THE NEW ERA IN SOUTH AFRICA

WITH AN EXAMINATION OF

THE CHINESE LABOUR QUESTION

BY

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'Alles zal recht kom'

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NEW ERA IN SOUTH AFRICA

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT POSITION

It was on October 11, 1899, that President Kruger flung down that challenge at the feet of Great Britain which closed one era in South Africa. It was on May 31, 1902, after a war the magnitude of which had astonished the whole civilised world, that the new order was inaugurated by the Peace of Vereeniging. Between these two dates lies one of the most memorable struggles of the British race—a struggle the gravity and importance of which future generations alone will be in a position to estimate at their true value. It is unnecessary to linger here over the many events crowded into the troubled, but withal epoch-making, years when, from the four quarters of the globe, men of Anglo-Saxon birth and descent, urged by the sense of a common unity, hurried to South Africa to draw sword in defence of the mother country. With the story of the war itself I am in no way concerned. Its triumphs, its feats of endurance and valour, and, since its record after all is but a human one, those disturbing

blunders and mistakes, not wholly valueless for the lessons they taught and the test they afforded as to the temper of the nation—these things belong to another chapter of South African history. They are written elsewhere, and the knowledge of them has gone abroad throughout the world.

But there is another side to the story left untold—the less familiar victories of peace which followed on the stirring fighting record known to all. A great war is necessarily a period of strain and excitement, and Nature, eternally striving for the average and normal, decrees that a certain measure of reaction should follow such a period. The peace, long deferred, brought with it an overwhelming sense of relief, and, not unnaturally, public interest, so long riveted on South Africa, fell back with a sigh of comfort into the many and varied channels of its normal affairs. Every detail of the war itself was followed with the keenest attention, but with that new and mighty struggle inaugurated by the close of hostilities, a struggle not for the taking of life but the restoration of law and order, the general public has felt less concerned. The soldiers at least started with a clear field. Their failures, when they failed, were due to defects in their own system. But the men of peace, whose task began when that of the army came to an end, were face to face with a very different state of affairs. The chaos of a continent was the one obvious feature revealed by the cessation of hostilities, and the nation, a little weary of the long-drawn-out trials of the war, shrank somewhat from too close an investigation of its character. 'We have seen the thing through, the men on the spot must do the rest.' Such was the tacit attitude, and perhaps at heart there was a general hope

to hear no more of South Africa for a time to come. Like Pharaoh and Sergeant Whatsisname, England gave her blessing to the recent combatants, and literally 'left 'em in the desert making friends.' She mobbed the astonished and wholly unimpressed Boer generals when they visited London, as a further proof of good will, and settled down happily again to her own concerns.

War is dramatic and stirring. Above all, its failures and successes are perfectly obvious. Civil administration, on the other hand, is largely concerned with dull details in no sense picturesque or exciting. Still further, its results are but slowly won and unsensational in character. But the South African Reconstruction constitutes a very remarkable page in our national record, and it is one of which the English have good reason to be proud. The immense difficulties of the task have received very inadequate recognition in this country. The trials of South Africa yet again have come prominently before public notice, and a somewhat petulant impatience makes itself felt that she should linger thus unaccountably on the road to full prosperity. Few people realise what has already been achieved, or the true character of such an achievement in a land where bricks had literally to be made without straw.

That war sweeps away old landmarks, obliterates treaties and conventions, and leaves the victor at its conclusion privileged to write with conquering hand what he pleases on a new page of history—these are well-established truisms. But in Africa, mysterious, baffling, paradoxical Africa, a war was bound, more than in any other land, to follow an abnormal course; a peace, when it came, to present problems of unusual complexity.

During the long struggle between 1889 and 1902 the existing landmarks had been wiped out with a completeness which it perhaps requires some personal acquaintance with the old order of affairs to realise. A country had been laid waste, a Government utterly destroyed, and social, political, and economic life shattered to their foundations. The whole fabric of society had been swept away, and the new power was face to face with a task of reconstruction the magnitude of which at first sight appeared to be little short of superhuman. It might well be asked, could mortal men grapple successfully with so unprecedented a state of affairs; could mortal intelligence restore the blessings of peace and civilisation to so devastated and demoralised a land?

It will be my endeavour in the following pages to give some account of the work of reconstruction in South Africa, and to sketch the outlines of that new State which owes its existence to the incessant toil and unwearied energies of Lord Milner and his able and devoted subordinates. It will rest for a future generation to appreciate at their full value the labours of these men, to whose lot has fallen one of the most complicated and extraordinary tasks in the whole history of the Empire. To say that they have made no mistakes in their unparalleled work would be to claim for them an infallibility their great chief would be the first to repudiate. Can it be seriously suggested that from the ashes of such a struggle the new State, phœnix-like, was to rear itself fair and perfect, without flaw or blemish of any kind in its structure, or without experiencing difficulties and hindrances in its erection? Any such contention seems childish and unreasonable; nevertheless it is tacitly put forward in various quarters.

Criticism—not the criticism which desires to help forward a difficult task, but criticism springing too often from that ungenerous desire to depreciate the work of others or from the assumption of cheap superiority on the part of the critics—is common at present. The nation, indeed, seems to be fortunate in the possession of many Daniels, youthful and otherwise, come to judgment on her affairs. Whether such Daniels prove their wisdom by grumbling over the fact that South Africa possesses no Aladdin's lamp with which to create a perfect structure in a night is open to question. Political regeneration, like any other great force, is bound to move slowly. It is not a question of creation so much as evolution. Foundations require to be dug and the structure broad-based if in the years to come it is to bear the burden of great things. Foundations are not decorative portions of a building, but their strength and solidity are nevertheless capital considerations, and it is naturally with foundations the new Transvaal Administration has been called upon primarily to occupy itself.

A two-and-a-half years' war had left South Africa naked, destitute, and temporarily shorn of the common necessities of civilisation. Still further, in the Transvaal at least, the new authority succeeded to a corrupt and inefficient Government, the lines of which they were compelled not so much to remodel as to remake fundamentally. Certain types of mind may choose to ignore such considerations; nevertheless, the marvel to-day is, not that the whole country has so far failed to regain its old standard of wealth and prosperity, but that, after so devastating a war, reconstruction has already made such strides on the road to new prosperity. It is a road which will lead South Africa, if

she be true to herself, to a great place among the nations of the world; but there are obstacles in the path requiring time and patience to overcome, and patience at the present moment is not the most marked characteristic of some of her less wise friends. The wilderness has failed to blossom like a rose within forty-eight hours of the declaration of peace, and many voices are raised in loud protest at the fact. I shall endeavour to show not only how unreasonable is such a spirit of criticism, in face of the immense constructive work already achieved in South Africa, but to point out the enormous difficulties which have beset the Government—difficulties which have necessarily retarded political and economic expansion.

Over and over again one has had occasion to notice how little the actual geographical conditions of South Africa are grasped by the stay-at-home, cosy-corner critic, whose voice is raised on so many occasions. During the war these good people transported army corps over the map of Africa or cavilled at generals for failing to do so, as though they were pushing perambulators from parish to parish in an English county. And this same ignorance as to the true character of the vast often desert country which forms the South African Dominion lies at the root of much careless criticism and irresponsible grumbling. It is difficult for a resident in these islands to gauge the conditions of life in a country comprising so huge an area of territory, where towns are small and scattered and railways few and inadequate. During the actual war it was realised vaguely we were fighting under abnormal conditions, for which much allowance must be made. But the toleration extended to the military power has been somewhat withdrawn from the civil authority, whose

difficulties at the conclusion of hostilities were no less formidable, if, indeed, not greater.

For what was the state of South Africa on that momentous day when the news of peace spread rejoicing throughout the Empire? Natal and Rhodesia naturally had come through their trials loyal and undisturbed, but the Cape, that Achilles' heel of the Empire, was smouldering with rebellion and disaffection, none the less acute that her rebels had never suffered the actual stress of war. A weak Prime Minister, possessed with a mania of his own importance, and virtually ruled by the party he was elected to oppose, constituted a political problem sufficiently difficult in itself, since the golden moment of suspension had been allowed to slip by, thanks to the timidity of the Home Government. But turning at once to the new Colonies, on whose fortunes interest is at present focussed, what was the condition of this territory, fallen to our lot through right of conquest?

Imagine a wilderness stripped bare, intersected by lines of blockhouses and barbed wire, everything in the shape of live stock driven away, the veldt untilled, roads and drifts often impassable, railways torn up, towns and houses wholly destroyed. Not a very promising outlook; nevertheless, the new power had not only to start the whole machinery of administration in the face of agricultural destitution and congested railway lines, but was at once confronted with the trifling detail of conveying the major part of an army of 200,000 men out of the country and re-establishing no fewer than 200,000 members of the old burgher population in their homes. This Herculean task, to which I shall refer in detail in the next chapter, was accomplished actually within eight and a half months after the conclusion of

peace. It is a task which for some curious reason has never received the recognition it deserves; nevertheless, it remains as one of the most admirable examples of Anglo-Saxon administrative genius known to the world, as its almost Quixotic generosity is without parallel in the records of warfare.

If the Transvaal Government could point to no other achievement than the work of repatriation, its success in this field would distinguish it honourably for all time. But the labours of the Repatriation Department, great though they were, only formed one portion of the duties of the new authority. In every other direction the work has been ceaseless and overwhelming. Before the end of the war preparation had been made for taking over the country at the close of hostilities, and a rough working administration devised. But as little by little authority passed from military into civil hands the magnitude of the task involved might well have daunted men less brave than those to whose lot it fell. This complete remaking of a nation in every branch, the departure of the army, the return of the old population, the re-settlement of refugees, the first revival of trade, the spread of education, the schemes immediately set on foot for the development of railways, agriculture, and land settlement—all these matters carried forward in the teeth of incredible difficulties will in some far-off day, when the African story is told in its completeness, rank side by side with the heroic tales of Ladysmith and Mafeking, victories of peace as stirring and triumphs of endurance no less remarkable.

For it must be remembered that the backward system of the old Boer Government, with its hand-to-mouth legislation, had left the State, in spite of its wealth, quite unprovided with public works. Their absence

was all the more manifest when, at the conclusion of hostilities, special efforts were required to meet the needs of a devastated country. Railway extension, improved methods of agriculture, irrigation, and forestry all demanded a heavy immediate expenditure for their development, though the schemes were reproductive, and ultimately would produce good returns. The first duty which devolved upon the new Government, devolved upon it quite inevitably under the circumstances, was the process disagreeable either to nations or individuals, that of putting its hand somewhat deeply in its pocket. Money was required at every turn and corner to meet the urgent claims and necessities of administration. The following summary of the financial position in the new Colonies is succinctly stated by Mr. Buchan in his admirable work, 'The African Colony:'

'The liabilities and needs of the country stood as follows: An advance by the Imperial Government, to cover the estimated Transvaal deficit of 1901–2, 1,500,000*l.*; the old debt of the Transvaal, 2,500,000*l.*; compensation to loyalists in Cape Colony and Natal, 2,000,000*l.*; the acquisition of the railways, and the repayment of the existing railway debt, 14,000,000*l.*; repatriation and compensation in the new Colonies, 5,000,000*l.*; railway extension, 5,000,000*l.*; land settlement, 3,000,000*l.*; various public works, 2,000,000*l.*—a total of 35,000,000*l.* This is the sum comprised in the famous Guaranteed Loan.'

To this 35,000,000*l.* must be added the contribution of 30,000,000*l.* made by the new Colonies to the expenses of the war. 'We have, therefore,' continues Mr. Buchan, 'to face a total debt of 65,000,000*l.*, of which 35,000,000*l.* at 3 per cent. is a charge upon both

Colonies, and 30,000,000*l.* at 4 per cent. upon the Transvaal alone, a heavy responsibility for a white population of a few hundreds of thousands face to face with a labour problem.'

The normal administrative expenditure of the Transvaal, exclusive of debt charges, is 3,600,000*l.* The estimated revenue for 1903–4 was 4,500,000*l.*, a total made up of various items, the largest being mining revenue at 750,000*l.* and customs at 1,800,000*l.* Out of this 4,500,000*l.* the Transvaal has to find the interest on the War Loan, but the interest on the Guaranteed Loan has been a matter for special arrangement between the Orange River Colony and her sister colony. Railway profits are at present the most substantial form of revenue in South Africa. Rates, though latterly reduced, are high, but for the moment there is no other adequate guarantee for the debt charges. By an exceedingly skilful arrangement, an arrangement in which it is easy to trace experience gained among the complicated finances of Egypt, the railway profits of both Colonies have been excluded from their separate budgets and handed over to a joint committee of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, known as the Inter-Colonial Council. The Inter-Colonial Council has in its hands the entire administration of the Guaranteed Loan, the interest of which it pays from this special railway fund. The Council is also responsible for two departments common to both Colonies, namely, the Central South African Railways and the South African Constabulary, as well as some other small matters. Any deficit is met by proportionate charges levied on the two Colonies. The Council, in fact, inevitably reminds us of the famous Caisse de la Dette, which was at one and the same moment the financial prop of Egypt and somewhat of

a thorn in the side of her British administrators. But the arbitrary restrictions dictated by foreign jealousy and international control are, happily, lacking in this case, and the Council is not only more elastic in its composition than the Egyptian Caisse, but in other administrative respects has proved itself to be a most practical step in the direction of federation.

But financial arrangements, however skilful, do not in themselves create prosperity. The Transvaal has incurred heavy liabilities, incurred them necessarily and inevitably; but for the moment they remain a serious drag on her resources, and the financial strain is considerable. It would be foolish to hide the fact that, though the new Colonies are solvent, the margin is narrow, and administration and finance stand, in the words of Mr. Buchan, on a needle-point, requiring ceaseless care and attention. The situation in the Transvaal to-day is certainly a most extraordinary one. Here is a country of huge potential wealth, bearing within herself, on the Rand alone, gold estimated by Mr. Bleloch to the value of 2,871 millions sterling. Other minerals exist in abundance, including enormous deposits of coal, iron-ore, lead, and diamonds; in fact, the potential resources of this amazing land are very little realised in England. But for the moment this fabulous wealth is incapable of exploitation. Everything is at a standstill, owing to the shortage of labour. Industrial development and mining development are checked and crippled, and the State finances, which naturally reflect the general prosperity of the country, are crippled in turn. Hence, on all sides difficulty and depression exist, which not unnaturally begin to find expression in political discontent. 'Would to God we had died in Egypt!' is the irrational cry of the

short-sighted multitude who, delivered from the House of Bondage, murmur at such privations of the desert as may lie between it and the Promised Land. All great leaders, from Moses downwards, have had to reckon with this spirit, and the new Transvaal Administration is no exception to the rule.

At the conclusion of the war the one idea prevalent in South Africa was that peace would immediately inaugurate an era of unprecedented prosperity. Everywhere there was an almost feverish anticipation of the coming boom. The Government was urged to perfect its administrative machinery, and any attempt to stem the tide of popular impatience at once created an outcry. The possibility of labour difficulties seems to have been lost sight of, and the dislocating effects of the war on the Kaffir population. Hence, when, owing to the labour shortage, instead of a boom a slump set in, with a long period of depression, the reaction was inevitable. The Government, which had been urged to administrative efforts of all kinds, was now blamed for undue optimism and accused of financial recklessness. From extravagant hopes South Africa passed to equally extravagant gloom. Optimism and pessimism alike had been hasty and irrational, but, in view of the financial depression, few people were disposed to reason calmly as to the origin of the difficulty. Money, as I have shown, was required largely for the development of public works, but the utility of public works and their financial earnings in turn depend on the general prosperity of the country, and this latter is at a standstill owing to the labour scarcity.

It would be idle to deny that the financial situation in the Transvaal to-day is other than serious. Trade is stagnant, expenditure is heavy, and there has been

an ominous falling-off in revenue. A large number of the Rand mines are at a standstill owing to the labour shortage, and the country is threatened with an exodus of its white population. Nervous discontent naturally vents itself in abuse of the Administration, and the political agitators of both continents rejoice exceedingly in the fine field thrown open to mischief-making. Misrepresentation is a plant of very sturdy growth in South Africa, and a degree of energy is devoted to its cultivation which might with profit be expended on a better cause. It is all the more reprehensible in this instance because no single person possessing an elementary acquaintance with South African affairs can entertain any doubt at heart as to the cause of the present trouble.

Now there is one remedy—one remedy alone—for the present state of affairs in the Transvaal, and the distress and political unrest naturally resulting from it. That remedy is labour. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the fundamental economic fact in South Africa is the gold. Without the gold the Transvaal is an obscure agricultural district. With the gold it becomes one of the most important countries in the world. On the gold industry rests the whole development—social, political, industrial, economic—of South Africa. So long, therefore, as the gold industry is held back and retarded, so long will stagnation and bad times, resulting in distress and discontent, paralyse the country. Granted labour, all these difficulties will vanish. Industry and trade will revive. Profits and receipts will flow into the exchequer, thus relieving the financial strain. The unparalleled potential wealth of the Transvaal once liberated from its present shackles will be capable of

a development which will place South Africa among the front rank of prosperous nations. On the solution of this problem hangs the fate of the continent, and it is one which calls for immediate and vigorous action.

I shall return in subsequent chapters to this all-important question of labour and the vital issues it involves. In this preliminary survey it has been necessary to glance over the whole field of South African affairs, to show the inevitable expenditure which fell upon the Government, to recognise the existing drawbacks and difficulties, and point out briefly their cause and their remedy. The labour question, being the critical question, is the one on which all others turn, and the story of reconstruction shows how its ramifications make themselves felt in every branch of South African life and work. But before entering into a detailed examination of the matter as it affects the present and future, and the rights and wrongs of the Chinese Ordinance at present convulsing the country, we must turn back and see what work has already been accomplished. Repatriation, the primary duty undertaken by the new Administration, will naturally be our first consideration.

CHAPTER II

THE TASK OF REPATRIATION

THE terms of surrender were signed by the Boer leaders at Pretoria on May 31, 1902. Under those terms Great Britain took upon herself two primary obligations towards her new citizens.

Article 2 laid down that all burghers in the field outside the limits of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, and all prisoners of war outside South Africa, should be restored to their homes as soon as transport and means of subsistence could be insured. Article 10 laid down that as soon as conditions permitted, a Commission, comprising local representatives, should be appointed in each district of the two Colonies, in order to assist the restoration of the people to their homes, and supply those unable to provide themselves with food, shelter, or the necessary amount of seed, stock, implements &c. indispensable to a fresh start in life. Still further the Government undertook to place at the disposal of the Commission a sum of three millions sterling for the above purposes. In addition to this free grant, the Government was prepared to make advances as loans, for the purposes of repatriation, free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years at 3 per cent. interest. To these

Commissioners was also allotted the difficult and delicate task of the examination of war losses and compensation claims.

Such was the undertaking, the fulfilment of which in letter and spirit constitutes such a remarkable page in our national record. Not even the measured language of the Blue Books, with their schedules and official phraseology, can hide the unique interest of the story. The entire novelty of the situation, the overwhelming difficulties, the hopes and fears of sorely harassed administrators, the return of exiles to a land often desolate but none the less dear, the hesitations of some, the helpfulness of others—all this and much else converts these State papers into very human documents. And guiding, enveloping the whole, we find the genius of the great governing race re-establishing these new children in their homes in her most motherly spirit, once again demonstrating to a puzzled world that she, so often accused of selfishness and materialisation, has a better claim than any to be counted the Don Quixote of nations. The task of repatriation was a pendant to the work undertaken in the concentration camps. In the same way as Great Britain had rescued, clothed, fed and educated the wives and children of the men against whom she was fighting, so at the conclusion of hostilities did she undertake to re-unite the scattered families and re-establish them in their homes. It is legitimate to ask whether any other country would have interpreted its duties to a conquered foe in so liberal a spirit, it is legitimate even to wonder what view the Boers might have taken of such responsibilities had the positions been reversed.

Under the Vereeniging terms, 33,000 burghers were entitled to be set at liberty. Of these over 24,000 were

in prisoners' camps in various British possessions, St. Helena, Bermuda, India, and Ceylon, and the remainder were in prisoners' camps in South Africa or on parole with their families in the concentration camps. The return of the prisoners of war, the restoration of the country population to their homes, and the supply to them of virtually everything necessary for their support, were the first duties, therefore, which confronted the Civil Administration.

The surrender of the commandoes was accomplished by Lord Kitchener with extraordinary swiftness and success. Within a month of the peace (that is to say, by the end of June 1903) the Government were free to enter into possession of a wilderness devoid of stock, crops, buildings, and inhabitants. Certainly an unpromising outlook as regards the future of a whole agricultural population.

The first business, of course, was the reshipment to South Africa of the 24,000 odd prisoners in the oversea camps. In view of the departure of the army and the many claims on transport, this task in itself presented many difficulties. Still further, the imprisoned Boers showed extreme scepticism as regards the terms of surrender. Telegrams from their own generals on the subject were received with incredulity, and looked upon as forgeries on the part of Great Britain in order to trick the burghers into taking the oath of allegiance. This view was instilled diligently into the country Boers by the educated Afrikanders and foreigners in the camps—yet another proof of that pernicious spirit of untruthfulness and intrigue which has worked such havoc in South Africa. In all the large camps this disturbing element, consisting of foreigners, Hollanders, irreconcilables, had subjected the loyally disposed to

ill treatment and petty annoyances. Feeling between the different sections in the camps ran very high: so much so that to avoid faction fights it was found necessary to classify prisoners according to their political opinions. The authorities, however, showed great patience, in spite of this militant attitude, and little by little a better spirit prevailed. The first transports returned only half full, but by the beginning of March 1903 all the prisoners had been restored to their homes with the exception of about 1,000 who still obstinately declined to believe in the truth of the Boer surrender. Even as regards these recalcitrants the Government did not relax its paternal efforts. A special commission of Boers was despatched to Ceylon and Bermuda to interview the prisoners, to give them personal explanations, and set their suspicions at rest as regards the supposed machinations of the English.

I have dwelt on this spirit as illustrating what might be called some of the moral difficulties which encountered the Repatriation Commissioners in addition to the enormous practical obstacles of their work. The sullen suspicion of the ignorant majority, encouraged by the active ill-will of the educated few, might have proved a difficult and irritating factor in the case but for the good temper and good-will shown by the victors. But the Boer, with all his limitations, appreciates justice and courtesy. Most of those who accepted the inevitable gave no further trouble. Lord Milner, in fact, pays a high tribute to the good behaviour of the returned prisoners and to the creditable manner in which they conducted themselves.

It was found impossible on disembarkation to entrain the men immediately and allow them to return to their homes, neither transport nor means

of subsistence being forthcoming. The two large prison camps at Umbilo in Natal and Simonstown in Cape Colony were accordingly used as rest camps, till the burghers could be despatched up country. The next step was to forward them to the concentration camps of their own districts, there to rejoin their wives and families. As soon as circumstances permitted, the re-united family with all their possessions were despatched in waggons to their homes. A similar plan was adopted with the prisoners of war and surrendered burghers in the country itself; the concentration camps in all cases forming the base of operations. It is easy to imagine the extra expense and work entailed by this influx of people into the camps, all of whom had to be fed and provided for free of cost. In the case of oversea prisoners, blankets when necessary were supplied to the men before they left the coast camps. One repatriation officer tells an amusing story of the amount of luggage with which numerous Boer exiles returned from foreign parts, mainly consisting of rubbish and valueless curios. In view of the congested railway lines, the authorities demurred somewhat at the extent of these personal impedimenta; but again the human touch breaks through, as the officer describes the grief which was caused among the men at the suggestion of parting with these cherished possessions. So with generous tact the authorities waived the letter of the law, and the burghers went up country with their curios, their pets, and an average of a parrot a head, the latter carefully treasured, no doubt, on the long journey from Ceylon or Bermuda, with a view to the wonder and delight of some Boer baby on a remote Transvaal farm.

But the forwarding of the men to the concentra-

tion camps was a trifling matter compared with the task of despatching them finally to their farms, equipped with all the necessaries of life. A vast department had to be called into existence to meet this need. In the Orange River Colony a small organisation for collecting information and statistics regarding the restoration of refugees had been formed as early as April 1902, and this became the basis of the repatriation machinery. In each Colony a Central Repatriation Board was formed at the capital, and local Commissions established in each district, who carried out the actual work of relief under instructions from headquarters. These Local Commissions were under the presidency of the Resident Magistrate of the district, assisted by three or four local men. Representative Boers of the district sat on these Commissions, and proved themselves generally to be useful and zealous members. The broad lines of the scheme were identical in both Colonies, but, owing to the great diversity of local conditions, a wise elasticity was allowed in the administration, thus obviating inevitable drawbacks which would have arisen under any cut-and-dried plan. Some mistakes, of course, were made, and some things done badly, but judged as a whole the result was a triumph.

As the full character of the undertaking revealed itself, the pressure of work upon Central and Local Boards alike grew almost overwhelming. The Central Department, which was under the control of a secretary, included the sub-departments of transport, stock, and supplies. To the Director of Transport fell the onerous task of supplying means of conveyance to the burghers from the camps to their homes, and subsequently organising the great convoys which traversed

the country, supplying the indigent population with food. The transport sub-department rapidly developed into a colossal undertaking. This branch arranged not only for the upkeep of the huge transport service (involving the erection of workshops), but, in addition to the actual repatriation of the Boers, supplied building materials, implements &c. for the farms; distributed vehicles and stock, ploughed the lands, and organised a veterinary service to cope with the manifold cattle diseases rampant in the country. In estimating the work of this branch, it is very necessary to bear in mind the great geographical distances in South Africa, and all the practical complications resulting from them. Waggons would often be absent three or four weeks from camp before they could return to pick up fresh families. The Director of Stock was responsible for the purchase of cattle in Africa and oversea; the Director of Supplies for the vast quantities of food necessary for the provision of this multitude. Forty supply and transport depôts were established at the concentration camps and elsewhere in the Transvaal alone, and stocked with food, seeds, implements, and transport. The supplies were issued under the direction of the local Commissioners, who considered the requirements of each applicant, and issued orders on the local depôts accordingly.

