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### From Naboth's Vineyard

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civilization at all." Until I met that Rhodesian doctor my sympathies would have run with those of the Natal Minister, but now "civilization" claims a tear, and presently we may find ourselves saying, "Even though we knew thee well—Alas! poor Bounder!"

BLOEMFONTEIN,  
*April, 1906.*

## IX

**W**HEN you have to put before people at a distance some complex political position such as that which now exists in the Transvaal, it is not a bad plan to take the position to them instead of attempting to bring them to the position. With this object I propose to make England our Transvaal, and the city of Birmingham our Johannesburg. We will, then, try to reproduce on an English stage thus created a counterpart of the conditions of economic, social, and political life as they exist to-day in that part of South Africa. The many profound and conflicting questions which lie hidden beneath the apparently simple formula of "One vote one value" may then be more easily understood by people in England.

We will first deal with our new Birmingham, dressed as Johannesburg. Then we shall survey England attired, contrived, and circumstanced as the Transvaal, and, finally,

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we shall apply to the people who dwell in Birmingham and those who inhabit England the panacea of "One vote one value," which is now proposed as the sole solution of all trouble, and the only guarantee for future peace and happiness in the Transvaal.

In Birmingham there is one industry. It is the production of a very valuable gas from a rock which up to the present time has been discovered only in Birmingham and its immediate vicinity. This gas, when produced, is taken immediately to New York, whence it is sent to most of the great cities of the outer world. The actual part of this precious product which Birmingham retains is nil, the gas itself being all sent away in sealed and guarded vessels. But the equivalent of a certain portion of the value of the exported gas comes back to Birmingham, and in a lesser degree to England, in the form of wages paid to the miners who hammer out rock from which the gas is obtained, and to the men who transmute the rock into gas; and a further portion of the equivalent also returns in the shape of money spent in banks, offices,

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shops, hotels, drinking-saloons, at racecourses and other places of amusement, as well as in the food which goes to support the managers, miners, engineers, firemen, stokers who are engaged directly or indirectly in this gas business.

Now, the first thing to note is that the people who are engaged in the production of gas in Birmingham are not Englishmen. They are Irish, Scotch, American, French, Peruvians. England itself is represented in Birmingham by a small and insignificant minority, but outside this great gas city, even in Warwickshire and all over the land from Cumberland to Cornwall, the sons of the soil, the people of England, form a large majority of the residential population. And the next thing which is of importance to note is that the difference existing between the inhabitants of Birmingham and the people of England is not confined to difference of race or nation. It is still more acute and complex. There is what might be called a domestic difference between the single city and the immense outside country. The English in England

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are all family people—married people with sons and daughters, home people with cradles and churches and graveyards and the rest of it. While the Birmingham people, who have come from America, Paris, or Peru for this specific gas business—they are mostly young men who have either no wives, or, if they possess wives, have for the most part left them over-sea, and have come here as single men. The conditions of life in Birmingham are not congenial to family well-being, and this manufacture of gas has, so far, at least, not been found to conduce to the domestic virtues in any high degree. Neither is life in Birmingham of a permanent nature. It is unusually transitory. It is the life of the hotel, of the boarding-house, of the club, and the taproom. There is much of the swallow about it, and ‘Here to-day, gone to-morrow’ would be a suitable motto for it; it would be true to say that a residence of three or four years in Birmingham would, in the majority of cases, be equivalent to one of thirty or forty years elsewhere in England. Nor are the moral differences

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between town and country life less striking when we examine them. The gas business is intensely self-centred, exciting, restless even to fever-pitch, grasping and aggressive. It is always spinning round itself until it becomes inebriated with the exercise. It seems unable to remain long alone, even with its own wealth. Have you ever noticed what an overfed and too-much-indulged house-dog will do if he is shut up in a room by himself? He gets up, howls, and scratches at the door-panel, or begins to bite a window-frame. That is not unlike the way Birmingham goes on.

This gas production generates other gases, and they in turn produce new intoxicants, mental and physical. There is the Stock Exchange, a porphyry-pillared edifice, where gas inflation was until recently carried on to an inconceivable extent. Its foundation-stone was laid with great ceremony by a late High Inca from Peru, but so far it has not fulfilled the glowing anticipations which were entertained of it, and it has signally failed up to the present in extracting the same quantity of gold from the pockets

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of the inhabitants of Peru as its predecessor, a much humbler and less pretentious edifice, succeeded in doing in the olden time. It is almost harrowing to hear the lamentations of the old habitués of this grand edifice as they compare the booming days of yore with the present sad and degenerate times. "Then, if you bought in the morning and sold in the evening you were rich," one of them remarked to me. "It (Birmingham) is only becoming a big Chinese compound, worked by a few foreigners," said another; and a third gentleman of the institution, who had kindly volunteered to conduct me to the summit of the Corner House, whence an extensive view of Birmingham and its suburbs was visible—and to whom I apologized for taking him temporarily from his business—replied, "Don't say anything about it. There is nothing doing; not a stroke all day."

