

FROM NABOTH'S
VINEYARD

LIEUT.-GEN.
SIR WILLIAM BUTLER, G.C.B.

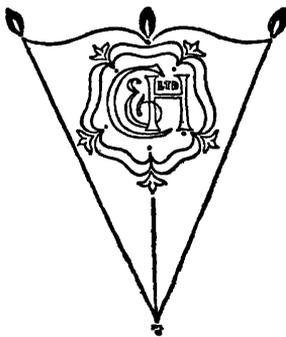
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BEING IMPRESSIONS FORMED DURING A FOURTH
VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA UNDERTAKEN
AT THE REQUEST OF THE *TRIBUNE*
NEWSPAPER

BY

SIR WILLIAM BUTLER, G.C.B.



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“There is no bulwark in wealth against
destruction to the man who in the
wantonness of his heart has spurned
the great Altar of Justice.”

DEDICATION

*To some future South Africa
(I pray not distant), when the
"Good Hope" of the old Navi-
gator shall have been realized.*

W. F. BUTLER.

February, 1907.

PREFACE

THESE letters from South Africa, chiefly written in the first half of 1906, are the outcome of a visit made to the sub-continent at the invitation of Mr. Franklin Thomasson, M.P., Governing Director of the London *Tribune*. "We venture to entertain the hope," wrote the Directorate, "that you are willing to proceed, in the interests of the *Tribune*, to South Africa in order to report in the spirit of a well-informed, broad-minded, reflective observer upon the various phases of the very delicate and difficult situation there existing.

"The *Tribune*, of course, does not bind you to the expression of any view as the result of your investigation, which we have

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no doubt will be carried out among all sections of the community; we only venture to suggest the end of the enterprise, an end in which we are sure you most cordially acquiesce—the discovery of the actual facts, and the real tone and temper of the various sections with a view to the rectification of errors, the healing of differences, and the permanent blending of the peoples. . . . The districts which you visit, the people you may meet, the questions you deal with, and the dates and manner of your communications, shall be entirely at your own discretion. . . . We look forward with confidence and pleasure to your acceptance of this proposition. On our own part we shall feel highly honoured by the co-operation of,” etc., etc., . . . “while from your point of view we venture to suggest that in undertaking the mission you will be not only helping to lay the foundations of a new enterprise from which important steps in the direction of progress may be reasonably anticipated, but also

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rendering an all-important service, at a vital moment in history, to the highest interests of the Empire.”

Such was the programme proposed; the other preliminaries were easily arranged, and on the 6th January I sailed for Capetown. In July I was back again in London. In the intervening six months, I had seen and conversed with many representatives of the various sections of political and social life in South Africa—civil, military, official, administrative, commercial, financial, and missionary. The country was not a new land to me. More than thirty years had passed since I first set foot upon its shores. This was the fourth visit I had made to it. I had seen a good deal of its old life, travelled rather extensively through it before the era of railways, and had had something to do and say to its subsequent history and later developments.

On each succeeding visit there was one fact which impressed itself upon me with

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increasing strength. There were new names in the offices and over the shop fronts in the towns, but out in the big country the old names were still in the farms. Men who had made money in trade or commerce had largely gone back to England to spend the remainder of their days there. The children or grandchildren of the Dutch were still on the old sites. This dominating difference between the two races, first convinced me that it was necessary to accept the fact of the permanency of Dutch life in South Africa, and the consequent greater necessity of cultivating friendly relations with this permanent population.

If you see a train going into a railway tunnel it requires no depth of observation to discover and determine the general direction in which that train will appear again at the other side of the hill, but all the same the other side of the hill is of consequence. This time I went up country after a short stay at Capetown. I was four weeks in

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Johannesburg, three in Pretoria, I went to the High Veldt at Middelburg, took a motor-ride through the Magliesberg valley and along the Rand, went down a gold mine, inspected a diamond field and a Chinese compound, visited Natal, drove fifty miles into Zululand, stopped at Bloemfontein and other places in the Orange River and the Cape Colonies, and returned to Capetown, having covered about four thousand miles in all.

The following letters embody the impressions formed during that journey. Whether the views they express fulfil the original intentions and hopes of the gentlemen who invited me to undertake the mission, I do not pretend to decide. But in now giving the letters in a collected form to the public, I desire to record my lasting sense of the great courtesy and kindness shown to me by the General Director and Management of the *Tribune*, and to acknowledge the generous spirit which

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characterized from first to last all their relations and transactions with me.

I wish also to express to many friends, old and new, in South Africa my grateful thanks for acts of attention shown by them in various ways, and not the least prized among many pleasant recollections linked with this last visit to South Africa, will remain the honest admission of mistaken judgment, frankly made to me by some known or unknown opponent, of the days before the War.

W. F. B.

January, 1907.