

# THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT BOER TREK

## LECTURE I.

### THE FIRST BOER REBELLION

THE voluntary expatriation of the Dutch farmers of the Cape Colony, and their wanderings throughout the wilds of South-Eastern Africa, which ultimately led to their occupation of this district of Natal, are so singular in their character, and are likely to bear such important results upon the exploration and further knowledge of this vast continent, that it has appeared to me not uninteresting to note down, and thus to commemorate, the principal causes which led to this migration ; more particularly as, from the party-spirit which always prevails at the very time of such political movements, the most distorted, one-sided, and false views are generally taken of the motives and objects of the principal actors engaged therein ; and it is only after the lapse of years, when time has somewhat soothed down the

passions, and calm reason has resumed its sway, that it becomes possible to obtain and impart a perfectly dispassionate insight into such events.

I should also add, that I would at once refrain from entering upon this subject if anything like political discussion can be apprehended from such an inquiry; but as the chief actors whose names are mixed up in these occurrences are long since departed to that "bourn from whence no traveller returns," and as the grave questions which mainly produced that migration have also for ever ceased, I hope that I may now venture to touch upon them "as mere matters of history": happy, if a retrospect of those events may tend to enlighten rulers in general in the greatest of all human sciences, that of governing a people for their real welfare; and more happy still, if my remarks upon them may produce a kindly spirit of good-will between our old colonists and our recently settled immigrants; inform the latter of the hardships and vicissitudes which the former had to suffer to obtain possession of this favoured land, and thus induce them to look, at least without envy or jealousy, upon the advantages which (as regards the possession of lands) the former have purchased by the blood of their parents and relatives.

No one will deny that any causes which would have led to the expatriation (not of single individuals merely, but) of entire clans—at the head of which such names appear as those of Retief, Uys, and Maritz; of Potgieter, Landman, and Duplessis; and

of Zietsman, Boshoff, and Otto—must ever be viewed as producing a serious national calamity upon any country: that the departure of such men, taking with them their entire families and properties, has tended very seriously to affect and impair the strength of the eastern province of the Cape Colony, in the contests with the Kafir races; and that, although in the course of years some such families may be replaced, yet the words of the sweet, descriptive poet will in this case be found fully verified, viz., that

“Princes and lords may flourish and may fade,  
A breath may make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed can never be supplied.”

Having always felt a deep interest in the affairs of that colony, having been personally known to many of those earliest immigrants, among whom I counted some of my oldest and best friends, and having, moreover, personally witnessed several of those events which led to this expatriation, I may be permitted, I trust, to enter into some of those details which were so well known to me without subjecting myself to the charge of making them now a subject of political controversy, my sole object being to recall to memory some of those events which at the time were fraught with great public interest, and for which I think the time is fully come to rescue them from oblivion, as I feel confident that the mere recital of them

will now tend only to foster between us all a more friendly spirit, by producing a more correct acquaintance with each other's public history.

The first cause of the Cape colonists passing beyond the boundaries of that colony, and entering as pioneers into the wilds of the South African continent, is no doubt traceable to the inherent roving disposition of man in general; but more particularly of those descendants of Saxon origin, to whom, a thousand years ago, the wide range of the European continent was found insufficient to gratify their wandering propensities.

The Dutch Governor, Van Plettenberg, had formally defined the boundaries of the Cape Colony, in the year 1778, by the Great Fish River to the eastward, and by an ideal line\* running through (what are now called) the districts of Somerset, Graaff-Reinet, Beaufort, and Clanwilliam, up to a little rivulet, "the Koussie," flowing into the Southern Atlantic, to the north-west; but for nearly forty years these boundaries were far better respected by the colonists meeting at the eastern frontier the warlike and independent race of the Amakozée, who, far from allowing any inroads upon their own territories, commenced a system of aggression upon our colonists, which extended over the greatest part

\* By a proclamation of Sir Harry Smith, dated 17th December, 1847, and confirmed by Her Majesty, the northern boundaries of the Cape Colony have been brought up to the banks of the Great Orange River.

of the Graaff-Reinet and Uitenhage districts, from which they were not finally expelled until the year 1812. This system of aggression they have never abandoned, but on the contrary have perseveringly carried on for nearly seventy years, each succeeding war having only formed them into a more dangerous, experienced, and vindictive foe. Along this extensive northern line the colonists also found little temptation to transgress those boundaries, from the arid deserts skirting the southern banks of the Great Orange River, where a few isolated Bushmen, the very outcasts of the human race, seemed to verify the fabulous accounts of the "Trogloodytes" of Africa, living, as they were, in holes and caves, hardly able to procure a scanty subsistence from the wild animals of the desert and from a few bulbous roots of the earth. These combined causes kept our Cape colonists for many years within the prescribed boundaries; but at the beginning of the present century small parties of a half-caste breed of European and Hottentot origin, mixing with the Mantatees, gradually occupied the lands beyond the Orange River, at the north-east boundary of the Cape Colony, and from them the race of what were called the Griquas was formed, with whom the colonists opened a regular intercourse, as they soon found that in seasons of excessive drought within the colony (where their herds and flocks were dying for want of pasture) the lands to the northward of the Orange River

were generally favoured with more frequent and regular thunderstorms, thus ensuring a better supply of grass during the summer months than the colony afforded. From that moment all the grazing farmers in that neighbourhood began to form establishments in the country between the Orange and Vaal Rivers (the Kye and the Knu Gariep), and took possession of such tracts as they found unoccupied, or otherwise entered into regular leases with the prior occupants of those lands; but they still continued to consider their domicile to be within the colony, to which they returned whenever the seasons of drought had passed away, or whenever called upon to pay their "opgaaf," or annual assessed taxes, and did not for a moment consider themselves as absolved from the duties and ties which bound them to the old colony.

This wandering habit, thus kept up and promoted by the vicissitudes and the periodical seasons of drought, was still further confirmed by the very tenure and extent of the lands granted to them within the colony.

The loan farms (subsequently converted into quit-rent lands) granted in areas never less than 6000 acres, but in those districts frequently to 15,000 and 20,000 acres—while somewhat justified by the aridity of the soil and the want of permanent springs—yet confirmed the colonists more and more in their purely pastoral or nomad habits, which gradually weaned them from all desire to cultivate their lands;

and, consequently, deadened that affection and attachment to a particular locality which is the natural result of agriculture and the improvement of the soil. On the contrary, with them their flocks and herds constituted their sole care and delight. Whenever these increased and multiplied they were content and happy; but the moment these suffered they were as ready as the patriarchs of old to strike their tents, or rather to pack up their waggons, and to go forth, either to the right hand or to the left, and to search for lands where late rains promised more abundant grass and water for their cattle.

