By whom should the waste places of the land, the vast areas which were without other occupants than a few roving Bushmen, be peopled? 'By the white man,' said the colonists; 'it is to the advantage of the world in all time to come that the higher race should expand and be dominant here; it would be treason to humanity to prevent its growth where it can grow without wrong to others, or to plant an inferior stock where the superior can take root and flourish.' 'By Africans,' said the missionaries; 'this is African soil; and if mission stations are established on its desolate tracts, people will be drawn to them from the far interior, the community will grow rapidly, those enlightened by Christianity here will desire in their turn to enlighten their friends beyond, and thus the Gospel teaching will spread until all Africa stretches out its hands to God.' Coupled with such arguments, which were constantly used by missionaries in the early part of this century, before their enthusiasm was cooled by experience, were calculations that appealed strongly to the commercial instincts of people in England. A dozen colonial farmers required something like a hundred square miles of land for their cattle runs; on this same ground, under missionary supervision, three or four hundred families of blacks could exist; these blacks would shortly need large quantities of manufactured goods; and thus it would be to the interest of trade to encourage them rather than the colonists. 'Already,' said they, 'after only a few years' training, many blacks can read as well or better than the ordinary colonists, and are exhibiting a decided taste for civilization.'

There was thus a broad line of demarcation between the colonists and such of the missionaries as held these views, and the tendency on each side was to make it still broader. It was deepened into positive antipathy towards those missionaries who, following Dr. Vanderkemp's example, united themselves in marriage with black women, and proclaimed themselves the champions of the black population against the white. Everyone acquainted with South African natives knows how ready they are to please their friends by bringing forward charges against anyone whom those friends dislike. Unfortunately the missionaries Vanderkemp and Read were deceived into believing a great number of charges of cruelty made against various colonists, which a little observation would have shown in most instances to be groundless; and thereupon they lodged accusations before the High Court of Justice. In 1811 between seventy and eighty such cases came before the Circuit Court for trial. There was hardly a family on the frontier of which some relative was not brought as a criminal before the judges to answer to a charge of murder or violent assault. Several months were occupied in the trials, and more than a thousand witnesses were examined, but in every instance the most serious charges were proved to be without foundation. Only a few convictions, and those of no very outrageous crimes, resulted from these prosecutions, which kept the entire colony in a ferment until long after the circuit was closed.

Thus far everyone will approve of the sentiments of one party or the other according to his sympathy, but in what follows no unprejudiced person who will take the trouble to study the matter thoroughly can acquit the anti-colonial missionaries of something more faulty than mere error of judgment. For years their writings teemed with charges against the colonists similar to those they had brought before the High Court of Justice. These writings were circulated widely in Europe, where the voice of the colonists was never heard, and they created

impressions there which no refutation made in South Africa could ever counteract. The acts, the language, even the written petitions of the colonists, were so distorted in accounts sent home, that these accounts cannot now be read by those who have made themselves acquainted with the truth, without the liveliest feelings of indignation being excited.

The colonists learned that in England they were regarded as cruel barbarians because they refused to permit Hottentot herds, swarming with vermin, to be seated in their front rooms at the time of family prayer. They found themselves pictured as the harshest of taskmasters, as unfeeling violators of native rights. And of late years it had become plain to them that the views of their opponents were being acted upon at the Colonial Office, while their complaints were wholly disregarded.

Several causes of dissatisfaction, besides those above mentioned, contributed to the impulse of emigration, but all in a very slight degree. Judge Cloete, in his 'Five Lectures,' mentions the severe punishment inflicted upon the frontier insurgents of 1815 as one of them; and there is no doubt that it was so with some families, though no trace of it can be found in the correspondence of the emigrants. The substitution in 1827 of the English for the Dutch language in the colonial courts of law was certainly generally felt as a grievance. The alteration in 1813 of the system of land tenure, the redemption in 1825 of the paper currency at only thirty-six hundredths of its nominal value, and the abolition in 1827 of the courts of landdrost and heemraden, unquestionably caused much dissatisfaction, though all of these measures are now admitted by everyone to have been beneficial. The long delay in issuing titles to farms, the cost of which has been paid to Government years before, is mentioned as a grievance in some of the declarations.

Two parties — men, women, and children — numbering ninety-eight in all, pioneered the great trek; of these twenty-six survived fever and fighting, loss of provisions, waggons, and cattle, and a long weary tramp from Zoutpansberg to Delagoa Bay, and were rescued and taken thence to Natal, and two children were carried off by the natives. The survivors were three women with their twelve children—seven orphan children and four youths. Not a single grown man escaped.

During the winter of 1836 preparations for emigration were being made over the eastern and midland districts. The Governor was perfectly helpless in the matter. The Attorney-General, Mr. A. Oliphant, was consulted by the Governor, and gave his opinion that 'it seemed next to an impossibility to prevent persons passing out of the colony by laws in force, or by any which could be framed.' On August 19 Sir Benjamin D'Urban wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Andries Stockenstrom, that 'he could see no means of stopping the emigration, except by persuasion, and attention to the wants and necessities of the farmers.' In that direction the Governor had done all that was in his power, but he could not act in opposition to the instructions of the Secretary of State. Sir Andries Stockenstrom himself, in replying to an address from the inhabitants of Uitenhage,

stated that 'he was not aware of any law which prevented 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.'

The story of the trekkers is one of surpassing interest, and must enlist for them the sympathy and unbounded admiration of all.

By the middle of the year 1837 there were over one thousand waggons between the Caledon and Vaal rivers—truly a notable and alarming exodus; and the Boers then began the work of carving out new countries for themselves. Their history surpasses all fiction in its vicissitudes, successes, and tragedies. They fought and worked and trekked, onward, always onward—never returning—on beyond the furthestmost outposts of civilization.

And so the story rolls on, gaining pathos, but losing no whit of interest from its eternal sameness. They fought, and worked, and starved, and died for their land of promise, where they might hope to be alone, like the simple people of their one Book; where they might never know the hated British rule; where they might never experience the forms and trammels, the restlessness and changes, the worries, the necessities or benefits, of progressing civilization. Their quarrel had been with the abuses and blunders of one Government; but a narrow experience moved them to mistrust all but their own pastoral patriarchal way, moulded on the records of the Bible, and to regard the evidences of progress as warnings of coming oppression and curtailment of liberty, and a departure from the simple and ideal way. The abuses from which they suffered are no more; the methods which were unjust have been abandoned; the ignorance of the ruler has been dispelled; in place of despotism there is autonomy; justice rules where ignorance and bias sat; liberty where there was interference; protection for oppression; progress and civilization have increased as in no other epoch; and the nation and Government from which they severed themselves have taken their place in the very forefront of all. But the Boer sees with the eyes of sixty years ago!

The ideal was impossible the struggle hopeless, the end

certain. They trekked, and trekked and trekked again ; but the flag of England—emblem of all they hated—was close by ; behind, beside, in front, or over them ; and the something which they could not fight—the ever-advancing tide of civilization—lapped at their feet, and slowly, silently, and for ever blotted out the line where they had written, ' Thus far and no further.'

The South African Republic had been in existence as an independent State for twelve years when it reached that condition of insolvency which appeared to invite, or at least justify, annexation, as the only alternative to complete ruin and chaos. And there are very few, even among the most uncompromising supporters of the Boers, who seriously attempt to show that the Transvaal had any prospect of prolonging its existence as an independent State for more than a few months when Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed it in 1877. The following picture is from a book published by the late Alfred Aylward, the Fenian, more anti-British than the Boer himself, who was present at the time, and wrote his book in order to enlist sympathy for the movement then (1878) organized to obtain a cancellation of the annexation. The value of Aylward's testimony would not be fairly appreciated without some explanation.

Sir Bartle Frere describes him (and quotes Scotland Yard authorities who knew him well) as one of the party who murdered the policeman at Manchester, and one of the worst and most active of the dynamiting Irishmen—a professional agitator, who boasted of his purpose to promote the Transvaal rebellion. Major Le Caron, too, stated on oath before the Parnell Commission that money was sent by the Irish Rebel Societies, through Aylward, to stir up the Transvaal rebellion. This is what Aylward says :

All South Africa was for the moment at rest, with the exception of the district of Utrecht, where an old-standing grievance with Cetewayo was the cause of some little alarm and excitement (*i.e.*, Cetewayo's threatened invasion). Still, the Transvaal was disturbed throughout its whole extent by the expectation of some pending change—a change coming from the outside, which had been invited by an active, discontented party, chiefly foreigners, dwellers in towns, non-producers, place-hunters, deserters, refugees, land-speculators, ' development-men,' and

pests of Transvaal society generally, who openly preached resistance to the law, refusal to pay taxes, and contempt of the natural and guaranteed owners of the country in which they lived, in the distinctly expressed hope that foreign intervention would fill the country with British gold, and conduce to their own material prosperity. The Boers, spread over a country larger than France, were stunned into stupor by the demonstrative loudness of the party of discontent. In some districts they (the Boers) were poor, and could not readily pay the taxes imposed upon them by the wars and railway projects of the Government. Their Volksraad was in Session, but its every action was paralyzed by the gloom of impending dissolution.

The Republic owed £215,000, which it had no immediate means of paying. Its creditors were clamorous; whilst the Executive, turn to which side it would, found itself confronted by threats, reproaches, accusations of slavery and cruelty based upon hearsay, and which, like the annexation that steadily approached, could not be met, because neither of them had yet assumed the evidenced consistency of actual fact. There was no public opinion to support the Government or to save the Republic. The Boers lived far apart from each other, whilst the annexationists and the party of disorder dwelt, in compact communities, in towns and mining villages. Into the midst of this confusion—into the capital of this bewildered State—entered Sir Theophilus Shepstone and his staff. He had not come to seize the country—he had come as ‘an adviser, as a helper, and as a friend’; but his advent was a blight—an incubus which rendered additionally powerless the unfortunate President and his Council. The coming of Sir Theophilus Shepstone was, to the minds of nearly all, but too clearly the forerunner of change. In the face of this additional whet to the anticipations of the party of disturbance, something that has been described as anarchy prevailed. Everyone waited; all fell into a state of expectation; no one attempted to save the State, or repel the danger. At the same time, there was no anarchy in the proper sense of the word. Justice sat on her seat; criminals were arrested and brought to trial; actions at law were heard and determined; and in no one place, save the goldfields, was authority, even for a moment, defied. There the law vindicated itself without having used violence or shed one drop of blood. Not one single public outrage, not one unpunished crime, marked this period of suspense, which is described by partizan writers as a time of chaos and anarchy.

