*Two questions force themselves upon us when looking at our political situation in the Cape Colony to-day.*

*Firstly: What is the cause of that steady and persistent Retrogressive Movement which has marked our political existence during the last years?*

*Secondly: How is that Retrogressive Movement to be stayed?*

# PART I.

# PART I.

LET us glance first at the conditions of this Retrogressive Movement, and see if its cause be discoverable.

That such a movement has taken place admits of no doubt.

Many of the measures passed have not only shown no tendency to accord with the movement known as Liberal or Progressive in all countries inhabited by Europeans; but they have shown a persistent tendency to

move in a contrary direction, and even to undo the more advanced and progressive legislative enactments of the past.

## Retrogressive Legislation.

While in all civilised countries where representative institutions prevail the tendency is to move without intermission in the direction of a broadened electoral basis, so that in several of the English colonies to-day we find manhood suffrage, or one man one vote, or adult suffrage; and while even the most backward of European countries are rapidly tending year by year towards these

conditions—we, I believe, alone among civilised people have deliberately, during the last few years, narrowed our basis,[1] and undone the progressive work of the last generation.

So also while in all enlightened countries during the past sixty years public opinion has been steadily advancing in the direction of doing away with the lash as a punishment for minor offences, we in this country have not only, during the last years, possessed certain individuals in our Legislative

[1] The Franchise Act, introduced and voted for unanimously by the last Ministry, Mr. Rhodes being Premier, raised the monetary qualification from £25 to £75 per annum.

Councils who have striven to introduce an Act making legal the infliction of corporal punishment for the smallest offences towards master or mistress on the part of household or other servants, and which, if passed would be merely a recurrence to slavery under a new name—but this Act was voted for by three members in the last Ministry, two of them being Englishmen, and one the Premier, Mr. Cecil Rhodes.

Again, while in all civilised countries the tendency, as each country advances, is to consider more and more the welfare of its labouring classes; to remove oppressive restrictions; to en-

deavour by every lawful means to increase their wages ; and to regard the labourer, not merely as a means for increasing the wealth of other sections of the community, but to legislate for *his* welfare, and to regard *his* happiness as one of the pressing considerations of the State—we in this country have, under the Glen Grey Act of last year, brought in and supported by Mr. Cecil Rhodes and his following, an enactment which compels even the self-supporting and industrious native to work for the white man for a certain time every year, whether he will or no ; laying himself open to imprisonment or fine

if he refuse, even though his going out to labour for the white man should entail the neglect of his own cultivated lands.

So again, with regard to land tenure ; while in all progressive countries there is a tendency to obtain and retain as large a part as possible of lands, mines, and great public works as the property of, and to be worked for the benefit of, the nation as a whole—we, in this country, are for ever and completely alienating our public lands, our minerals, our precious stones, and even our public works.

And further, not only are we alienating them within our own

boundaries, and allowing almost without a struggle a small band of Monopolists to gain possession and control of that wealth which should be ours and our children's to employ for the benefit of the nation that shall be, but we are enabling them to grasp adjacent territories still uninhabited by the white man, so that when the mass of civilised men shall enter into occupation there, they will find nothing of value left for themselves in that state which, by their labour, they will have to build up; the alien will already have set his grasp upon all that is fair or rich. For not as in other countries has the Monopolist risen up

among us, a growth of our own; he comes from a foreign clime, and sweeps bare the virgin land before him like the locust; and, like the locust, leaves nothing for his successors but the barren earth.

While in New Zealand and other advanced colonies every legislative effort is being made to retain the land for the people, we are quietly allowing ourselves to be stripped bare session after session, and are confiding our possession into the hands of the Speculator and Monopolist.

Lastly, while in enlightened countries there is a continually increasing tendency to raise the revenue, not by taxing the

primary necessaries of life, upon which almost the whole income of the labouring classes is necessarily expended, but to raise it through the taxation of luxuries, whether by means of Excise or Import dues, we in this country find that not only are our necessaries of life already taxed to an appalling extent,[1] but a heavy additional tax on wheat and flour, and an almost prohibitive tax on imported meat,[2] is being levied upon

[1] For instance, wheat 38 per cent., flour 59 per cent., unrefined sugar 107 per cent., butter 20 per cent., cheese 43 per cent., candles 59 per cent., paraffin 202 per cent.

[2] Frozen meat 2d. per lb., wheat an additional 38 per cent.

us; while diamonds (forming a monopoly of which the Prime Minister is the head) and the intoxicating liquors, inferior in quality, so largely produced in this country, are allowed to go untaxed.

So also in small matters.