It is important to keep this constantly in view, as explaining, from inherent causes, the facility and rapidity with which those migrations took place, and the unconcern with which, even to this day, many of our colonists are ready to flit from one district to another, for the most (apparently) frivolous reasons, taking their chance to find sufficient or better lands in the further wilds of Africa; and from these data we are, I think, warranted in drawing this apparently paradoxical conclusion: that the very possession of large tracts of country in the hands of single individuals lessens in them the affection for particular localities, that it fosters and encourages a wandering and pastoral life, which is at once opposed to that steady cultivation of the soil, which alone leads to the permanent improvement of a country; that it is opposed to all outlay of capital and labour, whereby alone even the most

fertile soils are improved and rendered productive ; and that, in so far, such extensive grants will ever prove opposed to civilisation and the true interests of any country.

But other causes, nearly forty years ago, began to prepare this important movement: in these I happened to be somewhat mixed up ; and as these particulars are not generally known, I believe their recital will prove of sufficient interest to claim your attention.

In the year 1813, on my return to the Cape Colony, I may assert with perfect truth that I found it enjoying such a state of general prosperity and social happiness as rarely falls to the lot of any colony, and has certainly not been felt in that colony before or after that period. The mild and conciliatory administration of the Earl of Caledon, his personally cordial and frank intercourse with all classes of society, and his princely hospitality, cemented and kept up the most friendly bond of union between the governor and governed, between the colonists and the English immigrants, and literally transformed all ranks of society into one family, to which the spirit of party, of jealousy, or of distinction of race was utterly unknown ; and anyone who at that time would have entertained a thought of creating such distinctions would have been scouted and marked as an enemy to the public welfare and to society. Lord Caledon's successor, Sir John Cradock (afterwards created Lord Howden), and



his fascinating consort, Lady Theodosia, continued to keep up that hospitality, and to render the government both efficient and popular.

An end had just been put to the first Kafir war, in which the Cape colonists, with the aid of a small military force under the command of my never-to-be-forgotten brother-in-law, Col. Graham, had expelled the Kafirs from our own territory, and a line of stockaded forts placed at a distance of from twenty to twenty-five miles from each other along the whole extent of our eastern boundary had effectually secured our inhabitants from the aggression of a single marauding Kafir, upon whom instant death had been solemnly denounced as the penalty of their transgressing our boundary.

At that time also an army of about 4000 or 5000 men (among whom was one body of cavalry nearly 1000 strong), headed by a numerous staff, effectually secured our coasts from foreign foes, and our territories within the colony; and being maintained in a high state of discipline, not only tended to promote the pleasures of society, but entailing a vast military expenditure, stimulated agriculture and commerce to such an extent that the colony bore, without grudging or complaint, an expenditure which at the present day must appear hardly credible.

The Governor of that colony was then receiving out of the colonial revenue as—

Civil Governor only	.	.	£12,000
A Lieutenant-Governor	.	.	3000

A Secretary to Government . . .	£3000
A Dep. Secretary £1500, but with per- quisites bringing it up to . . .	3000
A Collector of Customs . . .	1200
A Comptroller of Customs . . .	1000
A Treasurer-General . . .	1200
An Auditor-General . . .	1000
A Paymaster-General . . .	1000

and on this same scale some ten or twelve officials alone (who were paid in sterling according to the rate of exchange on the pay day) received out of the colonial revenue upwards of £30,000 per annum ;\* which heavy burthen upon the colony (although not then seriously felt) no doubt laid the foundation of great subsequent distress, and of many difficulties into which the Colonial Government was thrown when the general peace in 1815 brought about a vast reduction in the military expenditure, and the withdrawal of almost all the troops ; when trade

\* These appointments emanated from the Colonial Office, and their salaries were fixed in *sterling* money, but having to be paid in *paper currency* (the only circulating medium within the Colony), these officials obtained payment according to the rate of exchange at the time of receiving their salaries. As these salaries became payable on the first of each month, the Governor (who alone received £1000 per month) directed the Commissary-General to draw bills on England towards the close of the prior month, *and to tender these to the highest bidders for such bills*. The payment of the sterling salaries for the first of the following month was fixed on an average of the three *highest tenders* received by the Commissariat the week before, and it was remarked that several of these *sterling* officials having to make remittances to their families or creditors at home, their tenders for bills were always at the *highest* rate of exchange (but generally to a small amount), which invariably helped to fix the average.

became paralysed, and when the repeated and urgent petitions from the inhabitants at length brought about a reduction of those extravagant salaries, and led to a more uniform and well-arranged system in the payment of public servants.

One serious grievance was, however, generally felt, which, from the unsettled state in which the colony had been during the last ten years (having passed during that time through three successive and different governments—the British, the Dutch, and again the British), there had been no fit opportunity for remedying. This grievance was the want of an efficient and impartial administration of justice throughout the country districts. The Supreme Court at Cape Town could alone take cognizance of any serious civil or criminal case arising in any part of the colony: there was hardly any regular communication with the interior, and although the boards of Landdrost and Heemraden in each district could take cognizance of minor offences and civil suits of a limited amount, yet it was notorious that from the vast extent of the two districts of Graaff-Reinet and Uitenhage (which then embraced one-half of the colony) access to these two tribunals was exceedingly difficult and precarious. The absence of the two Landdrosts, who at stated intervals were required to visit every part of their districts, and the commandos against Kafirs, Bushmen, or others, which were frequently called out, and in which they generally took part, gave any

suitor a very doubtful chance of ever finding the Landdrost on his judgment-seat, but on the contrary his place there was frequently occupied by a worthy yeoman, who, as one of the Heemraden, officiated for him, but who was generally totally unfit to decide any important legal question between man and man.

The time appeared then to have arrived to remedy this evil, and one of the most important and beneficial acts of Lord Caledon's government was his directing that two of the members of the Supreme Court should annually visit as "a Commission of Circuit" every district in the colony, and there hold a court, with all such powers and authorities as were possessed by the Supreme Court, with liberty to refer any case for final determination to the Supreme Court, in like manner as at present prevails in regard to the District Court here and the Supreme Court of Cape Town.

But it cannot be denied, and experience soon showed, that justice, by being brought so much nearer to their homes, also brought to light various offences which, from the sparseness of the population and the difficulty of obtaining redress, had hitherto remained unexamined and unpunished; and the very first circuit which proceeded through the colony was furnished with a calendar containing between seventy and eighty cases, of murders, aggravated assault, and the like, which the missionaries, Dr. Van der Kemp and the Rev. J. Read, constituting themselves the protectors of the Hottentot race, and who had then

established the first missionary school or location on the frontier (at Bethelsdorp), deliberately brought forward and transmitted to the local Government as charges against the members of almost every respectable family on the frontier.

