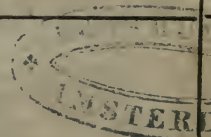


DT
770
W35

UC-NRLF



QB 572 318



WATSON

THE HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH RULE AND POLICY

IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE LECTURE ROOM, NELSON STREET,
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,

BY

ROBERT SPENCE WATSON,

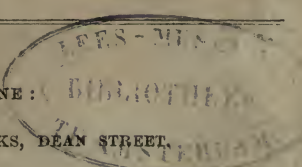
ON FRIDAY, THE 30TH MAY, 1879,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE NEWCASTLE LIBERAL ASSOCIATION.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE :

J. FORSTER, TYNE PRINTING WORKS, DEAN STREET.





Ex libris

Charles

Atwood

Kofoid

1870



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

PRESENTED BY
PROF. CHARLES A. KOFOID AND
MRS. PRUDENCE W. KOFOID

DT770
W35

THE HISTORY
OF
ENGLISH RULE AND POLICY
IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The English people are engaged in a strange enterprise in South Africa.* They are deliberately and of malice aforethought compassing the subjugation and possible extermination of a gallant though savage people. They have embarked in an aggressive war which must be troublesome and costly in any event;—a war in which failure is not to be thought of, but in which, the greater the success, the greater their disgrace. And they have done this, paradox though it seem, without knowing it, and against their will. It is because every one of us is so deeply interested in this matter; because every true born Englishman must feel that a stain on the honour of his nation is a personal disgrace, that I wish—however imperfectly, yet faithfully and fairly—to trace out for you the history of our rule and policy in South Africa; so that those of my fellow citizens who do me the honour to listen to me may be able to form an opinion, founded upon knowledge, of the deeds which we are called upon to ratify and confirm.

In 1806 the Dutch had maintained a colony at the Cape of Good Hope for more than a century and a half, as a convenient station on the old route from Europe to India. They had imported slaves to assist in the cultivation of the land which they purchased from the natives whom they called Hottentots. They fought these natives from time to time, and annexed more and more of their land, but instead of giving way or perishing before the white men, the Hottentots amalgamated

* The War with the Zulus.

with them, until some writers now tell us that there is not one pure Hottentot left. Whether this be so or not the native race has exercised a great influence upon the character and appearance of the major part of the population of to-day.

In 1806 the English took forcible possession of the Cape Colony with which they had been playing since 1795, when the Prince of Orange had fled for safety from Holland to England, and they looked after it for him. It has been perhaps the most foolish of all the silly extensions of territory we have made.

In 1811 came our first Kaffir war. The word "Kaffir," I should explain, is sometimes used to express the whole of the native tribes inhabiting South Africa, and sometimes to denote only those which inhabit the district known as Kaffraria, which lies to the east of Cape Colony, but has (for the most part) been annexed by us and added to it. The Dutch had established what they called a neutral zone between themselves and the Kaffirs, but the Kaffirs soon came across this zone for purposes of plunder. To the English and Dutch of that day no doubt this seemed an unpardonable offence, but to us it scarcely seems so enormous. The land had undoubtedly belonged to them before we stole it from the Dutch or the Dutch from them. True they had been driven out of it, but very much against their will, and (remembering the depravity of even white human nature) it seems rather natural that they should bear malice against those who had stolen away their homes and fatherland. An improvised force marched against them under a magistrate who was unfortunately killed, and then we began a systematic and pitiless war with them. We took no prisoners; every Kaffir who was caught was killed; until the whole people were driven back across the Great Fish River—some sixty miles, as the crow flies, beyond the neutral belt. The punishment was scarcely in proportion to the offence.

Our next difficulty was with the Dutch settlers—the so-called "Boers" or farmers. Then as now they were big, resolute, stubborn, simple men—only wishing to be left alone to rule both themselves and the natives about them. It is interesting to remember that, of all the Teutonic peoples, the Dutch are the most nearly allied to us, that their language is our mother tongue, and that their true home is our true fatherland, and then that of all quarrels the bitterest are those which at times unfortunately break out between near relatives.

This trouble with the Dutch came in 1815. They were slave

owners as we then were. We made laws regulating their conduct to their slaves which they disliked, and they rebelled. They were soon beaten, six of them were hanged as an example, their friends being made to stand by and witness the execution. But this was not all. Under the weight of six men the gallows broke. In vain did the friends implore that the lives of the senseless wretches might be spared. The repairing of the gallows was a work of hours; the victims were slowly restored to life; their poor friends were compelled to remain on the spot, and at last the rebels were hanged for the second and last time, and that so effectually that the patient but unforgetful Boers still curse the place and the deed.

Small wars with the Kaffirs were of constant occurrence, and in 1819, there was a severe one which resulted, as did each in turn, in the extension of English territory. In 1820 our Government sent out four thousand emigrants to Algoa Bay, four hundred miles to the east of Cape Town, and they there laid the foundations of the Eastern Province, the most thriving and prosperous part of the Cape Colony. Those of you who have taken any interest in Cape politics must have noticed the constant struggle for power which goes on between the Western Province which we took from the Dutch, and where the Dutch element still preponderates, and the Eastern Province which we colonized ourselves.

In 1820 the Cape Colony was ruled, much as we rule India, by an English Governor who was an absolute despot. We need not linger over the disputes with the Boers, and the wars with the natives, but may come at once to the great disturbances from which our present difficulties have to some extent sprung. Anti-slavery doctrines had at length triumphed in England. In 1834 slavery was abolished throughout the British dominions. The slaves belonging to the Cape colonists were 35,745 in number, and they were valued at £3,000,000, whilst the compensation to be paid for them was fixed at £1,200,000. But even this was not paid at once; it was long delayed, and fell into the hands of fraudulent agents, who would only part with it upon receiving heavy discounts. In 1833 and 1834 the Dutch began to leave the Cape Colony. They complained that the Government, which had so long encouraged slavery, now arbitrarily put an end to it; that they had parted with their independence, but had not obtained security; and they dreaded yet greater evils in the form of heavy taxation, which it was rumoured, the English Government intended to impose upon them.

By the close of 1836 nearly 10,000 people had "trekked," as they called it—made tracks, as we should say. So anxious were they to depart that they sold the farms and lands which had been theirs for many generations at merely nominal prices,—an entire farm being disposed of for a single waggon,—and moved off with their wives and children into the unknown world beyond, in search of some happy spot where the English should cease from troubling, and the Dutch should be at rest. Some stayed when they had crossed the Orange River, some reached Natal, and some even found their way beyond the Vaal River itself.

But before this migration reached its height, we had another Kaffir war, which hastened it greatly. In 1834 there was one of the constant land disputes, in which the farmers took what land they wanted without inquiring to whom it belonged, the Kaffirs revenged themselves by stealing their cattle; then a Commando was instituted, a number of soldiers, commanded by an English officer, and accompanied by the aggrieved farmers, invaded the Kaffir territory, seized all the cattle they found at the nearest Kaffir kraals, and sometimes burned the houses and shot the inhabitants in cold blood. This had been the case in 1834, and in December of that year the outraged Kaffirs rose suddenly and invaded the Cape Colony. To read the reception of the news by the House of Commons recalls the feelings of pain and horror, and almost of dismay, with which we received the sad tidings of the defeat and slaughter of British troops at the battle of Isandula. "The news had filled the friends of the settlers in the colony, and of the missionaries who had gone thither to convert the natives, with the utmost alarm and dismay." The Kaffirs had swept along the frontier of the colony, had burned the farms, killed the colonists, and carried off an immense quantity of cattle. The colony seemed at their mercy, for contrary winds prevented the succour sent from the Cape to the East Province reaching its destination. But even at the moment of communicating this sad news to the House of Commons it was fully and fairly stated that the war had arisen out of the bad conduct of the colonists, and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton confirmed this statement by citing several instances of robbery and atrocious cruelty; and "he hoped our treatment of the natives would undergo strict revision, for it had been such as to make every honest man blush."*

But right is not always might; when the white and the black man come to blows the ultimate result is certain. A terrible and stern

* Hansard, vol. xxvi p. 726 (1835).

revenge was taken ; we carried out to the full that Scriptural injunction, the full comprehension of which is one of the many substantial advantages which the English have derived from their Christianity,—“To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance ; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have.” We received the submission of the Kaffirs ; we took away their herds ; and we punished them for endeavouring to regain the land we had taken from them, by taking away the land to which we had driven them.