Peace was granted to Secocoeni, and the quietness and gloom of the country became even more profound.

Now, had a commission, royal or joint, been opened in Pretoria to inquire into the truth of the allegations made against the Government, history might perhaps be able to record that judgment, followed by justice, had overtaken the Transvaal. No commission was opened. There was a banquet and a ball. The suspense increased in intensity. Understrappers, and agents of the discontented faction, filled the country with rumours of impending annexation, and sometimes of impending conquest. The Boers, the inhabitants of the country, asked day after day what was the mission of the English Commissioner. They visited him in hundreds; but he knew the wonderful advantage to be gathered from the heightening of the mystery, and the intensifying of the excitement. He listened to everyone; but he maintained a gloomy and impassive silence, neither checking the aspirations of the annexationists, nor dissipating the forebodings of the farmers.

News arrived that troops were marching towards, and massing on,

the border; rumours spread that annexation was inevitable. Sir Theophilus sought not to alleviate the anxieties of the Government, nor to quell the now rising alarm amongst the people; he simply sat still and listened, watching the writhings and strugglings of the doomed Volksraad, and awaiting a favourable moment to end its existence.

At length someone determined to ask: 'Was it not possible to avert this annexation which loomed before every mind, brooding like a shadow upon the country?' He went to Sir Theophilus; he asked his question; and at length the oracle spoke. Without moving a muscle of his wonderfully impassive countenance, without even raising his eyes to look at the interlocutor, Sir Theophilus calmly murmured: 'It is too late!—too late!' And so, without the authorization of the home Government, without the consent of her Majesty's High Commissioner, without the concurrence of the Volksraad, against the will of thirty-nine-fortieths of the people, and in defiance of the protest of their Executive, as Mr. Anthony Trollope puts it, Sir Theophilus said: 'Then and from thenceforth the Transvaal shall be British property!' So he put up the Queen's flag.

Now, it is impossible to conceive anything more admirable for its discretion, more wisely calculated as to the moment of its occurrence, or more suavely and yet firmly done than this act. There was not a blow struck, not a shot fired; and the first impulse of nearly every person in the country, whether in principle opposed to annexation or not, was to congratulate Sir Theophilus Shepstone on the skill, tact, and good fortune with which he had put an end to the excessive anxiety, the mental strain, the fears, hopes, and expectations by which the whole country was paralyzed. Whether the annexation be now held to be right or wrong, its execution, so far as regards the act itself, was an unparalleled triumph of tact, modesty, and firmness.

It was not discovered at the moment, and it never entered into any man's mind to consider, that it was the presence in Pretoria of Sir Theophilus himself that had created the anxiety, and caused the paralysis; and that it was his arts and presence that had tightened and strung up into quivering intensity the mind of the country. He had broken the spell; he had introduced certainty in place of uncertainty; and he was congratulated, and very properly so, for the manner in which he had brought to a conclusion his hazardous mission.

Sir Theophilus Shepstone's despatches record his negotiations with President Burgers, and the arrangement which allowed him to make a formal protest against the annexation, so as to satisfy his Irreconcilables, whilst he in reality not only assented to the measure, but even assisted the completion of it, and discussed the details with Shepstone, who in turn had revised President Burgers' 'protest.'

On April 3, 1877, Shepstone had written to Frere:

Mr. Burgers, who had been all along, as far as his conversation and professions to me went, in full accord with me, had suddenly taken alarm; he made impossible proposals, all of which involved infinite delay, and, of course, dangerous agitation. As far as I am concerned,

it is impossible for me to retreat now, come what may. If I were to leave the country, civil war would at once take place, as the natives would consider it the sunshine in which they could make hay in the Transvaal; the goldfields are in a state of rebellion against the Transvaal Government, and they are kept from overt acts only by my warnings and entreaties.

And eight days later he wrote to Mr. Robert Herbert enclosing his letter under 'flying seal' to Frere :

There will be a protest against my act of annexation issued by the Government, but they will at the same time call upon the people to submit quietly, pending the issue; you need not be disquieted by such action, because it is taken merely to save appearances, and the members of the Government from the violence of a faction that seems for years to have held Pretoria in terror when any act of the Government displeased it.

You will better understand this when I tell you privately that the President has from the first fully acquiesced in the necessity for the change, and that most of the members of the Government have expressed themselves anxious for it; but none of them have had the courage openly to express their opinions, so I have had to act apparently against them; and this I have felt bound to do, knowing the state and danger of the country, and that three-fourths of the people will be thankful for the change when once it is made.

Yesterday morning Mr. Burgers came to me to arrange how the matter should be done. I read to him the draft of my Proclamation, and he proposed the alteration of two words only, to which I agreed. He brought to me a number of conditions which he wished me to insert, which I have accepted, and have embodied in my Proclamation. He told me that he could not help issuing a protest, to keep the noisy portion of the people quiet—and you will see grounds for this precaution when I tell you that there are only half a dozen native constables to represent the power of the State in Pretoria, and a considerable number of the Boers in the neighbourhood are of the lowest and most ignorant class. Mr. Burgers read me, too, the draft of his protest, and asked me if I saw any objection to it, or thought it too strong. I said that it appeared to me to pledge the people to resist by-and-by; to which he replied that it was to tide over the difficulty of the moment, seeing that my support, the troops, were a fortnight's march distant, and that by the time the answer to the protest came, all desire of opposition would have died out. I therefore did not persuade him from his protest.

You will see, when the proclamation reaches you, that I have taken high ground. Nothing but annexation will or can save the State, and nothing else can save South Africa from the direst consequences. All the thinking and intelligent people know this, and will be thankful to be delivered from the thralldom of petty factions, by which they are perpetually kept in a state of excitement and unrest, because the Government, and everything connected with it, is a thorough sham.

This arrangement with President Burgers was a most improper compromise on both sides. Moreover, Shepstone

received the protests of the Executive Council and of the Volksraad before he issued his proclamation. He had plenty of evidence to show that even if his action was approved by the majority, the Boers were sufficiently divided to demand some delay. He knew that the members of the Government and of the Raad would not face the responsibility of relinquishing the State's independence, although he received private assurances and entreaties encouraging him to act. He had representations and deputations from the Boers themselves, sufficient in weight and number to warrant his belief that a large proportion of the people desired annexation. He should not have allowed the 'hedging' that was practised at his expense. The Boer leaders were 'between the devil and the deep sea.' There can be no doubt whatever that they dearly loved and prized their independence and would have fought even then for it had they been in a position to preserve and profit by it; but they were not. They dared neither ask for relief at the price of annexation, nor reject the proffered relief at the price of continuing the hopeless struggle. So they compromised. They took the relief, they accepted pay of the new Government, and entered a protest, so as to put themselves right with the records and stand well with untamed ones of the party.

The Act of Annexation is so generally condemned by the friends and sympathizers of the Boers, and is so persistently quoted by them as the cause of the Boer War, that it is only right to show clearly what the opinion was at that time; and if it be deemed that overmuch space is given to this matter, the answer is, that it is quoted now as the crime which gave rise to the present hatred and mistrust of England, and it is all-important that the truth should be clear.

This is what Mr. J. F. Celliers, the patriotic editor of the Boer newspaper, *De Volksstem*, wrote in reviewing the work of the special session of the Volksraad, convened to deal with the questions of Lord Carnarvon's Federation Bill, and the rescuing of the country from ruin and chaos:—'During the session we have repeatedly had occasion to comment on the doings of the Raad. These comments have not been favourable, and we regret to say that we have found in the closing scenes of our Legislature no reason to alter our opinions.'

Then follows a scathing account of the 'work done,' in which occur such references as :—' With the exception of a couple of members, no one had the sense or manliness to go into the question of confederation'; and 'The most surprising feature of the whole affair was this—that most of the speakers seemed not to have the faintest conception of the desperate condition in which the country stood. . . .' And again, under date of March 28: 'About three months ago we said we would prefer confederation under the British flag if the state of anarchy then threatening were to continue. We know that a good and stable Government is better than anarchy any day.'

It is noteworthy that the writer of the above is the same Mr. Celliers who, two years later, was put in gaol by Colonel Lanyon on a charge of sedition, because he attacked the Administration for its failure to keep the promises made at the time of annexation.

Three thousand out of eight thousand voters actually signed petitions in favour of annexation. In the Raad, President Burgers openly reproached members for proclaiming in public, and for improper reasons, views diametrically opposed to those privately expressed on the confederation and annexation questions; and refused to consult with three out of four members appointed as a deputation to confer with him on these subjects, because they had not paid their taxes, and had so helped by example, not less than by the actual offence, to cause the ruin of the country and the loss of independence. And on March 3 President Burgers read an address to the Raad, in which the following words occur :

'I would rather be a policeman under a strong Government than the President of such a State. It is you—you members of the Raad and the Boers—who have lost the country, who have sold your independence for a *soupe* (a drink). You have ill-treated the natives, you have shot them down, you have sold them into slavery, and now you have to pay the penalty.'

* * * * *

'We should delude ourselves by entertaining the hope that matters would mend by-and-by. It would only be self-deceit. I tell you openly, matters are as bad as they ever can be; they cannot be worse. These are bitter truths, and people may perhaps turn their backs on me; but then I shall have the consolation of having done my duty.'

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'It is said here this or that man must be released from taxes, because the Kaffirs have driven them off their farms, and occupy the latter. By this you proclaim to the world that the strongest man is master here, that the right of the strongest obtains here.' [Mr. Mare : 'This is not true.'] 'Then it is not true what the honourable member, Mr. Breytenbach, has told us about the state of the Lydenburg district ; then it is not true either what another member has said about the farms in Zoutpansberg, which are occupied by Kaffirs. Neither is it true, then, what I saw with my own eyes at Lydenburg, where the burghers had been driven off their farms by the Kaffirs, and where Johannes was ploughing and sowing on the land of a burgher. These are facts, and they show that the strongest man is the master here. The fourth point which we have to take into account affects our relations with our English neighbours. It is asked, What have they got to do with our position ? I tell you, as much as we have to do with that of our Kaffir neighbours. As little as we can allow barbarities among the Kaffirs on our borders, as little can they allow that in a state on their borders anarchy and rebellion should prevail.'