The Government, of course, referred those charges to the Commission of Circuit, with directions to institute a searching inquiry into them all, and this duty occupied the first commission for several months; but from the difficulty of getting up the witnesses and sifting the preparatory examinations a number of these cases had to stand over for the following Circuit Court, and it was not until the sitting of the third Circuit Court (at which I officiated as Registrar) that the last cases on that fearful calendar were finally disposed of; and it is but just to add that of the long list of atrocious crimes thus inquired into with the utmost care and impartiality not one single instance of murder was proved against the accused, although in a few cases acts of personal assault and transgression of some colonial law were brought home to them, and punished accordingly.

As a curious instance of the extent to which some of these informations had been received, and had been readily adopted by the missionaries Van der Kemp and Read, without properly investigating them before bringing forward such serious criminal charges, I may mention that at Uitenhage a widow of one of the most respectable inhabitants in the

district was tried on the charge of wilful murder, for having ordered a young Hottentot some years before to be brought into her house; for having directed a boiler of hot water to be prepared, and for having by force pressed down his feet into the boiling water until they had been completely scalded and his extremities destroyed!

This woman had of course to be placed in the dock and tried as a criminal on this atrocious charge; a host of witnesses were brought up and examined, from whose testimony (and many of these Hottentots themselves) it was fully proved that many years before, while this widow lived in the Lange Kloof district (which is the coldest district of the Cape Colony), this young Hottentot had been sent out to collect some cattle and drive them home, when he had been caught in a snowstorm; that not returning at the appointed time, every search had been made for him by order of this widow; that he had at length been found and brought home late at night, with his extremities quite benumbed and frostbitten; that this widow had immediately, by friction and bandages, endeavoured to restore animation to his extremities; and in her ignorance, but from the kindest motives, judging that injuries of this nature could be best cured by opposite remedies, she had ordered a boiler of hot water to be prepared, and had kept the young lad's feet therein for several minutes, from no other possible motive than from a feeling of kindness and

humanity to endeavour to restore animation in his extremities, in which she however failed; that the lad had lived for several years afterwards in her service, and that of other masters, and had subsequently died from disease quite unconnected with this injury.

This widow was of course acquitted, with every expression of sympathy by the judges on the position in which she had been placed; but it is evident that such prosecutions, in which nearly 100 of the most respectable families on the frontier were implicated, and more than 1000 witnesses summoned and examined, and in several of which the parties accused, although acquitted of the more serious charges, were mulcted in fines and imprisonment, and had, moreover, to pay heavy law charges (for in the state of the law at that time the ex-officio prosecutors were entitled to claim costs, and in many instances in which the parties were considered to have the means, did exact them\*), that all those results engendered a bitter feeling of hostility towards the administration of justice in general, and more particularly against the missionaries who had brought forward these accumulated charges against such a number of colonists.

\* The attorney-general or public prosecutor was by law entitled to claim double the amount of the law charges due to the advocates. He had to make out a regular "bill of costs," which was subject to the taxation of the registrar of the Supreme Court, and at the foot of such bill of costs the public prosecutor charged, *pro fisco*, double, by multiplying the bill by two.

This, then, was the state of feeling generally prevalent throughout the remote country districts, when in the month of October, 1815, another Commission of Circuit, at which I again officiated as the Registrar, held its session at Graaff-Reinet, when one of those "untoward" events (to use a phrase from a Royal speech) took place, which set the whole eastern province in a blaze, drove a great mass of the population into open rebellion against their Sovereign, and brought the heads of several respectable families to an ignominious death, thereby causing an alienation from, and bitterness of feeling towards, the local Government, which a lapse of thirty-five years has not been able entirely to eradicate.

At the opening of the session at Graaff-Reinet, the Landdrost of that district, Mr. (afterwards Sir A. Stockenstrom), acting as the *ex-officio* prosecutor, informed the court that a farmer named Fredk. Bezuidenhout, living in the Baviaan's River district, had refused to appear before the court of Landdrost and Heemraden on a charge of ill-treatment of a Hottentot preferred against him, and that he had threatened to shoot the messenger or sheriff if he ventured again to approach his premises. He was known to be a person of a very daring character, and the Landdrost therefore applied for a warrant of "personal summons" (as it was legally termed), ordering him forthwith to appear in person before the Commission. The court granted this applica-



tion, and from the lawless habits of the individual, and his daily intercourse with Kafirs, whom, it was known, he admitted and dealt with, contrary to the law then existing, the court gave an order authorising the messenger who was sent off with the summons to call in the aid of the nearest military force, if he thought it necessary or apprehended any danger.

The messenger, upon reaching the neighbourhood, was informed that some Kafirs had been seen at the Baviaan's River, and thereupon applied to Lieutenant Rousseau, in command at the Boschberg post (now the village of Somerset), for his aid, who immediately, with twenty men of the Cape Corps, entered the Baviaan's River Poort, towards the residence of Fredk. Bezuidenhout. To a lover of nature this is a particularly picturesque spot, which was selected afterwards by Scottish immigrants, headed by Mr. Pringle, as their location. They have called it "Glenlynden," and I believe it is at present one of the most favoured settlements to be found in Somerset or Albany; but at the time of the occurrence now detailed it was only notorious for the impervious nature of the bush around, for the lawlessness of its inhabitants, and the facilities with which they maintained constant intercourse with the Kafirs, in defiance of the strict law forbidding all such intercourse under the severest penalties.

Upon approaching the residence of Bezuidenhout, they found him fully prepared to meet them; for

taking up a position (with a powerful half-caste person in his employ) behind the walls of a cattle-kraal, both being armed, Bezuidenhout called on them not to advance, as the first man would be shot! Undeterred by this menace, Lieut. Rousseau ordered his men to extend themselves in skirmishing order, and to attack the spot, when Bezuidenhout, for fear of being surrounded, after a hasty shot, which luckily took no effect, fled into his house, and, escaping through the back door, rushed into a thick bush and jungle close to the house, where, strange to say, for upwards of an hour this party of twenty active "track-finders" failed to trace the retreat of the two fugitives.

After again and again following their track up to a ledge of rocks where it at once became lost, they chanced to espy, in a remarkable precipitous impending rock or "krans," the shining muzzles of two rifles protruding from a hole in that ledge, thus announcing the lair into which they had got. Lieut. Rousseau thereupon crawled with difficulty to the top of those rocks, and there, being stationed but a few feet above the aperture of this cavern, he challenged Bezuidenhout to come out and surrender, acquainting him with the nature of his errand, and assuring him of personal safety, upon his merely engaging to accompany the messenger of the court, on the summons he was ordered to serve upon him; but the only answer he received was, that he (Bezuidenhout) would never surrender but with his life!