On the other hand, the general state of excitement in which Birmingham usually lived did not appear to have suffered from this collapse of its Stock Exchange. The stamps by which the gas is extracted from

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the rock seemed to be going day and night. Horse-racing was of constant occurrence. The grand stand was always well filled, horses seemed to be continually going round, the furnaces were always sending forth volumes of black smoke, and if you happened to wake at night you heard the thud of the town as though it had been day. I once inquired of a man how it came about that the theatres in Birmingham were so well filled. "You see," he said, "this is the way of it. Take a young fellow—a 'remittance man,' or a chap who has only twelve bob in the world—he'll put ten of it into a stall to see Lizzie Giggles, and he'll give the other two for a whisky-and-soda." "And who are the persons whom you call 'remittance men?'" I inquired. "They are young men from North and South America," he replied, "whose parents and guardians think Birmingham a good place to send them to. It keeps them out of harm's way in New York or Lima, and while they are waiting for a job their people send them money every month—that's why they're called 'remittance men.'"



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You might, perhaps, imagine from these glimpses of life in Birmingham that existence was a pleasant one there. Eighty per cent. of the population are men, and another eighty per cent. of these men bachelors. Things must be quite lively with all this gas production—racing, betting, theatre-going, and the like. Lively, no doubt, things are. The statistics furnished by the police authorities show great vivacity of life. In the six months, from January to July, 1905, ten thousand persons received sentences for various crimes committed in Birmingham; eighteen murders were reported, and there were more than seven hundred cases of robbery and housebreaking in the same short period. And this record of vivacious living has been achieved in Birmingham under its new dispensation, when it had got completely rid of its old English government, expelled its British municipality, and constituted itself entirely on the new Peruvian model, specially introduced by the High Inca of that nation. Personally, I remember visiting Birmingham in its old dull British days, when a single

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murder sufficed to bring war between Peru and England within measurable distance, and when the temporary disappearance of one lady, whose "crown of wild olives" sat uneasily upon her head was made the subject of Blue-book recrimination for nearly a year.

As my readers may have anticipated, from the few details of life given above, the inhabitants of Birmingham do not manifest any strong desire to make their stay in that city longer than they can help. Their great effort is to get as much gas out of the rock as they possibly can in the shortest term of time, and then to be off bag and baggage to Peru, leaving Birmingham, or the ash and cinder heaps which will finally represent the city, to the occupation of the people of England.

But in the contemplation of Birmingham under the Peruvians we have almost lost sight of the English in England. Let us turn to them. You will bear in mind that these English people are almost exclusively "old timers" on the land. Their old homesteads are no longer there, because in the

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war which Peru waged against England for the possession of Birmingham, the armies of the Inca of that time burned down all the homesteads of the English, and so devastated their farms and houses that, to use the words of one of the Peruvian officers who went through the war, "there was not a window-frame, or a door-post, or a bit of carpenter's worked wood left in the whole eastern half of" England. But in the few years that have elapsed since that war was concluded the houses have been rebuilt in some shanty fashion or other, and the owners, or those who survived the war, are back again on the old sites, and at all events the graves of the people's ancestors are still there, and the outlines of the hills are the same as they used to be, and the sun shines on the home as it did of old. Cradles, too, are to be seen in the rebuilt shanty-houses, and the downs are showing sheep on them, and you may even see some cattle again browsing in the valleys of the Thames or the Severn.

Well, as we have said, while eighty per cent. of the Peruvians in Birmingham were

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single men, so eighty per cent. of the Englishmen in England are married, and they, with their wives and children, mean to live and die on the land. Their home is here in England, and they have no Peru to go back to when their "pile" is made—indeed, the only pile that many of them will ever gather will be a pile of stones for their graves.

Well, now, having carried our transported Transvaal conditions of life to England, let us go a step farther and put down upon the two peoples, whose objects, habits, outlooks, hopes, and aspirations we have thus described, this great constitutional principle of "One vote one value," which we are told is to mark an entirely even and just balance of power between English and Dutch in the Transvaal. Where does the even justice come in? Is the bird of passage, the swallow, which does not even build a temporary mud nest in his attic at Birmingham, to have the same power of saying what is to be done with all this immense England as the man who has dwelt here from the beginning, and will dwell here to the end of his life? Is the new-comer, who has no

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family cares, and cares for no family ties, who is intent on the most rapid acquisition of money, who would if he could draw the last cubic foot of gas out of the rock in a week, and be gone the week after—is he to have, not, indeed, an equal share in the Government, but an enormously preponderating share of it? For observe, this shibboleth of “One vote one value” is quite as misleading as any other of the innumerable catch words which have been coined in the Birmingham mint and cast out by the Caucus House during the past fifteen or twenty years. It is not to give one value to every vote at which they aim; it is to make the one vote of the Birmingham Peruvian equal to three votes of the English over the rest of England. That is the plain, unvarnished truth.