To obviate delays, and with a view to resettling the farms at the earliest possible date, the burghers were allowed to anticipate any share which might fall to them under the three-million grant accorded by the peace terms. The allotment of this sum in money would have involved the delay of many months, and the lengthy examination of war claims. In order to expedite matters, therefore, burghers were allowed to

purchase all they required at the camp depôts—food stuffs, building materials, &c.—an account being opened in each case, with a view to the sum thus expended in kind being finally deducted from the particular burgher's share of the free grant. In addition, each family as it moved out of camp was supplied as a further free gift with tents, bedding, utensils, and rations for one month. Care was taken that no family should leave the camp without proper equipments and supplies for commencing the restoration of their homes. But on this point the Department might have saved themselves a measure of their paternal anxiety. No desperate haste on the part of the Boers was manifested to shake the dust of the much-abused concentration camps off their feet, a fact which possibly may be of interest to Miss Hobhouse and her friends.

So much for the actual scheme devised for this restoration of a whole people to their homes. Enough has been said to show the magnitude of the task involved under the most favourable circumstances. But, so far from circumstances being favourable, every natural obstacle which could hamper administration appeared to join forces in an unholy league against the restoration of law and order. The Boers had laid down their arms ; but famine, drought, destitution, and disease were dread battalions with which it was necessary now to reckon. I must again call attention to the state of the country when it passed under British control. Thanks to the senseless guerilla warfare of the previous twelve months, the land was absolutely denuded. Stock, crops, buildings, and every other necessary of life had been swept away. Moreover, the Repatriation Department was called upon to commence operations at the end of June, that is to say, in mid-

winter, when there was no grass, and all forage required had to be imported.

The first and chief difficulty arose over the pressing question of transport. The Department was obliged to avail itself of transport handed over by the army, the only body in possession of any. The military authorities do not seem to have lost this opportunity for a final flourish of red tape. The animals—for which, by the way, exorbitant charges were made—were transferred in the most wretched condition, the military authorities only parting with the worst they had. More than 50 per cent. of the ox transport was unfit to move, and had to be nursed through the winter. Hundreds of them died before they had done any work at all, and thousands were useless for months. The oxen were old, the mules also old and saturated with glanders, and the waggons in bad repair. Animals in such a condition were naturally the easy victims of disease. South Africa has a bad reputation at the best of times in this respect. Pest after pest swept down on the unfortunate transport authorities. Red-water appeared, killing off hundreds of stock; horse-sickness played havoc among the horses and mules; rinderpest, lung sickness, mange, and scab, each in turn demanded their victims. It has been calculated that in twelve months the Government lost 23,000 animals, valued at 370,000*l*. This sum, of course, represents a dead loss to the Department. Such animals nursed back to health as were subsequently sold to the burghers were necessarily disposed of at prices greatly reduced from those originally paid to the military authorities.

The question of supplies likewise presented extraordinary difficulties. The army again parted with

their stores reluctantly, barbed wire and blockhouses, so one correspondent states, being offered in lieu of foodstuffs. The congestion on the meagre railway system between the exodus of the army and the return of the prisoners and refugees was appalling. But, nevertheless, in the famous words of Galileo, 'E pur si muove.' Somehow things moved. In September matters showed considerable improvement, and the enormous accumulation of supplies at the ports began to struggle up country. In spite of all the obstacles I have enumerated, the work of repatriation went forward steadily, even in the teeth of the transport difficulty.

With the return of spring another urgent problem called for the attention of the Department, namely, the ploughing and sowing of the land. It was vital that before the end of December the mealie crop should be sown on which the population would have to depend for food in the coming year. But, again, the transport difficulty clogged the wheels, for it had been found absolutely impossible in the time to distribute the necessary draught animals and ploughs among the Boers. The situation was critical.

There was extreme depression at the gloomy outlook among the country population, but the Department rose to the occasion in a spirited and able manner. What might be called flying columns of ploughs were organised by the Government and sent round the country with a view to ploughing and sowing five-acre lots on each farm—just sufficient to keep the people going for another season. About 30,000 acres were ploughed in this way. The gratitude of the Boers on this occasion seems to have been genuine. Their depression passed away as the ploughing operations

continued, and they faced the future again with energy, hope, and resourcefulness.

But once again misfortunes from natural causes overtook the unfortunate country. During the war the seasons were particularly good. The peace was succeeded by an exceptional drought, which worked havoc on the veldt. In many districts there was almost complete failure of the mealie crop sown under such difficulties. In view of possible famine, therefore, the Government had no choice during 1903 but, at the cost of heavy expense, to keep supplies and vehicles in hand, so as to guard against any such contingency.

To sum up, by the beginning of April 1903, 200,000 had been restored to their homes. Every concentration camp was closed in the Transvaal; and in the Orange River Colony only 100 souls—widows, children, and infirm people—remained in Brandfort Camp. The recovery of the country in the time has been amazing. Destitution and desolation have been replaced by every sign of vigorous and prosperous life. It is unnecessary for me to dwell on the magnitude of the task accomplished, its gratifying character, and the energy, resource, and devotion displayed by all concerned. How Great Britain kept faith with her new fellow-subjects in South Africa is a story of which every Englishman has a right to be proud. Of the effect on the new fellow-subjects themselves it is less easy to speak with certainty. That a section, and a large section, too, is appreciative and grateful, and asks nothing better than to settle down peaceably under the new order of things, seems clear. But, unfortunately, there are many irreconcilables, fomented from the Cape Colony, who are industriously spreading abroad the old legend that Great Britain's magnanimity after Vereeniging, as after

Majuba, springs from her weakness, not her strength. These political malcontents require to be looked after sharply, in order that they may not upset the better-disposed families. Sedition must be dealt with firmly in South Africa if there is to be any peace in the country. Strict justice, firm consistent rule, and scrupulous exactness as regards pledges made—such things the Boer understands and appreciates. But it must be firm, consistent, and generous rule for all alike, British as well as Boer. Nothing is to be more strongly deprecated than sending our own people to the wall, and giving the Dutch preferential treatment over their heads. Certainly any such preference is wholly incomprehensible to the Boer himself, who misunderstands and despises heartily political sentimentality of that character.

Compensation claims have been a most thorny and difficult question both as regards Boers and British. Primarily there is much sore feeling in some loyalist quarters at the enormous efforts made by the Government on behalf of the Boers. They complain of injustice, and declare that the Dutch claims received attention before those of our own people. The position of the Government in the matter, though, was extremely difficult. Practically it was bound to allow the greater degree of distress to take more or less precedence in relief. Also they were pledged to special efforts by the Vereeniging terms. The preponderating numbers of the Boers and their absolute destitution made it inevitable that the Government should take action on their behalf. It was impossible, on every ground, practical and moral, to send hundreds of families out of camp without means of subsistence. The irritation of the loyalists, however, was exceedingly natural, for many

of them were scarcely less destitute than the Boers. The whole situation was greatly aggravated in Cape Colony owing to the open favouritism shown by the Sprigg Ministry to rebels, and the boycotting of loyalists in disaffected districts. The recent return of a Progressive Ministry will, however, alter this undesirable state of affairs. It is difficult to under-estimate all that the Progressive success means to South Africa. Had the Bond carried the day in this crucial struggle, fought by them deliberately on racial lines, it would have been little short of a political Sedan for the British party. As it is, the safety of the Cape is a gain so great that it may well compensate for the existence of serious troubles elsewhere. Once the vexed question of claims settled, South Africa, with a government in each Colony inspired by the principle of scrupulous justice to Boer and Briton alike, should be a very different country in the future from what it has been in the past. Little progress could be made in the task of reconciliation so long as the largest electoral unit among the various States was ruled by a party with a policy deliberately hostile to British interests.

A word in conclusion as to the cost of repatriation. The administrative expenses were extremely heavy, and the generosity of the Government in deciding that these costs should be borne by public funds, and not charged to the account of the three-millions free grant, is a point worthy of more recognition than it has received. The loss from depreciation of stock and material is also very heavy, heavier even than the cost of administration. Finally, many persons of the poorest class have been relieved by the Government, who had no property to lose, and consequently are not entitled to any compensation or share under the free grant

Though nominally debited with the amount of relief, in the majority of cases it will have simply to be written off against them. It is difficult at present to estimate exactly the total net cost, as the figures are complicated by loans and possible repayments, but in January 1903 the Transvaal Department had disbursed 1,183,594*l.*, and the corresponding returns for the Orange River Colony show an expenditure of 1,310,789*l.*

Nine and a half millions have been expended by Great Britain in repairing the damages of the war in the new Colonies, namely, three millions free grant to the Boers, two millions free grant to British subjects, foreigners, and natives; two millions in respect of special liabilities incurred as regards surrendered burghers; and two and a half millions distributed by the military in payment of receipts. Over and above this are the special expenses of repatriation and other charges, which must be defrayed out of Guaranteed Loan. Another five and a half millions has been paid over in Cape Colony and Natal in the discharge of compensation claims, making a total of fifteen millions expended since the peace in South Africa. It may well be asked if the above figures and the facts to which they relate have any parallel in history.

CHAPTER III

THE BURGHER SETTLEMENTS AND RELIEF WORKS

THE task of the Repatriation Department, described in the last chapter, did not end with the simple resettlement of the Boer population on their farms. Further duties in this respect devolved on the Administration. The soil of South Africa, in fact, seems peculiarly adapted to the growth of political gourds, which spring up with a celerity calculated to astonish Jonah himself. But in one respect the Scriptural simile is incorrect, for, though these developments come up in a night, they do not disappear with equal rapidity. On the contrary, when they come it is to stay, and their shade is apt to be neither grateful nor comforting to the local prophets and powers that be.

Repatriation brought to a head a question the developments of which had caused for several years increasing difficulty and anxiety in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. This was the problem of the 'Bywoner,' or poor white. The Bywoner difficulty was in no sense the product of the war. It had arisen automatically, owing to the characteristics of an agricultural race, whose outlook on life had remained practically unchanged for two centuries. Lady Anne

Barnard, the brilliant and gifted woman whose Cape letters, written more than a hundred years since to Lord Melville, form so charming a contribution to South African literature, has left on record some impressions of the Dutch, gathered during a tour in the interior of the Colony. She does full justice to their hospitality and kindly instincts, but comments on their apathy and lack of agricultural initiative. 'Still I found the same want of plantation,' she writes in 1798, 'rich soil remaining in unproductive barrenness for want of industry, though the grasping hope of possessing all the land between the settler and his next neighbour makes every man place himself at as great a distance from him as he can.'

Lady Anne's remarks, a century old, apply without modification of any kind to the more remote farming districts of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony to-day. The Boer is an agriculturist passionately attached to the soil, but his land-hunger, which is great, has an unprogressive, morose side to it. His view of farming in the main is purely pastoral. The progressive Boers who have turned their attention to agricultural development and intensive production are few and far between. The original farms which were devoted entirely to stock-raising were necessarily vast ones, and more than sufficed for the needs of the family. But as time went on, the population increased rapidly, whereas the productiveness of the soil remained stationary. Mill and Ricardo being luminaries whose rays lighted not the darkness of the Boer mind, no 'doses' of the economist text-books found their way on to the land with a view to redressing the balance. The natural result of all this was to bring about a state of affairs somewhat akin to that familiar in Ireland under the

name of 'congested districts.' The original farms which were capable of one subdivision were not capable of indefinite subdivision among the ever-increasing members of the family. So long as farming was to be carried out on purely pastoral lines a large acreage was indispensable for the agricultural unit. Under the circumstances, therefore, many people had to go to the wall. The only alternative for the landless man, crowded out of any share in the family heritage, was to become a dependant on the property of his more fortunate relatives, giving assistance on the farm, and receiving in return his daily bread and butter, and such further moral and social delicacies as usually fall to the lot of poor relations.

This system inevitably led to many abuses. Long before the war many farmers began to show growing impatience at the charges made upon them. Then came the great upheaval of 1899–1902, and what was irritation before the struggle developed after the peace into a flat refusal to re-embark on the old order of things. War losses, of course, pressed heavily on the burghers. Personally impoverished as many of them were, their disinclination to resume irksome obligations is comprehensible enough. The prospects of the Bywoner class, therefore, at the conclusion of hostilities were indeed black. They were destitute, and, owing to their previous dependence and landless state, were not entitled to any share of compensation under the three-million grant. Needless to say, however, an additional political element was not lacking to complicate matters. It was this element which brought the Government on to the field of action. Full to overflowing though the hands of the Repatriation Department were, it was called upon to deal with the

Bywoner problem, in order to keep the peace between the Boers themselves.

The question first arose over the repatriation of the National Scouts—that is to say, the whole class known officially as 'ex-military burghers,' and locally as 'hands uppers,' who had rendered assistance to the British cause during the later stages of the war. Occupation for a number of these men had been found in various public employments—the South African Constabulary, Railway Works, Post Office, &c. The majority, however, desired to resume their old agricultural employments. In the case of Bywoners among these men, the reluctance of their more wealthy relatives to allow them to return on the old squatting terms was intensified a hundredfold by political differences. Feeling against the National Scouts was very bitter on the part of those Boers who had fought to a finish. Even when permitted to return to their old homes, the ex-military burghers found life impossible, owing to the treatment they received. Though cases of actual violence were few, they were subjected to hostility and unfriendliness of every kind. Socially ostracised and generally treated as pariahs, the lot of the Bywoners was, indeed, unenviable.

It was clearly the duty of the Government to protect these unfortunate men, who had special claims on them, owing to the military assistance they had rendered. A plan was accordingly devised for forming groups of Bywoner settlements on farms capable of closer agricultural development, thus bringing together men in political sympathy with each other, as well as affording them means of livelihood. The first burgher settlement was set on foot in October 1902, through the enterprise of Captain Allison, an old Transvaal

farmer. A syndicate was formed by some wealthy ex-burghers, with a view to the acquisition or lease of farms suitable for agricultural settlement. Transportation on to the land of the syndicate was undertaken by the Repatriation Department, and settlers furnished with a repatriation outfit. The scheme, which was an adaptation of the old system of peasant tenure, was taken up eagerly by the people concerned. A set of standard regulations was drawn up under Government approval, with a view to the foundation of similar settlements in other parts of the country. Under the 'Standard Scheme,' as it is called, four large burgher settlements are already flourishing in the Transvaal—namely, the Standerton Farmers' Association; the Middelburg Farmers' Association, controlling 35,000 acres; the Pretoria Farmers' Association; and the Vaal River Association, controlling 75,000 acres. Finally, there is the Potchefstroom Farmers' Association, controlling 100,000 acres of land and offering accommodation for 2,000 families. This area, owing to its size and its capacity for very close cultivation, is managed somewhat differently.

The main lines of all these schemes are as follows: The farms may be leased from Government, private holders, or members of the syndicate; the tenure of the lease must not be less than seven years, to entitle the syndicate to the advantages offered by the State. For every pound subscribed by each syndicate for the equipment and working of their farms the Government undertakes to subscribe an equal sum up to a total of 50*l.* per family, the amount so subscribed to carry interest at the rate of 5 per cent., and to be repayable, unless otherwise arranged, in five years. The syndicate out of such capital equips the estates in cattle, waggons,

&c., and digs water-furrows and other works. Each syndicate binds itself with Government to charge settlers a rental of not more than one-third of the annual produce in cases where settlers are providing their own ploughing animals and implements, and one-half of the produce in cases where settlers are provided with ploughing animals and implements by the syndicate. Each tenant receives a card of membership of the 'Farmers' Association,' entitling him to an annual dividend of 25*s*., paid by the syndicate. Tenants have a right at any time, by a cash payment of 25*l*., to become shareholders in the syndicate and participators in its profits. The tenant may leave the property at six months' notice, upon repayment of all financial obligations incurred by him towards the syndicate. Any money he has invested is repaid, and the syndicate also repays the tenant 50 per cent. of the then value of any permanent buildings or improvements established by him. No person or family can be evicted, save on the ground of misconduct or failure to comply with his obligations as a farmer. No eviction can take place without the sanction of an authorised Government representative.

Such, briefly summarised, is the scheme which, from every point of view, social and economic, has proved a great success. Its close resemblance to the Métayer system—unknown in Great Britain, but common in France and other parts of the Continent—will strike many people. Though started with special reference to the ex-military burghers, its advantages were so obvious that large numbers of the Bywoner class, of all shades of political opinion, begged for its extension to themselves. Again, the Government gave proof of the liberal spirit by which they were animated towards

the Boers, and it was determined to apply the scheme, without political distinctions of any kind, to all who desired to benefit under it. The one condition insisted upon was that animosities should be dropped, and all sections undertake to live peaceably together. Thousands of men who otherwise must have fallen into hopeless destitution have now been restored to the land under more healthy and wholesome conditions than had ever been their lot previously. Truly for them the war has proved a blessing in disguise.

The Transvaal Government, sleepless though its efforts have been in every direction, must feel peculiar satisfaction at this solution of a very difficult question. The moral status of the Bywoner, living as a hanger-on upon the charity of relations, was most unsatisfactory under the old régime. Its pauperising and demoralising effect upon character will be readily grasped by any person with the smallest acquaintance with the difficult social and moral problems of poverty in this or any other country. The conditions of the Bywoner's existence struck at the root of energy, self-respect, and desirable personal pride. 'Without assets of any sort,' writes Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, 'with claims for compensation that even in the aggregate were insignificant, in many cases lacking the stamina to make a fresh start in life, with the reputation of wanting in both the wish and ability to work, they formed a class whom it was extremely difficult for the Government to help, and there was every prospect that they would remain as a permanent and pauperised element in the population.'

The Burghers' Settlements have obviated these dangers. For the first time the Bywoner has been placed in a position of economic independence; for the

first time, also, improved methods of agriculture have been brought within his reach. The syndicate, having a large command of capital, is in a position to spend money on machinery, irrigation, &c. The opportunities thus afforded for practical education in progressive farming are most valuable. Finally, as the settlers become more and more prosperous, it is provided that they may be able to enter into proprietary rights, and ultimately become holders of their land.

In the Orange River Colony the procedure adopted with the Bywoners was somewhat different. Indigent Burgher Settlements have not been organised there to the same extent. Various families have been placed in groups on the land, but questions of land tenure and finance did not admit of the adoption of the Standard Scheme. To meet the difficulty, relief works were started to provide for the indigent burghers. In order to make the enterprise as remunerative as possible, it was decided it should take the form of the construction of dams and other irrigation works on Government farms. The fertility of the land was thus greatly increased, and large tracts of dry farms rendered fit by irrigation for closer cultivation. By these means fresh areas capable of forming small holdings will be called into existence, thereby making a future permanent provision for many Bywoner families. The Government derive a benefit from the improved value of the land, and the men benefit by the opportunities thus afforded of honest and remunerative work. The economic soundness of the scheme in this case, as in that of the Transvaal Burgher Land Settlements, is self-evident, and it has proved equally successful.

Much doubt was at first expressed as to the willingness or the ability of the Bywoners to engage in regular

work. Contrary to expectation, however, the men took to it willingly, and achieved good results. Five relief camps—namely, Strydfontein, Kransdraai, Mushroom Valley, Tweespruit, and Parys—have been started on these lines, and have afforded employment to about 1,200 adult males. Over 3,000 souls, including women and children, have thus been provided for in the Orange River Colony. The daily wage fixed was 4*s.* 6*d.* for an eight hours' day. Boys from twelve to eighteen are employed according to their age and capacity, and employment is found for women when possible. Stores are erected in each camp. The Government undertake the water supply, sanitary arrangements, and a general conservancy of the camps. Hospitals and medical attendance are provided free of cost, and the Educational Department has established schools for the children, which carry on the good work commenced in the concentration camps.

The Dutch Reformed Church has also established ministers in each camp, and services are held regularly. Theoretically nothing could be more desirable than to afford the people every facility for the conducting of Divine worship. It is to be hoped, however, that spiritual ministrations, and not political intrigue, will occupy the time and best attention of the ministers. Many of these Dutch Predikanten hold the worst reputation as agitators, and their influence over the ignorant multitude is as great as it is pernicious. No element in the country is more bitterly anti-British, and as a body they will leave no stone unturned to wreck the best efforts of administration. The abuse of priestly authority and the power of religious tyranny have never received more melancholy and striking illustration than among these dour Calvinistic Doppers

of the high veldt. It is to be hoped that careful attention will be paid in all camps to this point, and the masquerading of treacherous propaganda under the garb of religion suppressed with a firm hand.

It is necessary to speak at this point of the treatment the National Scouts and other surrendered burghers have received at the hands of the Dutch Reformed Church. Shortly after the declaration of peace, this political priesthood of South Africa assembled in Synod, passed a resolution virtually excommunicating burghers who had surrendered before the war was over, or had served as National Scouts. A boycott of the most strict character was enforced against the 'hands-uppers.' They were entirely shut out from all religious services, and the use of sacraments withheld from them. The notorious case of Mr. Vlok, the Piquetberg clergyman, who was expelled from his pulpit for having preached against treason, clearly demonstrated the policy adopted by the Elders. A surrendered burgher was only allowed to rejoin his Church on making abject submission to the Predikant, and confessing the heinousness of his conduct in having availed himself of the rights of a British citizen.

In the Ermelo district, however, a number of non-guerillas were strong enough to make their opinion felt and to rebel against this system of ecclesiastical tyranny. A resolution was passed by the Ermelo Church Council which practically defied the Synod and removed the ban from the culprits. The irreconcilables withdrew in wrath and appealed to the ecclesiastical authorities, stating that the action of the Council was *ultra vires*. It was finally arranged to hold another Council in January 1904, and as it was tacitly understood that the matter should serve as

a test case as regards the status of non-guerillas elsewhere, the Conference was graced by the presence of Mr. Bosman, Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church. Mr. Bosman denounced the action of the previous Council as an 'insult' to the guerillas; the irreconcilables put forth their full strength, and as a result the resolution admitting surrendered burghers to the privileges of the Church was withdrawn. The recalcitrants accordingly were left in victorious possession of the field. Mr. Bosman graciously indicated that the Church made a distinction in guilt between 'hands-uppers' and the National Scouts. The path of repentance would be facilitated for the former, but public confession and penance could alone wipe out the guilt of the latter. Finding the non-guerillas unexpectedly obstinate, it was finally decided (with typical Dutch slimness) that an Elder should visit individual sinners and obtain a private confession. After such confession the culprit would be readmitted to the privileges of the Church.

It is unnecessary to comment on this state of affairs from the religious point of view, or the scandal of political tyranny masquerading in the garb of a faith every principle of which it sets at defiance. So far Mr. Bosman's attempts to break down the resistance of the non-guerillas has met with failure. It is much to be hoped the latter will hold together firmly and meet the difficulty by establishing a Church of their own. Such an act of self-defence would call forth sympathetic assistance from many quarters. The position of the Government in the matter is a very difficult one. The National Scouts have a special claim on their help and interest, but no Administration can interfere in the internal affairs of an ecclesiastical

body—a fact on which the Dutch Reformed Church calculates with nicety when it converts its organisation into one vast political caucus. The whole episode is of the highest significance as a practical demonstration of what we may expect from the Predikanten so far as peace and reconciliation between the races are concerned. It would be unfair, of course, to include each individual minister in one sweeping condemnation, but as a body there can be no question that the virulent feeling displayed by this powerful organisation is an ugly menacing factor in South Africa to-day. The Boer possesses a fund of natural piety on which it is easy to trade for seditious ends, and the danger lies in this fact. That the more ignorant simple men should thus be led astray by this travestied appeal to their best instinct is a very sad feature of the case. However, the Predikanten are with us and likely to remain. Time and education alone can break their power, and in the meantime individual cases of persecution must be dealt with as they arise.[1]

Bloemfontein for the moment is likely to prove a storm centre of manufactured disaffection, the character of which it is desirable to notice. A powerful syndicate of irreconcilable and disaffected Boers have taken over the management of the 'Bloemfontein Friend,' a newspaper which bids fair to outstrip even its journalistic fellows at the Cape in the malignancy of its attacks on

[1] Since the above was written, the excommunicated burghers have petitioned the Government for the official recognition and incorporation of the 'Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerk.' This petition has been granted together with the promise of State aid to Church funds according to the precedent already laid down by Government at the close of the war. Thus is established a second Dutch Reformed Church in the Transvaal, which, it is to be hoped, will set a new example of religious toleration and high principle in the land.

British rule and British administration generally. The 'Friend' is controlled among others by three of the most capable Boers in the Orange River Colony, ex-Judge Herzog, Mr. Abraham Fischer, and Mr. Wessels. Edited with undoubted skill, it forms the rallying-point of every seditious element in the new Colonies. Many statements which find their way into its columns are placed there with a view to consumption by and edification of the English pro-Boers; in fact the 'Friend' is undoubtedly in close relations with the latter as well as with the Bond in Cape Colony. Statements which reach England *viâ* Bloemfontein may accordingly be received with more than usual circumspection, especially when they emanate from this most able organ of Anglophobism. It is clear that the priests and the politicians will wage war to the bitter end against the re-establishment of peace and prosperity in South Africa, and no good end can be served by ignoring the fact. Two circumstances, however, may militate against their schemes. First, a general revival of prosperity, benefiting British and Boer alike, strikes at the very root of all discontent, and renders agitation impotent. Secondly, there can be no question that many burghers are genuinely weary of strife, and desire to live at peace with their neighbours, certainly as far as the burgher camps are concerned.