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'Do you know what has recently happened in Turkey ? Because no civilized government was carried on there, the Great Powers interfered and said, "Thus far, and no further." And if this is done to an empire, will a little republic be excused when it misbehaves ?'

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'Complain to other Powers, and seek justice there ? Yes, thank God ! justice is still to be found, even for the most insignificant ; but it is precisely the justice which will convict us. If we want justice, we must be in a position to ask it with unsullied hands.'

* * * * *

'Whence has arisen that urgency to make an appeal for interference elsewhere ? Has that appeal been made only by enemies of the State ? Oh no, gentlemen ; it has arisen from real grievances. Our people have degenerated from their former position ; they have become demoralised ; they are not what they ought to be.'

* * * * *

'To-day a bill for £1,100 was laid before me for signature ; but I would sooner have cut off my right hand than sign that paper, for I have not the slightest ground to expect that when that bill becomes due there will be a penny to pay it with.'

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The President added, and his statements remained uncontradicted :

The principal thing which had brought them to their present position was that to which they would not give attention. It was not this or that thing which impeded their way, but they themselves stopped the way ; and if they asked him what prevented the people from remaining

independent, he answered that the Republic was itself the obstruction, owing to the inherent incapacity and weakness of the people. But whence this weakness? Was it because they were deformed? because they were worse than other people? because they were too few and too insignificant to occupy the country? Those arguments did not weigh with him. They were not true; he did not consider them of any importance. The people were as good as any other people, but they were completely demoralized; they had lost faith in God, reliance upon themselves, or trust in each other. Hence he believed they were inherently weak.

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He did not believe that a new constitution would save them; for as little as the old constitution had brought them to ruin, so little would a new constitution bring them salvation.

* * * * *

The Great Powers, with all their greatness, all their thousands of soldiers, would fall as quickly as this State had fallen, and even more quickly, if their citizens were to do what the citizens of this State had done; if the citizens of England had behaved towards the Crown as the burghers of this State had behaved to their Government, England would never have stood as long as she had, not even as long as this State had stood. This State owed obligations to other countries; they knew that the fire which had nearly consumed this State would, if felt by them, very soon consume them also.

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In several of the cities of Holland there were people who had subscribed for only one debenture, because they thought men of their own blood were living in South Africa. What was the consequence? The interest up to July last had been paid; in January of this year £2,250 was due for interest, and there was not a penny to meet it.

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To take up arms and fight was nonsense; to draw the sword would be to draw the sword against God, for it was God's judgment that the State was in the condition it was to-day; and it was their duty to inquire whether they should immerse in blood the thousands of innocent inhabitants of this country, and if so, what for? For an idea—for something they had in their heads, but not in their hearts; for an independence which was not prized. Let them make the best of the situation, and get the best terms they possibly could; let them agree to join their hands to those of their brethren in the south, and then from the Cape to the Zambesi there would be one great people. Yes, there was something grand in that—grander even than their idea of a Republic—something which ministered to their national feeling. And would this be so miserable? Yes; this would be miserable for those who would not be under the law, for the rebel and revolutionist, but welfare and prosperity for the men of law and order.

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They must not underrate their real and many difficulties. He could point to the south-western border, the Zulu, the goldfields, and other

questions, and show them that it was their duty to come to an arrangement with the British Government, and to do so in a bold and manly manner. An hon. member on Saturday last had spoken with a fervent patriotism ; but he had failed to appreciate the reference, because it amounted to this—that they must shut their eyes to everything, so as to keep their independence.

President Burgers, who left the Transvaal broken-hearted, more by the cruel and mean intriguing and dissensions among, and disloyalty of, his own people, which made the annexation possible, than by the Act itself, when dying left a statement of the case. It is too long to reproduce in its entirety. He shows how the English faction worked for annexation, and how the Dopper party, headed by Kruger, allied themselves with the former in intrigue against the Government, thwarting all effort at reform and organization, and encouraging the refusal to pay taxes. He states plainly that this course was pursued by Kruger in order to oust him from power, and secure the Presidency for himself. He shows how he opposed 'that other element which had formerly worked in secret, viz., British interference, which got a strong support from the Boers themselves, and one of their chief leaders, P. Kruger, who had betrayed me, after promising me his and his party's support.' He gives the final scene as follows :

The Volksraad had gone away, having done nothing but harm. The members of the Executive had gone home, as if all were safe, and I sat with a half-new Cabinet and part of an old one, half discharged. Yet I made one attempt more, and drafted a letter to Shepstone, intimating that I would oppose the annexation by force of arms, etc. ; and showed this to two members of the Executive. The response to my appeal, however, was so weak (one of them being in league with the English) that I had to abandon the project, and try to prepare for the worst. When, therefore, Shepstone's announcement came—that he could wait no longer, that he had given us time enough to reform, and that he must issue his proclamation—I could do no more than advise a protest, and an appeal to foreign powers. This having been agreed to by my Government, I met Shepstone in presence of the Executive, and what could be saved for the country, such as its language, its legislature, the position of its officials, etc., was arranged. Before issuing his proclamation, Shepstone desired to see copies of both mine and the Government protest. This I promised, on condition he showed me his proclamation before publication : to which he agreed. To one clause I greatly objected, and protested—namely, the threat of confiscation of property for disobeying the proclamation. I pointed out that this was

barbarous, and would be punishing a man's innocent family for his actions. The clause was omitted. This is the origin of the lie that I helped Shepstone in drawing up his proclamation. In justice to Shepstone, I must say that I would not consider an officer of my Government to have acted faithfully if he had not done what Shepstone did ; and if the act was wrong (which undoubtedly it was), not he, but his Government, is to blame for it.

Messrs. Kruger and Jorissen left within a month to protest in England against the annexation.

Sir T. Shepstone wrote (May 9) : ' Mr. Paul Kruger and his colleague, Dr. Jorissen, D.D., the Commission to Europe, leave to-day. I do not think that either of them wishes the Act of Annexation to be cancelled ; Dr. Jorissen certainly does not.' And Mr. J. D. Barry, Recorder of Kimberley, wrote to Frere (May 15) : ' The delegates, Paul Kruger and Dr. Jorissen, left Pretoria on the 8th, and even they do not seem to have much faith in their mission. Dr. Jorissen thinks that the reversal of Sir Theophilus's Act would not only be impossible, but a great injury to the country.'

It is not necessary to seek hostile testimony to establish the fact that the Boers as a whole acquiesced in the annexation ; the foregoing quotation from Aylward's book supplies all that is needed—unintentionally, perhaps. The Zulu menace, which Aylward so lightly dismisses, was a very serious matter ; the danger a very real one. It has frequently been asserted by the Boers and their friends that the Zulu trouble was fomented by a section of the Natal people, and that Sir Theophilus Shepstone himself, if he did not openly encourage the Zulu King in his threats and encroachments on the Transvaal, at any rate refrained from using his unique influence and power with the Zulus in the direction of peace, and that he made a none too scrupulous use of the Zulu question when he forced the annexation of the Transvaal. It is stated that, in the first place, there was no real danger, and in the next place, if there were, such was Sir Theophilus's power with the Zulus that he could have averted it ; and in support of the first point, and in demolition of Sir T. Shepstone's pro-annexation arguments, the following extract from the latter's despatches is quoted by Aylward and others ;

EXTRACT FROM DESPATCH, DATED UTRECHT, TRANSVAAL,
JANUARY 29, 1878.

Sir T. Shepstone to Sir H. Bulwer.

Par. 12. 'Although this question has existed for many years, and the settlement of it has been long postponed, yet on no former occasion has it assumed so serious an aspect, or included so wide an area of territory; never before has there existed any bar to the farmers occupying their farms after an absence more or less temporary, caused by a temporary and local scare. Practically, the line of occupied farms has not been heretofore affected by the dispute about the beacons boundary, but now the prohibition to these has become absolute by Zulu claims and action. Ruin is staring the farmers in the face, and their position is, *for the time, worse under Her Majesty's Government than ever it was under the Republic.*'

Had Sir T. Shepstone's power been as great as represented, it is fair to suppose that it would have been exerted, and would have prevailed in support of his own administration; but it seems clear that he could do nothing; and as to the reality of the danger, nothing could better establish that than the unpleasant admissions in the foregoing extract and the initial disasters in the Zulu War a year later. The Boers' protective power was not lessened by the annexation—quite otherwise. It was supplemented by British money, arms, and soldiers, and the prestige of the British flag, and yet things happened as above described. What would they have been under the old conditions?

The day before he issued the proclamation Sir T. Shepstone sent a messenger to Cetewayo, telling him that the Transvaal would be under British sovereignty, and warning him against aggression in that direction. Cetewayo replied: 'I thank my father Somtseu (Shepstone) for his message. I am glad that he has sent it, because the Dutch have tired me out, and I intended to fight with them once, only once, and to drive them over the Vaal. Kabana, 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 p. 19.)

Colonel A. W. Durnford, R.E., in a memorandum of July 5, 1877, wrote:

About this time (April 10) Cetewayo had massed his forces in three corps on the borders, and would undoubtedly have swept the Trans-

vaal, at least up to the Vaal River, if not to Pretoria itself, had the country not been taken over by the English. In my opinion, he would have cleared the country to Pretoria.

'I am convinced,' wrote Sir A. Cunynghame, June 12, from Pretoria, 'that had this country not been annexed, it would have been ravaged by the native tribes. Forty square miles of country had been overrun by natives, and every house burned, just before the annexation.' And he wrote again, July 6: 'Every day convinces me that unless this country had been annexed it would have been a prey to plunder and rapine from the natives on its border, joined by Secocoeni, Mapok, and other tribes in the Transvaal. Feeling the influence of the British Government, they are now tranquil.'

So much for the reality of the danger. As to the causes of it and the alleged responsibility of Natal, Sir Bartle Frere, in a letter to General Ponsonby, made the following remarks :

The fact is, that while the Boer Republic was a rival and semi-hostile power, it was a Natal weakness rather to pet the Zulus as one might a tame wolf, who only devoured one's neighbour's sheep. We always remonstrated, but rather feebly ; and now that both flocks belong to us, we are rather embarrassed in stopping the wolf's ravages.

Sir B. Frere realized fully the dangers, and gave his testimony as to Boer opinion. On December 15, 1877, he wrote, concerning his policy towards the Zulus :

My great anxiety is, of course, to avoid collision, and I am satisfied that the only chance I have of keeping clear of it is to show that I do not fear it. The Boers are, of course, in a state of great apprehension, and I have ordered those of the two frontier districts of Utrecht and Wakkerstrom to hold themselves in readiness, should I find it necessary to call upon them for active service.