Finding then all his efforts vain to bring him to reason, and anxious to get out of these kloofs with his men before night, Lieut. Rousseau, keeping his position above, directed his men silently to form in two files, each party scrambling up in opposite directions from under the rock; when the heads of each column having got a few inches under the entrance, one party rushed forward and threw up the two projecting barrels, which were instantly fired off, but without effect, while the leading man of the second column fired his deadly rifle straight into the cave, from whence a cry immediately issued for mercy and surrender. All firing at once ceased, when the half-caste Hottentot crawled forth, stating that he surrendered himself, and that his master lay mortally wounded within the cave.

The men of the detachment even then with difficulty got into this grotto, which proved of stalactite formation, and of goodly dimensions within, where several guns and a large quantity of balls and ammunition were found collected, evidently showing that this place had long been prepared for a retreat in a similar emergency; and at the entrance lay the expiring corpse of the unhappy victim of his own obstinacy, having, in the recumbent position in which he had placed himself before the cave, received the fatal shot both through the head and breast.

Finding that the surrounding bush was occupied by Kafirs, with whom Bezuidenhout had kept up

daily intercourse, Lieut. Rousseau hastened to retire out of these kloofs before nightfall, taking the half-caste Hottentot in custody, whom he sent up to Graaff-Reinet, where he was put upon his trial; but after a full inquiry into all those particulars he was acquitted and discharged, and the Commission of Circuit proceeded soon after, passing by the present towns of Somerset and Graham's Town, to the town of Uitenhage, where the trial of several important cases awaited their arrival.

While engaged in the midst of these trials, an officer stationed at Graham's Town arrived one evening (having left that town the morning of the same day) with the astounding intelligence that the farmers of the Somerset and Tarka districts were all in arms, and were about to attack Capt. Andrews' post, which was stationed along the northernmost banks of the Fish River, to prevent any inroads from Kafirs in that quarter; and that Major Fraser, in command at Graham's Town, had immediately proceeded to the scene of action. Within an hour from the receipt of that intelligence Col. Cuyler, who was both Landdrost at Uitenhage and the Commandant of the Frontier, started on horseback, and within forty-eight hours, to the surprise of the rebel farmers (who were then still discussing their plan of operations), informed them of his presence, and desired to know the cause of those proceedings.

He then ascertained, that upon the death of

Fredk. Bezuidenhout, his relatives and neighbours had assembled at his farm, immediately after the departure of Lieut. Rousseau and his detachment, to commit his remains to the grave; and on that occasion John Bezuidenhout, a brother of the deceased, had become exceedingly excited, impressing upon all around that an act of gross outrage and illegality had been committed upon the deceased by his house having been surrounded and his person attacked by the military, as every burgher could only legally be arrested by his field-cornet or the civil authorities. This address had created universal sympathy, and all those present had at once engaged to avenge themselves for his outrage by attacking the nearest military post and expelling the British forces from the frontier.

They felt, however, that such plans ought to be more considered and matured before being carried out, and they had accordingly resolved to issue circular letters to the neighbours around, calling upon them to meet together and consider the present state of the country; while Cornelis Faber, a brother-in-law of the Bezuidenhouts, immediately started to hold a personal conference with the Kafir chief Gaika, to solicit him to make a joint attack upon the military posts, so as to expel the British forces from the frontier, promising him a full share in the expected booty. Several meetings were accordingly held in the more immediate neighbourhood by those inclined to join the rebels, and they

all resolved to place themselves under the command of Hendrik Prinslo, of the Boschberg, and of John Bezuidenhout; and having determined upon this first step, other circulars were more widely sent abroad to the adjoining districts, bearing the signatures of the leaders, inviting and commanding them to meet in arms at a particular spot on a day named, to "expel the tyrants from the country."

One of these circulars having providentially got into the hands of a loyal and well-affected farmer, he lost no time in transmitting it to the Deputy-Landdrost of Cradock, Mr. Van der Graaff, who forwarded it immediately to Capt. Andrews, whereupon the latter sent out a military party and apprehended Prinslo, while preparing to leave his farm to join the first assembly of men in arms. He was immediately secured and taken in custody to Capt. Andrews' post, who by this intelligence had also had time to strengthen his position and put it in some state of defence, when, two days after, three to four hundred men in arms appeared before it and summoned him to give up the post, and deliver up the prisoner Prinslo. At this time Faber joined them from Kafirland, with the unsatisfactory intelligence that Gaika had given him a most evasive reply, to the effect that he would call his Pakate\* together, and take some time to

\* The Pakate are the counsellors who always accompany the Great Chief, and without whose advice and concurrence no great public measure is ever determined upon.

consider, evidently following out the often experienced Kafir policy of watching the tide of events.

Some vacillation was thereby created in the operations of the Boers, and this became more apparent when that active officer, Major Fraser, succeeded the same evening in throwing himself into the post and opening communications with them, and when Col. Cuyler also, two days after, arrived on the spot, and informed them that all their plans were fully known, and would be signally punished. Before, however, proceeding to any extremities, a worthy field-commandant, William Nel, volunteered to go among the rebels, and if possible to avert from them the impending hazard they were running. He fearlessly continued to visit them for two days, was on several occasions in imminent danger of his life from some of the most violent and lawless of the rebels, who evidently saw that he was succeeding in opening the eyes of some to the dangerous position in which they were placed; when the leaders Faber, Bezuidenhout, and others, to counteract this impression, which they also saw manifesting itself, called the whole of their host together, and exacted from them a solemn oath, which they all took while ranged in a circle, loudly exclaiming that they would remain faithful to each other until they had expelled the tyrants from the frontier!

Col. Cuyler despairing, upon this intelligence, of bringing about their submission by peaceable means,

sallied forth the next morning early, out of Capt. Andrews' post, at the head of a troop of the 21st Light Dragoons, and a troop of loyal burghers headed by Commandant Nel, and finding an advanced post of the rebels (which they appear to have thrown out from their main body), Col. Cuyler at once ordered the troops to advance upon them, when about thirty, forming their left wing, threw down their arms in token of surrender; and the remainder falling back upon their main body, they all gave up the hope of further resistance, and slowly retired with all their waggons and cattle into the fastnesses of the Baviaan's River, where (they were well aware) a small force could hardly expect to dislodge them. Some further attempt to bring them to submission having again failed, Major Fraser on one side, the Landdrost Stockenstrom on another, and the Deputy-Landdrost of Cradock on a third point, arranged a combined movement, by which they entered and cleared simultaneously all the fastnesses of that impervious glen; the result of which was, that most of the followers of this band, now enclosed, contrived at night stealthily to escape by passes with which they were familiar; but the principal leaders still determined to reject all terms, broke up with their waggons and all their necessary "matériel," and contrived to get out of that district without direct opposition, and proceeded as far as the Winterberg, immediately bordering upon Kafriland, where they expected to meet with safety; but



Major Fraser with a detachment of the Cape Corps succeeded at length in completely surrounding them in a deep kloof, where they were come upon while outspanned; but rejecting all offers of surrender, John Bezuidenhout, Steps., Corns., and Abraham Botman, Andries Meyer, Corns. Faber, his wife, and his young son, fourteen years old, took up a position behind their waggons, from whence they maintained a regular skirmish for some time, killing one of the Cape Corps and wounding another, and it was not until Bezuidenhout was shot, and Faber and his wife were both wounded, that the troops succeeded in taking them all prisoners.