The majority of the people, if left alone, will be glad enough to settle down and let bygones be bygones. With few exceptions, the camp dwellers have proved a happy and contented community. A striking feature in all the repatriation reports is the testimony to the orderly, law-abiding character of the people. This obedience to authority may be in some measure the result of discipline acquired in the prison camps, and the

enforced absence of agitators; but, whatever the cause, it is of good augury for the future. Above all, it proves the old contention, so often advanced, that the Boer is not a difficult person to govern under a firm, but withal sympathetic, rule. Paternal treatment of a tactful character is essential for him. Leave him to drift, and he becomes the prey of the agitator—the tool of interested intrigue and religious fanaticism. No people as a whole have ever suffered more cruelly at the hands of their rulers. Weak and ignorant as children, they have been the facile dupes of tyranny; helpless pawns in a game played for personal ends by an unscrupulous political clique. From the political Boer nothing but trouble can be expected, and it is better to recognise the fact frankly. It is with the farmer Boer the hope of the future lies. His standard of political honour is of the lowest, owing to his past unfortunate experience of rulers and their methods. No greater duty, therefore, rests on the new Government than a steadfast manifestation of the moral side of its work. Justice, liberty, truth—on such great verities our Empire is founded. To convince the Boer of their reality, to teach him not only their strength, but their blessedness, such must be for years to come the highest aim of statesmanship in South Africa. The day he is won to our side, no longer coerced by the sword, but compelled by the mightier force of a hardly earned esteem, then indeed will President Brand's saying, 'Wagt een beetjie; alles zal recht kom' ('Wait a bit; all will come right') receive its happy fulfilment.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAND PROBLEM

South Africa is a continent which, in many ways, would have delighted the heart of Mr. Micawber. It is essentially a country where something fresh is perpetually turning up. Pliny's hackneyed phrase, however much we may weary of it, is nevertheless a commonplace from which facts allow no escape. John Ruskin once admitted he could not start a lecture on crystals without diverging into a glowing appreciation of Cistercian abbeys and architecture in general. In the same way, the most parochial of South African affairs, an irrigation scheme, a scab Act, or a farming syndicate, may from small beginnings raise great issues which involve fundamental questions of Imperial policy. It must be remembered that the complicated industrial, constitutional, and ecclesiastical problems in which the Old World abounds have no existence in South Africa. They are replaced by another set of problems even more difficult to analyse—those of nationality. South African history is the somewhat dreary record of the struggle which has arisen through the fortuitous juxtaposition of two white races, whose ideals and standards of civilisation have differed radically. And the whole situation is still further com-

plicated by the presence of a black race, a circumstance which, more than any other cause, has led to friction and misunderstanding between the whites. Racial strife has been the curse of the country, a curse from which a grievous heritage has sprung, and its appeasement is the final touchstone of future peace and prosperity. All Imperial policy in South Africa has at least one sure thread with which to steer through the labyrinth of conflicting claims and interests. Schemes which further this great object are working on sound lines to a wholesome end. But no policy, whatever its apparent advantages, can hope for ultimate success if it either ignores or conflicts with this fundamental ideal of statesmanship.

There are few questions canvassed with more heat at present in South Africa than that of land settlement. It is a problem which throws very clear light on various aspects of the racial struggle. Its solution can only be a question of time, but it is not too much to affirm that on a sound policy regarding the land the political future of the country may depend. The irony of Fate has willed that the Boers, a primitive pastoral race, hating industry and abhorring towns, should have settled in a country of vast mineral wealth, whose future is intimately connected with industrial development. It is unnecessary to recall the impotent attempts made by the Boers to check the influx of Uitlander immigration. The movement was beyond their power to stem or control. So the Boer withdrew more and more into the silence and solitude of the veldt, there to farm badly and unprogressively, whereas the English population continued to dominate the towns. Hence the divorce at present existing between town and country life, between industrial

concerns on the one hand and agricultural interests on the other; a divorce highly undesirable from every point of view. It is above all undesirable because it illustrates and throws into relief the divergent standards of the two white races. The occupations of the population, Boer and British, fall at present into two opposite camps, each marked by the strongest racial prejudices. If this antagonism between the agricultural Boer and the industrial Briton is allowed to develop unchecked, and no effort is made to bring them together, a racial cleavage of the worst kind, that of employment and interest, will be perpetuated and established.

The question of British Land Settlement has raised a certain amount of that captious criticism, the springs of which seem never failing where South Africa is concerned. Some foolish cry, of course, was started that the Government proposals aimed at dispossessing the Boer; an idea so ludicrously wide of the mark that it requires no contradiction. It is extraordinary, however, that any person endowed with a modicum of common sense can contemplate with serenity a future for the country consisting of prosperous, wealthy urban centres, British in tone and feeling, and beyond their gates a rural population wholly Dutch, sullen, unprogressive, hostile. And this must be the necessary and calamitous outcome of any policy of *laissez-faire* as regards the land. On the contrary, it is necessary to convince Boer and Briton alike that industry and agriculture are integral parts of one whole, and mutually dependent on each other for success and prosperity. Such is the task of statesmanship, and it can only be met by simultaneous and equal development of both urban and rural interests.

The land question raises what may be called the

first principles of South African policy in their clearest and broadest form. The gold remains, as I have said before, the cardinal economic fact in the country. The mining industry lies at the base of all prosperity and development, agricultural or otherwise. It is the keystone of the situation, and without it the whole structure would crumble. But, though the land by itself is not the primary consideration in South Africa, yet in conjunction with the industrial wealth it becomes a factor of scarcely less importance. To the land alone we must look for the gradual and peaceful solution of the race difficulty. From the land alone can arise that spirit of better understanding which will dispel the present antagonism between town and country. That ultimately a certain proportion of the Dutch may be drawn into the commercial life of the country and share the industrial interests of the British is a consummation much to be desired. A change so great, however, in their habits of life can only operate very slowly. Hence arises the present and paramount necessity for a judicious settlement of a large number of British colonists on the land; men who primarily will sympathise with the agricultural pursuits of the Boers, and appreciate their out-of-door tastes and interests. These new-comers will leaven the solid mass of the rural Dutch population, and they will heighten the general prosperity of the country by the development of agriculture and the introduction of better and more progressive methods of farming. The whole question of land settlement, therefore, is of the highest importance economically and politically. The agricultural development of South Africa, offering as it does so many opportunities for a healthy and wholesome life, is intimately bound up with the policy of

introducing new settlers, who will consolidate sentiment in the general interests of the Empire. Industrial immigration must be left to shift for itself, but agricultural immigration presents special difficulties; and Government assistance is imperative if it is to be undertaken successfully.

It is clear that however excellent agricultural immigration might be politically, unless good prospects of a steady and successful livelihood could be held out practically, any scheme must collapse through inherent weakness. No Government regulations, however skilful, could bolster up a plan economically unsound. The question as to whether British colonisation could be undertaken on a large and effective scale under State auspices was mooted as early as 1900. A Commission, under the presidency of Mr. Arnold-Forster, was appointed by the Imperial Government to investigate the agricultural resources of the country, and to recommend what facilities should be offered to intending settlers. The Commission reported favourably on the prospects of Land Settlement. It recognised the peculiar difficulties under which agriculture and stock-raising are conducted in South Africa; but it also recognised that, owing to bad methods in the past, the country up to the present had not been given a fair chance to prove its possibilities. The importance of the political side of the question was manifest to the Commissioners.

'Dealing with the question as a whole,' they wrote, 'we desire to express our firm conviction that a well-considered scheme of settlement in South Africa by men of British origin is of the most vital importance to the future prosperity of British South Africa. We find, among those who wish to see British rule main-

tained and its influence for good extended, but one opinion on this subject. There even seems reason to fear lest the vast expenditure of blood and treasure which has marked the war should be absolutely wasted unless some strenuous effort be made to establish in the country, at the close of the war, a thoroughly British population, large enough to make a recurrence of division and disorder impossible. We venture to believe that to this end some sacrifice may be reasonably made, and that a certain amount of pecuniary loss, at the outset, may be contemplated with equanimity, in view of the value of the result to be attained, and of the certainty that if that result be achieved any expenditure will be recouped and any loss retrieved.'

Mr. Arnold-Forster's inquiry was supplemented later by the valuable report of Sir William Willcocks on the prospects of irrigation and farming generally. Farming data were practically non-existent in the new Colonies, and any inquiry into its merits was consequently attended with great difficulties. But the same vigorous spirit which has characterised the whole work of Reconstruction in South Africa has marked the agricultural policy of the Government, and great strides have been made in every direction.

The Boer theory of agriculture was, as is well known, primitive in the extreme. Generally speaking, it began and ended with stock-raising. To increase his herds of cattle without much trouble or expense to himself was the ideal of the average Boer. The animals were allowed to wander at will on the veldt, and little or no trouble was taken to improve the breeds by selection or the introduction of fresh blood. Appeals to the Pentateuch also on all odd occasions did not make for agricultural advancement. South Africa, as

I have already remarked in a previous chapter, has a very bad reputation for cattle diseases. There can be no doubt that the Boer theory of epidemics, as visitations from the Almighty, against which it would be impious to struggle, is largely responsible for the hold these diseases have upon the country. Veterinary science was tabooed and despised. The admirable motto, *Laborare est orare*, is not one the Boer ever laid to heart, and probably he was mildly aggrieved when days of humiliation and the offering up of prayers failed to stem the evils of drought, locusts, and cattle pests. During the summer he lived like the nomad Semites of the Old Testament, among his flocks and herds on the high veldt, migrating in the winter to the lower altitudes of the bush veldt, which at that time of the year is healthy for man and beast. Meanwhile the soil remained, generally speaking, in unproductive idleness. Such agriculture, as distinct from stock-raising, which was undertaken, was conducted on most unsatisfactory lines. When wheat was grown it was without any reference to manures or the rotation of crops. Cereals were made to follow cereals year after year, without any rest for the soil or alternative leguminous crops. Consequently the wheat suffered severely from rust, and virgin soil of admirable quality was rendered useless and exhausted. Irrigation, that great factor on which so much depends in the future, was practically ignored. At the same time it would be unfair to regard the Boer family as wholly incapable. In a rough-and-ready manner he was able to provide for his own modest wants, and under the old régime there was no particular reason why either the Government or private individuals should bestir themselves about the land question. But the position of the new Government was a very

different one, and agricultural development was a necessary part of their programme.

Agriculture in South Africa to-day presents the usual Gilbertian anomalies in which that wayward land commonly abounds. On the one hand we have the new Colonies, under-populated and under-cultivated, with large agricultural resources quite undeveloped. On the other, we are confronted with the curious fact that if the present unprogressive Dutch policy with regard to the soil is persisted in, there will not be room enough on the land even for the Boers, let alone any new-comers. In the previous chapter I endeavoured to describe the Bywoner difficulty, and the growing numbers of a large and landless class to whom existence was becoming a serious problem. The Boer idea of farming was, as we have seen, the acquisition of an enormous estate, in the centre of which he was able to squat at ease. A very large acreage is, of course, necessary for stock-raising, especially when no attempt is made to combine it with other branches of farming. A few acres more or less casually cultivated in the immediate neighbourhood of the homestead exhausted the Boer's agricultural efforts. Huge tracts of land of great potential resources therefore lay idle and fallow, and wealth was only estimated by the herds of cattle roaming over the veldt.

Of course, it would be impossible to lay down a hard-and-fast rule about farming capacities, which necessarily vary in different parts of the country. But, broadly speaking, in districts where the land is capable of closer cultivation, it is desirable as time goes on and the population increases to replace the large, relatively unproductive pastoral farms, capable of sustaining one family at the most, by smaller hold-

ings devoted to intensive production. By these methods not only would the means of livelihood be secured to a larger number of people than is possible under present conditions, but the total wealth of the country would be vastly increased. That the Boers will continue to cling to their old pastoral methods and large holdings is very probable ; but if the Government, by judicious purchases of land, can bring in new settlers, and start smaller farms, conducted on very different principles, they will undoubtedly accomplish a most desirable work, politically and economically.

For an even greater, if more remote, question affecting the far future of South Africa is bound up with this problem of the land. The mineral wealth of the country (and this is especially the case as regards the gold-mines of the Rand) is not capable of indefinite exploitation. Prophecies on such a subject obviously lack the data necessary to a sound forecast; but though estimates vary, it would be most unwise to lose sight of the fact that within a short space of time, as time is reckoned historically—some say fifty, some 100 years—the Rand will be worked out and exhausted. A South Africa in which Johannesburg and Kimberley are deserted and decaying cities is a possibility, nay, an ultimate probability, statesmanship cannot afford to overlook. On the other hand, that agriculture has a future, and a great future, seems incontestable. That the palmy days of the mineral wealth, therefore, should help to establish the agricultural wealth on which future South African generations may be forced to rely, is a conclusion to which any consideration of the present or future points. Agricultural development, as Sir William Willcocks has pointed out, if slow, is permanent, and knows of

no exhaustion. Without the mineral wealth and all the conditions of life and influx of population which result from it, agriculture would have at present little or no *raison d'être* in South Africa beyond the squatting of Boers and Kaffirs. But the mineral wealth gives agriculture its immediate justification, and may so establish it that in years to come South Africa will not only feed herself (a process she has practically not even attempted so far), but send raw material to the increasingly congested countries of the Old World. Under such circumstances the future would be assured, whatever the fate of the gold. Otherwise it is difficult to see how a disastrous gap can be bridged between poverty and prosperity. It is again round the pivot of Johannesburg that the future turns. A flourishing gold industry is the basis of agricultural as of all other development in South Africa. And the moral is obvious, the same great relentless moral we find confronting us in every direction; so long as the gold industry is held back by labour difficulties, so long will the progress of the whole country be retarded.

Be that as it may, circumstances forced the question of agricultural development on the attention of the new Administration from the days of its first formation. As heirs of the late Boer Governments, the new power succeeded to large tracts of land in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. In the Transvaal the Crown lands cover the large area of 44,000 square miles, but very little of it is suitable for European settlement. In the Orange River Colony the land is admirable, but the total amount is inconsiderable. The Government heritage only amounted to 507,840 acres, increased by recent purchases to a total under 1½ million acres. As estate-owners on so large a scale a land policy was

thrust upon the new Government whether they would or no. Still further, a large number of applications for farms were received from men who had served in the war; sons of the Empire gathered from the four quarters of the globe, over whom the land had cast her spell. Between the possession of the land on the one hand, therefore, and the presence of these would-be settlers on the other, the situation called for definite and continuous action on the part of the Government. The latter soon made it clear that they were fully alive to the great importance of the question, and meditated an active policy in regard to it. Mr. Arnold-Forster's Commission, appointed shortly after the annexation to which I have already referred, proved that the difficulties and anxieties of the war were not causing the Administration to lose sight of the many obligations which peace, however tardy, would entail.

As early as 1901 Land Settlement Boards were started in both the Transvaal and Orange River Colony for the purpose of collecting farming data and facilitating the subsequent introduction of new settlers. Both departments commenced operations under the most disadvantageous circumstances possible, the whole country still being in a state of war. Their history is but another illustration of the work which has been accomplished in South Africa in the midst of circumstances calculated to drive administration frantic. The two Land Departments were confronted with an unique experiment in settlement. The experience of other Colonies and other countries was practically useless; the climatic, geographical, and racial peculiarities of South Africa having luckily no parallel elsewhere. There was no guide as to the formation of even tentative measures. General principles had to be evolved

as the work itself proceeded. No Agricultural Department existed under the Free Trade Government, agricultural concerns being dealt with when necessary by a small board of practical farmers. In the Transvaal, naturally, matters were still worse, and agriculture was left in a state of apathetic confusion. The happy-go-lucky methods with which the old Boer oligarchy had literally muddled along were clearly impossible for an enlightened Government. Here, as elsewhere, a fresh start had to be made from the foundations upwards.

The administrative conditions naturally vary in the two Colonies, the great disparity in the size of the Crown lands necessitating somewhat different methods. In the Orange River Colony there has been little modification in the original machinery, but in the Transvaal the Land Board has now given way to a large permanent branch of administration, namely, the Land Department, to whose charge fall important and varied functions. Two Settlers' Ordinances, promulgated towards the close of 1902, lay down the policy and terms of the Government towards agricultural immigration. A sketch of that policy and the work of the Land Department will follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

BRITISH LAND SETTLEMENT

We have glanced in the previous chapter at the general aspects of the land problem in South Africa. Three reasons, as we saw, lay at the root of the policy adopted by the Government: first, its position as a landowner; second, the presence of would-be settlers in the country; third, the extreme importance of establishing a loyal and intelligent population on the land with a view to the peaceful solution of the racial difficulty and the development of agriculture. The formation of a large Land Department in the Transvaal, of a smaller Land Board in the Orange River Colony, and the promulgation of the Settlers' Ordinances, define the attitude of the Government towards this important question.

It was clear that if British land settlement was to be undertaken at all in South Africa it must be on a large and effective scale; otherwise, however useful individually, politically its effect would be trifling. Three essential conditions were attached, in official opinion, to any successful scheme: it must have magnitude; it must deal with land of good quality; it must attract the right type of settler. The presence in the country at the end of the war of a large number not

only of Imperial Yeomen, but of oversea colonists from Canada and Australasia—men with exactly the experience of pioneer-farming most desirable at this present moment in South Africa—was a great and fortunate factor in the case. Applications for farms poured in upon the Government, and its difficulty was not so much to find the right type of men, but land of suitable quality on which to place them. Land purchase, therefore, became an urgent necessity, especially in the Orange River Colony, where the amount of Government property was inconsiderable. Again, settlement, to be effective, must clearly be conducted in groups. The establishment of individual British families in the midst of a wholly Boer neighbourhood would be a useless and possibly an unpleasant experience for the new-comers. The Government farms were apt to be scattered, and the acquisition of land in blocks for the formation of groups of new settlers, who would mutually support and aid each other, was very necessary. Two large blocks of land, in that favoured district of the Orange River Colony known as the Conquered Territory, were luckily acquired by the State on good terms. The situation, in fact, could not be met by any small or makeshift scheme. On the one hand, a good deal of land was coming into the market; on the other, the price of land was rising steadily all over the country. It was necessary for the Government to act promptly, first, in order to acquire good land at a moderate price while still available, and second, in order to retain in the country the Home and Colonial soldiers who desired to settle there permanently. Had the opportunity been allowed to slip, the land must have passed into other hands, and desirable settlers would have left the country discouraged and disgusted by long delays. The mis-

fortune for British interests in South Africa would in either case have been great, but the Administration took active steps to avert the danger.

Having urged the policy of land settlement on the Imperial Government in a series of despatches, Lord Milner suggested as a definite proposal that, under the loans raised by the new Colonies to meet war expenses, two millions in the Transvaal and one million in the Orange River Colony should be devoted to the objects of land purchase and settlement. On an average, the State would be called upon to invest 1,000*l.* for each holding, and the introduction of about three thousand or four thousand settlers was the end in view. The numbers are not large, but all that the scheme aims at is at making an effective and successful start. Once the possibilities of South African farming have been demonstrated, even on a small scale, under Government auspices, private enterprise will follow in the wake of the latter. This contention has been amply justified, first by the County Land Settlement Scheme, set on foot in this country by the Imperial South African Association, who have acquired an area of 300,000 acres in the Orange River Colony; and second, by the spirited enterprise of the Duke of Westminster, who has purchased a large estate near Ladybrand for the settlement of Cheshire yeomen. The estate, which includes nearly 16,000 acres, is well watered, and is the best land in the Colony for the growth of cereals. No effort is being spared to arrange for the comfort of the newcomers. The property will be served by one of the new railway lines, and the Duke, during a recent visit to South Africa, has made arrangements for irrigation, for the allotment of farms, and the erection of homesteads on the old Dutch pattern. The best wishes of

all persons interested in South Africa will go with him in the prosecution of this admirable undertaking. Pioneer schemes well provided with capital are of the utmost importance in these early days. The Land Settlement movement, once started, is bound to spread and grow, as its possibilities are demonstrated by practical experience.

It is not possible in a few short and dogmatic sentences to sum up the prospects of farming either in the new Colonies or South Africa at large. Such brevity and dogmatism would certainly be at the expense of the truth, for conditions vary enormously, and no rule-of-thumb summary will meet the case. Generally speaking, however, in the new Colonies the broad agricultural distinction lies between the dry and irrigated farms. The 'dry lands' of the high veldt are in the proportion of 200 acres to 1 of alluvial soil. Stock-raising, therefore, will continue to hold a foremost place in the agricultural concerns of the Transvaal. Granted, however, manures, and a suitable rotation of crops, experts are of opinion that a very large proportion of the high veldt may grow Indian corn, potatoes, roots, and other cereals without irrigation. So far the 'dry lands' have been entirely unexploited and their great possibilities allowed to remain fallow. If South Africa is to take her rightful place among the agricultural countries of the world, she must turn her attention to the development of the dry lands, and, above all, to intensive production.

Politically, as we have seen, intensive production, which admits of a large number of people being settled on the land, is the main end to keep in view. It is the end to which the paucity of agricultural supplies likewise points. With such a market as Johannesburg

close at hand, agriculture in the Transvaal has remained up to the present in a deplorable condition. Articles such as milk, meat, butter, or fruit, all of which could be produced in the country, have to be imported from abroad. In 1890 food-stuffs to the value of not less than 2,500,000*l.* were introduced into the Transvaal. It is clear what a great advantage it would be to the country if at least some proportion of this large total could be produced locally. Granted development and an energetic grappling with local difficulties, there is no reason why South Africa should not become ultimately self-supporting as regards food-stuffs. All this, of course, cannot be accomplished in a night. For the moment she must aim at reformed methods, at greater productiveness of the land, and at increasing the local output.

It is at this point that the value of irrigation becomes manifest. The 'dry lands,' as we have seen, are suitable for stock-raising and the cultivation of cereals on a large scale. But intensive production, which concerns the future of the 'mixed' holder and market-gardener, is largely a question of water. 'Water is not merely an element in agricultural operations,' writes Mr. Arnold-Forster's Commission; 'it is practically a condition precedent to their being undertaken at all. Without it the land remains almost worthless; with it large and valuable crops may be produced from the soil.' It is a far cry from the high veldt to Umbrian Assisi, and any connection between them at first sight seems grotesque. Nevertheless, when Francis, son of Bernardone, lifted up his heart in that wonderful hymn of praise to the inanimate creation and gave thanks for 'our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble, and precious, and

clear,' he merely stated in poetic phraseology a sentiment which in more prosaic form every agriculturist, both in North and South Africa, will echo. In South Africa as in Egypt, the effect of water on what is, to all appearances, desert land, is little short of miraculous. But, unlike Egypt, the sub-continent is no valley land traversed by one great river, the rise and fall of which can be calculated with exactness. South Africa consists mainly of a high plateau, with an erratic and uncertain rainfall, meagre in the spring, heavy and continuous in the autumn—that is to say, at just the wrong seasons for agricultural purposes. The rivers, such as they are, flow in rocky beds, practically dried up at one time of the year, and swollen into great torrents at another. Water, when it would be worth untold gold, is not to be had. It is at present in superabundant quantities, when not wanted. For the equalisation of such a state of affairs there can be no solution but water storage and its utilisation by irrigation. In order to arrive at some conclusion on this vital question the Transvaal Government summoned to their councils the greatest living authority on irrigation, the man to whose genius Egypt primarily owes the Assouan dam, namely, Sir William Willcocks.

In a long and interesting report, Sir William Willcocks deals exhaustively with the questions of farming and water supply in South Africa. He writes with enthusiastic conviction as to the future of the first and the possibility of the second. The lack of enterprise shown in agricultural matters was necessarily surprising to an Anglo-Egyptian official fresh from a country where the spirit of efficiency has entered into every detail of administration. 'Apart from its gold, diamond, and coal mines, South Africa has remained strangely

stationary,' writes Sir William. 'Fifty years ago it was a pastoral country, importing cereals, dairy produce, and even hay, from foreign countries. It is the same to-day. Half a century ago it needed a farm of 5,000 acres to keep a family in decent comfort; to-day it needs the same farm of 5,000 acres to keep a single family in comfort. Except in the extreme south-west corner of Cape Colony, agriculture has scarcely been attempted, except on the most primitive lines and on the most insignificant areas.' The great irrigation expert is much concerned as to the future of the country should agriculture remain undeveloped, and dark days overtake the gold and diamond industries. No South African statesman, he says, should rest satisfied with the present transitory wealth of the country. Irrigation, and irrigation alone, can insure permanent wealth to any part of South Africa. Agricultural development on any large scale without water storage is impossible, he affirms, in the new Colonies. On the other hand, India and Egypt have both shown the world what can be accomplished by well-conceived irrigation works undertaken by an enlightened Government. Sir William Willcocks therefore urges on the Transvaal Administration the adoption of irrigation works on a large scale. He calculates that three million acres of perennially irrigated land could be obtained at an expenditure of 30,000,000*l.*, and such land would have the value of 100,000,000*l.* sterling. Still further, good tillage, and an intelligent application of crop rotations and manures, would render another 10,000,000 acres productive under crops depending on rainfall alone. With such an addition to its wealth South Africa might contemplate with equanimity any exhaustion of its mines. There can be no question for the

Transvaal Government, in its present financial position, of undertaking public works on any such scale as suggested, though smaller local schemes will no doubt be prosecuted energetically. But Sir William Willcocks's exhaustive and scientific survey of the whole field, and the practical suggestions and sketches embodied in his Report, will form a valuable basis for all future development.

The Government land settlement scheme provides, as we have seen, for holdings of varied character. These holdings fall under three classes: large dry farms for stock-rearing, mixed farms where the cultivation of cereals is combined with cattle-breeding, and small holdings of the market-garden type. The size of the holdings could be determined by no arbitrary rule, for, as previously stated, the carrying and productive capacity of the land varies greatly in different localities. The Settlers' Ordinance, therefore, leaves a wide discretion to the District Commissioners in the fixing of boundaries. Few Boer farms are less than 6,000 acres, and many are considerably larger. The average size of the Government holdings will run about 1,000 acres. Smaller holdings must clearly be developed, unless the Bywoner difficulty is to reproduce itself again. The lack of data, to which I have referred elsewhere, rendered the framing of the Settlers' Ordinance somewhat difficult. However, it was drawn with wise elasticity, in order as much as possible to profit by the experience and avoid the errors of land settlement in Australia and New Zealand. The valuation of the land was calculated on such a basis as to give the settler, after all living expenses are paid, a clear profit of 12 per cent. on his capital. Special terms are made for settlement on unproved land where the initial outlay may prove great. Temporary relief is provided in

case of exceptional periods of drought and disease. Partnership is allowed, but settlers are bound to occupy their land, and transfer is forbidden. Holdings are allotted either under licence or lease, but when under the latter the acquisition of the freehold is made easy for settlers. Payments to Government in both cases are graduated, so as not to press heavily on the pioneer years. Finally, the Government encourages improvements by advancing sums equal to those expended by the settler on his holding.