CAPE COLONY,  
*April, 1906.*

## X

**W**E have been told that the vote of the newcomers into the Transvaal will be the vote of intelligence, of probity, of progress, of education, and of all those principles of justice between man and man which are the watchwords of English life. But is it English life as we know it in England that exists on the Witwatersrand? Outside the language and the racing there is little in common between the two countries. This single "industry" has called to life a great network of un-English methods—espionage, a vast secret service, a mysterious machinery for "roping in" a neutral or "freezing out" an opponent. There are newspapers, but they are only permitted to teach one side of the question. There are bookstalls and news agencies, but you will find it difficult to obtain a Liberal journal at them, although you will be plentifully accommodated with every

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racecourse rag or scavenger sheet in the empire.

There is an element of duality in the life of Johannesburg which is altogether peculiar to itself. There are, I think, about a hundred and eighty-four gold-mining companies on the Witwatersrand, of which less than a third, I believe, pay any dividend. You will find on the list of the directors of these companies the same name appearing and reappearing over and over again. A single name will be repeated eight and twenty times on the directorate lists. People in England know nothing of these duplications, nor of the company meetings which roll off one after the other at intervals of from five to fifteen minutes like trains at an underground railway station. It all looks so big, so imposing, at a distance, so "spacious" —like "the times of Great Elizabeth"; but follow it to its source, and you find a gentleman of Assyrian shrewdness and Teutonic training in the centre coil of the supposed colossal combination. The actor on the stage of a variety theatre, who represents a dozen different characters in as many

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minutes, has scarcely a more varied personality programme than a director of gold mines in Johannesburg, to whom Chambers of Commerce, innumerable associations, leagues, organizations and societies offer almost endless opportunities of self-duplication.

Scarcely less surprising is it to trace the thread of supposed intellectualism—upon which so much stress has been laid—to follow back into their early environments these would-be political guides, of whom it is said that they are alone fitted by mental superiority and gifts of education to be the leaders of a new people along the difficult paths of constitutional experiment. I ask, In what colleges did these men pursue their study of the principles of parliamentary government? In what universities did they graduate? Who were the illustrious teachers with whom they communed? I endeavour to lead conversation into channels which may give me information upon those points. I ask questions of old timers at Kimberley, or of some pioneers on the Rand, and I am told in reply that so-and-so sold ice-creams



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and cakes at Kimberley in the early seventies ; that another so-and-so was said to have been engaged in the fried-fish business in the Old Kent Road before he came to Johannesburg in the late eighties ; or, that a yet older so-and-so spent his early years in disposing of waistcoats from a hand-cart in the East-End of London at a still more remote period.

I beg my readers not to think that I entertain any prejudice whatever against any of the avocations named ; but partiality for an ice-cream, a fried sole, and a warm waistcoat in winter does not carry me to the length of endowing early vendors of these useful condiments and garments with any special aptitude for the ruling of men, or right of birth, by which wise statesmanship in the government of South African communities can be secured. The main diversities between the interests of the two sections merge off into more subtle shades of differences than any I have specified. But there is this characteristic feature about all, and it is that while to one side—that of the mines—all these differences are and

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must be of little moment, to the other side—that of the country—they may be of the deepest moment.

What the Transvaal wants in its true and lasting interest is a sure and steady development of its mineral wealth. It does not need a rapid, still less a feverish, output of its gold, any more than it needs a deluge of water in a single night. It requires a development of what is beneath its ground of such a sort as will enable its surface development to keep pace with it, to extend its agriculture, to increase its irrigation, to expand its forestry, to multiply its stock. You cannot hurry the seasons. No matter what laws you pass, the equinoxes will not come more quickly. The development of the surface of the Transvaal requires the lapse of time, aided and nourished by the wealth that lies below the surface. But the mines? Are they on the same plane of development? It is easy to conceive economic situations which are directly opposed to this idea, situations which may tempt to the most rapid and exhaustive developments. The more you over-capitalize,

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the more you inflate share values in the Stock Exchange—and you have been doing both for twenty years—the greater will be the effort at fevered development, all tending to the exhaustion of the mines and the ultimate ruin of the Transvaal. It is the difference between the gamekeeper and the gamester. One does not want all the game killed—the next year and the subsequent years have to be thought of—but the other? He wants it over in a night. He will double, and again double, and then—quit. The land may whistle in the wind for all he cares—he is off.

Yet another point—the native question—that one of vital importance. A native war on any large scale would be disastrous to agriculture in South Africa. How would it affect the mines? It is by no means certain that it would not benefit them. It was by such wars that Rome recruited her slaves for service in the mines of the Iberian Peninsula. Fifteen hundred years later Spain filled her mines in Mexico and Peru from the same source. It is not quite thirty years ago since harbour and dock works

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in South Africa were being worked by prisoners taken in Kaffir wars, and if even such things could not occur again—a fact of which I am doubtful—it does not follow that the state of abject penury which a native war would inflict upon tens of thousands of blacks, would not oblige some of these tens of thousands to seek the mines in order to save themselves and their people from starvation.