In Australia, where the material welfare of the country largely depends on its wool, it has been clearly seen that to allow the land to be partially ruined by the existence of an easily eradicated disease in the stock was scandalous and immoral; and they have legislated so successfully that in certain Australian colonies the insect which causes the disease has

been exterminated. It has been felt in those countries that the man who refuses to exterminate scab in his flocks inflicts a merciless wrong and injustice upon his fellows whose flocks his own infect; and the Australians have, by stringent legislation, made such conduct impossible.

It is not necessary to say that in this country all attempts to legislate in defence of the man who endeavours to keep his flocks healthy have been crushed or emasculated.

Many other matters will suggest themselves to every one in which our legislation has shown this retrograde tendency. We have no time now to enter into

details with regard to such measures as Haarhoff's Bill, which, as introduced, was intended to make it culpable for any aboriginal native, whether a domestic servant, householder, newspaper editor, or clergyman, to be found walking on pavements in our towns; and also to make it punishable for any aboriginal native to be found out of doors within a township after nine o'clock at night unless he or she had been given a pass by the Magistrate or other authorised person—a Bill which also received the support of the existing Government.

On the whole, it is evident that no impartial mind can

look at the course of our legislation during recent years without realising the fact that while the wheels of legislation in other civilised and Anglo-Saxon communities are tending to propel the car of state forwards, ours are slowly but surely running us backwards.

## Retrogressive Factors: I. The Bond.

Now, when we turn to inquire of ourselves what the reason of this Retrogressive Movement may be, I think the superficial reply, given when we glance merely at the surface of our public life, would be this: that the Retrogressive

Movement of late years has been entirely the work of that organisation known throughout South Africa as the Afrikander Bond ; and which has in recent years attained to such influence that it apparently coerces Ministry after Ministry, bending them to its will. But a deeper examination will, I think, show us that the Bond alone would not have been able to produce this movement. Another influence, working into the hands of the Bond, has given it for a moment the power of forcing this retrogression upon the country.

But before we turn to consider this secondary influence,

let us glance at the Bond itself.

The Afrikander Bond was in its origin one of the most beneficent and desirable institutions that have appeared in South Africa. It banded together, and aroused to healthy interest in the affairs of the State, a large body of men who, hitherto unorganised and isolated, had not taken that share in the government of the State which their numbers would have justified, and who were therefore unduly disregarded and possibly even unjustly dealt with.

Started originally (as was inevitable under the circumstances) as a more or less racial

organisation, and opposing Boer as Boer to Englishman as Englishman, this tone, nevertheless, as time passed, quickly modified itself. To-day the organisation is merely an organisation which draws together and unites for common purposes a number of the early colonists and others holding certain views on social and political matters, and in no way is it a merely racial organisation. To this extent it forms a healthy and desirable element in our public life. Left to itself, and having no adventitious power given it by an extraneous intervention, I believe that, so far from being an evil, the existence of the

Bond would awaken and maintain that healthy friction and interaction of opposing views which is necessary to keep pure and healthy the stream of political life.

But what has this extraneous influence been which has acted upon the Bond, removing it from its healthy position, and enabled it to obtain for the moment an undue power of enforcing its retrogressive views and methods upon the whole Cape Colony?

To explain this influence it will be necessary to examine carefully the nature and power of that small band of Monopolists to whom we before referred.

## AFRICA BEFORE THE MONOPOLISTS.

South Africa is a country of vast resources. In spite of the dryness of much of our climate, the rocky nature of certain tracts of our soil, taking the whole of South Africa together from east to west, I do not hesitate to assert that not many countries equally desirable and suitable for human habitation will be found. More than a compensation for the dryness of our climate is the absence of the numbing cold of extreme northern and southern lands, which for months in the year renders outdoor labour difficult;

yet more important is the absence of that moist heat which in tropical countries renders exertion almost impossible to the white man, and exhaustive to the dark. A country with temperate, stimulating climate, which favours the health and energy of Europeans, physically and mentally; which is favourable to the constitution of every species of domestic animal, and is adapted to the cultivation of almost every plant of the temperate and tropical zones; which, above all, is one of the richest, if not the richest, country in the world in precious stones and minerals of all kinds, and which was originally peopled

only by barbarians—this country has always been attractive to Europeans. For 200 years, Boer and Englishman, we have been populating and steadily taking possession of the land, moving steadily northwards. Our progress has not been made by a series of world-striking *coups d'état*, it has been slow, but it has been the more healthy, the more sure, the more deeply rooted, because of its gradual and natural development.