Sir T. Shepstone also wrote, concerning the reality of the danger, under date December 25 :

The Boers are still flying, and I think by this time there must be a belt of more than a hundred miles long and thirty broad, in which, with three insignificant exceptions, there is nothing but absolute desolation. This will give your Excellency some idea of the mischief which Cetewayo's conduct has caused.

And again (April 30, 1878):

I find that Secocoeni acts as a kind of lieutenant to Cetewayo. He received directions from the Zulu King, and these directions are by Secocoeni issued to the various Basuto tribes in the Transvaal.

Sir T. Shepstone rushed the annexation. He plucked the fruit that would have fallen. He himself has said that he might have waited until the Zulus actually made their threatened murderous raid. That might have been Macchiavelian statecraft, but it would not have been humanity; and there was nothing in the attitude of the Boer leaders at the time of the annexation which foreshadowed the fierce and determined opposition which afterwards developed. The fact seems to be that the people of the Transvaal were either in favour of the annexation, or were overpowered and dazed by the hopelessness of the Republic's outlook; and they passively assented to the action of Sir Theophilus Shepstone and his twenty-five policemen. The Boers were quite unable to pay the taxes necessary to self-government and the prosecution of the Kaffir wars. The Treasury was empty—save for the much-quoted 12s. 6d. The Government £1 bluebacks were selling at 1s. Civil servants' salaries were months in arrear. The President himself—the excitable, unstable, visionary, but truly enlightened and patriotic Burgers—had not only drawn no salary, but had expended his private fortune, and incurred a very heavy liability, in the prosecution of the unsuccessful Secocoeni war. No amount of *ex post facto* evidence as to the supposed feelings and opinions of the Boers can alter a single one of the very serious facts which, taken together, seemed to Sir Theophilus to justify the annexation. But it all comes down to this: If the passive acquiescence in the annexation coincided strangely with the Republic's failure to defeat its enemies and pay its debts, it is no whit less odd that Lord Carnarvon's anxiety for the Republic's safety synchronized with his attempt to confederate South Africa.

The real mistakes of the British Government began *after* the annexation. The failure to fulfil promises; the deviation from old ways of government; the appointment of unsuitable officials, who did not understand the people or their language; the neglect to convene the Volksraad or to hold fresh elec-

tions, as definitely promised ; the establishment of personal rule by military men, who treated the Boers with harshness and contempt, and would make no allowance for their simple, old-fashioned ways, their deep-seated prejudices, and, if you like, their stupid opposition to modern ideas : these things and others caused great dissatisfaction, and gave ample material for the nucleus of irreconcilables to work with.

During the occupation period Mr. Kruger took office under the British Government, as also did Dr. Jorissen and Chief Justice (then Judge) Kotzé, and indeed all the officials who had protested against the annexation, except Mr. Piet Joubert, who declined to do so, and who, if actions be the test and not words, was the only honest protestant. Mr. Kruger retained his office for some time after he had concerned himself in the Repeal agitation, but finally resigned his post on being refused an increased remuneration, for which he had repeatedly applied. There can be but little doubt that had this inducement been forthcoming, he would have remained a loyal British subject.

The effect of the annexation was to start the wells of plenty bubbling—with British gold. The country's debts were paid. Secocoeni and Cetewayo would be dealt with, and the responsibility for all things was on other and broader shoulders. With the revival of trade, and the removal of responsibilities and burdens, came time to think and to talk. The wave of the magician's wand looked so very simple that the price began to seem heavy. The eaten bread was forgotten. The dangers and difficulties that were past were of small account now that they *were* past ; and so the men who had remained passive, and recorded formal protests when they should have resisted, and taken steps to show that they were in earnest, began their Repeal agitation. All the benefits which the Boers hoped from the annexation had now been reaped. Their pressing needs were relieved. Their debts had been paid ; their trade and credit restored ; their enemies were being dealt with. Repeal would rob them of none of these ; they would, in fact, eat their cake and still have it. The Zulu question had been taken up, and could not now be left by the Imperial Government to settle itself. The debts discharged for them and the outlays incurred might, it is true, be charged

to them. They could not be repaid, of course, for the same reason that you cannot get blood from stone ; and the amount would, therefore, be a National Debt, which was exactly what they had been trying for years to incur, and the condition of their credit had made it impossible to do.

The causes of discontent before given were serious, but the failure to fulfil promises was not deliberate. Circumstances combined to prevent Sir Bartle Frere from visiting the Transvaal, as intended and promised. Native wars (Gaika and Galeka), disagreements between the Colonial and Imperial authorities, the obstructions and eventual dismissal of the Molteno-Merriman Ministry — the first under Responsible Government—Natal and Diamond-fields affairs, and, above all, the Zulu War, all combined to prevent Sir Bartle Frere from fulfilling his obligations to settle Transvaal matters.

In the meantime two deputations had been sent to England, representing the Boers' case against annexation. The active party among the Boers, *i.e.*, the Voortrekker party, the most anti-British and Republican, though small in itself, had now succeeded in completely dominating the rest of the Boers, and galvanizing them into something like national life and cohesion again — a result achieved partly by earnest persuasion, but largely also by a kind of terrorism.

Sir Bartle Frere, who managed at last to visit the Transvaal, in April, 1879, had evidence of this on his journey up, and in a despatch to Sir M. Hicks Beach from Standerton on the 6th of that month he wrote :

I was particularly impressed by the replies of a very fine specimen of a Boer of the old school. He had been six weeks in an English prison, daily expecting execution as a rebel, and had been wounded by all the enemies against whom his countrymen had fought—English, Zulus, Basutos, Griquas, and Bushmen.

'But,' he said, 'that was in the days of my youth and inexperience. Had I known then what I know now, I would never have fought against the English, and I will never fight them again. Old as I am, I would now gladly turn out against the Zulus, and take fifty friends of my own, who would follow me anywhere ; but I dare not leave my home till assured it will not be destroyed and my property carried off in my absence, by the men who call me "rebel" because I will not join them against the Government. My wife, brought up like a civilized woman in the Cape Colony, has had five times in her life to run from the house and sleep in the veld when attacked by Zulus and Basutos. One of our twelve sons was assailed in sight of our house, within the last ten

years, by a marauding party ; and in my absence from the house, when it was surrounded by Basutos, my wife had to fly in the night by herself, leading one child and carrying another on her back. She walked nearly fifty miles through the Lion Veld, seeing three lions on the way, before she reached a place of safety. It is not likely that we should forget such things, nor wish them to recur ; but how can I leave her on my farm and go to Zululand, when the malcontent leaders threaten me that if I go they will burn my house and drive off all my stock ? Assure me that we are not to be deserted by the English Government, and left to the mercy of these malcontent adventurers, and I and my people will gladly turn out to assist Colonel Wood.'

I find that this idea that the English Government will give up the Transvaal, as it formerly did the Orange Free State, has been industriously propagated, and has taken a great hold on the minds of the well-disposed Boers, and is, I believe, one main cause of reluctance to support the Government actively.

They argue that what has been done before may be done again, and they have no feeling of assurance that if they stand by the English Government to-day they will not be left to bear the brunt of the malcontents' vengeance when a Republic is established.

And again on the 9th, from Heidelberg :

The idea that we should somehow be compelled or induced to abandon the country had taken great hold on the minds of some of the more intelligent men that I met. It has been sedulously written up by a portion of the South African press, English as well as Dutch. I marked its effect particularly on men who said they had come from the old Colony since the annexation, but would never have done so had they believed that English rule would be withdrawn, and the country left to its former state of anarchy. . . .

But there is great practical difficulty in conveying to the mass of the people any idea of the real power of Government.

It is not possible to pen a more severe and pregnant comment on the after-policy of England than that suggested by the italicized lines, written as they were by England's Plenipotentiary—an idea reported to headquarters, not as a feeler, but as a suggestion so absurd that it called for no expression of opinion. But he lived to find that it was not too absurd to be realized ; and perhaps, after all, it was written as a warning, and the wise and cool-headed old statesman in his inmost soul had a premonition of what eventually occurred.

Sir Bartle Frere met the Boers in their camp, and discussed with them their grievances. He informed them that he had no power to revoke the annexation, nor would he recommend it, as, in his judgment, such a course would be a reversion to chaos and ruin. The Boers pressed steadily for nothing less

than repeal. Sir Bartle Frere reported the historical meeting at Erasmus Farm to Sir M. Hicks Beach :

April 14, 1879.

They were evidently much disappointed. . . . Our meeting separated with no more definite decision than that they must report to the 'people,' and be guided by their decision as to what was to be done.

If I may judge from the gentlemen composing the deputation, and others of their class, whom I have had the honour of meeting since coming to the Transvaal, the leaders are, with few exceptions, men who deserve respect and regard for many valuable and amiable qualities as citizens and subjects. . . .

Of the results of our meeting it is impossible at present to say more than that it must have cleared away misconceptions on all sides. If they have learnt anything as to the finality of the act of annexation—that I have no power to undo it, and do not believe that it will ever be undone, in the only sense in which they will ask it—I have, on the other hand, been shown the stubbornness of a determination to be content with nothing else, for which I was not prepared by the general testimony of officials who had been longer in the country, and who professed to believe that the opposition of the Boers was mere bluster, and that they had not the courage of their professed opinions. . . . I feel assured that the majority of the Committee felt very deeply what they believed to be a great national wrong. . . . But my conviction is that the real malcontents are far from being a majority of the whole white population, or even of their own class of Boer farmers.

I have no doubt whatever that if the Executive were in a position to assert the supremacy of the law, to put an effectual stop to the reign of terrorism which exists at present, the discontented minority would cease to agitate, and would soon cease to feel grievances which a very brief discussion shows to be in the main sentimental; not the less keenly felt on that account, but not likely to survive the prosperity and good government, with a fair measure of self-government in its train, which are within their reach under British rule.

And, again, he wrote to Lady Frere :

PRETORIA, *April 20, 1879.*

My last letter had not been gone many hours by the mail express when Lanyon ran into my room, to tell me that the Boer camp was actually broken up and the Boers dispersing.

I need not tell you how thankful I was. The one thing I dreaded was civil war and bloodshed, and had a single malcontent been shot, I should have considered it a greater misfortune than the death of a dozen Piet Retiefs, or Uys, dying like heroes in the field of battle for their country and brethren. So you may imagine how thankful I felt to the Giver of all good, who has guided and protected us through life.