But there was then (as I trust and believe there is now) a strong party in England who refused to allow injustice to be done in her name even to Kaffirs. The causes which had led to the war were carefully inquired into. Lord Glenelg, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, openly declared that the Kaffirs had ample justification for their conduct ; he recalled Sir Benjamin D’Urban, the then Governor, and restored to the natives the land of which they had been wrongfully despoiled.*

This act of justice is worth our while remembering : it is possible that we may even wisely profit by the precedent it affords us.

Let me sum up the position of affairs at the end of the Dutch migration, say 1838. We had ruled the Cape Colony for 32 years ; we had carried on three extensive wars with the Kaffirs, and nearly constant petty ones ; we had quelled the Dutch rebellion ; we had abolished the use of the Dutch language in Government despatches, and the old Dutch Courts for the settlement of disputes ; we had given the Hottentots the same privileges and position in the eye of the law as the Europeans ; we had put down slavery. A large number of the Dutch inhabitants had left the colony, and had gone away beyond the Orange River. Our possessions consisted of but a portion of the district which we now call the Cape Colony, and that the portion bordering the coast.

And now we will follow those Dutch boers who did not like us, and who had shaken off the dust of their feet against us, and gone out into the great continent of Africa in search of independence and peace. A rough and weary time they had of it, constantly harassed by the natives, and without house or home, but they were brave men and persevered to the end. Some of them, after encountering incredible hardships and privations, forced their way over the Drakenberg Mountains (the Dragon Hills) into what we now call the Province of Natal. They found the

* “ Handbook of Cape Colony,” by John Noble, p. 23

fair land almost without inhabitants, for Tschaka, the great Zulu King, had carried out in it his policy of extermination. This man had, during the sixteen years of his reign, acquired permanent authority over nearly the whole of South Eastern Africa, including the districts now known as Basuto Land, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal. He *was the Napoleon of Southern Africa, and carried out his conquests at a cost in human suffering which almost approaches that of his great white contemporary. I have not the time, nor should I venture to weary you by relating the bitter wars between Tschaka's successor, Dingaane, and the Dutch, but they at length triumphed over him (460 of them under Pretorius defeating his picked army of 12,000 men on Dec. 16th, 1838)† and established the free Dutch Republic of Natalia, and I think that you will agree with me that they had also established some claim to the right of self-government.

But we could not let them alone, although they had gone nearly a thousand miles away from us. In 1842 we sent our troops to invade their territory. They were told that they owed obedience and fealty to English rule, and, after a brief but brave resistance they were overpowered; and on the 8th August, 1843, Natal was formally annexed, and became a British dependency. At this time there were about 6,000 whites and 25,000 natives in the land, there are now only about 20,000 whites and 320,000 natives, so that, although it is called the Garden of Africa, it has not been a very successful colony.

I stated that only a part of the Dutch emigrants had forced their way into Natal. Those who settled in the Orange River territory formed themselves into a kind of Republic, and laid down laws to regulate the position of the natives who continued to dwell in the district, but they speedily received notice from Governor Napier that they were not released from their allegiance to the British Crown. They had many wars with the natives who were openly encouraged by the English, Earl Grey, who was then at the Colonial Office, actually writing to Sir Harry Smith, "I would advise you to enter into friendly relations with those chiefs; advise those chiefs to combine against the Boers under a general authority; tell them the British Government will help them. If they choose, the Governor of the Cape will send them an officer to reside amongst them, and aid them by his advice and directions. His first

* Shooter's "Kaffirs of Natal and the Zulu Country," p. 249.

† "Natal," by Brooks and Mann, p. 219.

step is to induce the chief to establish a confederacy against the Boers."

And yet it is denied that the English Government has ever incited the natives against the Boers, or ever used the dangerous weapon of savage allies against a civilized people.

But the Boers in the Orange River territory received reinforcements of an unexpected kind. The English Government in Natal soon made itself hateful to the Dutch, from whom the English had seized it. They were not allowed to purchase lands; and Kaffirs were located on the lands which already did belong to them. No attempt was made in any way to regulate the conduct of these Kaffirs, and the Dutch, after appealing through Pretorius to the Governor of Cape Colony in vain, once again abandoned all their possessions, and set out to seek a home in the wilderness.

It was the wet season of the year when Sir Harry Smith met them on their road, and was moved to tears by their condition. He says: **"These families were exposed to a state of misery which I never before saw equalled, except in Massena's invasion of Portugal, when the whole of the population of that part of the seat of war abandoned their homes and fled. The scene here was truly heartrending."* But the Dutch persevered, and made their way for the most part into the district we now call the Transvaal, some going to the Orange River territory.

In the latter territory they were attacked by the English in 1848, and at Boomplaats they were defeated after one of the most severe skirmishes ever witnessed, and the Orange River territory was declared to belong to England.

And yet, at this very time, the Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Henry Pottenger, †declared that there should be a complete reversal of English policy in South Africa, and that, instead of adding to the limits of the Colony, he would gladly retrench them.

We must now return to that Colony. In 1846 we were again at war with the Kaffirs. Two of them had stolen an axe, and were rescued by their countrymen as they were being taken to prison. ‡ In the war which ensued we were again victorious, and the Kaffirs were driven beyond the Kei River. Then in 1850 came the bloodiest struggle in which the Cape Colony ever engaged, it was a kind of sacred war, to which the Kaffirs were roused by the preaching of one of their prophets: it lasted for two

* J. Noble's "South Africa, Past and Present," p. 124.

† Hansard, vol. c. xvi, p. 250.

‡ Bisset's "Sport and War in South Africa," p. 54.

years and a half, but at length the natives submitted to Sir George Cathcart, and Kaffraria became a British dependency. Since that time the Cape Colony has been free from war until the year 1877.

But the peculiar interest to us of this struggle is that its long duration forced the English Parliament to give it quite an unusual amount of attention. Debate followed debate in the House of Commons, and the whole question of our South African policy was thoroughly discussed. We learn from these debates that the patriotic British merchants at the Cape had been supplying the natives with fire-arms. We learn also that one of the principal causes of the war was the support which the English had given to the Kaffirs when they came into collision with the Dutch. We learn that many of the colonists found the Kaffir wars a lucrative source of income, and that it was commonly said in the colony that the war would last as long as the expenditure went on, and would begin to end "when the price of waggons fell." How history repeats itself! How one thinks of the difficulty which there is now in Natal to find means of transport; how the very men for whose sake England is putting forth such efforts are plundering her for their own benefit, and how scarcely for love or money can a single waggon be got to cross the frontier! yet public meetings are held, and resolutions that the war should be vigorously carried on, are enthusiastically passed.

But to return to the debates. In 1848 Earl Grey had told the colonists that "it was not to be expected that in future this country should bear the expenses incurred in maintaining a force to defend the Colony, and that it was incumbent upon the colonists to make a suitable provision for that purpose." Upon this point most of the debates in 1851 turned, and I propose to make some quotations from them, as they bear closely upon the position of affairs to-day.

Perhaps the principal part in the discussions was taken by Sir William Molesworth. On the 10th April he made a remarkable speech, in which he reviewed England's entire policy in reference to her colonies, and from this speech I must read at some length, because I find there expressed, eloquently and forcibly, that which I believe to be the common-sense view of the matter taken by a man who does not agree with some of us upon the unlawfulness of war.

After speaking of the forces maintained in our various colonies, and of possible reductions in them, he thus proceeds:—*

* Hansard, vol. cxv, p. 1335.