They were from thence guarded by a military escort, and committed to the gaol of Uitenhage, where, subsequently, some fifty or sixty more persons who were traced, and known to have joined in the rebellion, were secured; and a special commission, appointed at Cape Town, soon arrived there to try the offenders. After some preliminary inquiry, thirty-nine persons out of the whole party were selected as the most culpable, who were put upon their trial on the charge of high treason, and waging war against His Majesty; and after a lengthened and painful trial, a sentence was passed condemning six of the leaders to suffer capital punishment; and all the others, after witnessing the ignominious death of their leaders, to undergo various degrees of punishment by transportation, banishment, and fines, according to the various degrees of their proved

culpability. Upon this sentence being forwarded to the Governor of the colony for his "fiat," before being carried into execution, His Excellency was pleased to commute the sentence of one of the leaders into transportation for life ; but with regard to them all, the sentence directed that they should be led to a remarkable plot of ground, or plateau, called the "Slachters Nek," being the very spot where these leaders had exacted from all their followers the oath to stand by each other until they had "expelled the tyrants."

Thither they were taken under a strong military escort, and on the 6th of March, 1816, under the direction of Col. Cuyler (upon whom, both as the ex-officio prosecutor and as commandant, the duty devolved of seeing the sentence carried out), the sad preparations were made, in the presence of a large concourse of the friends and relatives of those about to undergo the punishment of death, and who were gathered together from all parts of the frontier to take a last farewell of those whose lives were to be forfeited, although it appeared that some hope was still entertained among them that their lives would be spared. In these hopes they were, however, sadly disappointed when they saw the scaffold prepared to receive the five culprits, who with perfect resignation and firmness, under the spiritual guidance of a worthy minister, the Rev. Mr. Herhold, simultaneously mounted the fatal ladder, from which, at a given signal, they were launched into eternity !

But, even then, they were doomed not to find an end to their misery ; from the hasty and imperfect manner in which the scaffold had been constructed, it proved insufficient to bear the weight and dying struggles of these five powerful men thus thrown off. The whole fabric gave way, and the unfortunate men, slowly recovering from the asphyxiated state into which they had been partially thrown, crawled up to the officer whose painful duty it was to see to the execution of that sentence, calling aloud for mercy. This was responded to by all their friends placed without the circle, who, viewing this as a signal dispensation of Providence, were with difficulty kept from forcing themselves through the military array, and with screams and shouts joined in the cry for mercy.

But the stern nature of his duty left the kind-hearted Col. Cuyler no alternative but to see the execution carried out to the letter of the sentence.

The culprits were again secured, every preparation was again hastily made, so as not to allow the day to pass within which the sentence directed the execution to take place ; and amidst the cries and clamour of their friends, the five unfortunate beings were doomed again singly to mount the ladder, and the last rays of the setting sun shone gloomily upon the five expiring sufferers, now dangling in mid-air, until life became extinct, when they were cut down and their earthly remains buried under the scaffold by the hands of the executioner (in the terms of the

sentence of the law), and amidst the cries and sobs of their friends, to whom their last request to obtain the dead bodies was refused.

Thus ended the rebellion of 1815, the most insane attempt ever made by a set of men to wage war against their Sovereign, the result of which could not have been doubtful for a single moment: it originated entirely in the wild unruly passions of a few clans of persons who could not suffer themselves to be brought under the authority of the law: the sentence passed upon them was no other than might have been expected in a case of overt rebellion thus committed; and although at the present time, with our feelings of humanity becoming daily more and more abhorrent of the punishment of death, we may think that the forfeiture of one or two lives might have amply atoned for the offence (considering the lives previously sacrificed), yet the culprits or their friends could have no cause for just complaint when, for crimes such as these, the rigour of the law was enforced; on the other hand, we need only call to remembrance our own feelings at the perusal of the thrilling pages of the immortal author of *Waverley*, to admit that pity and commiseration for the vanquished are perfectly consistent with the admission of the unlawfulness of their cause; for although we need not exactly assent to the proposition of the author of the *Pharsalia*—

“*Victrix causa diis placuit sed victa Catoni,*”

yet we may justly, at least, make allowance for the wounded feelings of those who were left behind.

In fact, I know, from personal interviews with several of the descendants of those who were then executed, that these events which I have now detailed, have left in their minds a far more indelible impression than even their losses by the Kafir wars, or the abolition of slavery. When here as Her Majesty's Commissioner, in 1843 and 1844, I endeavoured frequently, in converse with many influential farmers, to soothe down the feelings of hostility which they openly avowed against Her Majesty's Government; and when I had frequently (I hoped) succeeded in convincing them of the mistaken views which they had imbibed as to the principles and objects of Government in public matters, and proved to them satisfactorily, that (as regarded their future prospects) an entire new system had been laid down, and was now carrying on, to give them the enjoyment of the utmost share of rational liberty in all their political institutions; when I had succeeded so far in convincing their minds, I have more than once felt a pang to hear the embodiment of their inmost feelings expressed in the words—"We can never forget Slachters Nek!"

Such expressions, coming from the heart, could not but be respected and sympathised with, and we might only hope that the rising up of another generation would gradually obliterate such feelings; and that, as in the present descendants of those who

took prominent parts, and "were out," in the Scotch Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, *their* feelings of hostility towards the Government are long since forgotten in the unity of interests which now prevails: this would undoubtedly also here have taken place to a certain extent, if after that date two or three other events deeply affecting their interests had not tended still further to keep up and excite that distrust of, if not hostility towards, the Government, which more directly preceded and brought this vast expatriation.

If you, ladies and gentlemen, have felt any interest in this introductory address, I shall willingly devote a little more time to collect the materials and give you the details of those further events; but before I pledge myself to carry out that intention, allow me to throw myself upon your candour, at once to pronounce whether any here present conceive that in so doing I can be said to depart from that principle which I have been the first to impress upon our Council, that we should not enter upon matters of present political bearing in the district. If this be felt by anyone, I shall at once decline carrying out a task from which I only hope to derive the pleasure of producing a kindly spirit between our present immigrants and the Dutch farmers, by their becoming, as it were, more intimately acquainted with each other. I have also ventured upon this course, as I confess I do not view such a retrospect as in the slightest degree connected with the present

political state of the country, respecting which I am well aware such an entire change has taken place in the general policy of Her Majesty's Councils, that so far from wishing to withhold any rights or privileges from any of Her Majesty's subjects here, it can only be owing to their own indifference to these matters, or to the improper way of making their appeal, that such boons would be withheld from them.