I am to see a deputation from the Boers' Committee again to-morrow, and then I hope we shall have done with meetings and grievances—for the present a phrase which they carefully put into all references to their breaking up, and which they evidently mean. *It was clear to me that it was not the annexation, so much as the neglect to fulfil the promises*

and the expectations held out by Shepstone when he took over the Government, that has stirred up the great mass of the Boers, and given a handle to agitators.¹

There it is in a single sentence! It was not the annexation which caused the war; for nine men in every ten admitted that it was welcomed and justified by considerations of general South African policy, or else simply inevitable. No! It was the failure to fulfil the conditions of annexation!

In 'A Narrative of the Boer War,' Mr. Thomas Fortescue Carter has given with admirable skill and impartiality a full account of the causes which led to the outbreak. His history is, indeed, so determinedly just as to have met with considerable disapproval in quarters where feelings are hot on either side, and where plain truths are not palatable. Mr. Carter resided in the country for years before the annexation, and went through the war as correspondent of a well-known London daily, and this is his opinion:

Anyone who knows the acquaintance Sir T. Shepstone had with the Boers of the Transvaal, years prior to the annexation, cannot doubt that, regarded as a friend and almost as one of themselves, no one better than he could have been selected for the task of ascertaining the desires of the people; and no one who knows Sir T. Shepstone will believe that he did not take sufficient evidence to prove to any man that the Boers were anxious to be extricated from the dilemma they were in, and really willing at that time that their country should be annexed. Men who during the late war were our foes were at the time of the annexation clamouring for it, welcoming Sir Theophilus Shepstone as the deliverer and saviour of the country. I mention Swart Dirk Uys, an eminent Boer, who fought against the English in 1880-81, as one amongst the hundreds and thousands who went out to meet Sir Theophilus Shepstone with palm branches in their hands.

The natural aversion of the people to English rule was overcome for the moment by their greater aversion to being wiped off the face of the Transvaal by the blacks; that was a contingency staring them in the face, and yet not even that imminent common danger availed to secure unity amongst them, or would rouse men individually to take upon their shoulders the responsibility which rests upon every member of a State.

The Boer Volksraad, after promising to appeal to their constituents on the subject of the new constitution proposed, almost immediately passed a measure, which was familiarly styled by the people the 'Hou jou smoel law.' The literal translation of this term is 'Hold your

¹ Several of the letters and despatches given in this volume are quoted from Mr. Martineau's excellent 'Life of Sir Bartle Frere,' a portion of which book was lately published in cheaper form, under the title of 'The Transvaal Trouble and How it Arose.'

jaw.' In brief, it was an Act which made it high treason for any man to discuss the question of either confederation or annexation.

I come to the conclusion, then, that the cause of the annexation was England's historical greed of territory, especially rich territory; and that, however unworthy the motive on the part of the visiting power, the Boers did not at that time receive the visitor with other feelings than those of satisfaction, and practically surrendered their country voluntarily and gladly to the ruler of a greater power, under the impression that Sir Theophilus Shepstone would be permitted to carry out, and that he therefore would carry out, the promises he made them. As the programme was open before them, they had everything to gain and nothing to lose, except the loss entailed by nominal government by the British. No man, whether Boer or Britisher, who was living in the Transvaal, or knew the feelings of the Boers at the time of annexation, would in 1877 have given any other account of the feeling of the nation; and if I have formed too low an opinion of the motives of English statesmen at that time, and am not justified in attributing the annexation to greed instead of to the purer and nobler desire to protect England's colonies, or even the Transvaal itself, from the inroads of savages, then my excuse must be that the failure of England to send out at that time a force equal to the task of restraining those savages and maintaining peace, has helped materially to lead me to the unwarrantable conclusion.*

And so came the war. The history of it is written that all may read; and it is not necessary here to refer at length to the details of it. The utterly unjust treatment of Bezuidenhout at Potchefstroom was the immediate cause of the outbreak. The armed interference of the Potchefstroom burghers with the Imperial officials followed on December 16, to be in turn succeeded by the battle of Bronkhorst Spruit on the 20th.

The following account of the affair is taken from Mr. Carter's book:

All went well on this day till about 2.30 p.m., when the following was about the order of march: One mounted infantryman in advance of the main body next the band; of F company, forty men; of A company, forty men; then followed the quarter-guard, thirteen men; and provost-escort and prisoners, twenty-three men. The remainder of the force was posted along the string of waggons, with the exception of the rear-guard of about twenty men, which were some distance behind. Colonel Anstruther, Captains Nairne and Elliott, Lieutenant Hume, and Adjutant Harrison were riding just in front of the band, when suddenly Boers appeared all round. The locality that the regiment had reached at the time was one where stood several farms, and the trees surrounding these homesteads afforded cover under which a hostile force could

* It is only fair to state that *at that time* the Home Government believed the prestige of the Imperial authority to be sufficient for all purposes.

assemble without being perceived from a distance. On the right was a ravine with wood in it, and amongst that the Boers were lying in ambush. How unexpected was the appearance of a force of Boers to the English may be judged from the fact that the band of the regiment was playing at the time. Colonel Anstruther, immediately he caught sight of the enemy on the crest of a slight rise to the front, called a halt, and the order was passed to the rear for the waggons to close up. Before this could be done a messenger from the enemy, carrying a white flag, came forward and handed the Colonel a note signed by Piet Joubert, and countersigned by other Boer leaders, desiring him to halt where he was until a reply had been received from Sir Owen Lanyon to the ultimatum the Boers had addressed to him. The message also contained the warning that if the soldiers advanced beyond a small stream in front of them, it would be taken as a declaration of war. Colonel Anstruther, with Conductor Egerton, had ridden out in front of the advanced guard to meet this flag of truce; after he had read the message, the bearer of it informed him verbally that two minutes were allowed for his decision. Colonel Anstruther verbally replied that he should march on to Pretoria, and, to use his own words, as published in his despatch written just before he died, the Boer messenger 'said that he would take my message to the Commandant-General; and I asked him to let me know the result, to which he nodded assent. Almost immediately, however, the enemy's line advanced.'

Whilst this short parley was going on, every effort was being made in the rear to get the waggons up, but without much good result, because when the Boers opened fire the rear-guard would be at least half a mile behind the head of the column. Even those who were guarding the waggons had not time to join the main body. When Colonel Anstruther saw the Boers advancing, he gave the order to his men to extend in skirmishing order, but before they could open out to more than loose files they were met with a murderous volley, and at the same time Boers on the right and left flank and in the rear, who had previously measured and marked off the distances, picked off every man within sight. Our men returned the fire as best they could, but in less than ten minutes 120 were either killed or wounded, besides a large proportion of the oxen in the waggons shot. The officers who exposed themselves were picked off almost immediately by the Boer marksmen. Captain Nairne, Lieutenant M'Sweeney, Lieutenant and Adjutant Harrison, Lieutenant Hume, Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Barter, Conductor Egerton, Surgeon Ward, were all wounded, besides Colonel Anstruther himself, who was shot in two or three places.

It was useless to contend against such odds, and the 'cease fire' was sounded, and handkerchiefs waved to denote submission. During this unequal struggle, Mrs. Smith, the widow of the bandmaster of the regiment, who, with the wife of Sergeant-Major Fox and some children, were riding in one of the foremost waggons, came fearlessly up to where the wounded lay, and, tearing strips from her clothing, helped the surgeon to bandage the wounds. The sergeant-major's wife was severely wounded, as was also Fox himself. There was no lack of heroism during those awful ten minutes, whilst men were being shot down like dogs. Lieutenant Harrison was shot through the head while cheering on his men; Lieutenant Hume was equally conspicuous for his coolness. An orderly-room clerk named Maistre and the Sergeant-Master-Tailor Pears quietly concealed the regimental colours in a wagon-box when they saw the danger of them falling into the hands of the enemy; and their work was not in vain, as Conductor Egerton

managed subsequently to wrap them round his body under his tunic, and having obtained permission after the fight was over to walk to Pretoria for medical assistance, he carried them safely to the capital, as well as the disastrous news of the engagement. Forty-two miles traversed by a wounded man on foot in eleven hours is in itself a feat worth mentioning, and one the value of which can only be really estimated by those who know what South African roads are in the rainy seasons.

As soon as our force surrendered, Franz Joubert, who had been in command of the Boers, and who, it is said, fired the first shot, with the exclamation, 'What is the use of waiting?' came forward with some of his men, and on finding poor Colonel Anstruther severely wounded expressed sorrow.

Whether the affair of Bronkhorst Spruit can be called an act of treachery on the part of the Boers is rather a nice question. Colonel Anstruther's words—the words of a dying man—rather go to prove that he was unfairly treated, though he does not say so directly. He was given to understand by the messenger who came with the flag of truce that another communication would be made to him as soon as his reply to the request to halt had been reported to the Boer Commandant. The only reply given him was 'a murderous volley.' The Boers cannot lay claim to much bravery or superiority (except in numbers) over our soldiers in this fight. Theirs was a deliberately-planned ambush to entrap men who had no idea that they were marching in an enemy's country. Bronkhorst Spruit engagement is the one during the whole of the war which does not redound to the credit of the Dutch, even if it does not reflect great discredit upon them. If a reasonable time had been allowed Colonel Anstruther to give his reply, the 94th could not then say, as they do say and will say, that they were treacherously surprised. 'Two minutes' looks, under the circumstances, very much like an idle pretence of fair dealing to cover an intentional act of cowardice which subsequent conduct could hardly palliate. The Boers say that they had not more men than were marching with the 94th on that occasion; that statement is worth very little, considering the evidence of our officers, and, above all, the harsh evidence of the facts that the 94th was from advance-guard to rear-guard practically surrounded and outnumbered in every direction.

The preparedness of the Boers and the precision of their fire may be gathered from the testimony of Dr. Crow, of Pretoria, who attended the wounded, and vouched for an average of five wounds per man. Dr. Crow also wrote :

But as disastrous as the late war in the Transvaal had been to British prestige, thank God those at Bronkhorst Spruit did their duty and died like men, a noble example to any army. If any stain has been cast on the British flag in the Transvaal, the gallant 94th did all that was possible by their deeds at Bronkhorst Spruit to obliterate it.

The news of this affair was received with horror, and the feelings roused by the details of it have never been allayed.