“ With the permission of the House, I will explain as shortly as I can the reasons which have led me to the conclusions which I have just stated. I have said that the policy of this country with regard to its true colonies is of a very different character from its policy with regard to military stations; for the motives which have induced it to plant colonies are quite different from those which led it to occupy military stations. We all know that, ever since the new world was discovered, it has been the unceasing desire of England to plant that new world with new Englands. It was the ardent wish of this country that its children should occupy the uninhabited portions of the earth's surface, and carry along with them to their new homes the laws, the institutions, and feelings of Englishmen; that they should there become bold, energetic, and self-relying men, capable and willing to aid their parents in times of need, and not weak, puling infants, ever crying to their mother for assistance and emptying her purse. Now it is as true of bodies of men as it is of individual men, that the best mode of developing in them energy, courage, and self-reliance, is not to coddle and fondle them, and to tie them to a mother's apron, but to throw them upon their own resources, and to let them rough it and battle it with the world. Therefore it was the old policy of this country, with regard to plantations, and it still is the recognized constitutional doctrine with regard to them, that their inhabitants should take care of themselves, and manage their local affairs, and govern themselves by representative institutions, Now, most of our colonies, properly so called, do possess representative institutions, and all of them are about to possess those institutions. With such institutions no taxes can be levied in these colonies without the consent of the representatives of the people; and their inhabitants cannot be constitutionally compelled to contribute out of their taxes to the revenues of the United Kingdoms. Therefore reciprocally, the people of the United Kingdoms ought not to be called upon to pay out of their own taxes any portion of the local expenses of such colonies; and consequently in such colonies all expenses for local purposes should be paid out of local revenues, while all expenses for imperial purposes should be paid for out of imperial revenues.”

He then proceeds to apply the principles he has laid down to answering the question—who ought to pay for the military force which is maintained in a colony, and points out that such a force can only be required for war with external foes, or to preserve order and tranquility

in the colony. Although the entire speech is full of interest, the part which affects us to-night is as follows:—

“I will next speak of wars with savage tribes on the frontier of a colony. The answer to the question whether such wars ought to be considered as strictly local wars or not—whether any portion of the expense of such wars ought to be defrayed by the local government or not—the answers to these questions depend upon the nature of the government of the colony. If the inhabitants of a colony have representative institutions, and the management of their local affairs, and if the relations between them and the frontier tribes be conducted by local officers, then the local government must be held responsible for the result, and if the result be war, and that war be conducted by local officers, and the expenditure on account of it be under local control, then I think that it is quite clear that the whole expense of that war should be paid by the colony, and no portion of it by the United Kingdoms. And I feel convinced that if the local government had to pay the expense of native wars, those governments would take care not rashly to engage in war, and when engaged in it, it would be for their interest to bring the war to a termination as speedily as possible, and at the least possible cost. Unfortunately it is quite different when the imperial Government has to pay for a native war. Then it is the interest of many persons in the colony that the war should be made as expensive as possible.

* * * * *

I believe that it is almost impossible for the imperial Government at home to exercise any real check over such expenditure; and I believe that it is also very difficult, if not impossible, for the imperial officers in the colony to resist the claims poured in upon them from every quarter; for, the imperial purse being considered inexhaustible, every one in the colony is intent either upon picking it himself, or assisting others in doing so, whenever a fair opportunity, like a native war, occurs. On the other hand, the resistance offered by the imperial officers in a colony is generally languid, for they have no clear and permanent interest in offending those around them by keeping down imperial expenditure, provided it do not become so extravagantly great as to cause a great outcry in this House; and, generally speaking, hon. members know nothing about the matter till two or three years after the money has been spent. Then it is too late; fair promises are made which are invariably broken.

It appears to me to be of the utmost importance that we should not, if possible, be made liable for any bill on account of native wars, for such a bill will always be a most extortionate one; and yet in no one case that I remember, were the extortioners contented, but invariably accused us of being mean, shabby, and not paying enough. If in any exceptional case it should be deemed expedient to assist a colony, possessing self-government, in a native war, I am inclined to think that the wisest plan would be to give the colony a round sum of money, and let the local government employ it in the manner which it deems best. On the other hand, I must admit that if the inhabitants of a colony do not possess representative institutions, if they have no voice in the management of their local affairs, if they be governed by the Colonial Office, and if the relations between them and the native tribes be conducted by officers responsible to the Colonial Office, then the Colonial Office, that is, the Imperial Government, must be held responsible for the result, and, if the result be war, as the war will be conducted by imperial officers, as the expenditure on account of it will be under imperial control, as such wars are apt to be hastily produced, unnecessarily prolonged, and conducted with lavish expense, it would not be just to throw the whole burden of such wars on the colony; but a portion at least of the expense ought to be paid by the Imperial Government."

Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, Mr. Hume, Mr. Adderley, and many others, enunciated and enforced similar views in the various debates; Mr. Cobden quoting Adam Smith, who said we should make the colonies pay their own expenses in time of peace, and contribute as much as would indemnify us in time of war.

It is amusing to notice, *en passant*, that the Zulus were mentioned in this debate of the 10th April, 1851, by Lord Mandeville, but only to say that they were perfectly peaceable, and never attacked us!

In Natal the inhabitants have only a partial voice in the management of their local affairs. The Imperial Government is conducting the war "hastily produced," and will be expected to bear all the cost of its unnecessary prolongation. The Colonists alone can and do benefit by it.

The most important result of the long Kaffir War of 1850, and of the discussion which it aroused, was that our Government was led to give representative government on an unusually wide, popular basis to the Cape Colony; but it was not until 1872 that the Governor was removed, and that they received an entirely responsible government with

an Elective Legislative Council and House of Assembly, and a Ministry accountable only to their own Parliament.

I shall have but little more to say about Cape Colony. It lies far away from the present source of anxiety, but in order that you may see how strange a people the Kaffirs are, I must tell you of their amazing conduct in 1857 in Kaffraria.* More than 50,000 of them voluntarily starved themselves to death. They were told that the English would be driven away, and that their race would be restored to its ancient glory, not by the living but by the dead. They sowed no seed; they slaughtered their cattle; they burned their grain; and then they sat down, and died the most lingering and painful of deaths, in quiet faith and hope.

But this is a digression. I have already mentioned how some of the wandering Dutch found their way to the Transvaal, where the English of that day thought it too far to follow them. Comparatively few, however, settled there until after the battle of Boomplaats, when the English took the Orange River Territory from them. Then Pretorius fled across the Vaal river into the Transvaal, and the English Government set a reward of £2,000 upon his head.† The Dutch Boers followed him; he established a Republic; and as he was so far away, and as the great debates to which I have alluded began to bear fruit, the English Government sent commissioners to negotiate with this doughty rebel, and in 1852 they entered into the Sand River Treaty, now of so much importance. ‡The Transvaal had never been declared to be British territory, and by the first article of this convention the Assistant Commissioners guaranteed "in the fullest manner, on the part of the British Government, to the emigrant farmers beyond the Vaal River the right to manage their own affairs, and to govern themselves according to their own laws, without any interference on the part of the British Government; and that no encroachment shall be made by the said Government in the territory beyond, to the north of the Vaal River; with the further assurance that the warmest wish of the British Government is to promote peace, free trade, and friendly intercourse with the emigrant farmers now inhabiting, or who hereafter may inhabit, that country; it being understood that this system of non-interference is binding upon both parties."

* J. Noble's "South Africa, Past and Present," p. 225.

† J. Noble's "South Africa, Past and Present," p. 123.

‡ This Treaty is given verbatim at p. 148 of J. Noble's "South Africa, Past and Present."

In the further articles the Commissioners disclaimed all alliances whatsoever and with whomsoever of the coloured nations to the north of the Vaal River; the Dutch agreed neither to permit nor to practise slavery; all trade with the natives in ammunition was mutually prohibited; and thus the Transvaal Republic was founded by treaty with the English nation.