For myself I prefer to go back to the study of the old masters in all these matters. Wonderful is it to reopen the old books and to find how many were the things these men knew about Kimberley and Johannesburg long years before either place had been heard of—knew the lives that the people would lead there, the things they would say and do; foretold the very thoughts that would fill their brains, and even the tissues that would form their bodies. Here is one little bit about Johannesburg: “A terrible machine has possessed itself of the ground, the air, the men and women, and hardly even thought is free.” And here is a sentence which many of the people who control

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the "Industries" of South Africa might learn and lay to heart, and many another, too: "See what allowance vice finds in the respectable and well-conditioned class. If a pickpocket intrude into the society of gentlemen they exert what moral force they have, and he finds himself uncomfortable and glad to get away. But if an adventurer go through all the forms, procure himself to be elected to a post of trust, as of senator or president, though by the same arts as we detest in the house-thief, the same gentlemen who agree to discountenance the private rogue will be forward to show civilities and marks of respect to the public one, and no amount of evidence of his crimes will prevent them giving him ovations, complimentary dinners, opening their own houses to him, and priding themselves on his acquaintance." Nor does the following passage seem out of date when applied to some of our latter-day patriots and heroes: "The reputations of the nineteenth century will one day be quoted to prove its barbarism." And did not a certain great thinker see something like a Chinese compound in Johannesburg

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when he penned the following: "In —, in addition to the ordinary abominations of slavery, it appears *only men* are bought for the plantations, and of these miserable bachelors one dies in ten every year"? The italics are not in the original, and neither is it South Africa about which the philosopher was writing, but these thoughts have the eternity of truth in them that they are as "claims" pegged out for ever on the conscience of the world.

And meanwhile I hear the question asked, What, then, should be done in the matter of this Transvaal constitution? I will endeavour to answer it in as few words as possible. Turn your constitutional scales any way you like, they will always come back to a level swing. It may take years to do it—costly and terrible years—but it will come back. You can separate Johannesburg from the remainder of the Transvaal, make it an independent unit in a group of other independent colonies, giving it any rights and privileges in reason, and then let it work out its own destiny as it pleases. This is a possible solution (and it is one which I think

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was first formulated by Mr. Chamberlain some seven or eight years ago) ; but attempt to mix it with the remainder of the Transvaal in a cunningly devised and dishonestly stated scheme of what is called "one vote one value," as that idea is at present planned and understood, and you will fail, just as surely as every other scheme which has been conceived in injustice and formulated in pretence, has already failed in South Africa.

And there seems to me to be another course, easier, safer, and less liable to the experimental and unknown. It is so to measure and distribute your electoral areas that while in a House of sixty representatives the two great parties will have something like even numbers, there will be at least a likelihood of from six to twelve seats falling to a third or moderate party. These would hold the beam of the balance and give the ship of state a better chance of sailing, with some degree of safety and success, through the early part of its voyage.

I do not believe that the Boers would even wish for a clear and definite majority at this stage of their political life. But they

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are living under a great dread—namely, that they will be handed over to the rule of the magnates of a single class and colour. They have had even ampler reason in the past than the ordinary outside world is aware of to dread this faction. It has pursued them with a hounding hate through their history. The men who are foremost in this party—the edge of whose animosity seems ever to be on the grinding-stone—came among them for the most part as needy adventurers, some of them in outcast penury. They are now of great wealth. Even when they had plotted and contrived the destruction of the Government under which they had accumulated these riches, their punishment at the hands of the enemies they had gratuitously made was a nominal one. Whence comes this unrelenting animosity? Was Balzac beholding it when he wrote, “There is nothing so terrible as the vengeance of the shopkeeper”? But vengeance for what?

CAPE TOWN,  
*2nd May, 1906.*



## XI

**I**F books could have cured South Africa or even alleviated the worst symptoms of the troubles which seem to have become chronic in her system, all would long ago have been well with her. Happy is said to be the land which has no history, and happier would seem to be the country about which people do not write anything. A book resembles a prescription, only penned when there is illness about. Something of the nature of our Distinguished Service Order, a decoration of which a late illustrious statesman observed, when informed that his son had got it, "Ah! poor boy. I heard there was a lot of it about. But he'll get over it—he has a sound constitution." As to South Africa, books have been piled on books in endless variety, and still the troubles remain. New doctors prescribe new nostrums, and these in turn seem only to generate new distempers. As

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the tropical portion of the Continent has been known as the white man's grave almost since the time of Columbus, so the temperate zone of the southern region has persistently proved itself a great cemetery, in which the reputations of successive statesmen and commanders have been entombed.