In short, we have only to refer to the memorable despatch of Lord Stanley of December, 1842 (which first directed the adoption of this territory), and to the more recent speeches delivered by Lord John Russell, and very lately by Earl Grey in the House of Lords, to feel that the mists which ignorance, misrepresentation, and party spirit had for some time cast around our rulers have been completely dispelled; and that both they and the British public in general are only anxious to see us all enjoying a full share of rational liberty, as most conducive not only to our own interests, but to those of the empire at large. On this subject I shall beg to conclude by quoting a remarkable passage to be found in the *Edinburgh Review* of April last, in an article headed "Shall we Retain our Colonies?" The words are:—

"The affection of the colonists it is easy to preserve or to recover, where, through misjudgment or misunderstanding, it has been shaken or impaired. By ruling them with *forbearance, steadiness, and justice*, by leading them forward in the path of freedom with an encouraging but cautious

hand, by bestowing upon them the fullest powers of self-government wherever the infusion of British blood is large enough to warrant such a course ; in a word, by following out the line of policy announced and defended by Lord John Russell, in his speech on the introduction of a Bill for the government of the Australian Colonies in February of the last year, we may secure the existence, and rivet the cohesion of a dominion, blest with the wisest, soberest, most beneficial form of liberty which the world has yet enjoyed, and spreading to distant lands and future ages the highest, most prolific, and most expansive development of civilisation which Providence has ever granted to humanity !”



## LECTURE II.

### THREE GREAT GRIEVANCES

**I**N my last lecture I gave the details of one of those unfortunate events which frequently mark the transition from a rude state of society to one in which the supremacy of the law becomes a principle acknowledged by all classes, as essential to the general peace of the community and as consistent with the very notion of rational liberty. The feeling of hostility towards the Government and the administration of justice, which then prevailed among the frontier farmers, would gradually have been obliterated, as they became more and more sensible of the advantages which a higher state of civilisation conferred upon them ; but several other causes soon arose, which not only fed that flame of discontent, but became ultimately so burthensome as literally to drive the great majority of the inhabitants of the eastern province out of the pale of the colony, and after that movement had once commenced, it has since been found quite impossible to stem the torrent. One cause of general dissatisfaction was connected with and arose from the hasty and ill-considered measure directed

by the Home Government to redeem the paper currency, after having allowed a ruinous depreciation to take place, which judicious measures might have averted or prevented to a great extent.\* That cause of grievance is, however, more connected with, and forms part rather of, the general history of the Cape Colony; I shall therefore not enter upon that subject, except only to observe that it tended to keep up the excitement previously produced on the frontier, and caused that spirit of disaffection to become more generally and widely spread than it otherwise would have been.

But, independent of this, there arose three great and prominent causes of grievance, which bore less or more seriously upon the energies and prospects of the whole colony, but pressed with tenfold hardship upon the eastern provinces. With regard to these questions, it must also be observed at the outset that, although, for the sake of perspicuity, I shall deal with them separately, they were yet working simultaneously; the one cause preponderating in one year, and in another the second or the third cause, but all alike tending to accomplish this one end—that of driving the great mass of the population out of the further influence of those

\* An ordinance sent out by the Home Government was promulgated on the 6th of June, 1825, introducing British silver money as a legal tender, and directing it to be taken in exchange for the Cape paper rixdollar at one shilling and sixpence sterling, which had been originally issued and recognised as of the value of four shillings for every rixdollar.

measures which (several have often assured me) would otherwise again have driven them to open resistance or rebellion.

These three great grievances under which they suffered may be styled—

1. The Hottentot Question ;
2. The Slave Question ;
3. The Kafir Question ;

and it will at once be seen from the mere recital of these names that they all arose from the manner in which both the local and the Home Government were considered to be dealing with those three distinct races by which the European population was surrounded, and upon a judicious management of which the peace and prosperity of the colony entirely depended.

I shall therefore consider the prominent features of each of these three great questions, as they more particularly bore upon the interests of the frontier farmers, and which afflicted them during a period of twenty years, say from 1815 to 1835, when the migration out of the colony into Central Africa may be said to have commenced.

I have stated in my preceding lecture that the proceedings instituted by Dr. Van der Kemp and the Rev. Jno. Read, against a great number of the members of influential families throughout the country districts, caused at once a deep-seated hatred against those missionaries who had thus constituted

themselves the guardians of the Hottentot race, and also created a sense of distrust of the Government, from the manner in which (it appeared to them) that cause had been advocated and supported. In stating this fact let me not be misunderstood, nor let it be supposed that I wish to express for a moment any other opinion than that, in very many instances, it had become necessary to release that race from the state of thralldom in which they had theretofore been kept; nor do I wish to express any other opinion than that there were among those individuals who were devoting themselves to the conversion of the heathen, and spreading among barbarous nations the light of the Gospel, many excellent persons, who may be justly ranked among the greatest benefactors of the human race; and that such names as those of Kicherer, Edwards, Campbell, Moffatt, Hodgson, and the like, will ever be respected by every one who regards true religion and virtue as essential to the happiness and the eternal welfare of the human race. But, being now enlisted in the sacred cause of truth, my duty compels me equally to state that, at the time which I am now considering, there were among those who assumed to themselves the important office of teachers in the missionary schools within the colony, several persons so illiterate, and beset by such narrow-minded prejudices, as to render them totally unfit to direct the education and moral training of the Hottentot youths of both sexes; while there were even some

amongst them who, from the disreputable connection they had formed with females of that race, had lost all that respect which morality of conduct will ever command in society.

Such instances were not only marked out as warranting that dislike to missionaries in general, but the inhabitants saw, with dread and apprehension, how the Government gradually allowed the whole of that population (on which all farming pursuits on the frontier depended) to withdraw themselves from all control and agricultural pursuits, and to put themselves, moreover, under the spiritual charge of any person who, without reference to country or nation, announced himself as inclined to become the pastor of such flocks.

In this manner, within a few years, no less than "thirty missionary schools," or institutions, sprang up within the colony—where Dutchmen, Frenchmen, and Germans joined with English or Scotchmen nominally to instruct any Hottentots, or descendants of Hottentots, who felt inclined to congregate around them.