Let us return to the Orange River Territory. After the defeat of the Dutch, a British Resident was appointed, who, with the aid of a small council, might make laws for everybody but the natives, but even the fact that we did not make laws for them was insufficient for them, and they would fight us. The Dutch naturally refused to help us; we were surrounded by hostile peoples; we were making great exertions and going to vast expense to maintain our government over a people who hated us, and not without cause. The game was evidently not worth the candle. In 1851 Earl Grey had written to the High Commissioner that "the ultimate abandonment of the Orange River sovereignty must be a settled point of our policy," and that when this was effected, no wars, however sanguinary, which might occur between the native tribes and the independent peoples should afford a ground for our interference. This was followed by the appointment of the Commissioners who had consented to the treaty with the Transvaal farmers, and they entered into a similar convention with the Boers of the Orange River territory.* The future independence of that State and its government were guaranteed, and its inhabitants were declared to be a free and independent people. Existing treaties with coloured people north of the Orange River were renounced, and none were thereafter to be entered into which might be injurious or prejudicial to the interests of the new Republic. This convention was confirmed by Royal proclamation on the 8th April, 1854.

The Orange River Republicans had many a difficulty to contend with, and had to make great sacrifices. They had to fight as well as to pay taxes; they had to suspend the action of their law courts; and their whole industries were paralyzed, whilst their state revenue was exhausted. But they struggled bravely on for more than 14 years; they got through their troubles, and their land is now the only inland state which is peaceful and prosperous. It has a population of 50,000 whites and 25,000 blacks in a country not quite so large as England and Wales; that is to say,

* Given verbatim in J. Noble's "South Africa, Past and Present," p. 159.

the entire population, of a land nearly as large as our own, is less than that of North Shields.

I have gone so carefully into this history of our dealings with the Dutch in the Orange Free State because it is one of the few glimpses of justice and common sense which the whole of our dealings with them afford. We voluntarily came to the opinion that our annexation had not been wise and judicious, and we abandoned it. There is thus a precedent which might be fairly and fully weighed in connection with our recent course of dealing in the Transvaal, and the policy which we may hereafter adopt in regard to it.

But the case is yet stronger than I have stated it. There were some of the inhabitants of the Orange River Territory who did not wish to be without the care and protection of England.* They memorialized the Secretary of State, and even sent a deputation to England to urge the impolicy and injustice of the proposed measure. It would destroy confidence in the stability of the British rule throughout Southern Africa; it would occasion cruel and interminable wars between the Natives and the Europeans which would endanger the security and peace of Cape Colony itself. But though these are the very views which have occasioned the annexation of the Transvaal, Sir George Clerk and Sir George Cathcart took a decided stand in opposition to those who did not wish to be free. "The more I consider the position of the territory," said Sir George Clerk, "the more I feel assured of its inutility as an acquisition. It unquestionably has some attractions * * * * but it is nevertheless a vast territory, possessing nothing that can sanction its being permanently added to a frontier already inconveniently extended. It secures no genuine interests; it is recommended by no prudent or justifiable motive; it answers no really beneficial purpose; it imparts no strength to the British Government,—no credit to its character, no lustre to its crown."

Every word might have been spoken of the Transvaal! but how strangely inconsistent is our policy with these Dutch. We take their land from them by force of arms; and then compel them to receive it back again. We insist upon annexing a State where the great majority of the inhabitants do not desire it; we refuse to keep a State where some of the inhabitants do not wish for independence. Such conduct looks like a set resolve to thwart the wishes of the Dutch whatever they might be.

* I have been informed by Sir George Clerk that it was the few English settlers in the Orange River Territory who took this action. It was the few English settlers in the Transvaal also who involved us in our unfortunate annexation of the territory, the independence of which

Let us now sum up the state of affairs in South Africa twenty-five years ago. Cape Colony has fought its longest war with the natives, has greatly extended its boundaries, and is to enjoy peace for twenty years; it has received a representative government, although the Home Government will appoint its Chief for eighteen years longer. Natal has been wrested from the Dutch, and is governed by a Lieutenant Governor. The Orange River Territory has been taken forcibly from the Dutch, but has been given up to them again, and is a Republic; and the Transvaal is also a Republic by express agreement with the English Government; and thus things remained for the next thirteen years. Every province had its difficulties and troubles, but the arrangement which had been come to seems on the whole a wise and fair one. It would have been better had Natal been added to the other republics, but in two directions, at all events, the Dutch had fairly won their independence, whilst we had the barrier of the two young republics between our Cape Colony, and the most warlike tribes of natives.

And now we come to one of those curious discoveries which change the political history of the world, and show us how infinitely true it is that "trifles make the sum of human things." *In 1867 a diamond was seen in the hands of some children who were playing with it in their father's house. He was a Dutchman, living in the extreme north of Cape Colony, and almost on the south bank of the Orange River. Another plaything was substituted for this one; the diamond passed through several hands, and was at last purchased for £500 by Sir Philip Woodhouse, the then Governor of Cape Colony. That stone should surely be amongst the regalia at the Tower of London, for it has become historical, and has cost the English people untold gold and some priceless honour. In 1868 and 1869 search was made, and diamonds were found upon some of the farms in the west of the Orange Free State; and in 1870 there was a general rush to the Diamond Fields of needy men anxious to pick up a fortune,—a rush like that which many of us remember to the Australian gold diggings in 1851. And now most unfortunately the English Government forgot all about the treaty they had made when they forced the Dutch to establish the Orange River Free State: they crossed the river; they set aside the claims of the Dutch, who were in possession; and they professed to purchase the territory now called Griqualand West from an old Kaffir who laid claim

* Trollope's "South Africa," vol. ii, p. 161.

to it. In one sense it was a cheap enough purchase, the diamonds found upon a single farm in four years were worth £3,500,000; more than £10,000,000 worth have been taken from another farm. We stole the land from the Dutch in the first place, and then got a sham title to it by giving Nicholas Waterboer, the Kaffir, a life annuity of £1000 for it, and securing to his wife and children a pension of £500 a year.* The Orange Free State had no armed force wherewith to arrest our wanton and wicked aggression, but they protested stoutly against the act. Lord Kimberley was then at the Colonial Office: in this matter of wrong-doing in South Africa neither of our political parties have clean hands. It has been a national, not a party question, and where both have so much to be ashamed of, it would be difficult and unjust to endeavour to apportion the weight of blame. Lord Kimberley then being at the Colonial Office, the Diamond Fields were declared to be British territory on the 27th October, 1871, but we had done this grievous wrong in a muddled and blind way, for although we had got the Diamond Fields, the mines themselves had been bought by private speculators. The most valuable one of all had been sold by a Dutch Boer to an English firm for £6,600; they cleared £35,000 a year from it for four years, and sold it in 1875 to the English Government for £100,000.†

But I have not time to go at all fully into the curious history of the Diamond Fields. The annexation was not popular even amongst the English, and in 1874 an English resident told Mr. Froude that the transaction made him ashamed of his country.‡ The Government wished the Cape Colony to accept the new territory, but it objected to do so, and not even yet have the terms upon which it would consent to take the awkward gift been arrived at.

But President Brand not only protested against the wrong done to his little republic, he came over to England and urged the justice of his case so pertinaciously that Lord Carnarvon, who had then become Secretary for the Colonies, whilst refusing to entertain the question of right, agreed to pay to the Orange Free State the sum of £90,000, and the further sum of £15,000 in case that State should at any time make a railway in connection with the other colonial railways, and thus the difficulty was ended in a somewhat strange and undignified way.

* The end of this business is amusing. We have not paid Waterboer. We have disputed his title at law, putting him to £3000 expense, and have cast him into prison for some trifling offence. "The Native Question in South Africa," by W. H. James. M.P., p. 43.

† Cunyngame's "My command in South Africa," p. 172.

‡ Froude's "Short Studies on Great Subjects." "Laves from a South African Journal," p. 532.