Under these conditions it is hoped the Government may attract a good type of settler to South Africa, offering him in return reasonable prospects of a happy and successful livelihood.[1] It is no case, as Mr. Buchan wisely says, for 'flamboyant prophecies.' Farming in South Africa is not likely to escape the difficulties and drawbacks which attend that profession elsewhere. On the contrary, it presents special difficulties which require energetic combating. Agriculture is not likely to prove a Tom Tidler's ground for the idle and incompetent any more than the mining industry. A fall in prices later on must certainly take place, and this is a factor to be reckoned with in any estimate of profit and loss. The need for labour here, as elsewhere, makes itself felt very keenly. Though the Kaffir is by nature an agriculturist, the farmers are as short-handed as the mine-owners, and complain as bitterly of the shortage—yet another instance of the widespread and paralysing character of this trouble. Still there can be little doubt, when all reservations are made, that farming offers sound and solid prospects in South Africa, and it is much to be hoped men of character and intelligence may find it worth while to

[1] 508 settlers have been established in the Transvaal up to the present date.

settle on the land, and so check the wholesale diversion of energy and enterprise to the towns. Still further, the land itself has a charm of its own which it must require a very sluggish soul to resist. It is essentially life on the broad trail, this open-air free existence among the grand and cleansing influences of nature. And when one remembers the lives crushed into misery and degradation by the social pressure of our large towns, and then reflects on the possibilities of work and happiness held out by such an existence as this, the pity of it seems that so few can profit by it.

It will be readily grasped from the above survey of agricultural concerns in South Africa how important and varied are the duties which fall to the Land Department. It is not merely a question of the introduction of new settlers, the allotment of land, and the survey of farms; but the foundation of a much greater and more comprehensive work, embracing the whole agricultural development of the country. America is a notable example of the services which can be rendered to both State and individual by a public-spirited and well-organised Agricultural Bureau—a fact to which we have testimony nearer at hand in the admirable work carried on by the Irish Board of Agriculture, under the presidency of Sir Horace Plunkett. The Land Department in the Transvaal is based on an equally broad conception of its duties. Its three main branches are Agriculture, Irrigation, and Cartography. The following sub-departments deal in detail with the practical aspects of the work: First, a veterinary department, urgently required with a view to stamping out cattle diseases rife in the country; second, a chemical department, to whose duty falls the analysis of soils, manures, feeding-stuffs, &c.; third, a botany

department, for the investigation of grasses, forage, poisonous plants, &c.; fourth, a horticultural department, for the encouragement of fruit-growing and the establishment of orchards; fifth, a forestry department—a most important work; sixth, a poultry department; seventh, a dairy department; eighth, a department for entomology and locust destruction; ninth, a publications department, for the purpose of circulating information of benefit to farmers. This last department seeks to make known throughout the country the results obtained by the labours of all the other divisions. In order to give practical expression to the above methods for raising farming from its present inert and unprogressive state, three model farms have been started at Potchefstroom, Lichtenburg, and Standerton. Object lessons are here given in dairy and poultry work, fruit and vegetable cultivation, gardens, orchards, &c. Extensive trials are conducted as to the growth of crops, the use of fertilisers, the best methods of cultivation and harvesting, and the breeding and management of stock. It is hoped that these farms may prove educational centres for a very wide district.

Of course, the history of the Land Department has not been without its mistakes and blunders. The task of calling such an organisation into existence, and of fitting it with the proper officials and machinery, might well tax the efforts of an administrative archangel. As so often happens in South Africa, the real magnitude of the undertaking only revealed itself little by little. Obstacles have been numerous and heavy, and the severe drought of the past two years has proved a most serious drawback. The specialised character of the work also caused exceptional difficulty in finding the right men to undertake it. But, in spite of everything,

solid results have been obtained, and the record of the Land Department is a very remarkable one. Like the work of the Repatriation Department, the great constructive efforts of the Government as regards land settlement and development have remained practically ignored. It is quite easy to understand why such work is passed over in silence by a certain section in this country, who appear to dread nothing so heartily as the revival of prosperity in South Africa. Such a work as that of the Land Department hardly jumps with that charming conception so often depicted for our benefit of a cowed and demoralised Administration, the serf and slave of the gold magnates, whose only object is to put as much money, as quickly and as disreputably as possible, into the pockets of their lords and masters.

A few words in conclusion as to finance. Complaints of reckless and extravagant expenditure are among the common charges brought at the present crisis against the Administration. I have endeavoured to show in the present and preceding chapters that a heavy expenditure fell inevitably on the new Government. Repatriation was a very costly matter, and the expenses of land settlement and purchase have proved considerable. The whole machinery of State had not so much to be restored as to be freshly created. No development was possible without capital being sunk freely in public works. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to see how this large expenditure could have been avoided. It is very easy and very dangerous to dogmatise in a superficial manner on the subject of retrenchment. A short-sighted economy, entailing no present sacrifices, may prove ultimately not only costly, but disastrous to a country. South Africa has suffered too much in the past from this ill-starred spirit of

economy. It has sprung almost invariably from that shirking of responsibility which has lain at the root of all our troubles; witness Lord Kimberley's refusal in 1872 to purchase Delagoa Bay at a cost of a few thousands. Small penny-wise savings made in such a spirit have a knack of piling up debts, only to be cancelled ultimately by a vast expenditure of blood and treasure. On the other hand, a liberal expenditure at a given moment, though it may produce temporary financial difficulty, is often the wisest, the most far-seeing, and in the long run the most economical policy. And this latter view applies to the affairs of the Transvaal to-day. The Government might certainly have economised in various directions. They might, for instance, have taken a less liberal view of their repatriation work and the burgher settlements, but any such saving would have been a poor economy in view of the discontent and poverty which must have resulted among the Boers. Again, they might have shrunk from attacking the agricultural problem, and thus saved large present expenses. But if desirable would-be Colonists had left the country, and land suitable for settlement had passed for ever out of the hands of the Government, what would the ultimate loss to South Africa not have proved both politically and economically? And the same line of argument applies to each department in turn.

The temporary difficulties of the situation will be denied by no one, but they are not such as to call for hysterical outcry and panic more characteristic of a neurotic woman than of men of business capacity and sense. Temporary difficulties lasting a year or so count, after all, as nothing in the life of a nation. Policies stand or fall ultimately by their approximation to, or departure from, the great broad lines of development

and progress. Long steady views are indispensable in statesmanship, and luckily for South Africa she possesses at the head of affairs one whose hand has not only steered her destinies with unfaltering courage and prescience through this crisis in her history, but whose outlook remains calm and unclouded by the immediate trials of a transition period.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPREAD OF EDUCATION

THERE is no feature in South Africa to-day more hopeful and encouraging than the strides made by education since the war. Under Republican rule, matters in this respect left much to be desired, both in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. The organisation, as usual, was better in the Free State than in the neighbouring Republic. An Education Department existed, and a system of teaching was carried on, very fairly good as far as it went, though by no means embracing the educational needs of the country. But in the Transvaal education was left in a condition of unprogressive chaos. No uniform national system existed. Doles were made by the Government to private schools at the rate of so much per child. A large proportion of such sums often found their way into the pocket of the Boer parent, not to be extracted therefrom for such foolish purposes as reading and writing. The mental attitude that you are a child of light, under the special protection of the Almighty, and that consequently it is quite unnecessary to worry over any personal efforts as regards self-improvement, naturally did not conduce to the spread of learning. The ignorance of the Boers as a whole, especially that of the poorer classes among them, was

something so colossal that it is difficult of realisation by an European people. It is unnecessary to insist on the calamities which have resulted from their intellectual limitations. When that 'ignorance in motion' denounced by Goethe is marshalled by national sentiment, and directed by religious enthusiasm of a type as reactionary and as lacking in all high spiritual insight as the mind over which it holds sway, such ignorance in motion becomes in truth the most potent of destructive forces. Still further it is clear that the mental outworks to be stormed and overthrown among such a people before the true citadel of knowledge can be reached are of a formidable character.

Many travellers in remote districts in the Transvaal have spoken of the rush of pity and indignation often experienced on up-country farms at the sight of children growing up in such intellectual darkness and mental squalor. Freedom, to live the life of a savage, to withhold education from the young, to bar the doors against all those better and higher possibilities of thought and feeling which alone make life really worth the living, such was the seamy side of the Boer spirit of independence. That spirit had its good side, its robustness, its courage, its endurance, its patriotism. To-day the greatest problem in South Africa is perhaps the psychological one as to whether the conqueror can or cannot touch that spirit to higher issues, nobler ends. If they fail here at the fundamental source of things, South African unity, South African advancement, must remain an idle dream. Hence the paramount importance of education under the new régime; hence the importance that such education should be no mere mental gymnastics, but a real drawing forth of character and of that admiration, hope, and love through which, so a

great writer tells us, men alone can live. Educational matters, as we all know to our cost, have a curious tendency in every age to generate heat in far greater proportions than light. The acrimonious discussions among our latter-day politicians not infrequently suggest the wordy warfare of the mediæval schoolmen. Even in South Africa notes of discord are by no means unheard, and sections exist there, as here, who would make the welfare of the children the stalking-horse for their own political and ecclesiastical ends. But at least in the new Colonies the Government had the advantage of starting not so much with a clean as with a brand-new slate. Practically they had a free hand, unhampered by precedent, and they have made good use indeed of their opportunities.

The educational work of the new authority dated from the formation of the concentration camps. Two facts rapidly forced themselves into prominence as the camps were started. The appalling ignorance prevailing among the Boer women primarily amazed and baffled the authorities. Next, the opportunity circumstances had provided for reaching the country children, and saving them from the conditions, little short of brutish, in which they were being brought up, was too great a one to be lost. The severe mortality prevailing in the camps at one time, and the controversy to which it gave rise, will be fresh in the minds of most people. But, so far from the mortality being a matter of any surprise, the medical reports on examination reveal a state of affairs which not only affords a full and sufficient explanation of the heavy death-rate, but throw a lurid light on the manners and customs of the people concerned. Sanitation in its most elementary character was unknown among the Boers. Every

camp superintendent had to wage war with the inmates on this subject. The use of soap and water, of ventilation, and of isolation in illness, are all simple medical truths of which the Boer women have a rooted horror. Their notions as to the treatment of disease illustrate their standard of civilisation more effectively than any other means which might have come under public notice.

Even the official narratives and the report of the Ladies' Commission abound in stories which would seem incredible were they not vouched for by competent witnesses. Pneumonia patients who eat their poultices and use Reckitt's Blue as a cooling drink; children covered with green paint for measles, or daubed with vermilion when suffering from nettle-rash; babies suffering from pneumonia fed on sardines instead of milk, and carefully varnished all over their bodies; fur clipped from a cat, roasted, and then applied as a remedy for bronchitis; liniments used for internal consumption; cake and lumps of meat given to enteric patients; and a lavish use of Dutch 'droppels,' thanks to which children were dosed at one and the same time with ether, opium, tartar emetic, and laudanum—such were some of the horrors against which doctors and nurses had to struggle. Other remedies and methods were indulged in plentifully by the Boer women, but they are of too disgusting a character to be enumerated here. If I have referred to the unsavoury subject at all, it is only to draw attention to the terrible conditions of prejudice and ignorance existing among countless Boer families, and the deplorable surroundings in which children were growing up. To read the narrative of so much avoidable pain and suffering is to cry once again with the prophet that in very truth 'the people perish for lack of knowledge.'

This state of affairs gave the authorities a chance of which they availed themselves in a really admirable manner. It was clearly a vital matter for the State to rouse a perception of better standards of thought and action in the minds of the rising generation. Schools were formed in every camp, and a systematic effort made to provide means of education free of charge for the children. A Commissioner of Education, Mr. Sargent, was appointed in February 1901 for the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. The task of supplying teachers and the necessary school apparatus for thirty-three camps scattered over so vast an area was no light undertaking. Surely no school system was ever started under circumstances less academic, with the smoke and din of warfare in the eyes and ears of scholars and teachers. Adequate accommodation in the camps for school premises there was none. Building material in the shape of wood and iron existed at the coast, but with wrecked, congested railway lines, taxed to their utmost capacity to supply the needs of the army and the thousands of refugees collected in the camps, transport for such material was impossible. But that good buildings do not necessarily manufacture good scholars is a moral from the South African camp schools our own Education Department might well consider when bent on preaching down the hearts of harassed school committees with their little hoard of departmental maxims. Mr. Sargent proved himself a capable and enthusiastic organiser, and under his direction the camp schools soon became the most hopeful and cheering feature of British rule.

Incredible though it seems, by the beginning of December 1901 more children were receiving education in the Orange River Colony than had ever been the

case under the Free State Government. Still further, they availed themselves most eagerly of the opportunities offered to them. Shelters of sun-dried benches covered with an old sail formed the first temporary school buildings, and these were crowded with children eager to learn, and, above all, anxious to improve their knowledge of English. Teachers were collected somehow, either masters or mistresses certified formerly under the late Government, or drawn from the ranks of refugees. The difficulties of providing an adequate staff under the circumstances were, of course, great. Teachers of any kind, qualified or unqualified, were few and far between, and their efficiency at times left something to be desired. But, nevertheless, the work accomplished cannot be too highly praised. The advent of 125 teachers from England marked a great step in advance. These educational recruits were a valuable addition to the staff. Their modern methods raised and improved the whole standard of education throughout the camps, and still further added to the bright and attractive character of the schools. The courteous and kindly greeting they received from the Dutch teachers already on the spot is another feature on which one dwells gladly. Two circular letters of Mr. Sargent, one of greeting to the new-comers, the other introducing the latter to the existing teachers, may well survive as models of that spirit to which one looks for the healing of racial strife and bitterness. It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of the work carried on by these educational volunteers from the old country. Unknown and unrecognised, to their lot has fallen a task as weighty as that which befell generals and army corps. In the history of a nation it is no mean part to be called upon to lead its children out of intellectual

serfdom. And the Egypt of the Boer child was singularly untempered at the best by fleshpots. It is impossible not to feel that, however great the cost, the war was a blessing in disguise for the youth of this nation.

No compulsion of any kind was used to force the children to attend school; they flocked thither willingly on their own account, and grown-up young men and women were not ashamed to share their educational advantages. The Education Department aimed at two great objects in the formation of the schools: first, to provide a place in the camps where children might be usefully and happily employed; second, to teach them the language which henceforth must be that of their country. Eighty per cent. of the children could neither read nor write, nor had any knowledge of English. The most gratifying progress, however, was made in this respect, the scholars showing the greatest eagerness to learn. Religious instruction was given in Dutch, but the rest of the work was conducted in English. Naturally the tuition was of a strictly elementary character, rarely extending beyond the third standard. The majority of children from country districts were either in sub-standards or in standards 1 and 2, and scholars of all ages were found quite indiscriminately in every section. Some of the 'English compositions,' written laboriously but treasured with pride for the inspection of visitors, are very quaint. 'I will try to learn English that I can say to the Kakky handsup,' writes one little Boer damsel, with all the authoritative instinct of her race. 'I am twelve years old. This is my first English writing.' Another scholar bursts into eloquent language in praise of his school and teachers. 'Our school, our school; that word is

enchanting; when we are in school it is the best days of our life with exception when we get punishment, but if that is not the case we know from no sadness in school. We have three teachers and four mistresses. "But by which of these teachers you learn the best?" you perhaps ask. Well, may I say what I think, respectable teachers? Yes? I hope I shall not offend one of the teachers with my feeling, and in case I do that, I ask them lowly for excuse. Well, perhaps I am wrong, but I think Mr. Patterson.[1] I am very thankful for the kindness that the teachers showing me every day, and I say with a voice that comes out of my heart—Long live our teachers.'

Undoubtedly many members of the rising Boer generation, nurtured on misrepresentations of the English, left the concentration camps with very different feelings towards their new fellow-citizens, thanks to the kindly influence of the teachers and other persons in authority. Primers and text-books, needless to say, were of little assistance in schools of so original a character. Oral composition, recitations, singing, story-telling, were the methods of instruction chiefly employed, and with great success. Kindergarten and Sol-fa were equally popular, and the sweet voices of the children and their correct singing caused much astonishment among old South African residents. Habits of personal cleanliness were insisted upon with the best results. The improvement in *morale* and appearance was apparently most striking. The conversion of dirty, slouching, sullen children, dazed with the great solitudes of the

[1] Lieutenant Patterson, of the Lancashire Fusiliers Regiment. When quartered in Belfast, Mr. Patterson rendered great assistance with the camp school, teaching a class of children daily, among whom he was very popular.

veldt, ignorant of any word of English, into tidy, bright scholars, with faces showing every sign of quickened intelligence, was a transformation truly remarkable. Very happy relations sprang up in many cases between teachers and pupils, and copious tears were shed frequently by the latter when the break-up of the camps separated them from their kind friends. The attention given to the organisation of games also showed much wisdom on the part of the authorities. To play cricket and football energetically with scrupulous fairness was a desirable training as regards certain very slack sides of the Boer character. When the Boer, in the widest sense of the phrase, has learnt to 'play the game,' there will be no further trouble in South Africa.

As time passed on the educational arrangements in the camps were more and more perfected. The needs of the urban children were also not neglected. By the beginning of 1902 either free or fee-paying schools had been established in all important centres along the railway line, and when possible in outlying towns. As the results of these efforts the declaration of peace found no fewer than 24,670 children receiving education in the Transvaal alone, namely, 17,213 children in the camp schools, 6,062 in the town schools, and 1,395 in fee-paying schools. In the Orange River Colony 12,066 children were receiving education in the camps, and 2,691 in Government town schools, making a grand total for the two Colonies of 39,427 children under State instruction. All this work, again, let it be remembered, organised and carried out with the country in a state of active warfare. The above figures are out of all proportion to the results obtained under the Boer Governments. By 1903, 7,380 were being taught in

town schools in the Orange River Colony alone; that is to say, a number nearly equal to the highest total ever attained by the Free State Government recorded from both town and country schools alike.

On the declaration of peace and the subsequent dispersion of the camps, the Education Department set to work energetically to follow up the population to their own homes with teachers, marquees, school furniture, &c., an unique instance of the educational mountain pursuing a coy but very willing Mahomet. It was felt that at all costs the work begun in the camps must not be allowed to lapse. The good results obtained within a few months, the eagerness of the children to learn, and their sorrow at the break-up of the schools were encouraging signs which stirred the Department to great efforts. The formation of schools in towns was relatively not difficult, though the lack of all stores and equipment often complicated matters. It required, however, much ingenuity to meet the needs of the country population. It was finally decided to establish small schools on farms forming the centre of a district to which children could be collected. It is also noteworthy that up to the present time the demand of the Boer people for these schools is greater than the resources of the Department can meet. Situated, as these farm schools often are, sixty miles from a railway station, the conditions of life were frequently attended with much hardship for the teachers. It would be difficult to over-estimate the devotion, energy, and enthusiasm brought by the latter to their work, or to praise too highly the spirit in which they have discharged their arduous duties. It was the rule to send two women teachers or one man to each farm school, and when two women the plan of despatching an

Afrikander and an oversea teacher together proved most successful. Transport for the schools was furnished by the Repatriation Department, and free rations in addition were issued to children coming from a distance; sleeping accommodation was provided in marquees. The happy relations between children and teachers continued to be a most pleasing feature of the work, teachers being often pressed on the break-up of the camps to accompany families to their homes. As far as possible the Department have met this wish by sending teachers to the districts from which their pupils were drawn.

In addition to the free town and farm schools there are a certain number of fee-paying schools also in existence, under Government inspection. Orphanages have been opened at Irene, Pietersburg, and Potchefstroom for the children of those who fell in the war. Evening schools, continuation classes, and technical training are provided in the larger towns, and the whole question of secondary education is being pursued with vigour by the Department. One of the most pressing questions concerns the supply of teachers, which up to the present is far below the demand. Two Normal Schools have been established, one in Pretoria and one in Johannesburg, where training is afforded for students under experienced principals and staff. It is, of course, desirable to offer every chance to would-be teachers in the country itself, but South Africa offers a great opening to-day in educational matters for qualified British teachers either from the home country or the Colonies. As I have said before, it is difficult to exaggerate the task and influence of such men and women in South Africa at the present juncture. They are among the best and wisest instru-

ments of reconciliation between the two races, and in their hands lies a work of healing truly Imperial. Over 400 teachers have been imported from Great Britain, Australia, and Canada. It is to be hoped that not even the present shortage in England will prevent the emigration of certain persons qualified by character and intelligence to carry out this great work for their country.

Education is one of the matters which come within the province of the Intercolonial Council, and the two Colonies are now united under one Department, with Mr. Sargent at its head. All these tentative efforts in the direction of federation are greatly to be welcomed. By an Education Ordinance, promulgated in February 1903, the Government lays down its general policy and confirms the fundamental principles of a system already in operation. Free elementary education is provided wherever there is a daily average of not less than thirty scholars. The Government recognises its responsibility for the whole system of education, from the elementary school to the university; denominational religious instruction may be given by ministers of religion within school hours when requested, or children allowed, on the other hand, to benefit by a conscience clause. Instruction in Dutch is given for five hours a week, and local school committees appointed of an advisory character.

It is less pleasant, but most necessary, to speak in conclusion of certain dangers to which the educational system is clearly exposed at present, dangers which must be recognised and guarded against. The hateful element of political intrigue is never far to seek in South Africa, and it is very active just now in educational matters. It would be worse than folly to ignore

the fact that over the affairs of the country broods like a sinister spirit the power and influence of the Afrikander Bond, never greater or more active than at present. True, the Bond has received a wholesome check over the recent election in Cape Colony, but foiled at one point they will but attack another with the greater vigour. The excellent results of the system I have described, and above all the good relations between pupils and teachers, have alarmed and irritated the Dutch political agitators, including many of our old friends the Predikanten. The importance of education in the ultimate consolidation of our South African Empire, and the part it may play in the appeasement of racial strife, are facts as fully recognised by our foes as ourselves. And the present state of affairs, trending, as it does, to so desirable a consummation, in no sense meets the views of that great political organisation at whose door lie half the miseries of South Africa. The object lesson afforded by the Cape Colony in this respect is one we certainly cannot afford to overlook. In districts where the Bond is supreme its educational centres have been hotbeds of sedition—a not unnatural result of the violent anti-British doctrines taught by teachers of strong proselytising tendencies. It is precisely because the Bond has carried on its propaganda so successfully in schools under its control that its leaders view with the greatest alarm the establishment of the present system in the new Colonies. That system strikes at the root of their influence by its non-political character. Schools under the new organisation cannot become centres for the fanning of racial strife and discord. Hence the entirely artificial agitation set on foot as regards the schools—an agitation,

it is satisfactory to note, which is already collapsing, thanks to the lukewarm support given by the country Boers and its own inherent weakness.

A determined effort, however, has been made—and will no doubt be repeated—to capture the school committees. The local Predikanten exercise great influence on these bodies, and it is unnecessary to state on which side—that of peace or discord—such influence is usually thrown. But the kernel of the whole agitation lies in the fact that in the Cape Colony the appointment of teachers is vested in these committees. The Bond consequently, in many districts, has been able to appoint its own instruments to posts of authority, teachers whose qualifications were often political rather than educational. It is obvious what power a political organisation can wield under such circumstances, and its immense potentialities for mischief. In the new Colonies, therefore, though local committees of an advisory character were established, the Government most wisely retained the power of appointing teachers in its own hands. It is round this point the battle has raged, and the Administration is much to be congratulated in standing firmly to its guns in the matter. It is also satisfactory to note that the attempt to start Dutch 'Volk' schools, mainly supported by sympathisers from Holland, is proving a complete failure. Where a Volk and a Government school exist in the same town or district, the latter speedily empties the former. The cry that English teaching was being forced upon the children instead of the Dutch tuition despised by their parents is thus disproved in the most categorical manner.

General Botha showed less than usual Boer astuteness when he allowed his English friends to put that

singularly foolish and inept complaint into his mouth anent children being taught by 'Romanists' and 'Sacerdotalists.' The fancy picture of the Boer child being goaded along the path of Ritualism by a paternal Government is so ludicrous that it hardly merits the emphatic official denials promptly made. It is even possible to suggest, when the performances of the Dutch Reformed Church are taken into account, that no 'Romanist' or 'Sacerdotalist' would be able to instil more docile submission to priestly authority than the Predikanten themselves enforce among their flock.

There is no question, needless to say, in Government schools of forcing British ideas and British political opinions upon the pupils. No attempt is made to denationalise them or to turn their thoughts from the history and heritage of their own people. No sensible person can imagine that fusion and good-will are achieved through the violent uprooting of a nation's ideals. But what, under wise and broad-minded teachers, the Boer child will learn, is to think without bitterness of its English rulers, to appreciate their good-will and intentions, to realise the dignity and responsibility of British citizenship, and to lay to heart those great lessons of unity and mutual respect on which the future of the Afrikander race depends. The descendants of old Van Tromp flouting the English with his broom off their own coasts share a common heritage with the nation who found subsequently in Dutch William one of the wisest of its sovereigns. All this a teacher can instil without trenching in the smallest degree on politics or national prejudices. It is of great importance that the Government should assure itself that such ends are not ignored by its servants, and schools converted into centres of political propaganda hostile to

British rule. Head teachers should certainly be appointed with a due regard to their attitude on a point so vital to British interests. Cases which occurred now and again in the camp schools of Dutch teachers who refused to conduct the National Anthem on the King's birthday, and stirred up the children to sing the Volkslied and other kindred demonstrations on ex-President Kruger's birthday, should be dealt with in future very firmly. Let Dutch teachers be appointed by all means so long as they are willing to carry out their contract loyally in letter and spirit. But playing with treason is a little game we should do well to render singularly unprofitable in future. Our squandered millions, and still more our dead, call out loudly against any other course. We have suffered severely throughout our South African administration by that easy-going spirit of *laissez-faire*, which hopes to overcome all obstacles by viewing them through the glasses of official optimism or inertia. It has long been a favourite card of the Bond to raise the bogey of racial feeling on every occasion when their own unscrupulous designs meet with any hindrance. Let the Government lay that spectre boldly by making it clear that neither clamour nor agitation will move them to allow racial strife part or place in their educational system.