The native trouble which has lately appeared in Natal is of very old standing. Its causes are only difficult to discover because of the multiplicity of the reasons assigned, and of the various side currents which influence the direction of the main stream. I find the following entry in an old notebook kept in Natal more than thirty years ago:—"The night before I left London I met a gentleman who had lived for many years in Natal. 'You are going to Natal,' he said. 'Well, you will meet a man there who will tell you that all the evil in the country is caused by one thing. Five minutes later you will meet another man who will give you a totally different reason. Take my advice—hear everything and judge for yourself.'" Recently I visited Natal for the fourth time

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in my life. I had met on the ship that brought me from England one of Natal's ablest Ministers, and he had most kindly made the journey easy and pleasant to me.

The Colony was in a state of great excitement. A telegraphic despatch had just been received from the Colonial Office at home asking information regarding a proposed execution under martial law of twelve natives, who had been tried by a court composed of Militia officers, for the murder of a police officer and a constable, and directing that the execution should be suspended pending, as it would appear, the receipt of this information. The facts of the case were these. Resistance had been made by a party of natives armed with assegais to a patrol of mounted police sent to arrest men who had refused or delayed to pay a poll tax recently imposed by the Legislature. A couple of natives had been arrested and handcuffed. A rescue was successfully attempted. Shots were fired by the police, assegais were thrown by the natives. Some four or five men, white and black, were killed or wounded, including the officer and

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constable. The affray took place at dusk Rain was falling. There had been a general scuffle, and the precise details of what happened are obscure, but it is admitted, so far as I have seen, that the first shot was fired by the police, and that a general *mêlée* had then ensued.

In consequence of this, martial law was immediately proclaimed in Natal. Native kraals were burnt by punitive expeditions, crops were destroyed, cattle were seized over considerable districts, and two natives were summarily shot by drum-head court-martial. Twelve other men were to be executed at forty-eight hours' notice given by telegram to the Imperial Government at home. It was under these conditions that the Secretary of State had cabled to suspend the executions, and to ask for some further information as to the crimes and the trial of these condemned men.

Thereupon Natal flew out: The Ministry resigned. Indignation meetings were held, and the action of the Home Government was denounced from one end of the Colony to the other. One man—a gentleman whose

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name deserves to live—had the courage to stand up in the largest of these indignation meetings and to protest against the action taken by the Natal Government. There had been no necessity or occasion for martial law, he said, and even if circumstances had warranted the departure from civil law, he pointed out that the offences for which the twelve men were condemned had been committed prior to the proclamation. Further, he laid stress upon the fact that the civil tribunals were all in being, that the King's writ still ran, and that there was no state of war in the Colony to justify this resort to extreme measures. He might better have talked to the winds. But though Mr. Morcom stood alone on the platform of protest, he was not the only person who held similar opinions regarding these sanguinary proceedings. Many men of the older order were with him. Natal, however, does not listen to its older heads. Other voices are in an ascendant there, perhaps more than elsewhere in South Africa. The Colony was always remarkable for the possession

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of a very advanced school of public orators. Even in the old times it was sometimes wont to fly into a rage on slight provocation, and a second generation begotten under the semi-tropic conditions of the larger portion of the Colony is not likely to be more cool of head or less warm of language than were its old and cold world fathers. Even these old fathers could, in some instances at least, talk big enough. Thirty years ago, when Natal had a white population of seventeen thousand souls, I remember one of its most prominent politicians informing his constituents that the Government of Great Britain "was a remote and inconsiderate faction, who were heedless of the lives and properties of the Colonists." It was, if I do not mistake, the Government of Mr. Disraeli and Lord Salisbury which was thus described. The reigning sovereign of that day was alluded to as "a distant potentate." The small garrison then stationed in Natal was said to be maintained, "not for the protection of the white people, but for their control and subjection;" while, again, the weakness of this force was

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cited as proof of the "callous ineptitude of the Home Government, which ought to send to the capital city of Pietermaritzburg a force eight times the strength of the existing garrison, in order to secure to the Colony the blessings of peace, security, and prosperity." And all this remarkable flow of rhetoric, and much more of it, was poured forth merely because Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Minister, had ventured to question some high-handed acts of the Natal Executive of that time; and a bishop of the English Church, whose name was celebrated in his lifetime, and is now associated with the scene of the most memorable defeat sustained in our history for a hundred and fifty years, had raised his voice in protest against these proceedings.