And now you will learn how these Diamond Fields have been an unmitigated curse to us, and how seriously they have affected the chances of permanent peace in the adjoining territories. The work in the mines was performed by Kaffirs who were enticed from all parts of the surrounding country by the prospect of liberal pay, for Kaffirs can and do work when it suits them to do so. We had bound ourselves by treaty not to deal in ammunition with the natives, but, having already broken the treaty in one particular, it was easier to break it in another. We allowed the unreserved sale of fire-arms and gunpowder to the Kaffirs at the Diamond Fields, and much of their wages was spent in the purchase of these articles. General Cunynghame thinks that 400,000 fire-arms (chiefly rifles) were thus distributed amongst the warlike nations adjoining the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and Natal.*

The result of this state of affairs was soon seen, and we have had to pay dearly for our gross faithlessness.

The Transvaal, or as it was then called "The South African Republic," had a rough struggle almost for existence. There were fierce and bloody wars between the Dutch and the Kaffirs, in which acts of savage cruelty were followed by bitter retaliation. There was an attempt to unite the two Dutch republics under one government, but we interfered and declared that such a proceeding would annul both the Conventions of 1852 and 1854. Strange and invariable blindness to the true course of honest policy! We break the treaties ourselves directly and with impunity, even when our doing so involves the worst consequences: the Dutch must not even break them by implication! Then there was a dispute with the Griquas, and we broke the Sand River Treaty, and, although their territory bounded that of the Transvaal, we declared that they were British subjects. There had been internal dissensions also, for the land was rich and of great extent, and the people were few, and inclined to a simple patriarchal form of government, and there was not that community of interest which produces strong community of feeling, which lies at the root of what we call patriotism, and which induces men to make great sacrifices, pecuniary and otherwise for their common country. But the discovery of diamonds in Griqualand West intensified every difficulty; not only were the natives armed, but we began to play them off against the Dutch in order to keep the republics in check. Then in 1871 gold was discovered in the North of the Transvaal, and

* Cunynghame's "My command in South Africa," p. xi.

the diggers rushed off to avail themselves of the discovery. Diggers are not the most orderly and scrupulous of men, and they soon began to involve the Dutch with the Natives who were already ripe for mischief. Then noble old Andries Pretorius was long dead, his last words advising concord among his countrymen, and the President (elected in 1872), the Rev. Thomas François Burgers, was by no means a typical Dutchman. He had the "go" of a steam-engine always at high pressure, and his overflowing energy was sometimes misapplied.* He had not learned the wisdom of hurrying gently, and so, although his exchequer was empty, he initiated great railways and other enterprises, succeeded in obtaining credit, and rushed his Republic into heavy debt. Then the waywardness of the digger produced its certain result, and Secocoeni, the Chief whose possessions lay nearest to the Leydenburg diggings, declared war, and the result (when, after three months' fighting, the volunteer army broke up of its own accord and went home) was somewhat doubtful, although Secocoeni sued for and obtained peace upon agreeing to pay a small indemnity. It is said that some of the farmers in out-lying districts subsidized the local chiefs in order that they might live in safety. Then there were frontier questions with Cetewayo, the King of the Zulus, whose land lay between the Transvaal and Natal and the Sea, and here again we supported the Natives against the Boers. Then the English Government was perpetually sending poor President Burgers irritating and insulting messages based on an insufficient knowledge of the facts, and he was rated in turn by each Colonial Secretary. There was no doubt that the Transvaal was passing through many and great difficulties, but its position was not nearly so desperate as that of the Orange River Free State had been. At length the English Government professing that it feared something might happen which would endanger the English possessions sent Sir Theophilus Shepstone to investigate matters, and to advise the Dutch authorities. Already there had been a clamour for annexation from the English colonists who had recently settled in the state, but the Dutch believed that the mission was a friendly one, and received it in a friendly manner, and (so reckless of facts are men resolved upon excusing injustice) that this very friendliness has been adduced as a proof that the Boers desired annexation?

Sir Theophilus Shepstone took with him a small escort of mounted

* Trollope's "South Africa," vol. ii, p. 44.

police. The Dutch knew that the entire armed power of England was at his back; they did not know that a commission which was to be the death-blow to their independence was in his pocket.

This commission is so strange a production, that I would fain have quoted it to you in its entirety.* It was purposely vague, so that it could be said that any successful act of aggression was covered by it. It was guarded in its language, so that any unsuccessful act could be successfully repudiated. The most important portion—after declaring that Sir Theophilus Shepstone may annex and administer such territories as after due consideration he shall think fit, but only provisionally and during the Queen's pleasure, and without ever mentioning the Transvaal in any way, runs thus:—"Provided first that no such proclamation should be issued by you with respect to any district, territory, or state, unless you shall be satisfied that the inhabitants thereof, or a sufficient number of them, or the Legislature thereof, desire to become our subjects; nor if any conditions unduly limiting our power and authority therein are sought to be imposed."

Sir Theophilus Shepstone arrived at Pretoria on the 22nd Jan., 1877, and on the 12th April, without having made any public or general attempt to ascertain what the wishes of the people were, and in direct defiance of the plain sense of his commission, he issued a proclamation coolly annexing the whole of a territory as large as France, and with a population of 40,000 whites and 250,000 blacks:—†"Now therefore I do, in virtue of the power and authority conferred upon me by Her Majesty's Royal Commission, and in accordance with instructions conveyed to me thereby *and otherwise*, proclaim and make known that from and after the publication hereof the territory heretofore known as the South African Republic shall be and shall be taken to be British territory,"

"And otherwise." What were the instructions conveyed to this mighty Commissioner "otherwise," and what way was that "otherwise," and from whom and by whom were they conveyed? It does not read like a piece of honest English history this, nor is it. A more wicked and wanton deed was never done by any man in the name of any nation, and yet it was not repudiated. It is not too late to repudiate it now.

When the news came to England people did not understand it or care about it. There was indeed a debate in the House of Commons in

* It will be found in Aylward's "The Transvaal of To-Day," p. 389, and in Noble's "South Africa Past and Present," Appendix p. 339.

† Noble's "South Africa, Past and Present," p. 341.

which Mr. Courtney, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Parnell, Mr. O'Donnell, and a few others, stood up manfully for those rights of the people which are the first article in the creed of all Liberals who see that it is possible for other peoples as well as the English people to have rights. But, as a whole, Tories, Whigs, and Radicals joined hands over the business, and sang a chorus of thanksgiving and joy over this most wicked and wanton violation of popular rights.

How was this possible? Chiefly from a misconception of the facts.

Lord Carnarvon was busily forwarding his scheme for a great South African confederation at this very time. If we read the deeply-interesting debates upon this subject, as well as that upon the annexation question, we shall find the following statements constantly made, and the facts involved therein as constantly assumed to be correct:—

- 1.—That the inhabitants of the Republic wished to be annexed.
- 2.—That they had instituted and maintained slavery.
- 3.—That they had exercised exceptional cruelty towards the natives in their wars, and exceptional injustice in their government.
- 4.—That they had been disgracefully beaten by the natives in war.
- 5.—That annexation was ardently desired by the natives, and would insure peace with them in the Transvaal, and would also prevent disturbances in our other colonies.

We will take each of these assertions *seriatim*, and endeavour to ascertain its truth or falsehood.

The first proviso of Sir Theophilus Shepstone's commission requires him as a condition precedent to annexation to obtain the popular sanction. The second proviso shows clearly that annexation, if it were desired, was not to be sudden, and should not be forcible, but was to be a matter of negotiation and arrangement, for it contemplates the people wishing to be annexed, yet requiring conditions which, unduly limiting the power of the Crown, would not permit its compliance with their wishes. In this case no annexation was to take place.