The younger ones, no doubt, received there the rudiments of some elementary education; but the older ones uniformly declared that they were "too old" to learn, but yet preferred remaining there, leading a listless, idle life so congenial to their habits, and could only be induced in the seasons of harvest, or upon urgent applications, occasionally to drive a waggon to market, and thus so far to "lend

their help"; but at such extravagant prices as at once deprived the agriculturist of his legitimate profits, and rendered such sources of labour so uncertain and precarious, that (in very many cases) he was compelled to abandon agriculture altogether, and to depend solely upon his herds and flocks for food and support. But even for the protection and rearing of these some herdsmen and shepherds were needed, but these duties they also gradually ceased to perform: so that whenever a farmer was unable, by the help of his own family, to watch his flocks by day and by night, losses became fearful, and many, in despair, were compelled to give up all farming prospects, and to take up their abode with some friends or relatives, so as to combine their resources, and thus eke out a miserable subsistence, without the chance of improving their condition, still less of providing for their offspring.

This injury was not so seriously complained of in the western, or rather south-western, provinces, near Cape Town, where, for a time, slave labour was sufficient for the wants of agriculture; but in the northern and eastern districts it was intensely felt. I have myself known farms which had been completely abandoned, by the last remaining Hottentots having given up service, or retired to the missionary schools, taking with them the flocks or herds which they had earned in their employer's service, and rejecting every offer or bribe to continue any longer in such service.

There were even many Hottentot families so destitute, or otherwise ill-behaved, that admission to the missionary institutions was refused to them ; but these, rather than continue in the service of the farmers, gradually congregated themselves in the outskirts of various towns, and chiefly about Graaff-Reinet, Graham's Town, and Somerset, where they became a perfect pest to society, and a terror to all the neighbourhood, from the daring thefts and robberies which were committed by them for miles around. The difficulty, however, of tracing and punishing these offenders was so strongly felt, that nothing but the enactment of a stringent vagrant law appeared to all practical men likely to meet and overcome the evil ; but the difficulties in the way of enacting such a law appeared insuperable to the Legislature, and although frequently promised by the Executive, it was deferred to the Greek Kalends, thus only increasing the disaffection by the disappointment of such expectations.

It is a singular fact, that the only relief which some of the farmers found in those districts was at places adjoining the Bushman country, where a humane and enlightened policy soon received its never-failing reward.

Up to the beginning of this century these Bushmen had been considered as utterly irreclaimable : the deadly poison which they dealt out to anyone approaching them in any suspicious attitude made them an object of universal dread and abhorrence :

they were considered as the declared enemies of the human race ; and I fear that the indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children of that race was at one time considered not only as perfectly lawful, but praiseworthy.

However, about the beginning of this century, the worthy missionaries, the Rev. Messrs. Kicherer and Edwards, boldly ventured among them, and secure under the ægis of the Gospel and religion, they displayed their moral courage in the midst of the threats and the fearful scenes which they were compelled to witness, and their sublime sacrifice of every comfort, and almost of every necessity of life, in the cause of humanity, was ultimately rewarded by reclaiming at least some few clans, and establishing a friendly feeling between them and the nearest farmers.

Soon after this, also, a custom was introduced, sanctioned and encouraged by Government,\* of allowing some field-cornets of well-established humanity to visit their country on hunting expeditions, in seasons of drought and famine, when the Bushmen were seen congregating in flocks around them, and thereby acquiring the art of converting into "biltong" † the

\* This mode of reclaiming them was first recommended to Government by the "Commissioners of Circuit."

† "Biltong" (literally "hamtongue") consists of strips of raw meat, cut out of the hams, sirloins, or fleshy parts of cattle, or the larger antelopes, which, sprinkled over with salt, are exposed to a warm sun, and thus, sun-dried, constitute the usual food of the pastoral farmers for months.



produce of the chase, thus securing to themselves at least some animal food throughout those seasons of starvation.

This humane conduct of these farmers was duly rewarded, as some of these Bushmen gradually put themselves under their protection, and entered the service of the farmers around, thereby further securing to themselves and their families a certain mode of subsistence throughout the year. Their natural intelligence was soon displayed in watching the flocks; they became most faithful and trustworthy herdsmen, and I have personally visited farms in the Sneeuwberg, which had for months been abandoned by the proprietors, who had gone off to Cape Town, or to distant districts, with their entire families, leaving flocks of six, seven, and ten thousand sheep under the sole charge of one or two families of these "tame" Bushmen (as they were emphatically called); and I have been subsequently informed that such instances were by no means rare, that they invariably proved themselves fully worthy of the trust thus reposed in them, and that on the return of their masters they would, with the help of their "kerfstok" (or nick-stick) account for the loss of every ewe, wether, or lamb which had died or been lost with a distinctness and fidelity truly surprising.

From a note appended to one of the inimitable chapters of the *Antiquary*, Sir Walter Scott (it would appear) notices these "nick-sticks" as peculiar to the bakers in Scotland two or three centuries ago. It

may not prove uninteresting to an Oldbuck of Monkbarns to trace whether the Caledonian bakers acquired that knowledge from the Bushmen of South Africa, or *vice versa*; but to those who feel disinclined to adopt either theory, it may suffice to consider how, in a primitive state of society, men will be found to resort to the same rude means of aiding their memories and sharpening their intellect, without reference to latitude or country.

In those few districts then immediately adjoining the Bushman country some substitute was partially found for their loss of their Hottentot servants, but throughout the remainder of the eastern province it must be acknowledged that the numerous missionary schools, and last of all the extensive establishment at Kat River, took from the service of the farmers every Hottentot or servant of Hottentot descent, who were not only induced to retire to those schools as the abode of ease and indolence, but were moreover taught to consider themselves as a distinct and separate race, who "ought" not to owe any service to the Saxon farmer.

And this leads me to notice a far more serious evil still than the mere loss of labour, which arose from the system pursued in regard of the Hottentot race, the effect of which, although long predicted by many persons, had been only considered as "Cassandra's" prophecies, until the late events have exposed them in their fearful reality; and they can now, therefore, only be noticed as historical

lessons, from which rulers may derive useful warnings in legislating for and governing different races in one and the same country.

I have already noticed that at most (if not in all) these schools or institutions within the colony the Government did not claim or exercise the slightest interference or control; occasionally, even, disclosures were made which clearly showed that in some of them a magisterial authority was assumed to punish offenders by juries, and modes of punishment were devised by the missionaries within such schools altogether inconsistent with the first principles of justice; but these even appear to have been passed by without official notice; and upon this principle of the Government becoming more and more apparent, the missionaries also became the more confirmed in the authority which they assumed, as well over the temporal as the spiritual concerns of those who came to their schools.