It may be of interest to recall out of that time a few notes then written upon the question of bestowing responsible government upon the Colony of Natal:—"To reproduce here (in Natal) the form of government under which England thrives, it is essential that there should be an ample supply of able men whose social position

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will place them above the suspicion of interested motives, and whose private means will allow them to devote their lives to the service of the country. Natal does not as yet possess men of sufficient means so circumstanced as to enable a Government to be carried on in a safe and satisfactory manner, and neither can the small body of able men now here be expected to form such dispassionate opinions as Ministers at home. As we find in the religious world the smaller bodies are more prone to excessive outbursts of sectarian zeal and more bitter in their warfare of words, so in the political arena we observe small communities indulging themselves more frequently in minute animosities, the perception of which would be lost in broader boundaries, and we obtain evidence of legislation on statements of opinion which are unchecked by more sober thought or wider experience." And then I come upon this bit about the native question:—"Immigration of Zulus from Zululand into Natal will be unnecessary, if Kaffirs (in Natal) are placed upon a proper footing (*i.e.*, on the land)." I



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venture to give these old-time extracts, not so much for the purpose of making time my justifier as to show old Natal that I do not now plunge into the discussion of her troubles or her politics on the sole warranty of a globe-trotter's return ticket. Old Natal and I were young together. I have always had for her a kind of second home affection. Her lowlands and her highlands, her winter snow-capped Drakensberg, her deep kloofs and sparkling waterfalls, the magic of her sunrises and sunsets—these, and the memory of friends, most of whom are gone to their rest, have made Natal a green spot in my memory.

But as I was not blind to certain peculiarities which seemed to mark her collective character a generation ago, I cannot be oblivious of them to-day. They have neither disappeared nor lessened. It is rather the other way. Whatever riches Natal may have won she owes them chiefly to adventitious aids and outside circumstances. Let us look at her again as she was thirty years ago before we speak of her as she stands to-day. "There is much to

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excuse the possessors of this land if in the very richness of their possession they should at times become fretful over the slow development of the earthly paradise where they dwell. It is so fair and fruitful that they may well ask why it does not thrive, and they may easily ascribe to causes other than the right one the fact of their ill-fortune ; yet the true reason is simple enough. The critic who said of Natal that it was only a land of samples missed the point of his own truth. To change a sample into a crop, to make a crop a staple commodity, to export to foreign shores the surplus productions of the soil, these are only progressive steps in the prosperity of a nation. But this ultimate result can only be reached through the same conditions of industry and energy which in other lands, and under less favoured climates, turns the product of the soil into the wealth of a civilized community. There is no Royal road to the prosperity of a people, be their country ever so rich or highly favoured. As our forefathers toiled to unlock the riches of the soil, and as they passed through successive stages of development on their road to

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prosperity, so must their sons labour in their new homes ere they arrive at national wealth and greatness. The cry from one end of the Colony to the other is that 'No one will work—the Kaffirs won't work, the whites won't work.' Meanwhile, Natal stagnates. And yet this cry is only half the question. That Providence helps the man who helps himself is as old as it is true; but in Natal the help is sought abroad and forgotten at home. To ride on horseback over the country, to eat well, drink well, race well, and do little or nothing else—such are the everyday customs of the land. It was not in this fashion that the homeland prospered or that the new States of the Western World have risen to wealth and power."

Here we seem to be at the source of the stream of trouble, by the mid-course of which we stand to-day. Natal preferred her own methods. Fenced in between a great mountain range on the west, the Indian Ocean on the east, and with native territories on her northern and southern frontiers, she elected to go as she had gone in all matters of life and labour. She brought in the Zulu

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and the Kaffir from north and south, and imported the Indian indentured coolie from over the sea. She kept her territory locked in great aggregations of land which were wrongly called "farms." The owners of these vast expanses induced Kaffirs to build their kraals and become tenants thereon. At first the rent charged was a mere nominal sum. The huts were of the rudest description, beehive structures of reeds and grass. As time went on the rents grew. Decade by decade they rose from ten shillings or a pound per annum to many times these figures. At the present moment Natal has about half a million natives living on lands owned by men who are called farmers, but whose wealth is chiefly derived in the majority of cases from the rents which they levy upon these Kaffirs. Considerable numbers of these landlords are absentees. In addition to the rents paid for their beehive huts the natives are taxed by Government fourteen shillings a year hut tax. They have also to give labour to their lords at low rates of remuneration. They pay for dog licences, fees to magistrates' clerks, and

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are, of course, subject to fines for offences against law. These offences include the collective drinking of beer in the huts or kraals. When a fine is imposed the money or the cow is not always at hand to pay it, but there is sure to be a local "gombeen man"—a village Shylock ready to advance the required amount; and I have been told on the best authority that the mulct man will be fortunate if by the time he has redeemed his bond he has not paid his fine twice and even three times over.

It is the Ireland of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries over again, with black men substituted for white and the blunderbuss absent.