War is at the best a dreary business. Its feats of valour and endurance are purchased at an expenditure of human misery before which the most callous may well shrink. But as far as South Africa is concerned the story of the rise and spread of education is a page of brightness and hope which compensates for many sorrowful records elsewhere. And it is impossible not to feel that, at however great a cost, the upheaval which has swept away an order of things so hostile to progress

and civilisation, which has rescued the present and will save future generations from the mental and moral darkness which formerly encompassed their lives, has brought many compensations in its train. The work that lies ahead is no question of mere intellectual drill enforced for selfish ends or motives of political expediency. It is a question of the whole moral uplifting of a people, of the realisation by this race so long stagnant in a backwater of civilisation that they, too, are men and women with infinite powers of being, doing, and suffering, and that for them, as for us, the call is upwards and onwards. Schedules and departmental regulations cannot achieve this end. They remain so many dry bones, unless the breath of personal influence and enthusiasm stirs them into being. But at least we can claim that no prospect is brighter to-day in South Africa than that of education; no one department gives more reason to hope that in the end all will have been for the best for vanquished as well as victors. If in years to come an Afrikander people indeed arises

> Sane and great
> Forged in strong fire by equal war made one,

may those who come after us not hope to see a day when the Anglo-Boer war will appear to that race in the light of a great liberation, a drastic striking off of the fetters of ignorance, prejudice, and misrule, the gift forced reluctantly through fire and sword, accepted ultimately with gratitude and understanding, of peace, liberty, and knowledge?

CHAPTER VII

THE LABOUR DIFFICULTY

I STATED in the first chapter that the question of labour supply was the capital consideration in South Africa to-day. Whichever way we look, whichever way we turn, all development and all progress find themselves speedily confronted with the labour shortage. The question is one of extreme difficulty and complexity, abounding in great fundamental issues of a most important character. No truer words have ever been written about South Africa than Mr. Benjamin Kidd's dictum that all political and economic matters in the sub-continent are at present in the first instance related to the native question. Economics, geography, ethnology, politics, sociology, and morals are all concerned, and to overlook any one of their rival claims is to spoil the argument and invalidate a sound conclusion. The loose talk and extraordinary ignorance displayed during the recent debates in Parliament on the Chinese question show how little our politicians have grasped the true bearings of that most complicated and serious problem which lies ahead for South Africa—the relations of her Blacks and Whites. That this problem is bound ultimately to present difficulties infinitely greater than the racial

disputes between the British and Boers is well known to all close observers of South African affairs. But since the problem is after all one of to-morrow rather than of to-day, the weighty considerations involved, to some of which I must refer in a subsequent chapter, might have passed for long unnoticed by the man in the street, had not the labour difficulties at Johannesburg focussed public attention on one side at least of the question.

So much prejudice enters into popular estimation of gold-mining on the Rand that it is hardly surprising if many judgments have gone astray on a subject approached for the first time from that point of view. Labour difficulties affecting the pockets of the wicked capitalists are viewed not only with complacency but distinct satisfaction in many quarters. Others, less hostile, think nevertheless that the interests of rich men may be left to shift for themselves, and that no risks, political or social, should be run on their account. Both sections alike entirely overlook two facts: First, that the prosperity of the capitalist only reflects the general prosperity of the country, and that an absence of capital implies stagnation and bad times for all classes concerned; next, that the troubles of the mining industry are but the tangible results of deep-seated natural forces which have been operating in South Africa for years, and are assuming little by little a more and more threatening aspect as regards her expansion and progress. Industry and ethnography are inextricably entwined in South Africa. They are the major premisses of every proposition, political, social, and economic, which arises in the sub-continent. At first sight there may appear to be little connection between gold-mines and native races; nevertheless, a

consideration of the one cannot be separated from that of the other. The present confusion existing in many minds over the Chinese question is simply due to the fact that the ethnographical factors are ignored or misunderstood with most unfortunate results as regards the conclusions arrived at.

The gold remains, as I have said before, the cardinal economic fact in the country, the pivot on which all prosperity and development turn. Flourishing gold industry is the soil from which alone can spring commercial and agricultural expansion of a large and varied character. The potential mineral wealth of the Transvaal is vast. Generations to come may find her, apart from the gold, a great industrial centre. So far so good, for such a prospect opens up vistas of white immigration on a large scale from the congested countries of the Old World. But at this point we are pulled up sharply by that second great consideration which enters into all South African affairs, the consideration of race. Machinery, workshops, collieries, all the modern industrial paraphernalia transported on to the high veldt, by the most capable of Anglo-Saxon workmen, cannot disguise the fact that European conditions do not reproduce themselves here. The South African industrial communities are bound to differ profoundly in character not only from those of England, France, or Germany, but from those which we find in countries such as Australia and America. The presence of a large indigenous black population too numerous politically, and yet (with a typical South African contradiction) too few economically, fundamentally alters every social and industrial condition known to us in other countries.

These two points—namely, industry and race—must

be borne in mind most carefully before any decision can be arrived at as regards that vexed question of the hour—the introduction of Asiatics to the Rand. We must first study the needs and requirements of the gold industry, on the development of which, as we have seen, all progress depends. We must next examine the population question in its different bearings, its ratio of blacks to whites, the causes which have produced the present shortage, and the various remedies suggested for its cure. When the two sets of conclusions are laid side by side, then, and then alone, shall we be in a position to form a final judgment.

The present situation may be summarised briefly as follows: The mine-owners declare that, owing to a variety of causes, they have not sufficient native labour on the Rand, and must supplement the supply with Asiatics; to which their adversaries retort that the deficiency could and should be made good with European unskilled labour. The mine-owners reply that unskilled white labour is impracticable and too costly, and would check all expansion. The other side reject the explanation, flourish a list of mines paying high dividends before the eyes of a slightly envious public, and declare that the proprietors could afford to pay the higher white wage perfectly well if they chose. We must turn to the gold industry itself and examine its character before we can judge as to the rights or wrongs of its plea for cheap labour.

As I have previously remarked, the atmosphere of prejudice which surrounds the gold industry and its affairs in South Africa singularly complicates any discussion of the subject. In an age of peptonised food, literature, and politics, it is certainly easier to pick up

and repeat vociferously some parrot cry of the hour rather than to form independent judgments involving the disagreeable study of dull facts. But it is perplexing to understand why such moral turpitude necessarily attaches in some people's eyes to fortunes derived from gold-mines. Capitalists in other branches of industry are allowed to pursue their work and callings without let or hindrance. Huge fortunes made in coal, cotton, and even cocoa pass without criticism or comment. But the man who has turned his attention to gold-mining is for some inexplicable reason treated as a pariah beyond hope of salvation. This attitude is all the more ludicrous since on the Rand gold-mining has been reduced to an exact science, and is not one whit more speculative than coal-mining in this country. It is not so much a case of gold-mining as gold-manufacturing. Dishonest practices as regards the flotation of companies, the manipulation of the share-market, the management of mines &c. have of course taken place, especially in the earlier days, but such Stock Exchange operations in no way affect the solid and genuine character of the industry itself. Mr. Henry Birchenough, whose valuable investigations are referred to in a subsequent chapter, speaks emphatically on this point. 'Looked at as a working industry,' he writes, 'gold-mining on the Rand is not a speculation at all; it is as solid, as common-place, as unexciting as any other staple trade, such as cotton-spinning or coal-mining at home, and in some respects it is even less speculative, because its product practically never fluctuates in value, never finds an over-stocked market, and never suffers from change of fashion.' The leading group of capitalists on the Rand, those much-abused men to whose energies and abilities the country owes its entire development,

work the large companies they control on lines as honest and legitimate as those of any sound industrial concern in this country. That they have made large fortunes in the process, that their aims were those of self-interest, not philanthropy, does not alter the fact that to their skill, industry, and knowledge South Africa will owe any foremost place she may hereafter occupy among the nations of the world.

If public attention could be diverted from this glamour which surrounds the capitalist, and a certain type of mind bring itself to look in a sane and wholesome manner at a great Colonial industry, we should hear less foolish talk than at present prevails about the capitalist intrigues in the Transvaal. We have been told frequently of late that it is a matter of small importance whether the gold industry develops slowly or not—'Perish the mines!' is a cry of many politicians. But it would be as reasonable to expect Lancashire to prosper with her cotton mills closed for lack of hands, or South Yorkshire and Derbyshire to flourish with their coal-mines shut down, as South Africa to develop her resources with her main industry rendered impotent. The cry for labour is no artificial agitation resting on the avaricious desires of the mine-owners. It is the cry of a vast industrial organism deprived of its motive power, an organism of which all the parts, great and small, are consequently suffering together, to the infinite detriment of the country at large.

Turning now to the technical side of the industry, we find that the mineral wealth of the Transvaal is unique, and has long since passed from a speculative stage. The conglomerate pebble-beds known as banket, in which the gold is found, are a formation peculiar to the country. The gold basin is about 130 miles

long, by 30 wide, and contains various reefs of different values. The bulk of the Rand output is derived, however, from mines on what is known as the Main Reef series, a distance of 62 miles, extending from Randfontein on the west to Holfontein on the east. These pebble-beds, lying at an angle of from 30 degrees to 70 degrees, after dipping for a few hundred yards, flatten out, and the lode has been proved by borings to maintain at deep levels the stability and quality of the outcrop ore. It is imperative to bear in mind, however (for it is on this point that the whole labour problem turns), that the mineral wealth of this district, estimated, as we saw, by M. Bleloch at the enormous total of 2,871 millions sterling, is due entirely to the wonderful continuity of the reefs laterally and clinometrically, and not to the thickness or richness of the deposits. In the latter respect the Transvaal mines compare very unfavourably with the rich quartz formations in other parts of the world. The following returns of other prosperous gold-mines in different parts of the world bear out this contention. In New Zealand the Waihi gold-mines show a yield of 55*s.* 9*d.* per ton; in Queensland, Mount Morgan, 109*s.* 10*d.* per ton; Charters Towers Field 103*s.* 7*d.*, Gympie 102*s.* 9*d.*, Croydon 68*s.* 11*d.*, Ravenswood 60*s.* 10*d.*, Etheridge 75*s.* 3*d.* per ton respectively; in Western Australia, Great Boulder 120*s.*; Kalgoorli 140*s.*; Lake View 120*s.* per ton; in Tasmania, Tasmania Gold-Mine 82*s.*; New Golden Gate 70*s.* per ton; in India, Mysore 108*s.* 7*d.*; Champion 107*s.* 3*d.*; Ooregum 83*s.* 5*d.*; Nundydroog 97*s.* 5*d.* per ton; in the United States, Portland Cripple Creek 200*s.* 6*d.*; Comstock Nevada 205*s.* 4*d.*; Camp Bird, Colorado, 127*s.* 9*d.* per ton; in Venezuela, El Callao 152*s.* 2*d.* per ton; in Mexico, El Oro 55*s.* 9*d.* per ton;

in Canada, Le Roi 49*s.* 6*d.* per ton. All the above show a much higher rate of profit than the Transvaal mines. The Witwatersrand reefs are of low-grade ore, yielding generally a very small percentage of metal to rock. It is for this reason that the bad economic conditions prevailing under Republican rule and the labour difficulties of to-day have pressed, and are pressing, so heavily on the industry. It is essential to bear this point in mind, for the low-grade mines largely outnumber the rich ones, and the whole future of the country is concerned with their development. Extraordinary misconceptions, needless to say, exist on this subject. The large dividends paid by a few highly favoured mines are quoted by the thoughtless as typical profits of the whole district, whereas, so far from high dividends being typical of the Rand, the exploital of the deep-level and low-grade mines is not even possible under present economic conditions, and many companies are unable to pay a dividend at all.

The average yield of gold from the seventy-nine companies situated on the Main Reef between Holfontein and Randfontein is 41*s.* 9*d.* per ton. The average working costs run about 27*s.* 6*d.*, and the average dividend derived from crushing operations is calculated at 10*s.* 7*d.* per ton. But since the low-grade mines only yield ore valued at from 15*s.* to 20*s.* a ton, it is obvious what a large reduction in costs is necessary to render their development possible. The extensive faulting of the Witwatersrand conglomerate beds, the thinness of the pay seams in certain sections necessitating the mining of non-payable material, the minute particles in which the gold is found necessitating the chemical treatment of all the ore crushed—such are some of the natural difficulties which have led to an enormous expenditure

of capital for equipment and machinery on the Rand. The Johannesburg Chamber of Mines claims that nowhere in the world are labour-saving devices employed to such an extent as in the Transvaal, nor is there any record of a more energetic and skilful development of a thin-reef deposit. The exigencies of the industry have entailed these costly equipments as the only means of treating the low-grade ore. The machinery on the Rand is of an extremely complicated and delicate character, and the plant is unrivalled in any other part of the British Empire. It is to this fact we owe the high standard of respectability among the Johannesburg working classes. Highly skilled artisans are alone capable of handling such machinery, and the rough mining camp population is conspicuous by its absence.

These natural difficulties, involving heavy working expenses, explain the reason why the Transvaal gold industry has necessarily fallen into the hands of large financial groups. A considerable expenditure of capital —an expenditure quite beyond the means of the private investor—is necessary to equip and start a mine. It is calculated that nearly a million sterling must be sunk in a deep-level mine before any profits are made. Before the war 6,240 stamps were at work on the Rand. The mining authorities state that on an average 5,000*l.* must be expended per stamp for development work and capital outlay. This sum does not include administrative expenses, and makes no allowance for non-producing mines; in round figures, therefore, over thirty millions sterling has been spent in capital outlay on the Rand. It is morality of a curiously marauding character which seeks to deprive the pioneers of the gold industry, merely because they happen to be rich men, of the

return they have a legitimate right to expect on their money. One law for rich and poor is a sound axiom, and there can be no logical excuse for exempting the former from its application.

Bearing in mind the salient points presented by mining on the Witwatersrand—namely, a thin reef deposit of low-grade ore, the working of which entails a large capital expenditure, and the use of complicated and costly machinery—it is clear that if the industrial game is to be worth the candle at all, such mines must depend for their very existence on cheap unskilled labour in those departments where muscle is forced to replace machinery. And it is upon the foundation of unskilled native labour directed by highly paid white artisans and overseers that the industry has been built up, as its future development turns on the question of an adequate and steady labour supply. The more men employed on the mines, the more stamps dropping on the Rand, the greater will be the prosperity direct and indirect of the whole country. The important part played by the labour problem is shown by the fact that over 53 per cent. of the working costs on the Rand are swallowed up in wages, 28 per cent. of that total being paid to white men, and 25 to black. At the outbreak of the war there were in round numbers 100,000 Kaffirs and 12,000 white men employed on the mines. The Kaffirs were paid at the rate of 47*s.*to 50*s.* per month, and with food in addition cost their employers about 3*l.* for that period. Very different was the position of the white artisan, whose wages ran from 25*l.* to 30*l.* per month. It will be necessary to refer subsequently to this immense gap between the rate of wages paid for skilled and unskilled labour. Working costs on the Rand being what they are, and the costs of living in Johannes-

burg being also excessive, it is practically impossible to raise the rate paid for unskilled labour to a standard which would enable the white labourer to earn a living wage.

The number of stamps at work prior to the war was 6,240, and in August 1899 gold was produced worth 1,720,907*l.*, equal to 20,650,884*l.* per annum. In July 1903 (I am quoting from the Majority Report of the Labour Commission) 7,145 stamps had been erected on the Rand, 3,725 stamps were being worked, the output for the whole Transvaal for the month being equal to 12,827,004*l.* per annum. The remaining 3,420 stamps were idle, owing to lack of native labour, and the producing stamps were working at a serious disadvantage. On this basis the annual loss to the industry in dividends was calculated at 2,924,947*l.* It was shown if the 3,420 stamps lying idle could be brought into operation employment in connection with them could be found for approximately 5,612 more skilled white artisans, while local trade and coal consumption would benefit to the extent of 2,191,536*l.* per annum. 142,473 natives are required to work all the stamps now erected on the Rand, and another 30,227 are needed for the development of the non-producing mines. When the immediate requirements of gold-mining companies in outside districts and those of the Transvaal coal-mines are taken into consideration, the Majority Report contends that, without making any allowance for future expansion, fully 197,644 unskilled labourers are required for present purposes. Of this large total only 68,280 were at work in July, leaving a shortage of 129,364 men. It is not astonishing, in view of the above figures, that the Transvaal mining industry is moving heaven and earth to procure additional labour.

Matters have undoubtedly shown some improvement during the last few months since the above statistics were compiled. More natives have returned, and in March 1904, 72,340 Kaffirs were at work on the gold-mines, as against 55,507 in July 1903. The gold production also has crept upwards, till in March 1904, 308,242 ounces were produced, as against 475,000 ounces in August 1899. That the labour supply will return eventually to the old figure of 100,000 men, with a proportionate increase of output, seems very likely. But a return to the old figures in no way meets the demands of the economic situation to-day. The development of which the mines are capable would soon place them in a position to employ not 100,000, but 200,000 men. And on every hand the demand for native labour increases steadily. The immense potential mineral wealth of the Transvaal, apart from the gold, is quite unexploited. Public works, railways, and private enterprises are making increasing demands on the native supply. From every part and district of South Africa the cry goes up for labour. But the supply of natives south of the Zambesi is limited, and the great question arises, whence is this labour so essential to the progress of South Africa to come?

It is no exaggeration to state that labour is almost a question of economic life or death for the country at the present crisis. We must consider the history and aspects of the shortage in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

CHARACTER OF THE LABOUR SHORTAGE

Labour shortage is no new question in South Africa. The difficulty obtains from an early date in its history prior to the British conquest. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Dutch Governors at the Cape imported slaves from the East Indies to cultivate the Company's plantations, a step of far-reaching importance, since it definitely withdrew white men from the lower forms of manual labour. In South Africa, as elsewhere, the presence of an inferior black race, ever demoralising to the standard of industry among Europeans, was doomed more and more to press upon the industrial concerns of the country. The difficulty arose from the fact that, though the presence of the Kaffir checked, as it was bound to check, the employment of Europeans in the lower grades of work, nevertheless the supply of natives willing to labour was not adequate to the demand. As Sir W. Willcocks truly observed, the Kaffir is not a worker or developer of anything. The Bantu races, most unfortunately for their native land, were, in American phraseology, born tired. Physically they are fine men, and the unsophisticated savage is a merry, good-tempered creature, for whom one has a genuine liking. But the dignity

of labour is a high-sounding phrase which conveys nothing to him, and, a true child of nature, he shakes his woolly head and declines to bow to formulas, however admirable. He has carried the simplification of life to a point when his wants are few and a minimum of labour can supply his modest needs. Ambitions which do not soar above the acquisition of concertinas and sardines hardly make for 'strenuousness' among blacks, any more than ambitions limited by alcohol make for strenuousness among whites. Exertion is not necessary either as regards the native's wants or luxuries. Laziness all the world over can only be overcome by filling people with the desire for better interests, and inspiring them with that divine discontent which is the origin of all progress. But the Kaffir is quite happy in his aboriginal idleness. Like Kim's Lhama, he desires to be 'freed from the wheel of things;' hence his disinclination to apply his coffee-coloured shoulder, so well provided with muscle, to that same wheel of the white man's multifarious concerns. This attitude may be one of profound wisdom and philosophy on the part of our Bantu brother, but practically, as we shall see, it involves the industrial and political concerns of South Africa in anomalies of a very awkward character.

Long before the rise of either Kimberley or Johannesburg the first labour difficulties of the present century began to make themselves felt in Natal. Though the blacks were to the whites in a ratio of at least eleven to one, this preponderating Kaffir population could not be relied on for a small but steady supply of labour. Consequently a demand for Asiatic labour arose from the planters, who were not disposed to see their tea and sugar crops ruined, thanks to the

inconsequent behaviour of the reckless and lazy Kaffir. Indentured Indian coolies were first introduced in 1860, and there are at present 72,965 Asiatics in Natal engaged mainly on plantation work. In 1870 the discovery of the diamond fields at Kimberley created a special demand for unskilled labour in Cape Colony. The rise of the industry soon reacted unfavourably on agricultural concerns, as boys were diverted from the farms to the mines. In 1874 a resolution was passed in the Cape House of Assembly that, in view of the labour shortage, inquiries should be made as to the introduction of Chinese or Indian coolies. In 1876 a similar resolution in favour of Chinese immigration was carried. In 1890 matters had reached so serious a point that a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the circumstances, and this was followed in 1893 by the appointment of a Labour Commission, which dealt exhaustively with the whole subject. Resolutions from fruit-growers, wine-growers, and other associations, agricultural and horticultural, in Cape Colony, continued to insist on the labour shortage and the necessity of supplementing the supply from outside sources.

It is obvious, if South Africa had experienced labour difficulties at a period when her requirements were of the most modest character, the sudden rise of a huge industry, entailing in its turn development and expansion in countless directions, was bound to bring matters very soon to a crisis. Reference to the annual reports of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines shows that, with one or two rare intervals (notably 1895 and 1896), the gold industry has been constantly short of labour. Comment after comment is made regarding the scarcity, and it is clear that though the supply improved,

the increase was utterly disproportionate to the rapid strides made by the industry. Then came the war, and with it the complete dislocation of the industrial and agricultural concerns of South Africa. The natives were scattered far and wide. Some were in receipt of large sums from the military, harvests were abundant, the peace brought a great demand for labour to repair the damages of the war; finally, the mining industry resolved on a most ill-judged reduction of wages, to which I must refer subsequently. Thanks to this combination of causes, the 100,000 to 110,000 Kaffirs formerly employed on the Rand were dispersed, and to-day the number at work is only 72,340.

But it is not the mining industry alone which has suffered from the dislocation caused by the war. Agriculturists are loud in their complaints that a wholly inadequate number of boys are available for farm work. Other industries re-echo the cry; and as for railway development, the number of Kaffirs employed on new construction has been the subject of almost acrimonious dispute between the Government and the mining industry.

In March 1903 an important and representative Conference was held at Bloemfontein under the presidency of Lord Milner for the consideration of various matters affecting the common interests of South Africa. The delegates included not only the Prime Ministers of Cape Colony and Natal and the Administrator of Rhodesia, but the highest and most experienced officials from the various States—men whose ability and honour not even South Africa's worst traducers will venture to call in question. In view of the deliberations of this body, and the important consequences which indirectly resulted from them, it is desirable to insist on

its representative and official character. True, we live in an age when through some extraordinary process of inversion no person is apparently more disqualified to give an opinion on a given subject than the man who has devoted the study of a lifetime to it. Students of economics are warned not to interfere with tariff questions; men who have spent all their days in South Africa are told their opinions are warped and worthless, and that Little England doctrinaires alone can judge of Colonial affairs in their right proportions. Experts are discredited; ignorance, it would seem, is held to be an inspiration. Since a few people, however, may still cling to the idea that the views of men on the spot, based on a study of facts, are of more value than those of untravelled theorists, it is pertinent to draw attention to the attitude of the Bloemfontein Conference on the question of the Asiatic immigration. Expert opinion on the Rand, however true and reasonable, may always be damaged and discredited by raising the old cry of illegitimate financial pressure. The most distorted imagination, however, will perhaps hesitate to describe the Conference as a body packed by the capitalists for the furtherance of their own ends. Consequently the opinions recorded have all the value of independent as well as thoroughly representative South African testimony.

The Conference was occupied primarily with tariff questions, but it subsequently passed unanimously a series of resolutions on the native question, of which the two following may be looked upon as the most important, not to say epoch-making:

1. 'That this Conference, after considering all available statistics and hearing the reports of the highest official authorities of the several States, has come to

the conclusion that the native population of Africa south of the Zambesi does not comprise a sufficient number of adult males capable of work to satisfy the normal requirements of the several Colonies, and at the same time furnish an adequate amount of labour for the large industrial and mining centres. Under these circumstances, it is evident to the Conference that the opening of new sources of labour supply is requisite in the interest of all South African States.'

2. 'That in the opinion of this Conference the permanent settlement in South Africa of Asiatic races would be injurious, and should not be permitted, but that, if industrial development positively requires it, the introduction of unskilled Asiatic labourers, under a system of Government control, providing for the indenturing of such labourers and their repatriation at the termination of their indentures, should be possible.'

These resolutions, bearing the imprimatur of the highest official and expert opinion in South Africa, were of extreme importance. The judgment of such authorities on native affairs as Sir Godfrey Lagden, Mr. Stanford, and Mr. Moore, men whose opinion on this difficult question is known to be without rival in South Africa, must necessarily carry great weight with any unbiassed mind. Of all testimonies, that of the Bloemfontein Conference is the best as regards the possibilities, harmful or otherwise, of Asiatic immigration. Had the Conference pronounced against the latter, any course adopted in defiance of their views would have been open to the gravest objection. But, on the contrary, South Africa, speaking through her most experienced officials, emphasised the serious nature of the labour shortage and declared that under

proper restrictions immigration should be permissible and desirable. All that has followed during the last few months has been the logical outcome of the resolutions passed by the delegates.