With the exception of the simple-minded Moravian brethren (whom I would willingly distinguish as a marked exception), I believe, I am bound to state that almost universally the notion was studiously inculcated in the minds of the Hottentots that they not only had been, but still continued to be, an oppressed race; that despite the Magna Charta granted them by the Government, in the so-called 50th Ordinance, the white people were still ready at all times to injure them; and such notions, I fear, were instilled with great earnestness in the minds of

the large mass of Hottentots who were congregated in the Kat River settlements. This notion, no doubt, laid the foundation of the rebellion which has so fatally complicated the present Kafir war; but upon these events it is not my wish to dwell any further, as I only desire here to state that, many years ago, I noticed that feeling of "national alienation" (as it may be called) arising, and anticipated that those seeds of antipathy and hostility of races would inevitably yield those poisonous fruits from which the colony has of late been suffering.

This will be sufficient to mark how the gradual withdrawal of the whole Hottentot race from agricultural or pastoral service—and the spirit of hostility which manifested itself in them towards the frontier colonists—left the latter no other remedy than to resort to the sad alternative of seeking elsewhere for a place where their herds and flocks might be safe, and where they might obtain labour on more easy terms.

II. But great and serious as this cause of grievance became, it proved quite secondary to the intensity of feeling with which the colonists saw the steps taken by the Government to deprive them of that labour over which they claimed an unquestionable right of property.

It is a singular fact, and one, I believe, not generally known, or at least not sufficiently considered, that during the last century, while all other colonies belonging to European powers were inundated by

slaves (chiefly imported by British vessels), the Government of Cape Colony had always been averse to the introduction of slaves; that by various stringent proclamations their importation had been prohibited, and that from time to time (generally once a year) a special licence was issued only for a limited number to be imported, upon the earnest representations of the colonists, and proportionate to their increasing numbers and the wants in agriculture.

During the short administration of the Batavian Government, from 1803 to 1806, various proclamations and acts also manifested an intention in that Government to put a speedy end to the existence of slavery in the colony; and thus, during this century, a very small number of slaves indeed of the negro race had trodden the colonial soil. The natural consequence was that nine-tenths of the slave population consisted of house-born slaves, who were looked upon more as family domestics, and treated like the *Verne* of the Romans. They were trained to various trades and professions; were never worked in gangs, and in fact enjoyed all the privileges and comforts which free domestics could possibly claim. The value of such slaves increased daily, with the increase and greater demands of the free population, and not unfrequently £400, £500, and £600 were readily given for a single slave well instructed in certain trades. It was but a natural result, from such a state of things, that slaves of this value should be well treated, and also that they knew their rights and

how to maintain them ; and although, no doubt, in the course of ten or twelve years, two or three instances of very severe ill-treatment and even of murder were brought before the courts and tried, and were loudly denounced by (what was falsely called) the philanthropic press, yet it would be as unjust to infer from such cases a charge of general ill-usage of their slaves against their masters as it would be to lay to the charge of the populations of Edinburgh or of London the murders of Burke, of the Mannings, of Rush, and the hundred others, accounts of which pollute almost every English paper.

Soon after the general peace of 1815 it became but too apparent that the public mind in England was directed to the total extinction of slavery, the leading men of all parties having openly avowed that in having gained the triumph of the abolition of the slave trade, they only viewed this as a stepping-stone towards the attainment of the greater measure ; and, as preparatory to that step, various local laws were introduced considerably curtailing the authority and power of masters over their slaves. The most important one was a local ordinance, passed in 1826, by which a new office of guardian or protector of slaves was created, who, by himself and his deputies, had particularly to look to the protection of their interests. Every slave thereby acquired a right to compel his master to grant him his liberty if he could obtain the means of commanding his price at a fair valuation by persons indifferently chosen. The hours of labour

were fixed, and various other stringent rules were introduced, at once creating a power which could interfere on behalf of the slave in all the domestic concerns of every household. It may easily be imagined how such a system at once produced an alienation from that good feeling which existed before in these relations. The slave, heretofore accustomed to receive any favour or indulgence through his master or mistress, now saw another power arising which could grant these by virtue of his office; and the masters, jealous of that power, frequently withheld, upon principle, what they would readily have conceded as a matter of grace.

From that moment, therefore, that kindly feeling which had before existed on both sides may be said to have expired, and the whole country began to feel the ill effects of this undue and inconsistent interference. But the Home Government, not satisfied with these colonial laws, passed in February, 1830, an Order in Council, by which a host of protectors were further appointed to be the special guardians of slaves in every district, and to enforce still more stringent rules against the slightest act of injustice committed towards their slaves, who were expressly declared not to be liable to any punishment for preferring any frivolous complaints against their masters, "unless such complaint shall arise from some malevolent or culpable motive" (*vide* Section 72 of the Order in Council), while for any, even the slightest contravention of any of the provisions of that Order in

Council, by the master or mistress, a penalty never less than £10 nor more than £500 is denounced. (*Vide* Section 74.)

But the feature which particularly denounced this Order in Council was exhibited in the sections by which every year the proprietors of any slaves employed in agriculture or manufacture were required to take out from the office of the protector, or assistant protector, a book styled in the Order in Council a "punishment record book," in which every such proprietor was compelled to make himself (if he could write), or otherwise cause to be made, an entry of every punishment of whatever kind he may have inflicted upon every slave, detailing with the greatest minuteness every particular of the offence, of the punishment, of the witnesses to it, etc. This book every such slave-owner was required to take twice every year to the protector or assistant protector within his district, and there to swear to the correctness of these entries, and if at any time thereafter a complaint might be preferred before any of the protectors of any punishment having been inflicted, and the "record book" did not show a perfectly true and correct statement of every circumstance connected therewith, the master was to be tried for wilful and corrupt perjury, independent of the punishment he might be liable to in respect of the complaint itself!

It is impossible to describe the excitement which pervaded the length and breadth of the colony when



these provisions became known : the slave-owners at once, with one consent, resolved to resist a law involving so iniquitous a principle, as that everyone should be called upon to enregister his own misdeeds and swear to them ; and they sent from all quarters some delegates to Cape Town, who there joined with the slaveholders in and near the town to hold one of the largest public meetings ever held in the colony ; where they unanimously pledged themselves not to take out these "punishment record books," and in the enthusiasm of the occasion they passed a resolution to walk up in a body to Government House to submit this their firm resolve personally to the Governor. His Excellency, having been previously apprised of their intention (by a deputation sent up in advance), some 3000 to 4000 persons marched up in procession to Government House, and being received by His Excellency Sir Lowry Cole, under the stately oaks at the Grave Street entrance, the late Mr. Muntingh and myself having been called to the unenviable task of being their spokesmen, had the painful duty of solemnly assuring His Excellency, in the name of the assembled throng and of all the slave-owners throughout the colony, "*that they could not, and would not, comply with this law*"; that they were ready one and all to submit to the penalties therein enacted, but implored His Excellency to release them from the operation of a law which appeared to them a violation of every principle of justice. This step taken by the slave-owners was denounced at the