Now the point to bear in mind in connexion with all this is that these black people in Natal have no representation in Parliament. If they should object to the rents which are put upon their reed huts, the answer is, "You can go." But that is just what they can't do. There is now no place for them to go to. Besides, the Zulu is not nomadic; he is very fond of his home. It would be wrong to say that the natives

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have no friends in Natal. They have many true friends, many kind masters and magistrates, but the tide of public opinion is against them, and the form of Government which has been so oddly called "responsible," is not and cannot be as direct, or as "favourable in the mind of its ruling," as that which was identified to the native imagination with the names of "Somtseu" (Sir Theophilus Shepstone) or that of "Sobantu" (Bishop Colenso). In the old time they had men to rule and advise them, whose sympathy and good-will they felt assured was theirs, and to whom they looked with perfect confidence and trust. Colenso's love for the native races was one of those superb devotions to the ideal which all good men admire, and it was an ideal for which he would willingly have laid down his life. Now there is no one to be their friend in the sense that these great men were friendly to them. I see that the working-men of England are their friends, but when the individual working-man comes to South Africa, the feeling can scarcely stand the strain that environment puts upon it. Still,

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taken as a whole, the attitude of the white working-man towards the native is not a bad one. It is a long way superior to that of the loud and boisterous man of whom I spoke in a recent letter.

CAPE TOWN,  
*May, 1906.*

## XII

“**A** MONG all the evidence taken before the Commission on Native Affairs,” said the foremost authority upon native questions now in South Africa, “I am sorry to say that the latest importations from home were the least in sympathy with the natives.” This opinion I have found corroborated wherever I came into contact with the individuals who were in closest touch with the black man, or were best acquainted with his ways and history. There is no room for doubting that the man who knows the Kaffir best likes him the best. The man who has the smallest knowledge of him has the largest measure of contempt or dislike for him. And it was the same thing in North America when I travelled there many years ago. The new-comer into the land was the Red Indian’s worst enemy.

That there is to-day unrest and discontent



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among a large number of the native races outside the Cape Colony there can be no doubt, but there are reasons for it. It could not have been otherwise. Many causes of native discontent lie on the surface, others are deep down in their hearts. Democracies have not yet succeeded in ruling subject races. We have broken faith with the black man. It was Mary Kingsley who wrote that "when you once get between two races, the feeling of treachery, the face of their relationship, is altered for ever—altered in a way that no wholesome war or no brutality of individuals can alter." These are weighty words. We have waged very unwholesome wars with the natives, and there have been terrible acts of barbarity and brutality perpetrated against natives in these wars, but it is doubtful if they have had the effect upon the native mind that what are supposed to be more legitimate pursuits of covetous accomplishment have produced. In all parts of the sub-continent, and by all persons, you will be told the same story of the demoralization of the natives by the late war. The details differ, but the effect is the same. In

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Northern Natal men will tell you of the fortunes made by certain master cattle-raiders who employed natives to loot cattle from the Boers. The master-raider made his tens of thousands, the white captains of the industry their hundreds, the black battalions got nothing. "Where is the money and the land you promised us?" they now ask, not in North Natal alone, but in Basutoland and elsewhere. "You told us that we were to get the farms when the Boers were driven out. You were then to be first, we were to be the second. But for us you could not have finished the war. It was we who tracked and found the Boers for you. How many thousand of our people have been killed fighting for you, and what have we got for it?"

That is one phase of discontent, but there are others. The old "respects" have largely disappeared from the native mind. If ever familiarity bred contempt it did in the unnatural alliance between black and white against white which that war produced. "Why do you sit here night after night with that gun firing at you?" the black brother

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would ask. "We will go and take it." But the brotherhood ended when the last shot was fired. The servant, elevated for the time, had to go downstairs again. Nor was his old position before the war allowed him; he must go lower. His wages were to be reduced by half. He was to pay double taxes. He was to be coerced into labour by taxation. Men had no hesitation in saying in his hearing that if these means failed to induce him to work for the white man, other methods must be found.

At the close of a native meeting held by a high official some months ago, and after many grievances had been brought forward, the following words are said to have been spoken: "You increase our taxes. You bring in the Chinese, and by them you take work from us. Where are we to find the money to pay all these taxes? You tell us that Parliament will hear our words, but who is there to represent us in Parliament? You prevent us from buying land, you tell us not to employ lawyers, but we must employ them." In these complaints, and there were many more, we get some insight

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into the general causes of native discontent existing outside of the Cape Colony.

That Colony stands alone in its policy towards the native race—a wise and far-seeing policy, the result of the work of many minds during the past quarter of a century, but mainly due to the lifelong labours of one individual, Mr. Saul Soloman, a gentleman of whom Mr. Froude once wrote : “ He was one of the best men I ever knew.” Much might be written upon this subject, but it cannot be written now. The policy pursued in Natal and that adopted by the Cape Colony represent two distinct systems. There can be little doubt as to where the balance of wisdom lies.