Those superb pioneers of South Africa, its Boers, have continued to move, as they have always moved, northward: our English colonists have been steadily building up their vil-

lages, founding their educational institutions, and establishing a liberal and progressive Government. We have not exhausted or even yet opened up many of the mineral resources of our country; they are still here for the use of our own and future generations; but so far as the colonists, Dutch and English, have populated the land, our progress, though slow, has been wholesome; and the land as a whole has been kept free from many of those crushing evils which afflict the older civilisations of Europe, and even affect some of the younger dependencies.

There is a sense in which we

have been a poor people. We have had no mass of surplus wealth wrung from the labour of a working class, but we have been a very rich people, perhaps one of the richest on the earth, in the fact that grinding poverty, and the enormous and superfluous wealth of individuals, were equally unknown among us. Our people as a whole led a simple but comfortable life; our labouring classes were engaged in no unhealthy occupation; starvation and want were unknown among us; we were progressing steadily, if slowly, and keeping our national wealth for the people as a whole, and for all who should labour among us.

But a new element has burst into South African life.

## Retrogressive Factors: II. The Monopolist.

When diamonds were first discovered here, in the true old South African manner, the find was considered as one for the people at large. For years there flocked to the Diamond-fields colonists from every part of the country, and the wealth discovered went back to the homes of the people. That wealth rebuilt many a Colonial homestead; it educated many a Colonial child; it enabled landowners to carry out improvements otherwise impos-

sible; it saved from insolvency many a Colonial firm which had sent members to dig; it spread throughout the country a glow of well-being, owing to the general diffusion in small sums of the wealth made by South Africa from the diamonds. Something analogous took place in the early days at the Transvaal gold-fields; and gold-digging has never yet become quite so complete a monopoly in the hands of a few as the diamond industry.

Time forbids that I should enter into a detailed account of the way in which these industries passed from their early and healthy condition; the

facts are well known to you all. There were in South Africa certain men from Europe, of great shrewdness, and with large abilities for speculation, who saw at once the possibilities our natural industries opened out before them. The many small original possessors of the wealth of South Africa were not men of vast means, and were rather hard workers than sharp financial speculators; and the keen-sighted strangers quickly discerned that, could they buy out the small interests one by one and then amalgamate among themselves, slowly but surely the wealth of the country would pass into their hands.

It needed no vast capital to buy out the original possessors.

To-day a small, resolute, and keen body of men, amalgamated into Rings and Trusts, are quickly and surely setting their hands round the mineral wealth of South Africa. Our diamonds are already a complete monopoly in their hands; our gold, our coal, the richest portions of our soil, and even our public works, are tending to fall into the grasp of our great amalgamators. Not only are these men not South Africans by birth, which would in itself matter nothing, but in the majority of cases they are men who regard South Africa merely

as a field for the making of wealth and the furthering of their own designs. When they have attained their end they do not feel themselves bound to the spot which has enriched them, but in most cases retire to Europe to expend the wealth of South Africa in the purchase of social distinction and in the luxuries of old-world life, or in further increasing their command over South African resources.

And South Africa grows poorer!

Yet, were this all, we should be inclined to say, What ground have we for complaint? These men are but taking advantage

of that competitive system which we to-day still uphold. If the men of South Africa are not skilled enough in the methods of gathering together the wealth of a people; and if they have not that fellow-feeling to be able to defeat them, which would enable them to combine, and so retain the land for the people at large; can we blame the men who take advantage of our ignorance and disunion? They are but carrying out their operations on the most approved financial principles! In truth, were this all, we should merely be suffering in a most exaggerated degree from a disease common to many other countries.

## The Union of the Two Factors.

But our evil has not stopped here. Owing to the mental capacity of some of these speculators, and to certain conditions in South African public life, the conception suggested itself to them: that were it possible to obtain complete control of the political machinery in any African State (notably of the Cape Colony), and could they hold the reins of Government in their own hands, their power for increasing their wealth, for resisting taxation upon those industries of which they possessed monopolies, and for ex-

tending their commercial exploitations into adjoining territories, would be immeasurably increased.

This conception has been seized and carried out.

The means of its accomplishment in the Cape Colony has been through the complete control gained by the Monopolists over the only group in South Africa whom they could hope to guide, and whom, in view of their extra-colonial plans, it was necessary to keep pacified and well in hand.

It is this command of the political machinery of the country by the Monopolist, owing to his union with one

section, which constitutes the real disease from which the Cape Colony is suffering. It is this which lies at the back of our Retrogressive Movement.