Race-hatred may have its origin in a hundred little incidents, but in the Transvaal there were two which undoubtedly, whether justly or otherwise, gave a character to the Boers that has embittered feeling against them more than any which had occurred in generations previous. The second affair followed very closely on the Bronkhorst Spruit engagement—*i.e.*, the infamous murder of Captain Elliott, the only surviving unwounded officer from Bronkhorst Spruit. Captains Elliott and Lambert were taken prisoners, and were offered the choice of two alternatives—either to remain prisoners of war during the hostilities in the Transvaal, or to be released on *parole d'honneur* on condition that they should leave the Transvaal at once, cross into the Free State under escort, and not bear arms against the Republican Government during the war. The second alternative was chosen. They received an escort and free pass from Commandant-General Piet Joubert. The following is extracted from Captain Lambert's Report to Sir George Colley on January 5 :

We started about 1 p.m. from the Boer camp, passing through the town of Heidelberg. After going about six to eight miles, I noticed we were not going the right road, and mentioned the fact to the escort, who said it was all right. Having been 'look-out' officer in the Transvaal, I knew the district well. I was certain we were going wrong, but we had to obey orders. At nightfall we found ourselves nowhere near the river drift, and were ordered to outspan for the night, and next morning the escort told us they would look for the drift. Inspanning at daybreak, we again started, but after driving about for some hours across country, I told the escort we would stop where we were while they went to search for the drift. Shortly after they returned and said they had found it, and we must come, which we did, eventually arriving at the junction of two rivers (Vaal and Klip), where we found the Vaal impassable, but a small punt, capable of holding only two passengers at most, by which they said we must cross. I pointed out that it was impossible to get my carriage or horses over by it, and that it was not the punt the General said we were to cross. The escort replied it was Pretorius's punt that the General told them to take us, and we must cross ; that we must leave the carriage behind and swim the horses, which we refused to do, as we then should have had no means of getting on. I asked them to show me their written instructions, which they did (written in Dutch), and I pointed out that the name of Pretorius was not in it. I then told them they must either take us back to the Boer camp again or on to the proper drift. We turned back, and after going a few miles the escort disappeared. Not knowing where we were, I proposed to Captain Elliott we should go to the banks of the Vaal, and follow the river till we came to the proper punt.

After travelling all Monday, Tuesday, and up till Wednesday about 1 p.m., when we found ourselves four hours, or twenty-five miles, from Spencer's punt, we were suddenly stopped by two armed Boers, who handed us an official letter, which was opened, and found to be from the Secretary to the Republican Government, stating that the members were surprised that, as officers and gentlemen, we had broken our *parole d'honneur*, and refused to leave the Transvaal; that if we did not do so immediately by the nearest drift, which the bearers would show us, we must return as prisoners of war; that as through our ignorance of the language of the country there might be some misunderstanding, they were loth to think we had willingly broken our promise. We explained that we should reply to the letter, and request them to take it to their Government, and were prepared to go with them at once. They took us back to a farmhouse, where we were told to wait until they fetched their commandant, who arrived about 6 p.m., and repeated to us the same that was contained in our letter of that day. We told him we were ready to explain matters, and requested him to take our answer back to camp. He then ordered us to start at once for the drift. I asked him, as it was then getting dark, if we could start early next morning, but he refused. So we started, he having said we should cross at Spencer's, being closest. As we left the farmhouse, I pointed out to him that we were going in the wrong direction; but he said, 'Never mind; come on across a drift close at hand.' When we got opposite it, he kept straight on; I called to him, and said that this was where we were to cross. His reply was, 'Come on!' I then said to Captain Elliott, 'They intend taking us back to Pretoria,' distant some forty miles. Suddenly the escort (which had all at once increased from two to eight men, which Captain Elliott pointed out to me; and I replied, 'I suppose they are determined we shall not escape, which they need not be afraid of, as we are too keen to get over the border') wheeled sharp down to the river, stopped, and, pointing to the banks, said, 'There is the drift—cross!' I drove my horses into the river, when they immediately fell; lifted them, and drove on about five or six yards, when we fell into a hole. Got them out with difficulty, and advanced another yard, when we got stuck against a rock. The current was now so strong and drift deep, my cart was turned over on to its side, and water rushed over the seat. I called out to the commandant on the bank that we were stuck and to send assistance, or might we return, to which he replied, 'If you do, we will shoot you.' I then tried, but failed, to get the horses to move. Turning to Captain Elliott, who was sitting beside me, I said, 'We must swim for it'; and asked could he swim, to which he replied, 'Yes.' I said, 'If you can't, I will stick to you, for I can.' While we were holding this conversation, a volley from the bank, ten or fifteen yards off, was fired into us, the bullets passing through the tent of my cart, one of which must have mortally wounded poor Elliott, who only uttered the single word 'Oh!' and fell headlong into the river from the carriage. I immediately sprang in after him, but was swept down the river under the current some yards. On gaining the surface of the water, I could see nothing of Elliott, but I called out his name twice, but received no reply. Immediately another volley was fired at me, making the water hiss around where the bullets struck. I now struck out for the opposite bank, which I reached with difficulty in about ten minutes; but as it was deep, black mud, on landing I stuck fast, but eventually reached the top of the bank, and ran for about two hundred yards under a heavy fire the whole while.

The Boers then invaded Natal and took up a position on Laing's Nek, four miles inside the Natal border, from which, on January 28, Sir George Colley endeavoured to oust them with a mounted force of 70 men and some 500 men of the 58th Regiment. The position is one difficult enough to climb unencumbered by military accoutrements, but the disposition of the little mounted force covered the approach. By some unexplained mistake, however, half of the mounted infantry charged and carried the Boer position before the 58th had climbed the hill, but were too weak to hold it and retired, leaving the 58th uncovered in a terrible ascent. But few of the exhausted men reached the top of the hill, and those, led by Colonel Deane, only to be shot down. Of the mounted men, 17 were killed and wounded; of the 58th, 73 were killed and 100 wounded. The result was absolute defeat of the British forces. The number of Boers engaged is not known, but the force behind the Nek consisted of several thousands, and no doubt a fair proportion engaged in the fight.

On February 8 General Colley made a demonstration in force on the Ingogo Heights. The force consisted of under 300 men, with 4 guns and 38 mounted men. On the Boer side there were about 1,000 men, and the fight lasted from morning until after dark. It was a drawn fight, in which both parties left the battlefield at night. There cannot be any doubt, however, that the balance of advantage was with the Boers, since the loss on the British side was very severe: 76 men were killed and 69 wounded.

On February 27 came Majuba, when Sir George Colley designed to retrieve his fortunes and strike an effective blow without the aid of his second-in-command, Sir Evelyn Wood, whom he had sent to hurry up reinforcements. The scaling of the mountain at night was a fine performance. The neglect to take the rocket apparatus or mountain guns, or to fortify the position in any way, or even to acquaint the members of the force with the nature of the position which they had taken up in the dark, and the failure to use the bayonets, were the principal causes of disaster. The Boers attacked in force a position which should have been absolutely impregnable, held as it was by a force of 554 soldiers. The Boer force is not known, but probably consisted of

upwards of 1,000 men, since Christian Joubert after the fight offered to take a portion of the men, numbering, as he said, some 500, to attack a small British laager on one of the spurs of the mountain. The splendid feat of taking the hill-top, however, was accomplished by a small storming party of less than 200 men, the balance of the Boer forces covering the approach of their comrades by an accurate and incessant long-range fire. The result, as is known, was terrible disaster: 92 killed and 134 wounded, and a number taken prisoners, represented the British loss, whilst the Boers lost 1 killed and 5 wounded. No attempt had been made to occupy positions below the crown of the hill which commanded the approaches, and the Boers were able to creep up under good cover from place to place by the exercise of their admirable tactics. It is impossible to detract from the performance of the Boers, and a glance at the position leaves one more astonished than ever that a successful attack could ever have been made upon it. The Boers displayed on this day the finest fighting qualities. The generalship of their fighting Commandant, Nikolas Smit, was of the highest order. The cleverness of the attack, and the personal bravery and audacity of the storming party are beyond praise.

By the time Sir Evelyn Wood had ranged his forces for an effective and extended attack on the Boers, and by the time Sir Frederick Roberts with the command of about 10,000 men had reached South Africa, the administration of Mr. Gladstone had awakened to the fact that the war was an unjust—not to say costly—one. An armistice was arranged and peace made without another blow.

The terms of the settlement proposed by the Liberal Government fitly illustrate the generosity of their motives. They proposed doing 'simple justice' to the Boers, but at the same time retaining the districts of Lydenburg, Middelburg, Wakkerstroom, and Utrecht, not to mention handing back Zoutpansberg to the original native occupants. So anxious were the Boer leaders to effect a peaceful settlement, so fearful were they of the actions of their followers, that when they arranged the long armistice they did not announce to their party the intentions of the British Government regarding the above districts. General Joubert did not communicate

to his army the terms of peace, but simply stated that a Royal Commission was to settle everything. A month later, when some inkling of the terms reached the Boers, a solemn protest and warning was issued, and when the Royal Commission actually sat, the British representatives were informed that any such curtailment of the territories would be followed by a resumption of hostilities. Needless to say the proposals were abandoned and the Boers got their way. So ended the war.

Ingogo has been called a drawn battle. Bronkhorst Spruit was—such as it was. At Laing's Nek and Majuba the Boers beat us, as Mr. Carter fairly puts it, 'when they were on the top of the hill and we were at the bottom, and when we were on the top of the hill and they were at the bottom.' The narrative of these events is about as humiliating a one as an Englishman can read. Here and there it is redeemed by the heroic conduct of individuals in the midst of general disaster. In the smaller affairs, such as the particularly gallant defences of Standerton, Potchefstroom, and Rustenberg, where little garrisons held their own with conspicuous ability and courage, there is something to cheer the disheartened reader. The defence of Potchefstroom by Colonel Winslow should be read in full for several reasons. The siege of Standerton witnessed several acts of valour, but, above all, that of Hall the volunteer, who single handed deliberately engaged a force of over 300 Boers, drawing their fire on himself in order to warn his comrades of the danger of being cut off and to give them a chance of escape—a noble act in which the gallant fellow achieved his object but lost his life. It was in Rustenberg where Captain Auchinleck, with about seventy men armed only with rifles, held his laager against hundreds of the enemy, fighting day and night for weeks; and eventually drove off the Boers who were trenching towards his position by charging at night with from nine to fourteen of his men and clearing the enemy out of the trenches with the bayonet. This performance he repeated three times, himself badly wounded on each occasion. The impression created on the enemy by these tactics was such that they overcame their desire to get at close quarters with him and left him severely alone.