In making its money Natal has made its bed too. The present Government in that Colony is the heir to successive administrations which have followed the same track. They are on the wrong road, and when that is the case the further you follow the road the further it will carry you out of your course. So convinced was Sir Garnet Wolseley thirty years ago that it would not be possible to continue the lines which Natal

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was then pursuing towards its native population that I believe he thought of proposing a government for the Colony based upon the Indian system. He foresaw that the introduction of responsible government under the conditions which were possible in Natal would only aggravate the difficulties of the native situation, and increase the evils under which the Colony suffered. It was interesting to hear all this repeated by so many persons in Natal, after these years, as their personal experience of what had actually occurred. The forecast had been verified. "Responsible government by a handful of farmers—twelve-thousand-acre men, more or less—is bound to produce trouble, for legislation for natives will rest chiefly with men who manage the natives for their own interests." So one said, and another, and yet another. Natal could not make up its mind frankly to accept the new situation which arose in South Africa with the development of the great mineral wealth of the interior sub-continent. It would neither educate its natives nor enfranchise them. They were to be

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rent-payers, hewers of wood, tax-payers, farm hands, domestic servants, policemen, but not artisans, nor owners of land, nor citizens. The tribal system was to be maintained, but the power of the head of tribe, the chief, was to be lessened almost to the vanishing-point.

Natal forgot that the native was gradually educating himself, and that the process was not likely to be carried on in the best school. The black miner would learn many things in Johannesburg besides rock-drilling. The Zulu policeman was receiving education of a strange type in our seaport towns. During a stay of a few days in Durban I saw some extraordinary lessons being taught. I saw rickshaw Kaffirs carrying a white man in a state of helpless intoxication to the lock-up. Another Zulu in police uniform walked beside the vehicle, occasionally picking the white man's hat from the street and replacing it tenderly upon the inebriate's head. Lessons such as these were only as infant-school teaching compared to those which the war had inculcated. Hell was then, as a celebrated journalist said at the time, "let

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loose." When you thoroughly emancipate that portion of the universe you will not be able to tie it up again at your pleasure, even with responsible Government to help you. I have been told by one of the oldest and most experienced gentlemen in the Colony that parental and tribal authority or discipline among the young Kaffirs was now a thing of the past. The young blood does as he likes. Formerly he had to beg his "musha" from his relations. "He came into the world naked, he lived naked, and he left the world naked. Now he can buy his finery and pay his fines out of the money he makes at the mines. His old code of morals is all but gone. He still loves his home, but he no longer wants to marry and settle down." He will do as the white man does. The terrible aftermath of the war is before him, and in Johannesburg the "Book of the Bounder" is always open to him.

"The Government of this country (Natal)," wrote the most distinguished soldier who has been in South Africa for a century, "is neither one thing nor the other. Its natives

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are quick to catch the true meaning of this state of things. They are changing their tone, and they will readily grasp the fact that the house divided against itself, etc., etc."

In Natal blacks to white are	9	to	1
In the Transvaal they are ...	4	„	1
In Basutoland ... ..	35	„	1
In Cape Colony ... ..	4½	„	1

Besides the blacks there are large numbers of coloured or half-caste people to be reckoned with. Thirty years ago there were three or four thousand Indians in Natal. Now there are more than one hundred thousand, and there are almost as many more over the other Colonies. Fifty thousand Chinese coolies have recently been added to the population to add fresh confusion to the race question. These yellow coolies were carried through Natal by railway "precisely as convicts"—the words are those of an official. What does the native African think of it all?

Now let us look at the frame in which this strange picture of black and white and yellow is set. You have placed in a central



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position between the Zambesi and Table Bay a great gold and diamond "industry," with an enormous plant of machinery. This plant requires, say, two hundred thousand workmen to keep it fully going. At the top of this "industry" you have a directory with an inner circle or powerful combination, possessing in an almost unlimited degree the power of purse and Press. This directing circle is cosmopolitan, exacting, highly organized. It grasps at unlimited power, and so far it has got everything it has grasped at. If this powerful organization of men, money, and machinery had grown up gradually in some old and strong social body, or long-established national system, where a firm Government ruled over a closely settled and homogenous population, it would have taken its proper place in the nation to which it belonged; but in South Africa it came as the thunderstorms come, and instead of growing up as a valuable adjunct or servant of the State it descended upon it as a master, a despot, and a collective despot, in whose frame the bowels of human compassion could not be looked for nor the brains of a wide

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and sympathetic knowledge expected. In their individual capacities the men who form this combination may be the best models of the citizens of the world, but it is not as private citizens or individual homogeneities they have to be judged.

In the train of this triple-headed giant there have come great numbers of the representatives of that peculiar product of our time which I have sketched in a preceding letter. Is it difficult to trace on the chart of the future South Africa the direction to which the forces and the teaching I have touched upon are tending? Those people who have had the longest experience in dealing with the native races are the most in doubt about the future. They see the danger, but it is easier to foresee than to avert. Nevertheless, amid the clouds on the horizon of South Africa there is a distinct ray of good hope in the early provision made by the wisdom of successive Governments in the Cape Colony for the education, elevation, and political advancement of the black races. Natal preferred to follow their old methods, and she is to-day gathering some of the fruits