No one pretends that the Transvaal Volksraad* (or Parliament) sanctioned the annexation, although Sir Theophilus Shepstone urged them to do so. No one ventures to assert that any public meetings were held in favour of it. The Commissioner says that he was satisfied—by addresses, memorials, and letters received, and by personal inter-

* "A nation with a popular parliament can only be held to express its opinion to another nation by the voice of its parliament: and the Volksraad of the Transvaal was altogether opposed to the interference of Great Britain." "South Africa," by Anthony Trollope, vol. ii, p. 51.

course with the inhabitants—that a large proportion of the people desired the establishment of Her Majesty's authority and rule. As he was living in Pretoria, which has but some 2,000 inhabitants (men, women, and children), and as his staff charged themselves with the task of getting suitable addresses, this was not quite so satisfactory as it should have been, seeing that the popular sanction lies at the root of the whole matter. But the question has been tested. The President and Volksraad at once formally and forcibly protested against the deed. A deputation was sent to England to plead for justice to their country. When Lord Carnarvon told them that their people had desired annexation, they were astounded, and he was equally amazed to hear it stoutly denied. This was a point which was capable of proof. The deputation apparently misunderstood Lord Carnarvon, and thought that he undertook that the annexation should be cancelled if it were shown to have been contrary to the wish of the inhabitants. They went home, and sent out memorials to be signed by those who had not desired or approved of the annexation. What did Sir Theophilus Shepstone do when his accuracy was to be put to the proof? He issued a *proclamation that the setting on foot of the memorials was promoted by a spirit of sedition, and warned the promoters that they were by that—his proclamation—made liable to imprisonment, fine, and such further and other punishments as the law might direct! And when the Deputies held a meeting at Pretoria to tell the people how they had fared on their journey to pray from free England for the restoration of independence, dearer than life, to themselves and to their children, this representative of an English Queen had cannon directed upon the Assembly, and held troops in readiness with which it might be overawed!†

Are such things really possible? Am I telling you of the deeds of our own countryman in this 19th century, or do I dream, and are these things but recollections of the hateful rule of the Spanish Don Alva over the Netherlands; of the wretched tyranny of Napoleon's minions over the Spaniards struggling for their country's liberty; of the brutal Haynau trampling out the last sparks of freedom's torch in bleeding Hungary? Of such men, and of such men alone, are such proclamations and actions worthy. They reek of the foul atmosphere of despotic Imperialism. There is a rank Russian flavour about them. They are

* Given in extenso in Aylward's "The Transvaal of To-Day," p. 404.

† Hansard, vol. ccxiii, p. 2064.

emanations from the mind of a detective policeman, not from that of an English statesman. The Dutch were too scattered, too feeble, too peaceful a people, to fight against the armed legions of England who crushed them ruthlessly, and then forbade them to murmur.

But they are a patient, determined, obstinate people; and Sir Theophilus Shepstone's threats were futile. The memorials were signed and came in, one hundred and thirt-five against and thirty-one in favour of annexation. There are 8,000 adult males in the Transvaal—of these 6,591 enfranchised burghers voted against annexation, and only 587 *enfranchised burghers voted for it: thirteen sixteenths of the entire adult male population voted against the deed.

What becomes of the statement so constantly repeated in Parliament, that the annexation was by mutual consent, and that the large majority of the whites were in favour of it? What is Sir Theophilus Shepstone's "satisfaction" worth? and how comes it that an English Commissioner tramples on the principle of popular sanction, and that an English Parliament applauds his deed? Even the Imperial despot of France did not dare to act so shamelessly.

Now let us examine the second charge, that the Dutch had instituted slavery in their territory. There must be old Africans to whom such a charge as this, made by the nation which inflicted the slave trade upon Africa, and carried it on as one of her most important enterprizes until the year 1807, must sound somewhat ironical. The fact itself of the existence of slavery in the Transvaal is by no means proved, nay further, the Dutch themselves deny it absolutely, and ask how many slaves our Adminstrator has liberated since he annexed their country. This is a fair question, and unless it be answered we must conclude that the charge is false, and has only lived (like many a lie before it) because it has been so current. Mr. Froude, who visited the Republic in 1874, says,† "In the Transvaal the blacks swarm, as they do in Natal. They do as little work, and as little does any one think of forcing them to work. Their women cultivate their corn patches. The men wander about and steal cattle."

Yet there is no smoke without fire, and there is a wide concurrence of testimony that what is called forced labour did exist in both of the Dutch republics. In the Orange Free State it is rather a matter of police: vagrancy is strictly prohibited, and a confirmed vagrant is set to

* Hansard, vol. cexlii, p. 2065.

† Froude's "Leaves from a South African Journal," p. 525.

work upon the road or elsewhere for the common weal. So we find that in the Orange Free State there are comparatively few natives ! But in the Transvaal there was evidently more than this. The work which seems to me to speak with the most assured authority upon this subject is "South Africa, Past and Present," by Mr. John Noble, the Clerk to the House of Assembly in Cape Colony. He says that the Dutch made little scruple about obtaining possession of native children, sometimes as captives in war, sometimes by purchase from the natives, sometimes by mere violence. The children so procured were indentured up to the age of 22 or 25 years. Mr. Aylward says that these children were frequently brought by their parents to be apprenticed. After their term of apprenticeship they were free to go where they liked, but they generally continued in the service of the farmer who had brought them up. Now I dread and dislike forced labour. Call it the apprenticeship system, the coolie system, or what you will, it is always open to grave abuses, and is often only slavery disguised. But surely we cannot in ordinary decency pretend that we have a right to annex the Transvaal in order to put down forced labour. Why we have just been introducing it into our most recent undesirable acquisition—the island of Cyprus. We have for many years sanctioned the detestable coolie system in British Guiana in Natal itself, and in other of our dependencies ; and no tale of cruelty to their apprentices has ever been told about the Boers to compare for an instant with the sickening details of fiendish barbarity which an English Judge has related about that accursed coolie traffic in our own colony of British Guiana.* Only upon the principle, which some Englishmen would fain make popular to-day, that what is vice in the inhabitant of any other country may be virtue in an Englishman—that England's mission is to remove the moles from the eyes of the nations of the world (albeit the beams in her own render the operation tedious and disagreeable), can we condemn the Dutch in the Transvaal for taking a leaf out of our book.

We next come to the point that the Boers had exercised brutal cruelty towards the natives in war, and exceptional injustice in their government in peace. There can be no doubt that, wherever fighting goes on, the men who get the upper hand will often be guilty of gross cruelty to the conquered, and in war with savage peoples the accustomed barbarities of the savage are wont to arouse a thirst for simple and

* "The new Slavery. An account of the Indian and Chinese Immigrants in British Guiana," by Joseph Beaumont, late Chief Justice of British Guiana.

terrible revenge. War is a brutal business at the best, and our own hands are too deeply dyed with blood to admit of our casting stones at other people.* Even in 1851 Mr. Adderley said, in the great Kaffir war debate to which I have alluded, "The dealings of the Boers with the Kaffirs would not present us with a more atrocious or barbarous system of warfare than that we were then carrying on upon the frontier of Cape Colony, under the command of Sir Harry Smith, Her Majesty's representative."

In the practical government of the natives in time of peace our Cape Colony affords a bright and noble example. For the last quarter of a century slowly but surely has the social scale of the black inhabitant been raised. He has been treated with kindness and justice. Education has been afforded to his children, and he is gradually acquiring settled habits of industry and thrift. This is a work of which we may well be proud. But we must compare like things with like, and if we contrast the treatment of the natives in the Transvaal and in Natal, we shall not find much difference, and what difference there is will not always be in our favour.

Let us look for a few minutes at our government of the natives in Natal where we were in authority eleven years before the Dutch rule was established in the Transvaal. They are for the most part Zulus, and there are not less than 320,000 of them. We rule them by Kaffir law; we do not compel them to work; we allow them to have as many wives as they like, and to live in idleness whilst there unfortunate wives are dealt with and dealt in as simple slaves. We draw the line, however, at murder, and do not permit them to steal if we can prevent it. To illustrate our method of ruling them I must tell you the stories of the two chiefs—Mattyana and Langalibele.

†A young Zulu chief, Mattyana by name, was accused of a murder, and Mr. Shepstone was told to arrest him. Mr. Shepstone did not credit the charge, but sent for the chief to come and see him, and he came with an escort of 300 men. Both parties agreed to be unarmed at the conference, but Mr. Shepstone hid a gun under his cloak. Mattyana's men left their arms at some distance from the place of interview, as agreed upon, and they were secured by some of Mr. Shepstone's men, whom he had ordered to steal secretly away for that purpose. He next thought that the Zulus had been as deceitful as he was, and that he saw the

* Since this was written we have employed the savage Swazies against Secocoeni with sickening results, and the war now waging with the Basutos leaves us but little cause to boast of our way of dealing with native peoples in South Africa.