A Commission was next appointed by the Transvaal Government in July 1903 to inquire what amount of labour was necessary for the agricultural, mining, and other industries of the Transvaal, and to ascertain how far such requirements could be met from Central and Southern Africa. This famous Labour Commission, whose deliberations have been the cause of so much controversy, sat for thirty-two days, and examined ninety-two witnesses, including farmers, missionaries, mining experts, labour organisers, &c. Its conclusions have been given to the world in a Majority and Minority report, the character of which we must now examine.

The Majority Report deals primarily with the estimated labour requirements of the Transvaal. It states, as we already saw in the previous chapter, that to drop the 7,145 stamps at present erected on the Rand under the best economic conditions, also to meet the immediate requirements of the coal-mines and the gold-mining companies in outside districts, 197,644 natives are required. The needs of agriculture are estimated at 80,000, other industries at 69,684, and railways at 56,000, making a grand total of 403,328 natives. Of this total only 181,929 are at work, showing a shortage of 221,399. The Minority Report disputes these figures hotly; but we will return to their criticisms subsequently. The above summary is for immediate requirements, and makes no allowance for the expansion of industry, agriculture, or public works. Having formulated these requirements, the Report next

considers the sources from which they could be met. Estimates of native population in South and Central Africa vary considerably, but according to the figures of the Chamber of Mines, accepted by both the Majority and Minority Reports of the Labour Commission, the total south of the Zambesi should be reckoned at 6,326,511. North of the Zambesi we find another 7,271,180 natives, making a grand total of 13,597,691. The proportion of adult males available for labour purposes is generally calculated at 1 in 8, or 1 in 10, so it would seem at first sight as though ample raw material were forthcoming. Unfortunately, under analysis, these thirteen odd millions prove singularly unsatisfactory, or inadequate, so far as recruiting purposes are concerned. Primarily, whole States are closed by their respective Governments to recruiting, and as few natives work for more than six months in the year, all totals must be divided by two before the actual numbers available for consecutive work can be arrived at. Next, we find that from every district in Africa, in spite of this teeming population, the same complaint is heard of scarcity of labour. It must be remembered that this apparent contradiction arises from the fact of the extremely low economic standard of the native. His wants, as we have seen, are very simple and very few, and are to be gratified by a modicum of effort on his part. Consequently he very naturally declines to work through any unselfish or altruistic desire to benefit his white rulers. He remains at home in pleasing idleness, while his wives, the true slaves of South Africa, till the ground and cultivate the mealie-patch round his kraal. Hence the anomalous position we find to-day—a superabundance of population with a constant shortage of labour.

It was long thought by the Rand mining industry that the districts north of the Zambesi would furnish an ample labour supply. This hope, on investigation, has been doomed to disappointment.[1] For recruiting purposes the African territory may be divided into four groups: A, areas where recruiting is practically free; B, areas prohibited, or where conditions are prohibitive; C, limited; D, allowed under special circumstances.

Group A includes the Transvaal and Swaziland, the Orange River Colony, Basutoland, Cape Colony, and the Transkeian Territories. Small additions to the labour supply may be expected from this area, but in all these districts the home demand for labour is greater than the supply available, and this is particularly the case with Cape Colony. The 'boys' consequently have no need to undertake the long journey to the Rand in order to obtain employment.

Coming now to Group B, recruiting is prohibited by the Governments in Natal, British West Africa, Uganda, German East Africa, Portuguese West Africa, Congo Free State, Egypt, Madagascar, Somaliland, and Southern, North-western, and North-eastern Rhodesia. Apart from the question whether natives from these distant territories are fitted to stand the change of climate to the Rand, each Government approached in turn protests that such labour as is available is all required for home consumption, and that they themselves are short. It is a striking commentary on the African labour shortage that it was necessary to import Indian coolies to construct the Uganda railway. State

[1] It is desirable to draw attention to the exhaustive inquiries made by the mining industry in every part of Africa, and the large sums of money expended, in view of the charges brought against them.

after State sends the same reply in answer to recruiting inquiries, the Congo Government with unconscious humour regretting their inability to help the Rand owing to a 'dearth of humanity.'

Group C, which includes German West Africa and British Central Africa, is again a negligible quantity as regards labour supply. After prolonged negotiations, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association obtained permission to recruit a thousand natives from each territory. The Central African boys suffered severely from pneumonia, and proved very unsatisfactory. Still further, throughout the white population in Central Africa the same jealousy was displayed as regards the emigration of natives to other districts.

We finally reach Group D, Portuguese East Africa, the area on which the Rand has been forced to rely as its main source of labour. No less than 88 per cent. of all the natives employed on the mines before the war were recruited from Portuguese territory, a somewhat overwhelming proportion, as the Report points out, to be dependent on the goodwill of a foreign Power. The exportation of natives produced the largest form of revenue known to the Portuguese Colony, the Government being paid a poll-tax of 13*s.* for every native so exported, and a further charge of 10*s.* per annum for each year of service till his return. This densely populated district has been the salvation of the mining industry up to the present time; but here, as elsewhere, it is evident that an indefinite extension of the recruiting area is not practicable.

Granted even that Portuguese East Africa may in time supply the Rand with 100,000 boys (20,000 more than in pre-war days), a point must be reached when no further expansion is possible. The natives from the

Northern Territories are not only disinclined to labour, but, coming from a warmer district, the Rand climate tells on them severely. The Portuguese Colony itself shows signs of industrial development, and employers are beginning to murmur at the diversion of the labour supply to the Transvaal. The growth of industries and plantations for which the Government are now offering inducements is a factor which is bound in time very seriously to affect the Portuguese East African labour supply.

In every quarter of the continent to which they applied, the Rand authorities accordingly found themselves baffled in their search for labour. The great trans-Zambeian black reserves, on which they had relied with confidence for the supply of future needs, proved, on investigation, to hold out no prospects of successful recruiting. Thrown back upon themselves, three alternatives remained as a solution of the difficulty: first, either by compulsory methods, direct or indirect, to compel the existing Kaffir population to work; or, second, to replace Kaffir by white labour; or, third, to make good the deficiency by the importation of unskilled Asiatic labour.

The first alternative may be ruled out of court at once. No such suggestion has ever been advanced in South Africa by any responsible person. A large aboriginal population living in complete idleness is a disagreeable and undesirable state of affairs. Compulsion, however, in any form is not to be considered for a moment. As far as the Kaffir is concerned, he must be allowed to remain in idleness till the pressure of growing economic needs forces him to work for their supply. Coercion opens a door to so many evils that it must remain shut and barred. For the same reason, indirect

methods of compulsion, such as increased taxation and the modification of the native land tenure system, demand the greatest circumspection in their application. At present, the South African native receives special privileges and protection from the State, and the existing system could not be altered without entailing social consequences of a most grave, far-reaching character. As the mining authorities themselves declare, any such change requires consideration from wider points of view than that of their own industry.

We now come to the second and third alternatives, which are so closely connected the one with the other that they can hardly be considered apart. The shortage, as we have seen, is admitted on every hand ; the remedy of the evil is the point over which the various parties join issue. Whether Chinese or unskilled white labour be the more desirable for the Rand is a question, however, to which an answer must be sought, not only in the immediate vicinity of the gold-fields, but in a wider survey of South African affairs as a whole. And thus we are brought back to those first great principles of ethnography and population which, as I have stated before, are inextricably entwined with industrial concerns.

However urgent South Africa's need of industrial development—and this need is denied by no one—at the same time it is clear that if such development took place on false and artificial lines detrimental to the ultimate welfare of the country, serious harm might be done in the long run, in spite of an immediate prosperity. This is the view taken by those who oppose the introduction of Chinese into South Africa at the present crisis. It is a point of view which deserves all consideration when held—as it is undoubtedly held by many people—not for the purposes of political

agitation, but as a matter of genuine conviction. 'Replace your Kaffir labourer on the Rand little by little by the white working man,' urges the anti-Asiatic party, 'and in the meantime perfect your labour-saving machinery, make of South Africa another great white continent such as Australia and America, do not imperil so fair a prospect by the introduction of cheap yellow labour, which will close the door to this desirable immigration of an European working class; be prepared to make present sacrifices as regards your gold dividends to insure the happiness and welfare of future generations; do not allow capitalists in their haste to be rich to rob the country of those possibilities of European settlement and expansion to which our many sacrifices during the war surely entitle us.'

As will be seen, the capital argument on which this superstructure of reasoning rests, the argument by which it stands or falls, is the assumption that South Africa is a country affording unlimited expansion for the white man in all branches of industry. It is difficult to regard this assumption as based on other than a most fundamental misconception as regards the racial conditions of South Africa, and the economic consequences which naturally flow from them. Could the anti-Asiatic party carry this, their main point, they would indeed have brought forth a very weighty argument against even the temporary introduction of Chinese labour. But, unfortunately for themselves, they can do nothing of the kind. When we are told that white labour, if not stamped out by capitalist intrigues, should ultimately predominate from Capetown to the Zambesi, and that the immigration of Asiatics will check disastrously so desirable a consummation, it is pertinent to ask how the actual hard

facts of the existing Kaffir population can be made to square with this curiously visionary theory. For the great consideration overlooked in this line of argument, the ignored factor, the absence of which invalidates its conclusions, is that South Africa, lying as it does in tropical and sub-tropical latitudes, is not geographically a white man's country at all. It is merely the geological accident of the great height above sea-level of her central plateau which renders the country habitable by Europeans. Owing to that accident the European can live under a tropical sky, and bring up his children in a healthy land blessed with a magnificent climate. But we cannot escape from the fact that if the white man can prosper in this land, so to an even greater extent can the original Bantu races. South Africa possesses a large indigenous population of marked vitality and strength. Unlike other aboriginal races in different parts of the world, they have not dwindled and decayed by contact with white civilisation. South of the Zambesi the blacks already outnumber the whites in a proportion estimated variously at from 6 or 10 to 1, and their relative rate of increase is much greater. The total population of the African continent has been estimated approximately at from 150 to 200 millions. Out of this huge total, let it be remembered, the whole white population—north, south, east, and west—is under 1½ million. Appendix D, at the end of the book, though based on figures which are necessarily approximate, at least proves the insignificant character of European settlement. Africa is essentially a black man's continent, and save in certain localities the white element has scarcely made itself felf. South of the Zambesi blacks and whites flourish side by side,

neither supplanting the other, but the numerical preponderance rests always with the blacks.

Now, however glibly we may talk of a white man's country, it is clear that there must be some very definite limit to white expansion in a land already occupied by a large indigenous coloured population. This black population must live, and as time goes on, and their standard of civilisation increases, they will be forced to take a more and more active part in the industrial and agricultural concerns of the country. They constitute *par excellence* the natural working classes of South Africa, and the racial cleavage which inevitably exists when a higher and a lower race live side by side will never permit the whites to labour among them on terms of equality. Still further, were such an attempt possible, the lower economic standard of the black would always enable him to drive the white out of the unskilled labour market by the former's willingness to work for a much lower wage. The living wage of the white man in South Africa is, as we have seen, enormously greater than that of the black. On the Rand the native is well paid at 3*l.* per month wages; the European can barely support himself and his family on a wage of 25*l.* per month. Therefore, in all branches of work which are concerned with muscle rather than intelligence, the black in search of occupation can at any moment cut the ground from below the feet of his white unskilled competitor, so heavily handicapped by the economic wants of a superior civilisation.

It is this curious and unique relationship between the two races, a relationship due to a geological freak which has no parallel in any other part of the world, which constitutes the fundamental paradox of South Africa. From this primary paradox all others spring. Once

its bearings are grasped and thoroughly understood, the numerous anomalies of the land become more or less intelligible. But the person who misses this one main clue which alone unravels the perplexities of Africa will be led astray by many a false issue. 'Colour rather than the capitalist is, and always has been, the real governing factor in economics in South Africa,' wrote the editor of the 'Anglo-African Argus,' himself a Natalian, in a recent letter to the 'Times.' 'Nearly every practical measure in that great country has had to be devised, modified, amended, or annulled, not merely with the fullest regard to the coloured labour question, but generally as a direct consequence of the existence thereof.' It is most unfortunate that misapprehension should be so rife in England as regards those racial and geographical conditions which affect profoundly the economic affairs of the country. Nevertheless, the fact that Johannesburg and Cawnpore are situated on exactly the same degree of latitude north and south of the Equator respectively might cause the most thoughtless to reflect what circumstances can operate in order to make the Transvaal a white man's country at all. Still further, before English Trades Unions pass resolutions condemning a movement which, after a period of dislike and opposition, has at last won the support and assent of white working men in South Africa, they would do well to consider whether industrial conditions are likely to follow the familiar English lines in a country inhabited by a preponderating number of blacks. The difficulty, of course, does not spring from the numerical superiority of the Kaffirs. The nation which governs India and Nigeria and countless other races can afford to smile at such a suggestion. But the difficulty—and a very serious difficulty—arises from

the fact that the English and Dutch are not a governing caste, but white colonists living under representative institutions—a form of government which has no existence in other tropical countries where the blacks largely outnumber the Europeans. Thanks to a combination of geographical and geological circumstances, South Africa presents the strange anomaly of being at one and the same time a white man and a black man's country. Duality of race is the fountain-head at which we must seek the origin of its confused and contradictory politics and economics.

Racial feeling is an instinct most baffling to analyse, and it is extremely difficult to bring home to any person who has had no practical experience of life among coloured races the extraordinary mental, moral, and social atmosphere enveloping a society in which a higher and lower civilisation live side by side. Any attempt at equality of employment between the two races is doomed to absolute failure. Experiments made of setting whites to work on equal terms with blacks have always resulted in the degradation of the whites. They feel declassed, and grow bitterly ashamed of their association with the Kaffirs, by whom, in turn, they are treated without respect of any kind. A lack of respect is what no white race, largely outnumbered by a black one, can afford to tolerate for five minutes if anarchy is not to result in the land. Hence it is no artificial arrangement, but the inevitable result of natural causes, that in South Africa skilled and unskilled labour are divided by a sharply cut racial line. The gulf existing between the higher and lower races reflects itself in the social and economic conditions throughout the land, and it is one not to be bridged by the efforts and desires of amiable theorists. Artisans, overseers, and skilled labourers are all Europeans, and will con-

tinue to be so in the future as in the past, skilled white labour directing unskilled coloured labour. There is plenty of room for Europeans and natives alike in South Africa, but their functions and positions are not identical or interchangeable; and one cannot insist too strongly on this point. We must deal with men and facts as they are, and in view of the steadily increasing numbers of the native races and the political and economic pressure sooner or later they are bound to exercise; a South Africa populated with white men from Capetown to the Zambesi is of all dreams the most wild and Utopian.

Arguments against the importation of Chinese on the ground that they will check white immigration are therefore quite unfounded. Of all strange contentions this is the farthest from the mark. In no case could the place destined for the Asiatic be filled by a European. On the contrary, it is the introduction of unskilled labour alone which will render possible the immigration of skilled European workmen. The standard of unskilled labour is the standard of the Kaffir. It can never be that of the white man so long as the native population maintains its preponderating numbers. The most ardent advocates of white labour will scarcely suggest the extermination of the natives in order to render their theories practical and possible. And yet it is difficult to see by what other means they can achieve their end. Once granted, however, that indefinite white expansion is impossible in the ranks of unskilled labour, it becomes a relatively secondary matter as to whether black or yellow races should fill the place. The main objection falls to the ground, and the matter resolves itself into questions of adjustment and expediency between the races concerned.

CHAPTER IX

THE QUESTION OF WHITE LABOUR

We considered in the last chapter those fundamental, social, and racial conditions existing in South Africa which appear to militate so profoundly against the employment of Europeans in the lower ranks of unskilled labour. It is necessary now to return to the Minority Report of the Labour Commission, and see how far the advocates of white labour can make good their position economically.

There is undoubtedly much truth in certain contentions advanced by the anti-Asiatic party as regards the causes of the present shortage. They assert that various preventable causes have operated to keep natives away from the mines, and that as regards future demands the requirements of the country were greatly exaggerated by the Majority Report. It is next stated that white labour and labour-saving machinery can be largely used to supplement such shortage as may remain when all South African sources of supply have been thoroughly exhausted. It would be easier to analyse this position but for the sweeping accusations of *mala fides* brought by this section against their opponents. When all expert mining evidence is scouted and discredited; when reckless charges are made of mani-

pulated figures and cooked statistics; when popular expressions of opinion are treated as fraudulent manifestations obtained through the ill-gotten gold of a corrupt mining ring; finally, when all who differ from them are accused of joining an unholy capitalist conspiracy to ruin the country, such an attitude and such a line of argument can scarcely forward the elucidation of one of the most complicated and difficult questions of our generation.

Nevertheless, certain observations in the Minority Report are worthy of consideration, and should be taken into account in any final estimation of the problem. I have already referred to the dislocating effects of the war on the labour supply, and the fact that many natives are at present living in ease, thanks to sums paid them by the military. The reduction of wages decided upon by a conference of mine-owners at Capetown in October 1900 is now admitted by everyone, including themselves, to have been a great mistake. Prior to the war, boys were paid an average wage of 47*s.* per month, and their food worked out at the rate of 8*s.* 10*d.* per month. From October 1900 till the end of 1902 the wages were reduced to 30*s.* per month. In January 1903 the mine-owners reverted to the old scale, and underground boys are now paid 60*s.* per month, the average wage being 54*s.* Feeding costs, too, have nearly doubled, being 15*s.* per month, so the native is to-day better paid and better fed than at any previous date. The action of the mine-owners undoubtedly had a very bad effect on the labour supply. It destroyed confidence; and the knowledge of the reduction having spread throughout the country, the return to the premier schedule did not mend matters at once. At the same time, it is only fair to say that

more justification exists for the mine-owners' action than might appear at first sight. The initiative in the matter did not come primarily from them. A proclamation by the Republican Government in the early days of the war reduced the rate of native wages to 20*s.* per month. Lord Roberts, after the occupation, limited the wage to 30*s.* per month. When the first mines reopened they were under military control, and the rate of wages was fixed by the authorities. Also a very strong feeling existed, and exists, among people engaged in agriculture and industries—other than the gold—that one wealthy section ought not to spoil the labour market by outbidding their less prosperous neighbours. Many persons were of opinion that the competition of recent years had forced up wages to a figure out of proportion to the value of the work done, and the experiment of a reduction was hailed in all quarters. The wages question is not so simple as it may appear at first sight. A high wage defeats its own end—a point on which many witnesses before the Labour Commission insisted. An extravagant rate simply means that the native earns as much money as he wants in a shorter space of time, and diminishes his total period of service on the mines. The contention often carelessly advanced, that the industry will be able to attract more labour by a higher rate of wages, is thus proved to rest on a fallacy. If, on the one hand, the reduction of wages militated against the return of boys to the mines, the mistake could not be remedied effectually by now offering a much higher sum. The matter involves a very nice question of economic poise, above or below which it is not desirable to go.

The question of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association also came prominently before the Com-

mission, and this organisation received somewhat severe criticism from Mr. William Grant as regards its conduct and methods. The competence of Mr. Grant, who acted formerly as Native Labour Commissioner to the Chamber of Mines, to speak with authority on native affairs will be questioned by no one in South Africa, and his evidence is of particular importance as regards the possible labour supply in the country and measures for rendering mining work more attractive to the boys. The organisation of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association does not seem to have been popular among the natives. Indiscriminate touting is condemned on all hands, and Mr. Grant insists on the necessity for organisation. The actual methods, however, of the Association were not a success, though again they were influenced by exigencies arising from the war. Practically, the Association formed a Labour Trust for the distribution of boys to the mines. On its formation in 1900 the mine-owners arranged among themselves that, owing to the shortage, natives when recruited should be drafted in turn to the different mines, so that the supply should be equalised and fairly distributed among the various groups. From the proprietors' point of view the arrangement was just and sensible. Unfortunately, it proved extremely unpopular among the boys. The method savoured to them of coercion, and gave offence, though they had been told beforehand that they must contract to serve on the Fields generally, and not on one particular mine. But certain mines were popular, and boys desired to return to them; whereas others bore a bad name, and consequently were looked at askance by the natives. To restrict the Kaffir's choice of the mine on which he desired to work proved a great drawback from the recruiting point of

view, and these defects of organisation and policy are being remedied now.

No evidence in support of general accusations made against the sincerity of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association was, however, forthcoming. The industry claim that in thirteen months under review the organisation had increased the efficiency of the supply in a ratio of at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, and they appear to have spent about 50,000*l.* a year in their attempts to procure labour. The general conditions of the compounds also called forth much criticism, and undoubtedly there are great improvements to be made on many mines before the De Beers standard of comfort and efficiency is reached. But, again, the degree of importance which a Kaffir attaches to the conditions under which he works is a matter of some doubt. On a farm the conditions of life exactly reproduce those of his own kraal. Nevertheless the agriculturist is as unable to attract labour as the gold-mines. No circumstances, however, can render mining work other than an unattractive occupation, and a great obligation most certainly rests upon the mine-owners to insure the best possible conditions for the natives in the compounds, and just, humane treatment during their residence on the Fields.

As regards the discrepancy existing in the estimates of labour shortage between the Majority and the Minority Reports, it is very possible that the truth may be found in an average struck between the contending parties. The estimated requirements of the mines in the Majority Report are made on a basis of twenty boys per stamp. The Minority Report rejects these figures, and declares efficiency can be obtained at the rate of ten to twelve boys per stamp. Sir

George Farrar, in the Transvaal Legislative Council, stated that prior to the war seventeen boys were used on an average per stamp, and they were always short. Sir Percy Fitzpatrick put the average at sixteen. The number of boys required per stamp varies enormously, and the lower grade the mine the more unskilled labour is required owing to the peculiarities of the reef formation. Sir George Farrar further stated that with only ten to twelve boys per stamp certain mines would be absolutely unpayable. The matter is a technical question which only experts can decide, but it is noteworthy that the figures of twenty boys per stamp were not drawn up for the benefit of the Commission. They were prepared months previously for the use of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, and had formed the basis for the distribution of boys over the various mines. The estimates for agriculture and other industries are necessarily vague, but even if an average is taken between the figures of the Majority and Minority Reports, the shortage for present requirements in the Transvaal alone is still formidable, amounting to at least 150,000 persons. Mr. Grant's evidence on this point is most important, the more so as he ended by proving a somewhat unwilling convert to the views of the Majority section. He was first of opinion that the requirements of the Transvaal might be met from Portuguese East Africa and the adjacent territories. On consideration, however, and as the course of the Commission revealed the character and gravity of both the labour shortage and demand, his opinions underwent considerable modification. He stated that, in view of the great developments possible on all hands, the demand for labour was 'phenomenal' and 'abnormal,' and his final answer before the Com-

mission was that he did not think these requirements could be met unless there was a material change in the native world throughout the continent. No such material change has taken or is likely to take place at present.

Making the most liberal allowance, therefore, for the blunders and mistakes of the mining industry, allowing also for the increased efficiency of native labour owing to the stringent liquor laws now in force, admitting for the sake of argument that the figures of the Majority Report are exaggerated, the above facts still show a serious discrepancy between the supply of labour available and the demand for it. The question now arises whether this deficiency can be made good with white labour and the increased use of labour-saving machinery.

As far as labour-saving machinery is concerned, it is self-evident that, when appliances of that character are possible, the mine-owners would not neglect their use. As Sir George Farrar tersely remarked during the recent debate in the Legislative Assembly, 'We are not fools. We are short of labour, and therefore it is our interest to bring in every labour-saving appliance possible.' No less than 1,250,000*l.* has been spent in rock-drilling machinery on the Rand, machinery which has replaced 37,000 natives. The number of boys per stamp depends upon whether rock drills can be used or not; but the successful use of the drills is again dependent on the character of the reef mined. On wide reefs these appliances can be used economically and well; but they are impracticable on narrow reefs, because the waste rock is broken into fines—it cannot be sorted properly, and the value of the ore milled consequently is greatly decreased. On the low-

grade mines and narrow reefs it is necessary to work by hand, and, it will be remembered, it is on the development of these low-grade mines that the future of the industry depends. It is most probable that further mechanical improvements will be introduced, with a proportionate saving of labour. Mr. Birchenough draws attention to the future of labour-saving appliances on the Rand in connection with mechanical traction. Above ground, the truck system, which is very expensive (owing to the number of boys required), is giving place to the conveyor belt. Underground haulage, however, presents problems of great difficulty, for which no efficient mechanical solution is as yet forthcoming. Savings in many directions may be accomplished, thanks to the development of engineering skill; but in view of the splendid machinery already existing on the Rand, the total deficiency can hardly be made good from this side.