For the Monopolist Party, determined to obtain control of the political machinery, could only do so by purchasing the co-operation of some truly South African body. The more shrewd and modern section of South Africans—professional men, merchants, go-ahead newspaper-reading farmers—are, very many of them, unpurchasable; and those who are not would demand a high price in concessions local and personal, and even then could

not be blindly led. Our working population being mainly native, and very slightly enfranchised, is not at the present day, and will not be for a long time to come, a party powerful enough to make its support a strength to any leader. Then there remained for the Speculatist and Monopolist Party but one body to whom it could turn with any hope that it would place it in power. This body was the Retrogressive Element in the Bond Party. It was purchased, not by the outlay of capital, nor by offers of place and power to its members, but, much more cheaply for the Monopolist, by the simple

expedient of offering to support those Retrogressive measures which without his aid could never have found a place on our Colonial Statute-book.

The Kafir's back and the poor man's enhanced outlay on the necessaries of life pay the Monopolist's bribe.

On the other hand, the Retrogressive Element, once enabled to pass such measures as lay nearest its heart by the co-operation of the Monopolist with his skill and intelligence, is willing to give him a perfectly free hand, and support him in all measures which do not touch its Retrogressive instincts. We thus have the

Retrogressive Party supporting the Monopolist in carrying out measures in which he has no interest or concern, and the Monopolist assisting the Retrogressive Party in setting upon the Statute-book measures which are repugnant to his own common sense and shrewd modern outlook. Taking advantage of that childlike simplicity which is at once the weakness and the greatest charm of the Boer, he leads him whither he would and also whither he would not.

It is from this unnatural marriage that are born those evils under which the Colony groans to-day. It is a marriage which must end in rupture

when the Retrogressive Party discover how, instead of a union of affection, they have been led into one of convenience, and that the bridegroom is quite ready to forsake his bride when she has nothing more to give him.

Nevertheless, to-day it is this coalition which is unpicking the progressive enactments of the past, which is enabling the Monopolist Party to carry out unhampered its financial depredations here and in the Northern Territories. It is this coalition which, by giving political power to enormously wealthy individuals, is corroding our public life, till the principle that every

man has his price and can be squared, if you can only find his figure, is becoming an established dogma.

Worse than any of those retrogressive measures which the Bondsman, in simplicity and sincerity, desires to see enacted are those measures which he allows others to take, who are neither simple nor sincere.

### "But are they not Anglicising Africa?"

But I am aware it may be contended: "Granting what has been stated as being exactly true; allowing that the Monopolist has filched away the

wealth of South Africa; and granting that his party, by coalescing with the extreme Retrogressive Party, has given it for the time being an unhealthy preponderance; granting, further, that to retain control over the Colonial Legislature squaring in all its multiple forms has been, and is, a necessity on the part of the Monopolist Party; granting that this is disastrous to our public and social life—yet is it not worth our while to connive at all these conditions, and to abstain from disturbing them, as long as the Monopolist Party is quietly and persistently moving in a direction which tends to annihilate

the independence of two adjoining States, which shall ultimately render the Englishman dominant throughout South Africa? At the cost of whatever evils or injustice, is it not well to see extending northward the territory more or less under British rule?"

We are all aware that this is often put forth plainly and in so many words as a reason for abstaining from interference with the Monopolist Party. It is said frequently, "I am for Rhodes, because, whatever he may or may not be, he is slowly but surely undermining the Bond. Rhodes, and he only, will within our lifetime so

manipulate, that the neighbouring Republics shall fall into our hands, and the English Party in South Africa be dominant. And, after all, is not this extension to the northward a very fine thing for the Colony?"

To this I would first reply: Is the undermining and breaking up of the Bond, even if this should result from the alliance, worth the continual passing of such measures as we shall have in the future to undo? Is the breaking up of the Bond itself wholly to be desired? And if it were, is splitting the Bond worth causing deep racial unrest and suspicion where none before existed, be-

tween ourselves and our native fellow-inhabitants, the labouring class of South Africa, by the passing of laws which seem to express an animus towards them which we do not feel; and which constitute a course which, though for the moment it can work us no practical evil, may in years to come, when too late, be the cause of bitter regret? Is it worth while so vitiating the streams of our public life that we have to look back with regret and almost incredulity at the nature of our public life in years gone by, feeling its tone something almost too high ever to have existed in South Africa? Is

all this worth paying, even if we *are* undermining the Bond?

I, for one, hold strongly that it is not. I do not wish to see the Bond broken.

What I wish to see is the Bond holding its own manfully on all subjects, social and political, and exercising that influence upon the Legislature and public life of this colony which is proportionate to its numbers and intelligence; thereby preventing legislation from taking a course which might in any respect be unjust, or opposed to the benefit of an important and respected section of the community.

Is the forced annexation of