† Hansard, vol. cxvii, p. 741.

† Froude's "Leaves from a South African Journal," p. 509.

handles of short assegais (iron-headed spears) beneath their leopard skins. There was a quarrel; blows were struck on both sides; Mattyana cried out that he was betrayed; Mr. Shepstone fired off his gun over the heads of the Zulus, who ran back for their arms, but found them gone; and then the armed English fired upon the defenceless Zulus and killed thirty of them.

This peculiar mode of punishing a murder, which had probably never been committed, bore such fruit as we might reasonably expect. Soon afterwards unlicensed guns were seen in the kraals of a tribe living under the Drakenberg Mountains, and the natives refused to give them up because they belonged to their chief, Langalibele. He was twice summoned to go and see the English authorities, but he had heard of their short way with contumacious chiefs, and he declined. On the 4th of October, 1873,* five thousand soldiers, under the command of the Lieutenant-Governor himself, went up to the chief's territory. He absconded, and his people tried to follow him. A small party of English overtook them and summoned them to stop, but were fired at, and three of the English and two natives were killed. Then the army swept over the country; burned every house; shot down every man taken with arms in his hands; carried off the whole of the women, children, and cattle; and followed and captured Langalibele and many of his men. He was tried and sentenced to imprisonment for life (which has since been commuted by the Home Authorities to expatriation), five hundred of his followers were kept in prison for twelve months without trial,† and they were then sentenced to penal servitude for terms varying from two to twenty years,—a sentence which to a free man accustomed to live in the open air is worse than any death. The Home Government commuted some of these sentences also, saying that the matter should have been dealt with by the police, not by an army.

For the refusal of their chief to appear before the English authorities we had destroyed two large native tribes. We can scarcely say that, the circumstances being similar, we govern the blacks in time of peace better than the Boers do!

I have already dealt with the fourth point urged as justifying the annexation of the Transvaal, viz., that the Dutch had been disgracefully beaten by the natives in war. In the first place it was not true; in the second place, we, who had supplied the natives with arms, and had sup-

* "Natal," by Brooks and Mann, p. 263.

† "Leaves from a South African Journal," p. 511.

ported them in their claims against the Boers, were the last people who should bring forward such an accusation.

The last and strongest argument was that annexation was ardently desired by the natives, and would insure peace with them in the Transvaal, and would also prevent disturbances in our other colonies.

It was stated that the natives were not hostile to the English; and that by annexing the Transvaal we should be spared the horrors of a war which was imminent, and which, if it once broke out, might spread to our own provinces. We were indeed thus to effect an insurance against native wars. All South Africa, it was said, would know that England was in the Transvaal, and would rejoice that England had kindly shelved the wicked Dutch, and the reign of universal and everlasting Peace would once more begin positively for the last time. But before the year 1877 was out we were at war in Kaffraria, and the war, which was brought about by the misconduct of the Cape Government,* lasted for twelve months, and is scarcely well done with yet; in the next year we were massacring men, women, and children to put down an outbreak in Griqua Land West, and we were at war with the ungrateful natives in the Transvaal itself, who were actually under the guidance of Secocoeni himself, who treated us as though we were only Boers,—and we have not beaten him yet; and in the beginning of the third year we are at war with the Basutos and with our old allies and friends, the natives of Zululand. If we took the Transvaal from the Dutch because they went to war with the natives, who is going to be kind enough to take it from us?

But the Zulu war springs directly out of the annexation itself. Before I go to it let me say one word more about the Transvaal under English government. Sir Theophilus Shepstone himself wrote on January 22th, 1878,† “Ruin is staring the farmers in the face, and their position is for the time worse under Her Majesty’s Government than it was under the Republic.” But far beyond this: the very men who signed the memorial in favour of annexation, and who were, for the most part Englishmen, have presented another memorial upon the subject, and how do they describe the King Stork which has superseded King Log?—

‡ “Upon the faith of (Sir Theophilus Shepstone’s Proclamation and

* General Cunynghame’s “My command in South Africa,” p. 370.

† Blue Book, C. 2079. Enclosure 8 in No. 79.

‡ Hansard, vol. ccxlii, p. 2068.

Address of the 12th April, 1877), and in order to avoid civil strife and confusion, many of your Petitioners assisted or acquiesced in the annexation and military occupation of the late Republic . . . That it was distinctly promised to your Petitioners by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, when he deprived them of their independence, that in view of an alleged inherent weakness of the Republic, the British Government would afford the inhabitants of that state the security and protection which they were unable to obtain by themselves; that all legal courts of Justice in existence at the time of the annexation should be continued; that the Transvaal should remain a separate government, with its own laws and legislature; that the laws then in force should be retained until altered by competent legislative authority; that all private bonâ fide rights to property guaranteed by the late government, and all bonâ fide concessions and contracts, should be honourably maintained and respected: That as soon as it might be convenient some of Her Majesty's troops would enter this country, although they were not to do so to coerce the people, but to show those by whom they were surrounded that, with the changes in the form of ruling the country, would also come a great and necessary accession of strength to enable Her Majesty's Government to discharge the obligations it had undertaken:

“That in direct violation of the aforesaid promises, upon the strength of which the inhabitants of the late Republic were willing to give a peaceable trial to the new order of things, your Petitioners find that after 12 months experience of the government of Sir Theophilus Shepstone the following are amongst the most prominent of his breaches of faith:— That, in the first place, he has utterly failed to give to the people the promised protection against the natives, and is even now compelled to call for Volunteers to do the work which ought to be done by the Imperial troops in the settlement of the still pending Secocoeni revolt, for the suppression of which it was stated that the mere entry of British troops into this country was sufficient. And your Petitioners say generally, as regards the the native question, that the present position of the country is far more critical than under the old regime. That, in violation of the promise to retain all legal courts of Justice at the time of the annexation, Sir Theophilus has, by arbitrary proclamation, abolished the system of trial by Jury as exemplified in the old Courts of Landdrost and Heemraden of this country, and instituted a new High Court and a totally unfamiliar system of legal procedure, administered under the

supervision of only one Judge in place of a bench of three (as agreed upon by the late government), and in disregard of the acceptance of office by a second, if not a third, Judge; and your Petitioners further complain that the duties of the civil gaol officials and of the civil police, even on the floor of the High Court itself, have been usurped by the military authorities under orders of the Administrator. That the Legislature of this country has been dissolved, and no deliberative Representative Assembly of any kind substituted for it, although promised in his Excellency's Proclamation of the 12th April, 1877. That the laws of the country are being altered by mere Government Proclamation or Notice, and this without any prospect of the granting of any political constitution to the country. That with reference to the promised non-coercion by the British troops or authorities, your Petitioners complain that at a meeting which was held at Pretoria on the return of their Commissioners from Europe, certain artillery was trained upon the meeting, and the troops were held in readiness to over-awe the meeting."

Soldiers in the place of policemen: trial by Jury abolished: representative government abolished: laws altered by simple proclamation: military coercion! This is indeed Imperialism with a vengeance. Talk of Russian tyranny after that! Henceforth there can be little doubt in the mind of any reasonable man who reads the history of the transaction that the annexation of the Transvaal, the culmination of our seventy three years persecution of the Dutch, was a terrible mistake.

The Zulu war sprang directly from that annexation. Its causes are so fresh in the memories of us all that there is little need for me to dwell much upon them, but I think that, the more we reflect upon the war and the more we know of its true history, the more we shall be amazed at it. For twenty-two years had Cetewayo maintained altogether friendly relations with the Natal government. He had been visited at least twice by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who on the 1st September, 1873, actually performed the ceremony of his coronation, taking with him more than 400 soldiers as a guard of honour, and two cannon to fire royal salutes! Everywhere vast numbers of natives met him with the warmest expressions of satisfaction and gratitude. "The impression which Cetewayo made upon him during this interesting and very notable visit was that he is immeasurably superior to any other native chief he had ever come into communication with. He has a dignified bearing, and is unques-

tionably possessed of considerable ability and of much force of character. He was entirely frank and straightforward in all his personal communications. Sir Theophilus Shepstone was convinced that he was too old and too fat to aspire to military renown, and that the Zulu tribe was a materially less formidable power than it was when the English first took possession of Natal."*

And what has changed all this? Why are we now sending great bodies of troops against this man? Why are we about to invade his country and to punish his people and him? What has he done to us to deserve this treatment at our hands?