We now come to the great question as to whether white labour can meet the difficulty—a contention with which the name of Mr. Creswell, formerly manager of the Village Main Reef Mine, is intimately connected. I have already pointed out some of the serious racial and social reasons which apparently preclude the idea that white men can replace natives in the rougher classes of manual labour. Nevertheless, circumstances of an abnormal character at times arise which may be bridged temporarily by an artificial expedient, if such expedient is found practicable and economical. Every credit is due to Mr. Creswell for the energy and enthusiasm with which he carried out his experiment of replacing native by unskilled white labour on the Village Mine. At the close of the war, on the urgent representations of Lord Kitchener, a number of

irregular and regular soldiers, who were out of employment, were given unskilled work on the mines at the rate of 5*s.* per day, board and lodgings being also found. Mr. Creswell took up the idea with enthusiasm, and from June 1902 till March 1903 the experiment was tried at the Village. Mr. Creswell claims to have made a success of the undertaking, the increased efficiency of white labour being set against its much larger cost. The point is again a technical question, very difficult to decide, but at least all mining and expert evidence on the Rand is dead against Mr. Creswell's conclusions. So far from white labour having proved successful, it has been demonstrated satisfactorily that the working costs of the Village, mined with Europeans, was 4*s.* 3*d.* per ton higher than with unskilled black labour. Three mining experts, Messrs. Price, Skinner, and Spencer, reported on the experiment, and stated that, though white labour might be profitably extended in certain departments, its entire replacement of native labour was impracticable, and would mean the shutting down of most mines on the Rand. Still further, Mr. Mather, formerly Secretary of the Transvaal Miners' Association, and another recent convert to Asiatic labour, of which he was formerly a strong opponent, asserts that Mr. Creswell did not keep strictly to the terms of his contract, paying his men 5*s.* per day, but not the additional 7*l.* 7*s.* per month agreed upon for board and lodging and bedding. This led to a strike, and an order was obtained for payment. At this rate the actual cost of unskilled labour on the Village amounted not to 5*s.*, but to 10*s.* per day. Mr. Mather's statement has received no contradiction, and the total cost of unskilled white labour per month works out at 12*l.* 15*s.*,

as against 3*l.* 19*s.* for native labour. The Village was a good mine for the experiment, possessing wide reefs, on which rock drills could be used efficiently and well. But an experiment resulting in a loss of 3,000*l.* per month, or a total of one million per annum for the whole industry, is not one which any board of directors can sanction for an indefinite period. On other mines the same attempt was made, and proved equally unsuccessful. As the Chamber of Mines stated in their address to Mr. Chamberlain, 'it is hopeless to consider seriously, from an economical standpoint, the substitution of a mere muscular machine costing 20*s.* or even 10*s.* a day for one costing up to 2*s.* or 3*s.*, and capable of developing the same energy. Granted that the 12*s.* white man may do twice as much work as a Kaffir, the average cost per ton would be increased 10*s.* 1*d.*; 50 per cent. of the mines would be practically worked without profit, and the remainder would reduce their dividends 44 per cent.' Under such conditions only the richest companies could carry on at all, and the low-grade mines would go to the wall at once.

Mr. Creswell and his friends declare, of course, this failure to be due to the time-worn charge of conspiracy; that the mine-owners had made up their minds to keep out white unskilled workmen, fearing labour difficulties; that figures were juggled, and the experiment not given a fair trial. The facts in no way seem to bear out these somewhat reckless contentions. That labour difficulties of a serious character would undoubtedly have arisen had the mines persisted in this experiment is almost certain. Its first necessary consequence would have been the grading down of the wages at present earned by skilled workmen more to the level of those paid to unskilled men. The possi-

bility of such a step was regarded with irritation and alarm by the skilled artisans already on the spot. The settlement in the Transvaal of married men with their families is highly desirable in the best interests of the State. The costs of living are, however, at present so high that the average expenses of a family amount to 24*l.* per month. Once again we find ourselves working in the old circle. Granted that these costs of living may ultimately be considerably reduced, such reduction cannot take place until the development of industry and agriculture bring about a natural fall of prices, and development, as we have seen, is purely a question of labour. At a rate, say, of 15*l.* per month wages, mines must necessarily be worked on the 'single man' basis. There would be no settlement in the country, no family life as the foundation of a healthy civic life, and, in addition to hardship and dissatisfaction among the skilled workmen, the Transvaal would be monopolised by a floating population of inferior labourers, largely drawn from the riff-raff of foreign countries. In view of these facts, there is something very illogical in the opposition of the English Trades Unions to Chinese labour—an opposition based, as I believe, on an entire misconception of the circumstances. It is certainly no part of Trades Union policy to grade down skilled to the level of unskilled labour, nor can the Union leaders wish to see British artisans working for what is at present less than a living wage on the Rand, thanks to the competition of foreign pauper immigrants. It is all-important to South Africa that her white citizens should maintain the highest possible standard of efficiency. Her Europeans should make up in quality for the relative smallness of their numbers when compared with the native races. A white proletariat, cutting

down wages, taking the bread out of the mouth of British artisans, and lowering the standard of living, would be more disastrous for the Transvaal than the introduction of many thousand Asiatics. Little wonder that, even if working expenses had made the experiment possible, the mine-owners hesitated to embark on so stormy a sea of industrial troubles.

It is important in this connection to notice an experiment made by the Government with white labour on the railways. That experiment proved as complete a failure economically as similar attempts made on the mines. A thousand navvies were sent out from England for purposes of railway construction. After seven months' trial the Government were obliged to abandon the enterprise, owing to its excessive expense. The difference in cost between white and native labour varied on railway construction from 1,000*l.* to 2,000*l.* per mile, according to the section. Major Micklem, Captain Pritchard, Mr. Price, all Government officials, gave evidence before the Labour Commission as to the heavy increase of costs, and it was stated that, if the lines under Government control were to be built with white instead of native labour, another two and a half millions would be required to carry on the identical work. Sir Percy Girouard, in a valedictory despatch with reference to the departing navvies, emphasised the same point of excessive cost, and stated that, as far as the railways were concerned, the navvies had not departed a day too soon. An interesting statement has also been made by Lord Lovat regarding an attempt to settle some Imperial Yeomen as unskilled labourers on the East Rand mines. Though good terms were obtained for the men and they were kept separate from the Kaffirs, all had left at the end of

three months. They stated that the climate and altitude made rough work too difficult, and still more significantly that they objected to doing the work of natives and being regarded as 'white Kaffirs.' When testimony from all quarters thus goes to prove the impossibility of replacing black by white labour in the lower ranks of employment, it is somewhat futile to meet such a weight of evidence by charges of bribery and corruption. The inherent absurdity of these charges, which, if correct, would logically involve some of the highest and most honourable men in South Africa in malpractices of the worst character, is self-evident.

What we do see, however, through all the hubbub and clamour of the present agitation, is the reassertion of that eternal principle that experiments running a-tilt of natural laws and conditions are doomed to a chequered career and certain failure. White skilled labour is bound to remain in certain proportions—capable, no doubt, of some modifications—to black unskilled labour. We cannot alter the complicated racial circumstances owing to which the industrial superstructure of South Africa rests on the native. We cannot alter the geological freak which makes cheap unskilled labour the root factor of all development. The chain of argument, political, economic, and racial, is a lengthy one, and I have dragged my readers along it, I fear, at weary length, in an attempt to get back to first principles—the only ones of any value in an argument of this kind. And in view of the considerations we have examined, it is a study of first principles which, by a process of elimination, points to the justification of and necessity for Asiatic labour in South Africa to-day.

CHAPTER X

THE CHINESE SOLUTION

THE causes which have led to the present labour difficulty in South Africa are, as I have endeavoured to show in the last three chapters, numerous and complex. It may be as well to recapitulate the position briefly before we consider the one remaining cure for the existing evil.

We examined first of all the position of supreme importance occupied by the gold-mines in the economic affairs of the country, and glanced at that technical side of the industry which renders the mines dependent for their working on an adequate supply of cheap labour. We saw that the demand for unskilled labour throughout the sub-continent already largely exceeds the supply, and that there is no prospect of meeting locally the present, much less the future, large requirements of the mines. Agriculture, public works, and other enterprises are all equally short-handed and all equally importunate in their demand for more labour. Investigations in Central Africa hold out no hope that these requirements may be met from the trans-Zambesian districts. The Bantu peoples, though existing in preponderating numbers throughout the country, are constitutionally idle, and their low eco-

nomic standard and lack of wants deprive them of such incentives to work as operate in the case of the white man. Nevertheless the very character of this lower standard they set, and all the social and racial difficulties which arise from the juxtaposition of blacks and whites, forbid the spread of European unskilled labour in the lower ranks of industry. Still further, the costs of living and the rate of wages paid to white men being what they are, European unskilled labour cannot be profitably used in industrial enterprises. As the standard of civilisation increases among the blacks and their wants develop, they will learn to work steadily and in greater numbers, but that day is not as yet. In the meantime South African industry threatens to come to a complete standstill through lack of motive power. The actual position to-day is most serious. In the Transvaal the depression in business of every kind increases steadily, revenue is falling off, and the country is threatened with a large exodus of white population who can obtain no employment. A very unpleasant proof of the financial difficulties of the country has been recently forthcoming. An Extraordinary Session of the Intercolonial Council met at Johannesburg in the early days of March. Railway receipts, as I have stated elsewhere, are the principal item of revenue in South Africa to-day, and the Council was summoned with a view to the consideration of the financial position in view of the serious falling off of profits. The revenue for the current year, which was estimated at 2,350,000*l.*—an estimate based on nothing speculative or optimistic, but on the assumption that the mining industry would return to its normal condition—is not likely to exceed 1,600,000*l.* After certain reductions in expenditure have been made

the new Colonies will have to meet a deficit of 1,019,250*l.* About 900,000*l.* of this total is likely to fall on the Transvaal—a considerable strain upon her already embarrassed resources. In order to make both ends meet and carry on at all, the Council has been forced to abandon various railway schemes which were in course of construction. Such are the practical consequences of the stagnation of trade owing to the labour shortage. The difficulties of the Intercolonial Conference are a sufficient answer to that curiously short-sighted argument that development should be regulated by the available supply of labour—a contention which will not bear examination for one moment. Any such course is not only to depreciate the value of the mines 30 per cent., but, what is more serious, to damage the credit of the country in every direction. The Transvaal has incurred heavy liabilities and war charges. How are these charges to be met with a crippled industry and stagnant trade? How can the country afford to stand still in view of its debts, which it must work, and work hard, to discharge? The very natural discontent existing among the people of the country threatens to assume formidable proportions. Is the Government to look on placidly at such a state of affairs and to make no effort to bring about a return of prosperity?

There can be no abstract enthusiasm in favour of the importation of Chinese workmen. Public opinion in South Africa was at first strongly opposed to any such action. But since the pressure of hard facts has made it clear that the choice lies between imported labour and prolonged industrial and agricultural stagnation, public opinion has decided in favour of the former. The native will not work, and no one has suggested he should be

coerced into doing so. The European, for a variety of reasons, economic and racial, cannot take his place. Hence by a process of elimination South Africa slowly and unwillingly has been driven to adopt the one remaining alternative unless she were to drift to the verge of bankruptcy.

The findings of the Majority Report took practical expression when the Transvaal Legislative Council met last December. A motion was introduced by Sir George Farrar requesting the Government to prepare a draft Ordinance for the importation of indentured, unskilled, coloured labourers, and the resolution was passed, with four dissentients only, on December 30, 1903. The newcomers are to be employed solely on the mines, but indirectly they will relieve the tension on agriculture, public works, and private enterprises by rendering a larger supply of Kaffirs available for these latter purposes.

It is difficult to write with common patience of the outcry this step has excited among certain sections in this country, and the gross misrepresentation to which the Ordinance has been subjected. A highly complicated and difficult question, involving for its just judgment the careful study of technical details, has been enveloped for political purposes in an atmosphere of cant and prejudice which cannot be too strongly deprecated. A healthy and vigorous public opinion on the Asiatic question would have been welcome and desirable. The experiment is a difficult one ; it will require to be carried out with great tact and judgment ; and the consciousness that it excited keen interest, even criticism, in England would have been all to the good of every person concerned in South Africa. But one is tempted almost to despair of the political morality

of the country, and of its capacity to deal with the great affairs of Empire, when a crisis in a British Colony is but treated as an excellent opening for the creation of party capital, and truth gives place to misrepresentation of a peculiarly cruel and unjust character. There is no point on which the English are more honourably sensitive than the question of slavery. The great sacrifices made by former generations for the establishment of freedom throughout the British dominions is a page of history in which we all take peculiar pride. Consequently, it has been a very easy task by a series not of half, but of quarter truths, to set the country aflame with the notion that a scheme is on foot to reintroduce slavery into South Africa. One may well ask in sheer bewilderment of spirit whether one is expected to meet charges of so grotesque a character seriously. No public question of our times has given rise to more unjustifiable abuse of language, and, what is worse, to a more deliberate attempt in certain quarters to trade upon the ignorance of some or the high principle of others. Seldom has a more extraordinary alliance been seen than the present haphazard union between the party who desire on all occasions to damage and discredit their country and another section animated by very different feelings. It is necessary to discriminate carefully between the two elements of opposition, for the one is as deserving of respect as the other of condemnation. But the people who genuinely dislike the Ordinance on moral and social grounds—and of these I would speak with all deference, recognising the absolute disinterestedness of their motives—would do well to study the Labour Ordinance more closely before lending themselves to an agitation the drift of which they appear little to understand.

It is very necessary for England to realise that, as far as the kernel of this agitation is concerned, she is confronted with old foes under a new face. It is with real reluctance that one stirs the ashes of a bitter controversy that we all hoped had been consigned to final oblivion. The necessity for doing so can only be looked upon as unfortunate; but it would be still worse to blind our eyes to the character of the present opposition. Admitting readily that a certain proportion of the anti-Asiatic party hold their views as a matter of genuine conviction, there can be no question that the real fighting-line is manned by the Old Guard of pro-Boerism in a virulent and resuscitated form. And here lies the danger of the agitation, for it is pro-Boerism or, rather, all the elements of strife and hostility which constituted pro-Boerism reinforced through misunderstanding by allies of a very different character—allies who would entirely repudiate such leadership if they but realised in whose ranks they are inadvertently fighting.

Pro-Boerism under its true colours was never able to make headway with the nation. Perhaps we are not sufficiently educated to appreciate the character of its 'conscience' and 'morality.' Be that as it may, England would have none of it. The new pro-Boerism is more skilful in its campaign. The old crude methods of direct encouragement and assistance of the nation's enemies have been abandoned for an attack of a more specious and subtle character. The tactics only are changed; the intentions remain the same. But it must be admitted that the new vantage-ground is more favourable than the old, and offers better prospects of success. England is startled with the cry that her honour is menaced; that the scandal and disgrace of

slavery bids fair to tarnish her fair name; that she has squandered her blood and treasure in a sorry cause in South Africa; and that a horde of Asiatics are about to rob her children of the fruits of their dearly won victories. Little wonder that she is inclined to take fright, and to consider the advances of these dubious allies. As the wooden horse without the walls of Troy filled the Trojans with curiosity and bewilderment, so England gazes in perplexity at a similar strange device, and is half-minded to bring it within her gates—half minded only, for she, too, realises vaguely that, like the Greeks, some enemies are most to be feared when offering gifts of service.

Whether Asiatic immigration be right or wrong, it is highly desirable that the country at least should understand clearly what party in the State seeks to counsel her at this moment. The character of those counsellors, as proved by their past deeds, may well give her pause before she concludes rashly that her old and well-tried servants have played her false on this occasion—that those to whom her honour and welfare is of all inspirations the greatest have lent themselves to a sordid and disgraceful conspiracy for the benefit of mine-owners on the Rand. To take a fact, to misrepresent it, and then to found a crushing indictment on the misrepresentation, is a common political manœuvre. But when conscience and morality are invoked in support of such proceedings, and a tactical party move takes to itself the garb of lofty moral purpose, then we may well complain that the eternal verities are outraged by such hypocrisy. Judged ethically, it is a very serious matter for mixed or unworthy motives to appeal to the most sacred instincts implanted in men's hearts—justice and liberty. Judged practically, it is

no less serious for one of the great governing parties in this country to bring wholesale accusations against the public morality of a British Colony, a community animated by instincts as honourable as those common among the dwellers in these islands. The dignified protest of the Transvaal Free Church Council addressed to their militant and less well informed brethren in this country, a protest in which they repudiate the 'distressing and unwarrantable reflections' made upon them, deserves the careful attention of English Nonconformity. South Africa is a young country full of pride and sensitiveness. She will not readily forgive or forget the action of those who, caring less than nothing for her welfare, have endeavoured to cast the slur of slavery upon her name. Misrepresentation of a particularly cruel character born of ignorance and cradled by ill-will is what no country will tolerate indefinitely. Neither will a Colony submit passively to its internal affairs and trials being made an instrument for electioneering purposes in Great Britain. Nations, like individuals, may be goaded beyond endurance, and should interference as regards South Africa exceed a certain point, the tea in Boston Harbour remains as an ugly precedent for the consideration of the mother country. It is a precedent the nature of which she would do well not to overlook entirely.

Stripped of its verbiage and discounting the fine opportunity the Labour Ordinance affords for an attack on the Imperial and Transvaal Governments, we must next examine the slender basis of fact on which this distorted superstructure of misrepresentation rests. Primarily the misrepresentation, when not deliberate, springs from an almost complete ignorance of the

peculiar racial and industrial conditions of South Africa. The English of the Islands seem often to experience much difficulty in grasping the somewhat elementary fact that their Empire includes various and varying conditions of life to which one uniform constitutional mould, and the political rules-of-thumb of St. Stephen's, cannot be applied. No one could suggest the introduction of indentured coolies into this country, for instance. Any such idea is unthinkable. But that circumstance is no argument that the immigration may not be desirable for the Transvaal. The Chinese will be introduced under certain definite and strict conditions; they are to be employed only on unskilled work, they are to live in villages apart from the rest of the population, they are not to engage in trade, they will not be allowed to settle in the country, but at the conclusion of their term of indenture be shipped back to China. True, this method of procedure would not obtain among white races, but it is a system which under proper supervision and control may not be lacking in any element of justice or comfort for a black or coloured one.

The appeal to representative institutions and the customs of this country is no argument. Coloured races are not white races, and it is impossible to apply the same systems of legislation to both alike. From the practical point of view, the whole question resolves itself into one of management. Hence the importance of an adequate public opinion to safeguard the proceedings. If the energy at present employed in ploughing the sands of arid controversy were concentrated on this point, it would be of some practical value. Granted proper and humane supervision, it is difficult to see where the smallest moral harm can enter into

the arrangement; still less why the conscience of the country should feel any cause for alarm.

The term 'slave' cannot be applied to any man who deliberately and for profit enters into a contract, the nature of which is thoroughly explained to him beforehand. The condition of the Chinaman on the Rand will probably be one of vastly superior comfort to anything he knows at home. The mine-owners, so far from having a free hand as regards his treatment, will themselves be subjected to the most vigilant Government supervision—a circumstance which should go far to remove all possibility of abuse. Family life will not be interrupted, for wives and children are to accompany the coolies. If the Chinaman finds his work distasteful, he is at liberty to break his indenture and return to his own country. Finally, if he accepts certain restrictions on his liberty of action for a definite period of time, it is in consideration of the fact that his wages will be fifteen times greater than what he could earn at home. The contract between the Industry and the Chinaman is one of mutual profit and convenience, and in view of the conditions I have enumerated it is idle to talk of slavery. The essence of slavery, as Lord Hugh Cecil has aptly observed, is coercion, and coercion does not enter into the above scheme. Certain restrictions on the free circulation of coloured people living among a white race are common in different parts of the Empire. Certainly they exist in South Africa. The compound system, so often attacked by Exeter Hall theorists in this country, has been proved by long practical experience at Kimberley not to entail the smallest hardship or injustice on the natives. Travellers who, like myself, have visited the celebrated De Beers West End compound, who were confronted on every side by

the most good-tempered, merry-looking, well cared-for set of natives they had seen in South Africa, who were entertained by the part-songs of the Kaffir choir and saw the compound school, the trim hospital, and the swimming-bath, can only declare that, if this is slavery, some slaves are more to be envied than free men labouring in the slums of East London.

Few object-lessons could be more instructive as to the real character of the present agitation and its essential hollowness than an examination of certain ordinances regulating coloured labour already in existence in various parts of the Empire. Fifty-two such ordinances are in operation, and twenty-nine were sanctioned by Liberal Governments. Most remarkable of these is the Ordinance of 1894 for the introduction of indentured Indian coolies into British Guiana, which formed the basis of the Transvaal regulations. Lord Ripon and Mr. Sidney Buxton held at this date the respective positions of Secretary and Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. If the Transvaal Ordinance constitutes slavery, it is a little difficult to know what term can be applied to the far more stringent conditions for which a Liberal Government was responsible. Under the British Guiana Ordinance the labourer is indentured for five years; he can be transferred without his consent by his employer; he must serve ten years before he is entitled to a quarter of his passage money home; he must serve five years before he can return home, and then defray the entire cost of his passage to and fro; his pay is fixed at 1*s.* or 9*d.* per day, and a day's work may range from seven to sixteen hours; he must keep himself out of his pay; he is bound to reside on the plantation to which he is indentured, with a mini-

mum area of five acres; he may not be absent without leave; he may be forced to do piecework at rates fixed by the employer; he may be compelled to do any class of work his employer desires; he is subjected to severe fines and penalties for threatening words or gestures to his employers or for inciting other immigrants to desert their work. As against this the Transvaal labourer is indentured for three years; he cannot be transferred without his consent in writing; he and his family are sent home at his employer's expense at the end of the three years; he is free to return home at any time on paying his return fare and a proportion of his outward fare; his pay is 2*s.* per day, with food and lodging found in addition; though compelled to reside in the Chinese village its area is at least that of two miles; he can make what terms he likes for piece-work, and he knows exactly beforehand the character of the work in which he is to engage.

It is, of course, the duty of an Opposition to oppose, and in any political agitation it is always necessary to discount the difference of standpoint between the 'ins' and the 'outs.' But in view of the British Guiana Ordinance it is a little astonishing to find Mr. Sidney Buxton of all men talking about 'servile conditions' in the Transvaal, and explaining in the columns of the *Westminster Gazette* that the British Guiana Ordinance was designed, not only to secure that the labourer should carry out his contract but to protect him against 'excessive work, low wages, and bad conditions of employment.' Since the Chinese labourer in the Transvaal will be better paid, better fed, better protected against his employer, and given easier facilities for returning home than the Indian coolie in British Guiana, the new Ordinance should in common fairness have

received the hearty support of every member of the late Liberal Government. Imitation after all is the sincerest form of flattery, and with the British Guiana Ordinance staring them in the face, the 'slavery' contention on the part of ex-ministers becomes farcical. Is slavery therefore a mere question of latitude? And why, save for the stultifying purposes of party, should certain regulations be eulogised as a desirable system 'framed for the protection of the labourer' when established by a Liberal Government in British Guiana, and the same principle be stigmatised as 'servile conditions' when sanctioned by a Conservative Government in the Transvaal? Does Mr. Buxton seriously ask us to believe that, because in the one case the British Guiana Government is responsible for the importation and in the other a private association, the difference in agency constitutes slavery? The principle of slavery surely is not affected by agency any more than by geographical position or numbers. If a Government turns slave agent, the more heinous the conduct of such a Government. Of course no sensible person has any desire to charge the Liberals with instituting slavery in British Guiana, but it will be interesting to hear the final verdict of the British working man when he becomes familiar with the conditions of this latter Ordinance. The good sense of the nation in the long run never errs, and people whose feelings have been worked upon with a false cry of slavery may possibly resent the fact when they grasp the true position of affairs.

Having considered the 'slavery' contention, we may now turn with more profit to certain practical sides of the Asiatic question which merit attention.

It is a somewhat breathless task to follow the

gyrations of the critics, who with one breath denounce the settlement of the immoral Chinese among the virtuous Johannesburg community, and with the next endeavour to excite our pity for the woes of this oppressed people. However, we must make the attempt. As regards various evils prophesied as the result of this immigration, it must be remembered first of all that there is not the smallest prospect of a sudden and abundant influx of Chinamen to the Rand. Mr. Ross Skinner, who was despatched by the mine-owners to study the labour conditions in China, shows conclusively in his report that no large supply of Asiatics will be immediately forthcoming. This fact, and one of even greater importance—namely, that Chinese labour is likely to prove more expensive than Kaffir labour—are circumstances which will not be regretted by any one. It is highly desirable to regulate Asiatic immigration, purely from the point of view of supplementing, not superseding, the existing black labour supply. The point which it is imperative South Africa should bear carefully in mind is the temporary character of the experiment she is making. No effort should be relaxed to induce the Kaffir to work and take his rightful place in the affairs of his country. The immigration should be carefully supervised and regulated, so that as Kaffir labour becomes more abundant the Chinese supply should be proportionately diminished. Africa, as we have seen, is essentially a black continent; and though, owing to climatic reasons, a free circulation among the aboriginal races is not possible, nevertheless all labour demands can eventually be met south of the Zambesi. Let it always be remembered that the natural working classes of South Africa are the Bantu races of the country, and that we must

carefully safeguard the interests and position of future generations in our adoption for economic reasons of this temporary expedient. The drawbacks which seem likely to attach to Chinese labour and its greater cost may therefore be welcomed as highly desirable safeguards to the experiment. An unlimited labour supply of a very cheap character would necessarily have proved a great temptation, if not a definite source of stumbling, to the mine-managers. But, as things are, their interest will still be better served with Kaffir than with Chinese labour, and the presence of the latter will probably operate as a most healthy stimulus on the energies of the former. As to the vast social evils which are likely to result from the introduction of Chinese, much vague talk under this heading may be dismissed without lengthy comment. Sir Frank Swettenham has observed dryly that it is surprising how many people seem to know all about the Chinese and the conditions of indentured Chinese labour. Speaking with unrivalled experience of his subject, he pronounces the Celestial to be not only valuable as a labourer, but sober, honest, and hard-working. It is difficult at times not to suspect that the virtues rather than the vices of the Chinaman constitute the secret of his unpopularity in certain quarters, a fact to which the late Mr. Gladstone on one occasion bore emphatic testimony. One unholy power—the liquor trade—is certainly arrayed against him; the Dutch brandy interest has nothing to gain by his advent. The contention that the Chinaman takes money out of the country and does not spend it locally has much truth, but against this must be set the general revival of trade which will result from the increased prosperity of the mines. For every six or seven Chinamen imported, work will be found for one white skilled

artisan, and the large influx of white population to Johannesburg will compensate the local shopkeeper in no small measure.

European immigration, as we have seen all through, depends upon and is proportionate to the unskilled labour available. It is necessary to insist on this point in view of the misrepresentation so often slain by facts, but nevertheless endowed with such boundless vitality, that the Asiatic will drive the British workman from the gold-fields. As Lord Milner pointed out long since, of all extraordinary things about this muddled controversy, the contention that white labour and Asiatic labour should be regarded as mutually exclusive is the strangest. Heavy penalties exist under the Ordinance if an employer allows a Chinaman to engage in skilled or European work; a detail of no little importance, as regards which the anti-Asiatic party maintains a discreet silence when haranguing British working men.[1] The strongest argument in favour of Asiatic labour is the field it opens up for the employment of a large number of well-paid Europeans. Contradictory though it may seem, it is only on a coloured basis that South Africa can expand into a white man's country, as far as such expansion is possible. Apart from the mines, a general development will create numerous fresh employments in which white men can be engaged profitably as soon as this same development has led to the much-to-be-desired reduction in the costs of living. It is already evident that at the next election the British workman will be entertained to long tirades on the subject of the 'fields of labour' closed to him in South

[1] The employment of Chinese labourers on other than unskilled work renders the employer liable to a fine of 500*l.* for each offence, or in default of payment to imprisonment for two years.