It is not necessary to refer in great detail to the settlement. In effect it was that the Boers gained nearly all that they required, but not until the haggling and threatening had robbed concessions of all appearance of grace and justice. The natives were referred to in the conventional spirit. The unfortunate loyalists were left to take care of themselves. The men who had entered the Transvaal, and invested their capital and expended their energies there upon the most positive and sacred assurances of the British Government that the Queen's authority would never be withdrawn,—assurances given in public by the Conservative Government and confirmed by Mr. Gladstone's Government, assurances published by Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Garnet Wolseley, who said that 'as long as the sun would shine the British flag would fly over the Transvaal,'—were heartlessly abandoned, their protests were unheeded, the compensation allotted to them, namely, £1,400,000, was amended by the elimination of the million, their representations to Mr. Gladstone's Government were finally left unanswered—unless it be that the sneering reference made by that right honourable gentleman in the House of Commons to 'interested contractors and landjobbers' may be considered an adequate answer to a protest as moderate, as able, as truthful, and as necessary as Mr. Gladstone's remark was the reverse. In very truth, the position in which the British Premier had placed himself through his intemperate speeches in the Midlothian campaign, and his subsequent 'explaining away,' was an extremely unpleasant one. In Opposition Mr. Gladstone had denounced the annexation and demanded a repeal. On accession to power he adopted the policy of his predecessors, and affirmed that the annexation could never be revoked. On June 8, 1880, he had written to this effect to Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, the Transvaal deputation. Later on, in answer to an appeal that he should allay the apprehensions of the loyalists, who feared the results of the Boer agitation, he referred them to this very letter as a final expression of opinion, and authorized the publication of this message. When, however, peace had been concluded, and the loyalists, amazed and heartbroken at their threatened desertion, reminded him of his pledges

and implored him to respect them, he answered them in a letter which is surely without parallel in the record of self-respecting Governments. The wriggling, the equivocation, the distortion of phrases, the shameless 'explaining away,' are of a character that would again justify the remark of Lord Salisbury (then Lord Robert Cecil) in another matter many years before, that they were 'tactics worthy of a pettifogging attorney,' and even the subsequent apology—to the attorney. But what answer could be made to a protest which reminded the right honourable gentlemen of the following deliberate and official expression of his Government's policy?—

In your letter to me (wrote Mr. White for the loyalists) you claim that the language of your letter does not justify the description given. With the greatest respect I submit that it does, and I will quote the words on which I and also my colleagues base the opinion that it does unequivocally pledge the Government to the non-relinquishment of the Transvaal.

The actual words of your letter are :

'Looking at all the circumstances, both of the Transvaal and the rest of South Africa, and to the necessity of preventing a renewal of the disorders, which might lead to disastrous consequences, not only to the Transvaal, but to the whole of South Africa, *our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish the Transvaal*,' but, consistently with the maintenance of that sovereignty, we desire that the white inhabitants of the Transvaal should, without prejudice to the rest of the population, enjoy the fullest liberty to manage their local affairs.'

But your letter of the 8th of June not only contained this final and absolute announcement of the policy of England, but it gave the reasons for arriving at it in words which so aptly express the case of the loyalists that I quote them *in extenso*. They are as follows :

'It is undoubtedly matter for much regret that it should, since the annexation, have appeared that so large a number of the population of Dutch origin in the Transvaal are opposed to the annexation of that territory, *but it is impossible now to consider that question as if it were presented for the first time*. We have to do with a state of things which has existed for a considerable period, *during which obligations have been contracted*, especially, though not exclusively, towards the native population, *which cannot be set aside*.'

In your speech in the House of Commons, on the debate on Mr. Peter Rylands' motion condemning the annexation of the country and the enforcement of British supremacy in it, which was defeated by a majority of ninety-six, on the 21st of January in the current year, you used words of similar import. You are reported in the *Times* of the 22nd of January as saying :

'To disapprove the annexation of a country is one thing ; to abandon that annexation is another. Whatever we do, we must not blind ourselves to the legitimate consequences of facts. By the annexation

of the Transvaal we contracted new obligations. . . . I must look at the obligations entailed by the annexation, and if in my opinion, and in the opinion of many on this side of the House, wrong was done by the annexation itself, *that would not warrant us in doing fresh, distinct, and separate wrong by a disregard of the obligation which that annexation entailed.* These obligations have been referred to in this debate, and have been mentioned in the compass of a single sentence. First, there was the obligation entailed towards the English and other settlers in the Transvaal, perhaps including a minority, though a very small minority, of the Dutch Boers themselves; secondly, there was the obligation to the native races; and thirdly, there was the obligation we entailed upon ourselves in respect of the responsibility which was already incumbent upon us, and which we, by the annexation, largely extended, for the future peace and tranquillity of South Africa.'

Nor was this all. The loyalists proceeded to remind him that Lord Kimberley, his Secretary of State for the Colonies, had telegraphed in May, 1880, 'Under no circumstances can the Queen's authority in the Transvaal be relinquished,' and had confirmed the telegram in a despatch following; and that his lordship had also stated in the House of Lords on May 24 that '. . . after a careful consideration of the position, we have come to the conclusion that we could not relinquish the Transvaal. Nothing could be more unfortunate than uncertainty in respect to such a matter.' (Hansard, cclii., p. 208.)

The effects of the settlement, and the exposures in connection with it, and the attitude of the Imperial Government were most deplorable. No credit was given by the Boers to a Government which was clearly moved by the meanest considerations. No feeling but contempt, disgust, and even hatred, could be entertained by the loyalists for the Government which had so shamelessly deserted them. The settlement has left its indelible mark upon the sentiment of South Africa. The war, it will generally be admitted, was a most unfortunate occurrence. Only one thing could have been more unfortunate, and that was such a settlement as actually was effected—a settlement which satisfied no one, which outraged all, which threw South Africa into a state of boiling discontent. In some quarters the defeats of Majuba and Laing's Nek rankled deeply; yet they were fair fights, and Time can be trusted to allay the feelings of those who are worsted in a fair fight; but there were other matters which

roused a spirit in the English-speaking people of South Africa that had never been known before.

The former records of the Boers, favourable and unfavourable, are consistent with the records established in the War of Independence. None dare belittle the spirit which moved them to take up arms against the greatest Power in the world. Their ignorance may have been great, but not so great as to blind them to the fact that they were undertaking an unequal contest. It is not possible to say, with due regard to their records, that they are not a courageous people. Individual bravery, of the kind which takes no heed of personal risk, reckless heroic dash, they have not, nor do they pretend to have. Their system is entirely otherwise. They do not seek fighting for fighting's sake. They do not like exposing themselves to risk and danger. Their caution and their care for personal safety are such that, judged by the standard of other people's conduct in similar positions, they are frequently considered to be wanting in personal courage. It seems a hard thing to say of a people who have produced men like the first Bezuidenhout, who fought and died single-handed against the British troops; men like Piet Retief, as gallant a man as ever walked; men like Piet Uys, an example to all men for all time, and only one of many generations in one family of equally gallant Dutchmen; but it would truly seem that such examples do not occur with such frequency among the Boers as among nations with whom they have been compared. Where they have been able to choose their own positions, or where they have been stimulated by previous successes, they have done all that could possibly be asked of them; but their particular military system does not conduce to success under circumstances where men are suddenly and unexpectedly called upon to exhibit the virtues of discipline, to make what to the individual may appear a useless sacrifice of life, or, in cold blood and in the face of previous defeat, to attempt to retrieve a lost position.

The Boer military power has been called the biggest unpricked bubble in the world. Whether this be so or not—whether the early conflicts between the British troops and the Boers in the Cape Colony and Natal justify the view

that the Boers cannot take a beating and come up again—is a matter for those to decide who will give their impartial attention to the records.

Whilst conspicuous personal daring among the Boers may not be proverbial, it must be remembered to their everlasting credit that they, as did the Southerners in the American Civil War, robbed the cradle and the grave to defend their country. Boys who were mere children bore rifles very nearly as long as themselves; old men, who had surely earned by a life of hardship and exposure an immunity from such calls, jumped on their horses and rode without hesitation and without provision to fight for their independence.

There were, however, unfortunately, matters connected with the war which gave birth to a bitter and aching desire for revenge. Bronkhorst Spruit and the murder of Captain Elliott were among the earliest. Another was the shooting of Dr. Barbour (who was killed instantly) and Mr. Walter Dyas (wounded) by their escort under circumstances similar to those of the Elliott murder, with the exception that in this case the prisoners had been released on foot and in daylight, and were then shot down.

But there were others too. There was the murder of Green in Lydenburg, who was called to the Boer camp, where he went unarmed and in good faith, only to have his brains blown out by the Boer with whom he was conversing; there was the public flogging of another Englishman by the notorious Abel Erasmus because he was an Englishman and had British sympathies; and there were the various white flag incidents. At Ingogo the Boers raised the white flag, and when in response to this General Colley ordered the hoisting of a similar flag to indicate that it was seen, a perfect hail of lead was poured on the position where the General stood; and it was obvious that the hoisting of the flag was merely a ruse to ascertain where the General and his staff were. There was the ambulance affair on Majuba, when the Boers came upon an unarmed party bearing the wounded with the red cross flying over them, and after asking who they were and getting a reply, fired a volley into the group, killing Surgeon-Major Cornish.

There was the siege of Potchefstroom, during which the Boer force under Commandant Cronjé were guilty of actions contrary to the usages of civilized warfare. They are matters of history, and can easily be verified. Reference is made to them elsewhere in this volume in connection with Commandant Cronjé's action on another occasion.

And so the war left the country, as wars will, divided into two parties, with feelings towards each other that are deplorable enough in themselves, and not easily allayed. The curtain was rung down, and the scene was lost to the view of the world, but the play went on all the same behind the curtain. And this is what the new Government said to the world on August 8, 1881, when they took over the administration of the country :

To all inhabitants, without exception, we promise the protection of the law, and all the privileges attendant thereon.

To inhabitants who are not burghers, and do not wish to become such, we notify that they have the right to report themselves to the Resident as British subjects, according to Article 28 of the now settled Convention. But be it known to all, that all ordinary rights of property, trade, and usages will still be accorded to everyone, burgher or not.