It would be hard to answer these questions honourably and satisfactorily. Sir Theophilus Shepstone has annexed the Transvaal since he crowned Cetewayo. The interests which were Dutch are now English, and a change has now come over the spirit of his dream. He has found out that *he* was in error when he thought the Dutch were; that their claims, which he had advised Cetewayo were wrong, were just and right; but, last year, even when independent Commissioners of our own appointment have declared that the Zulu Chief's contentions were correct, the English Administrator has refused to allow him to reap the fruits of the verdict in his favour.

No doubt and no wonder that Cetewayo was roused at this sudden and self-interested change of treatment, and he stormed as some Englishmen (who would not like or deserve to be called savages) would have stormed had they been so served. But he did not declare war against us or touch our territory. Suddenly Sir Bartle Frere discovered that the army, which is the oldest of Zulu institutions, and which Cetewayo had commanded for 22 years without injury to us, was a standing menace, and he poured oil upon the fire by way of putting it out. He sent demands to Cetewayo which he must have known that Chief could never willingly submit to, and then wantonly and wickedly declared war against him.

Cetewayo is a heathen and a savage; Sir Bartle Frere is an Englishman and a Christian: but if the words and spirit of the letters which passed between the two were weighed by an impartial judge, those of the savage Chief would be held the more truly Christian of the two.

But the war is going on. We invaded their country, and the Zulus, in self-defence, have killed 2,500 of our troops in all; while we

* "Natal," by Brooks and Mann, p. 258.

have upheld our *prestige* by killing three times as many Zulus. Cetewayo has not attempted to retaliate upon us by invading Natal even when it lay at his mercy. He has even sent messengers to sue for peace, but Sir Bartle Frere has refused to receive them.* What do we wish to do? Is it to make these Zulus Christians by force that we are going to carry this accursed and shameful war further? Are we by fire and sword to spread what we are pleased to call the blessings of civilisation amongst them? Well may they dread those blessings! Christian England has much to answer for in the civilisation which she has inflicted upon savage peoples. Too often has she baptised men in the name of Christ but to make them the children of the devil; too often have loathsome and foul disease, and the ruinous appetite for strong drink, been made the companions of the Bible.

But again I ask what do we really wish to do in this matter? If we were moved by fear of the Zulu army, and felt it a standing menace, could we not, at a tithe of the cost already incurred in this war, have so fortified our frontier next Zululand as to make it impossible for Cetewayo to invade Natal with success, even if he wished to do so? When a hundred determined Englishmen behind a few biscuit boxes can turn back the flower of his army, surely it was within the bounds of our military and engineering science to have accomplished this!

But the truth is that, deny it as we may, there has been the disease of land-hunger in England of late, and Sir Bartle Frere has inherited the vain idea of forming a second Indian Empire in Southern Africa. I rejoice in the fact that the eyes of our Government seem at length to be fairly opened in this matter, and that we are to be spared the trouble, expense, and iniquity of a fresh annexation of land even for "a scientific frontier." Would that the instructions to Sir Garnet Wolseley which are kept so secret contained an express injunction to conclude an honourable peace without shedding another drop of Zulu blood.

I have finished my task, but would fain say a few words as to the future of this great South African Land, so much of which we have already undertaken to govern,—a land as large as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal, Holland and

* Daily News Special Correspondent, in paper of June 9th: "Durban, May 18th.—Cetewayo expressed surprise at the treatment to which he had been subjected; reiterated his unwillingness to fight; said that the quarrel was not his own seeking; and that he desired to live at peace as the White Man's Son. He believed that the movements against him were without the Queen of England's sanction." Would that it were so!

Belgium, Prussia, and Switzerland, all put together, and containing some two millions of people black and white. Lord Carnarvon, who has shown that he has the best interests of the country really at heart (although he has been misled by the men he has chosen to do his work) proposed a measure of confederation for the several colonies of South Africa which passed both Houses of Parliament. Like most of our recent legislation it was (and in this case rightly) a permissive measure. The South African Colonies would not adopt it, and there are indeed great difficulties in the way of the successful carrying out of such a scheme. In the Cape Colony there is a truly representative government, and almost universal suffrage for black and white man alike. In Natal there is the despotism of a Lieutenant Governor modified by a small, partly nominated and partly elected, legislative council. In the Transvaal there is an Administrator who is practically an absolute, and may be a tyrannical, monarch. The Orange Free State can scarcely be anxious to mix itself up with us when it sees the evil effects of our mal-administration. If Confederation is to save South Africa I fear that we shall not see its salvation. Would that we could be truly wise; that we would acknowledge the precedent of the Orange River Sovereignty, and would retire from the false position which we have assumed in the Transvaal, or, better still, that (with the consent of both) we could and would form Natal and the Transvaal into an independent, self-governed, and united State, and thus get rid at once of the shame of our wrongful deed, and of the constant wars and rumours of wars which so harass and perplex us.

We may beat the Zulus after a more or less bloody war, but we shall not have made them as friendly a people as they were before the annexation of the Transvaal. We may send our Dragoons to over-awe the Dutch, but that will not make of their deeply-wronged Republicans loyal subjects of Queen Victoria. Peace with the Zulus upon honourable terms is all we have the right to ask for—we are the aggressors. Restitution of the territory we have stolen from them, and of the Government we have violated, is the only honest course we can adopt towards the Dutch. I trust that when the present troubles are over the Government in power will send out a strong Commission of independent and capable men,—men unbiassed by colonial experience, and untrammelled by military traditions, but among the best and wisest of England's sons, who will patiently, carefully, and dispassion-

ately search into and ascertain the facts of the whole case, and will frame some scheme for the future government of all the States with which we have to do, which can fairly be carried into effect, and by which right and justice shall be secured for white and black alike.

For of one thing be certain, that in dealing with either savage or civilized peoples right and justice will ultimately go the furthest. History shows us only too often the terrible results which spring from the common intercourse between the white and the coloured races of mankind; but the history of England can also tell us of one instance at all events in which the white man and the red Indian, mutually trustful, entered into a treaty which was never broken, and the blessed effects of which still endure, though two centuries have elapsed since it was made. England has in late years done much for native peoples. She has purged away from her thoroughly at last the gigantic crimes of the slave trade and of slavery. She has made it her proudest boast that the very touch of English soil strikes off the fetters of the slave—that free men alone can breathe English air. She has avowed herself the protector and the friend of the coloured race; she has shown her practical belief in the universal brotherhood of man. Is she not strong enough and brave enough to-day to acknowledge that she has been made to sin grievously, in these Dutch and Zulu matters, against her own faith and in spite of her truest convictions? Will she not show the nations of the world that, to her, honour is dearer than revenge; and that Justice and Mercy, Honesty and Truth, are more righteous and more powerful factors in the dealings of man with man than all the gigantic and infernal paraphernalia of thrice-accursed War?

May 31st, 1879.

NOTE.—In the Transvaal we sowed the wind and are reaping the whirl-wind. It is not yet too late for the English people to prevent the perpetuation of a flagrant wrong done in their name to the Boers. Surely Commissioners would be better able to cope with the present difficulty than Generals, and it would be more consistent with the truest glory of England to acknowledge the wrong and to set it right, than to crush a small but gallant people who have risen in the name of Freedom.

January 21st, 1881.

FOURTEEN DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the date to which renewed.

Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

27 APR '56 RP

JUN 5 1960

UCLA
INTERLIBRARY LOAN

JUL 30 1974

M312939