We repeat solemnly that our motto is, 'Unity and reconciliation.'

CHAPTER II

AFTER THE WAR

IN 1882 Sir Bartle Frere wrote, 'I have never been able to discover any principle in our policy in South Africa except that of giving way whenever any difficulty or opposition is encountered.' The remark is still as true as when it was penned, and South Africa—the 'Grave of Reputations,'¹ as it has long been called—must by this time be regarded with doubtful emotions by successive Colonial Secretaries. What is it about South Africa, one asks, that has upset so many men of capacity and experience? Who can say? Often—most often—it is the neglect to thoroughly study and know what are called the 'local conditions,' and to pay due heed to local experience. Sometimes it is the subordination of State policy to party considerations which has ruined the Proconsul: witness Sir Bartle Frere, whose decisive action, firm character, and wise and statesmanlike policy are now—now that he is dead—recognised universally, as they have always been in South Africa. Perhaps there is something in Africa itself which makes it a huge exception to the rules of other lands; the something which is suggested in the 'rivers without water, flowers without scent, and birds without song'; a contrariness which puts the alluvial gold on the top of mountain ranges and leaves the valleys barren; which mocked the experience of the world, and showed the waterworn gravel deposit to be the biggest, richest, deepest, and most reliable

¹ Among the first notes which poor Colley—brave, wise, generous, and unlucky—wrote after taking office, was one containing these words: 'Whether I . . . shall find that South Africa is to me, as it is said to be in general, "the grave of all good reputations," remains to be seen.'

gold reef ever known ; which placed diamonds in such conditions that the greatest living authority, who had undertaken a huge journey to report on the occurrence, could only say, in the face of a successful wash-up, 'Well, there *may* be diamonds here, but all I can say is they've no right to be' ; the something which many, many centuries ago prompted the old Roman to write, 'Ex Africâ semper aliquid novi affert,' and which is in the mind of the South African to-day when he says, 'The impossible is always happening in Africa.'

There is this to be said for the Gladstone Ministry in 1881 : that, having decided on a policy of scuttle and abandonment, they did it thoroughly, as though they enjoyed it. A feeble vote-catching provision, with no security attached, was inserted in the Pretoria Convention relative to the treatment of natives, but no thought or care was given to the unfortunate British subject who happened to be a white man, and to have fought for his Queen and country.¹ The abandonment was complete, without scruple, without shame. It has been written that 'the care and forethought which would be lavished on a favourite horse or dog on changing masters were denied to British subjects by the British Government.' The intensity and bitterness of the resentment, the wrath and hatred—so much deeper because so impotent—at the betrayal and desertion have left their traces on South African feeling ; and the opinion of the might and honour of England, as it may be gleaned in many parts of the Colonies as well as everywhere in the Republics, would be an unpleasant revelation to those who live in undisturbed portions of the Empire, comfortable in the belief that to be a British subject carries the old-time magic of 'Civis Romanus sum.'

The Transvaal State, as it was now to be called, was re-established, having had its trade restored, its enemies crushed—for Secocoeni and Cetewayo were both defeated and broken—and its debts paid or consolidated in the form of a debt to England, repayable when possible. For some time not even the interest on this debt was paid.

Numbers of British subjects left the country in disgust and despair. Ruined in pocket and broken in spirit, they took

¹ See Appendix A for the full text of the Pretoria Convention.

what little they could realize of their once considerable possessions, and left the country where they could no longer live and enjoy the rights of free men. For some years the life of a Britisher among the Boers was far from happy. It is not surprising—indeed, not unnatural—that people unsoftened by education and the conditions of civilization, moved by fierce race prejudice, and intoxicated by unbroken and unexpected success, should in many cases make the vanquished feel the conqueror's heel. The position of men of British name or sympathies in the country districts was very serious, and the injustice done to those who had settled since the annexation, believing that they were to live under the laws and protection of their own Government was grave indeed.

The Government of the country was vested in a Triumvirate with Mr. Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger as Vice-President during the period immediately following the war; but in 1882 the old form was restored and Mr. Kruger was elected President, an office which he is now holding for the third successive term.²

Prior to the war the population of the country was reckoned by both Dutch and English authorities to be about 40,000 souls, the great majority of whom were Dutch. The memorial addressed to Lord Carnarvon, dated January 7, 1878, praying for repeal of the annexation, was 'signed by 6,591 qualified electors out of a possible 8,000,' as is explained in the letter of the Transvaal delegates to Sir M. Hicks-Beach dated July 10, 1878. The fact, already mentioned, that 3,000 electors had petitioned for the annexation only means that some of them changed their minds under pressure or conviction, and helped to swell the number of those who later on petitioned for repeal. The signatories to the above memorial would include practically all the Dutch electors in the country, and the remaining 1,400 or so would probably be the non-Boer party who preferred British rule, and could not be coerced into signing memorials against it. These figures are useful as a check upon those now put forward by the Transvaal Government to combat the assertion that the Uitlanders outnumber the Boers. Recognizing the fact that the Boers

² In February, 1898, he was elected for the fourth time.

are a singularly domestic and prolific people, one may allow that they numbered 35,000 out of the total population, an estimate that will be seen to be extremely liberal. At the time that the above figures were quoted by the Transvaal delegates every Boer youth over the age of twenty-one was a qualified voter, so that it would seem that the qualified Boer voter had an *average* of one wife and 4·3 children, a fair enough allowance in all conscience. These figures should be borne in mind, for the present Boer population consists of what remains of these 35,000 souls and their natural increase during eighteen years. There are other Dutch immigrants from the Cape Colony and Free State : these are aliens, who have the invaluable qualification of hating England and her sons and her ways and her works ; but, as will be made clear when the Franchise Law is explained, the present Boer electorate consists—or, without fraud or favouritism, *should* consist—of the ‘possible 8,000’ and their sons.

Many a champion of liberty has lived to earn the stigma of tyrant, and the Boers who in 1835 had trekked for liberty and freedom from oppressive rule, and who had fought for it in 1880, began now themselves to put in force the principles which they had so stoutly resisted. In the Volksraad Session of 1882 the first of the measures of exclusion was passed. The Franchise, which until then—in accordance with Law No. 1 of 1876—had been granted to anyone holding property or residing in the State, or, failing the property qualification, to anyone who had qualified by one year’s residence, was now altered, and Law No. 7 of 1882 was passed which provided that aliens could become naturalized and enfranchised after five years’ residence, thus attaining the status of the oldest Voortrekker. The feeling was now very strong against the Annexation Party, as they had been called, that is to say, the men who had had the courage of their convictions, and had openly advocated annexation ; and as usual the bitterest persecutors and vilifiers were found in the ranks of those who, having secretly supported them before, had become suspect, and had now need to prove their loyalty by their zeal. The intention was avowed to keep the party pure and undiluted, as it was maintained by many of the Boers that former proselytes had used their newly-acquired privileges to

vote away the independence of the country. The view was not unnatural under the circumstances, and this measure, had it not been a violation of pledges, might have found defenders among impartial persons; but unfortunately it proved to be not so much a stringently defensive measure which time and circumstances might induce them to modify, as the first step in a policy of absolute and perpetual exclusion. It was the first deliberate violation of the spirit of the settlement, and, although there is no clause in the Pretoria Convention which it can be said to contravene, it was, as Mr. Chamberlain has since styled it, 'a violation of the *status quo* as it was present to the minds of her Majesty's Ministers at the time the Convention was negotiated.' But the Gladstone Ministry, which had paid so heavily to get rid of the Transvaal question, was certainly not going to re-open it for the sake of holding the Boers to the spirit of the settlement.

Another precaution was taken to keep all the power in the hands of the Boers. The various towns which had formerly been entitled to representation in Parliament were deprived of this right, and have remained disfranchised ever since. Mr. Kruger feared that the enlightened thought of the towns would hinder the growth of his 'national policy.'

It was not too late even at this time to have bloodlessly settled the Transvaal question for ever by a fair but thoroughly firm attitude towards the restored Republic. No doubt British Ministers, conscious of an act of supreme self-restraint and magnanimity, believed that some reciprocal justice would be evoked. At any rate, it is possible that this was the reason which guided them, and not continued callous indifference to the fate of British subjects and the future of South Africa. In such case, however, they must have forgotten 'the fault of the Dutch'—which Andrew Marvell's couplet has recorded—of 'giving too little and asking too much.' The Transvaal Boers are very practical people, and no matter what they may receive or how they get it, whether by way of diplomacy or barter or the accident of good luck or deed of gift, they never neglect to press and scheme for more. It is an unpleasant feature in the Boer character, prominent alike in personal and general relations, begotten, mayhap, of hard life, constant struggle, and lack of education and

its softening and elevating influence. It is a feature which is common to all uneducated peoples who have suffered great hardships, and it will no doubt disappear in time ; but it is one which has to be reckoned with at the present day, and one which, when recognized at its true value, sustains the contention that the Boers, in dealing with those whom they regard as not of them, will recognise no right and do no justice unless compelled to do so. The considerations of a narrow and selfish policy are stronger than the sense of right and wrong.

British Ministers and the British people when glowing with a mildly enthusiastic satisfaction at their tolerant and even generous attitude towards a weaker opponent may imagine that they have sown good seed which in time will bear ample fruit ; but it is not so. Nothing but firmness and strict justice will avert a bloody day of reckoning. Nothing but prompt and effective veto on every attempt to break or stretch the spirit of past undertakings will bring it home to the Transvaal Government that all the give cannot be on the one side and all the take on the other ; that they cannot trade for ever on the embarrassment of a big Power in dealing with a little one ; and that they must comport themselves with due regard to their responsibilities.

Almost the first use made by the Transvaal Government of their recovered power was one which has wrought much mischief to the State. The Triumvirate who ruled the country in 1882 granted numbers of concessions, ostensibly for the purpose of opening up industries or developing mining areas. The real reasons are generally considered to have been personal, and the result was the crushing of budding activities, and the severe discouragement of those who were willing to expend capital and energies in legitimate work. Favouritism pure and simple dictated these grants. It is hardly too much to say that the system and spirit then introduced rule to this day, for although the Volksraad has taken definite resolution condemning the principle of monopolies and contracts conferring preferential rights of any sort, the spirit of this resolution is violated whenever the President and Executive deem it fit to do so—witness, for instance, the monopoly granted in December, 1895, for the free