Africa. The cry is likely to be cheap and popular, but its transparent inaccuracy will deceive no thinking man. Another suggestion frequently advanced is that, granted the necessity of Chinese labour, the Chinaman should be allowed to enter Africa without restrictions of any kind, and carry on what work he pleased. This is a contention to which we may indeed demur. Certainly the British workman would have had genuine cause of complaint had we allowed the place he can occupy in South Africa to be usurped by Asiatics. South Africa, after all, belongs to us, bought and paid for with a heavy price. The first interests which demand our care there are those of our own countrymen. It is an attitude perfectly legitimate to say 'Thus far, but no farther,' as regards the introduction of unskilled labour; the sole object of such immigration being the basis it affords for British settlement.

Turning now to the solemn warnings from Australasia, it must be confessed that her attitude reveals a complete *non sequitur*. There is no comparison whatever between the conditions of Australia and South Africa. Australia and New Zealand are, in every sense of the word, white countries. Their affairs are uncomplicated by any native problem (the aboriginal population being too trifling to reckon with), and they would be singularly foolish, under their more fortunate circumstances, to admit a coloured race whose presence would upset their whole economic standard. But in South Africa there is no question of upsetting the economic standard, for, as we have seen, the complication of a flourishing aboriginal race already exists, and the presence of the Chinaman will not affect that fundamental problem one whit. The worthy Mr. Seddon might well consider this trifling difference of

circumstances before agitating the Pacific cable in his capacity of Pontifex Maximus of the British Empire. Again, it is surely singularly unreasonable to maintain that, because the unrestricted influx of Asiatics caused much difficulty in California and elsewhere, a restricted importation, hedged with conditions derived from the experience of other countries, should work havoc in South Africa. Any such contention is highly illogical, and, still further, it is a poor reflection on the capacity of a nation whose peculiar talent shines forth in the government and direction of subject races. The question is one which South Africa, after all, must be left to settle for herself. Debates in the House of Commons, of a character which half drive one to believe that Guy Fawkes was a man much before his times, add nothing to the arguments for and against. South Africa, as we have seen, was driven but slowly to her present position. For a year the problem has been hotly canvassed in every State and territory. Popular opinion, first hostile, next dubious, has finally come round to its present attitude. Rhodesia, Natal, and the Orange River Colony all acquiesce in the proposed arrangement. In Cape Colony alone has there been any serious opposition, and this opposition was mainly due to the exigencies of the recent election and the necessity of conciliating the native vote. The ardour with which the Bond combated the immigration proposals was quite sufficient to drive many waverers over definitely to the Asiatic side. When the Bond thinks fit to take up a strong attitude on any subject, it is always perfectly safe to conclude that the exact opposite is the course beneficial to the honour and welfare of Great Britain. The Bond of course realises that Asiatic labour must result in a large white immigration

to South Africa. The increase of British population must diminish their power, and they fear the swamping of the Dutch vote.

The experiment, as I have said before, presents difficulties; it requires vigilant supervision and the check of an enlightened public opinion. But, properly safeguarded (and the Government will see to the safeguards), the venture can result in no ultimate harm for South Africa, whereas the immense benefits which will spring from an adequate supply of labour will be clear to everyone. Once development is possible, once industry and agriculture are set upon their feet, South Africa will move forward to her rightful place among the British dominions, a strong, prosperous, and contented community.

CHAPTER XI

THE PROSPECTS OF TRADE

Sir Richard Solomon, when speaking on the Chinese question during the recent debate in the Transvaal Legislative Council, drew a very striking picture of the condition of South Africa thirty-five years ago. It is a history of no little interest to trace the origin and rise of that development which has brought the erstwhile Cinderella of the Colonies into the front rank of States. Thirty-five years ago the only railways existing in South Africa were a suburban line ten miles in length from Cape Town to Wynberg, and another modest line constructed by private enterprise from Cape Town to Wellington, a distance of fifty-eight miles. Telegraphic communication was little further advanced. There was one mail steamer a month, and Sir Richard Solomon tells a delightful story of how on one occasion the London War Office characteristically and placidly arranged for a chaplain to take the service at King William's Town in the morning and ride over to Durban for the afternoon service. Practically the country was unknown. It was poor, it was far off, it had but indifferent communication with Europe. The almost complete ignorance which prevailed in official as well as unofficial quarters somewhat explains the apparently

callous manner in which formerly we piled up administrative error after error in the land. In the light of our knowledge to-day such blunders seem inexcusable; but it must be confessed, prior to 1870, the South African Colonies did not loom as very delectable possessions in the eyes of successive Secretaries of State. A harassing and never-ending series of native wars, and the chronic incapacity of the two white races to live on amicable terms, were the only circumstances which ever rendered South African affairs modestly conspicuous. Such incidents from time to time ruffled official somnolence, and drew a somewhat irritated and wholly superficial attention to its affairs. But it was an interest neither helpful nor particularly benevolent, and its spasmodic manifestations usually left the country a little worse off than it was before.

It may well be asked what circumstances have worked such a transformation, and brought about the state of affairs that prevails to-day? The answer is a very simple one. The change was wrought thanks to the discovery of that mineral wealth which has attracted, and continues to attract, so vast an amount of capital to the country. It is very easy to abuse capitalists, but it is only fair to remember that in pre-capitalist days South Africa was an obscure impoverished country, bereft of many common necessities of civilisation. The great strides she has made during the past generation are simply due to the attractions, direct and indirect, her gold and diamond mines have been able to offer to commerce and finance in the Old World. I do not want to weary my readers with statistics, so one small illustration of the change effected may perhaps suffice. In 1866 the total revenue of Cape Colony from all sources

amounted to only 536,347*l.* In 1903 her imports alone were valued at 34,685,020*l.* sterling.

The present importance, and still more the potential development, of the South African market are matters of the utmost consideration in commercial affairs to-day. With wise foresight, the Board of Trade last year despatched a Special Commissioner (Mr. Henry Birchenough) to inquire into the position and prospects of British trade in South Africa. Mr. Birchenough spent some months in the different Colonies, investigated their requirements, and analysed their trading operations. He devoted careful study to the commercial affairs of the Transvaal, especially those of its gold industry, as well as to other questions connected with public works and municipal enterprises. The result of these investigations have been published in a State paper, which is one of the most interesting and instructive documents an official inquiry has ever brought to light.

Mr. Birchenough's report primarily reveals his own eminent qualifications for the task entrusted to him. A man of business, with breadth of outlook as well as a great capacity for detail; a clear, lucid mind endowed with that most valuable of mental possessions, a sense of proportion—that quality for the lack of which so many fine talents run to waste—the Board of Trade were certainly happy in the choice of their Commissioner. Finally, Mr. Birchenough possesses no small power of literary expression, and the knack of inspiring facts and figures with that underlying sense of their human relationship which now and again, when dealt with by a master-hand, robs statistics of their weariness. The report should be read not only by business men, but by all persons interested in South Africa, or

indeed in Colonial development at large. Here and there, indeed, it raises issues and suggests reflections which have no little bearing on an even greater problem before the public.

Mr. Birchenough states in his introductory remarks that from the trader's point of view South Africa may be looked upon as one market. He might with justice have gone much farther, and stated that geographically it is one land from the seaboard to the Zambesi. Man has mapped out the continent into colonies and divisions, but these artificial distinctions have received small ratification from nature. Save on the frontier-line between Natal and the Transvaal, where the mighty Quathlamba range rears its crests to the sky, and again farther north, between the Portuguese and British possessions, there are no natural demarcations of territory. A chain of mountains running round the coast from Capetown roughly to Delagoa Bay encircles the inland territories, which to all intents and purposes form one continuous stretch of country. The point is important, because the absence of natural, geographical, or climatic differences must react somewhat on the temper of the inhabitants, and aid the movement of South Africa towards the final goal of Federation. Even the social and industrial requirements of the different Colonies vary very slightly. Cleavage, where cleavage existed and exists, has been a question of race, further influenced by the circumstance, commented on in a previous chapter, that the occupations of Boer and British have fallen into the sharply cut divisions of town and country. The trader's task, consequently, is not complicated by a variety of conditions producing proportionately diverse wants, but he is able to study the country as a whole.

The magnitude of the South African market and its value to British manufacturers are matters of capital importance to which Mr. Birchenough first draws the attention of the commercial world. 'The rapidity with which South Africa has come to the front as a great market for British manufactures is almost startling,' he writes. 'Ten years ago, in 1893, Great Britain's exports to South Africa were valued at a little under nine millions; last year they almost reached twenty millions. In 1893 South Africa stood sixth on the list of Great Britain's customers; last year she stood second. She had left America, Germany, France, and Australia behind, and was only beaten by India. It is no rash prediction that this year she will pass India, and stand first on the list as the largest buyer in the world of the produce and manufactures of the mother country.'

It will be at once asserted that this great increase in imports is a commercial flash in the pan, due to the necessity for making good war ravages and re-starting the normal machinery of social life. But the steady upward trend of imports for some years past—an upward trend which would have been much greater but for the political uncertainty hanging over the affairs of the country—points to the fact that the present activity is not the result of a temporary boom, but the commencement of a great period of sustained expansion. As I have pointed out, with, I fear, wearisome iteration in previous chapters, granted adequate labour, development of all kinds awaits South Africa. What may be called the material life of the country has grown up in the most haphazard manner. In some respects the South African standard of living is much below par. Municipal improvements are necessary throughout the length and breadth of the land. The material equip-

ment of even the large towns leaves much to be desired, and the smaller centres and country districts are still worse off. It is not even a case of bringing water-supply, draining, lighting &c. up to standard, for in many places these elementary requisites of a well-ordered civilised country do not exist. The South African habit of running up a handsome town hall in the midst of tin shanties, and then sitting down in admiration before it, was a feature of municipal life which often caused me much amusement. Tin shanties serve their purpose, but now the political unrest of the old days is removed South Africa may consolidate herself at leisure. The amount of work to be done in every direction is considerable. Many progressive schemes have been undertaken by the Governments of the various Colonies which will involve a large expenditure of money.

A rise in the standard of quality is already making itself felt in every branch of merchandise. This fact is one of the best proofs of increasing prosperity, and a sign much to be welcomed from every point of view. Even 'Kaffir truck' is rising in value, and the native shows signs of a desire to make more elaborate purchases than those he has been accustomed to in the past. This growth of wants in the Kaffir is, as we have seen, the true path along which salvation lies as regards the labour problem. The Kaffir bride, of whom Mr. Birchenough speaks as arrayed in white satin and orange-blossoms, and attended by pages and bridesmaids at a wayside station, may prove the most valuable ally the mine-owners could enlist in their struggle for labour. Undoubtedly they would do well to cultivate similar tastes in many such ladies—tastes the gratification of which would entail proportionate exer-

tions on the part of their masculine belongings. A feminine love of millinery is, after all, one of those first causes which lie deeply buried in the foundations of the industrial and social fabric.

Heavily though individuals must have suffered by the war, thanks to the abnormal trade resulting from it severe loss does not seem to have fallen on the commercial community viewed generally. But for the temporary check in development owing to the labour shortage, the peace would have resulted in but little slackening of business enterprise. Even when the abnormal operations connected with war repairs came to an end, the many needs consequent on expansion to which I have referred would have involved a steadily increasing volume of trade. The unexpected stagnation at Johannesburg makes itself felt, as it is bound to do, throughout the country, and for the moment the latter reflects the very serious check experienced by the mines. It is, after all, a very elementary axiom in physiology that the heart cannot suffer without damage to the smallest vein and artery in the circulation. But this period of depression may be safely regarded as but temporary, and one which will right itself automatically on the introduction of labour.

Mr. Birchenough, having first assured himself that South Africa offered a considerable and expanding market for commercial enterprise, next considered the methods by which British manufacturers might best take advantage of the latter. Five large ports—Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, and Delagoa Bay—are the gates by which commerce passes in and out of South Africa. Large importing firms are established in all the coast towns, with houses in the up-country centres. Sometimes, however, a

firm will have its headquarters in Johannesburg and its branch on the coast. The major part of the trade of the country passes through the hands of these firms; but there are, in addition, many independent local merchants. Important British and foreign manufacturers engaged in engineering works frequently establish their own houses in Johannesburg and import their goods direct. Competition between the various ports is very keen. As might be expected, it is Johannesburg whose affairs exercise a paramount influence on every commercial question great and small. Johannesburg is *par excellence* 'the market' of South Africa, and the supply of its numerous and increasing needs is a matter of first-rate importance to the coast towns. At the same time, the interests of the coast Colonies and the Transvaal are very divergent and require much skill in their adjustment. The former are agricultural and protectionist communities, whereas the industrial character of the Transvaal necessitates a free-trade policy. Under Republican rule the Transvaal stood without the Customs Union which united the rest of South Africa. Heavy transit duties were charged on all her goods, the coast Colonies in addition making various predatory raids on the traffic carried up-country. By the Bloemfontein Conference of March 1903 this state of affairs was swept away, and a Customs Convention concluded embracing all British South Africa. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this successful compromise, arrived at between the somewhat conflicting interests of the various States. The overthrow of economic barriers and the removal of possible tariff disputes from the long string of burning problems in South Africa is a matter on which the country cannot be sufficiently congratulated. The

Customs Union has paved the way for future political union of a more important character. The broad spirit of statesmanship displayed by the representatives of the different Colonies, and what may be called a general appreciation of that wider issue too often obscured in the past, were hopeful and happy signs for South Africa. At least the Bloemfontein Conference went to prove that the educative influence of a great war had not been thrown away on the country. Under the present arrangement a common and modified tariff has been adopted for all the South African Colonies. Transit dues are abolished and considerable reductions made in rates. The new agreement is decidedly in favour of the Transvaal; but by throwing her doors open to the trade of the coast Colonies she will compensate them for such sacrifices as they have made in their transit charges.

Delagoa Bay—that purchase we missed for the sake of a few paltry thousands—is much the best natural harbour in South Africa. Also it occupies a favoured position as regards the Transvaal, being distant only 396 miles from Johannesburg. On the other hand, 485 miles separate that city from Durban, 667 from East London, 715 from Port Elizabeth, and 1,015 from Cape Town.

Hence much sore feeling on the subject of railway rates among the British ports. The latter have strained every nerve to improve their somewhat poor natural resources, with a view to an effective handling of the Transvaal trade. The prospect of being cut out by the Delagoa line consequently is not regarded with equanimity by the coast merchants. But these latter may comfort themselves by the reflection that the expansion of trade in South Africa will shortly bring traffic

enough and to spare for all the different ports, and in the meantime the Portuguese show no signs of an energetic development of their railway resources.

We leave the ports, and pass along the different lines to that cockpit towards which they all converge. Mr. Birchenough, needless to say, gives a primary place in his report to the gold industry at Johannesburg, and bears emphatic testimony as regards all that it means to the country at large. He insists upon the paramount importance of the mines, their non-speculative character, and the great national issues connected with the labour problem. The Board of Trade Commissioner makes short work of the fallacious arguments anent 'standing still,' and points out the serious injury which the present stagnation is inflicting on the credit of the country. 'The real danger of the situation,' he writes, 'lies in the prolongation of the present financial strain. May not capital grow weary of waiting for a return which seems so long delayed, and seek other channels? Speedy relief is desirable not only for the financial groups which have to bear the heavy interest charges of the non-producing mines, but in the interest of the whole industrial and commercial development of the Transvaal. It is really a race against time; and that is why experiments, however well meaning, which take years to show their results are impracticable. Troublesome as the problem is, its difficulties are mainly concentrated on one factor. There is no dispute as to the wealth which lies in the Transvaal, nor is it denied that all the essential conditions which affect gold-mining are more favourable than before the war, with the single exception of the labour supply. It remains, therefore, to find an acceptable solution of this one question. The interests at

stake, which are not merely those of the financial groups, but, as I have indicated, the whole of the industrial and commercial interests of the Transvaal, are too important for it to be allowed to stand indefinitely in the way.'

Such testimony from an independent witness, on whose disinterestedness no shadow of suspicion can rest, is most valuable. Mr. Birchenough does not touch directly on the subject of Chinese labour. He confines himself to a study of the wider issue which underlies the latter. But his remarks are yet another proof as to the logical necessity of Asiatic immigration.

Granted labour, however—and I have dealt with the labour question so fully in previous chapters that it is unnecessary to go over the arguments again here—expansion is bound to come. The great questions for the British manufacturer are the character this expansion is likely to take, the new channels for trade it will open up, and his chances for profiting by the latter.

The gold industry estimates that, granted labour, they will be able to spend 50,000,000*l.* on fresh development during the next ten years. One-third of this total would be absorbed in equipment and machinery. It is unnecessary to insist on the field such a prospect opens up for engineering enterprise in this country. Railway extension is another pressing and important matter. As we saw in the first chapter, 6,000,000*l.* were set aside under the Guaranteed Loan for railway construction in the new Colonies. This expenditure has excited criticism in some quarters, but, in view of the prospective trade expansion, the Administration undoubtedly took a wise and statesmanlike view of the situation in pushing this work forward. The existing

lines have much difficulty in coping with the present traffic, and would be quite unable without improvements in their carrying power to meet the requirements of the future. New lines are needed urgently to open up the agricultural districts and bring them in touch with the industrial centres which form their natural market. Such lines are a necessary consequence of land settlement, if the latter is to prove successful. The Governments both of Natal and Cape Colony are also meditating a large expenditure on railway construction. Since the British occupation nearly 3,000,000*l.* have been spent in Great Britain upon rolling-stock for the new Colonies, and it is estimated that their requirements (those of the Central South African railways) will amount to from 500,000*l.* to 800,000*l.* per annum for some time to come. In addition to the needs of the mines and the railways, Government expenditure upon docks, irrigation works, and public buildings must amount to a considerable figure. I have already referred to the work which lies before the municipalities, and the many schemes to which they are pledged. Private enterprises, agricultural development, and the enormous increase in the demand for general merchandise which must result from all the above operations, still further swell the already large total. When all these factors are taken into consideration, the true character of the field offered to British trade in South Africa becomes manifest. There can be no question as to the scope afforded. The true question for us lies in our willingness or not to seize upon the opportunity presented to us.

Mr. Birchenough comments on the feeling he met throughout the country that, in view of the sacrifices made by Great Britain during the war, trade should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the old

country and her Colonies. This patriotic desire took practical shape at the Bloemfontein Conference, when under the new Customs Convention a preferential rate was given to British merchandise. Our trade at present occupies a dominant position in South Africa in spite of keen foreign competition. There is every desire on the part of the country herself that we should continue to hold and improve that position. It rests with ourselves to fortify our present vantage-ground, and to make the best of these great opportunities which lie within our reach.

It is calculated that 75 to 80 per cent. of South Africa's imports come from Great Britain or British possessions. Deducting, however, imports consisting of food-stuffs and natural products—articles in which Great Britain of course cannot compete—the figures work out still more to her advantage. When non-competitive articles are eliminated, and the comparison made between competitive articles alone, imports from the United Kingdom amount approximately to 75 or 80 per cent. of the total.

The two serious competitors with whom we have to reckon in South Africa are Germany and America. Keen business nations, both of them, they are fully alive to the possibilities of this great expanding market, which they are straining every nerve to capture. Belgium and Switzerland send a considerable quantity of goods into the country, but their competition is of secondary rank.

On the whole, Mr. Birchenough found the competition of Germany less serious than he expected, save in the mining-machinery and electrical markets. To use his expression, she 'nibbles everywhere,' and is a very general competitor, without, however, having obtained

a very definite foothold, save in the two directions just mentioned. Prior to the war her trade held a special position in the Transvaal, owing to circumstances which no longer operate in her favour. Still further, the factor of sentiment undoubtedly hampers her commercial concerns at the present moment. Resentment in South Africa is very deep as regards the attitude of Germany during the war, and the many slanders on the troops and the Government for which her press was responsible. A little wholesome payment in cash for the fictions she circulated with *malice prepense* to our detriment is not an unpoetic meed of justice for the recent performances of the Teutonic Empire. At the same time, the commercial enterprise and industry of Germany are above praise, and in no sense is her rivalry to be decried. Her traders are still further assisted by the system of reduced rates at which goods on the German State railways are carried for shipment at the ports. There can be no question of underrating her competition, but with proper energy and vigilance on our own part such competition should not attain to undue proportions.

As might be expected, it is in America, with her natural resources so vast and so superior to our own, that we find our most formidable rival. In electrical appliances, mining machinery, and labour-saving tools, her competition is very serious. A veritable international struggle exists at Johannesburg as regards mining equipment, and in this respect Great Britain has certainly fallen behindhand. The fact that a large number of engineers on the Rand are Americans undoubtedly influences the disposal of many orders to the United States. In the same way, the large German groups at Johannesburg steadily favour the manufactures of their own country.

But when due allowance is made for these circumstances, blame in the matter still attaches to the English firms themselves. The passages in which Mr. Birchenough analyses the reasons for this relative failure should be inscribed in large letters on the walls of every commercial house in this country. The quality of British work is never called in question. Value for value, it can more than hold its own against that of all other nations. But if in certain respects British manufactures have been outstripped by those of other nations, it is owing to defects in method, lack of adaptability, and a smaller degree of enterprise and vigour on the part of the manufacturer. This lack of energy is especially noticeable as regards electrical and mining machinery in Johannesburg—particularly electrical work, in which there can be no question as to the inferiority of the British as against the American or German article. The senseless agitation carried on by a certain section in this country as regards the gold industry is perhaps mainly responsible for the nervousness displayed by our manufacturers as regards commercial enterprise on the Rand. A great confusion of ideas has resulted from these attacks, and the speculative character of the share market most unjustly confounded with the solid industry itself. Hence there has been a tendency on the part of British manufacturers, disturbed by these vague rumours of financial instability, to look askance at Johannesburg and all its concerns. While they have hesitated and feared to put forth their full strength, Germans and Americans have stepped in and filled the place. It is just as well for the British working man to bear in mind that not only do the Little England party damage the credit of their country abroad, but, what may appeal to him more strongly,

cause his own wages to suffer through the work they have indirectly diverted to foreign countries.

I do not propose to follow in detail Mr. Birchenough's searching analysis of every branch of imports, its character, and the class of competition each in turn demonstrates. For this my readers will do well to turn to the report itself. Certainly it should be in the hands of every firm—especially the engineering ones—trading with South Africa. We are only concerned here with the general conclusions at which he arrives as regards our failure and success. Mr. Birchenough writes with conspicuous moderation and sanity of judgment as regards the present position, avoiding on the one hand that easy spirit of self-confidence which betrays England at so many points of her national life, and on the other that unjustifiable pessimism which represents our commercial affairs as in full decadence. 'Much of the depreciatory criticism directed by recent writers against the conduct and method of British trade is to be deprecated for the reason that it is too often indiscriminate and exaggerated in its character,' he writes. '. . . The important point is that our manufacturers should become aware of the weak point in their organisation, and should study and appreciate those methods of their rivals which have brought them success and are worthy of imitation. We too often put our natural gifts and rule-of-thumb methods against the carefully organised professional and scientific training of other nations. Moreover, our great success in the past inclines us to a certain slackness which prevents us from exerting ourselves to the utmost except under some kind of compulsion, and to a conservatism which makes us follow rather than lead in the evolution of modern business methods.'

On the other hand, in the best work the British manufacturers are still unsurpassed, and among their ranks are to be found men as shrewd and as enterprising as any in the world. The value of Mr. Birchenough's report lies in his demonstration that it only needs exertion on the part of Great Britain, and a resolute levelling upwards to the standard of her best men, in order to secure and retain the lion's share of South African trade. In fact, the gist of this inquiry may be summarised briefly in the notable words of the Royal traveller, 'Wake up, England!'

Mr. Birchenough examines the causes which have led to the success of foreign competition. Apart from an advantage in freights, to be referred to subsequently, American success practically resolves itself into the broad principle of greater activity, care, and alertness as regards business methods. The measures which should be taken by English manufacturers to improve their position are next examined at length. First and foremost, he urges upon them a more careful study of the local conditions and special features of the South African market. Over and over again politicians have blundered, and the country in consequence suffered heavily, through the lack of that trained expert knowledge which has made Indian administration a byeword for excellence. *Mutatis mutandis,* the same principle applies to its commercial affairs. As far as temperament is concerned, the personal equation tells all in favour of the pushful, alert, observant American. The Englishman, conservative by instinct, has a stereotyped standard of excellence from which he departs reluctantly. Modifications with a view to varying local conditions do not enter readily into his scheme of things. British makers of air-compressors, for instance, long declined

to recognise the fact that the Rand mines, standing at a height of 6,000 feet above sea-level, required longer cylinders than would be necessary in this country. Consequently many orders were lost owing to negligence on this point. The Americans, less solid and fundamentally efficient, are nevertheless more flexible in their habits, and by a careful study of local conditions turn out articles better adapted to the practical needs of the country. Also, generally speaking, their goods are of lighter make—a fact which has importance when heavy freight and railway rates have to be taken into account. Again, they show greater dash and enterprise in their attack on the markets; they spend money more freely in advertising, catalogues, and initial expenses; they enter into a hundred-and-one small details which the Englishman would despise as trivial. In all these small but important matters the foreigner possesses no inherent advantage. It only remains for the Englishman to adopt such simple and obvious methods, the success of which his rivals have demonstrated so clearly.

Better and more authoritative representation at Johannesburg is another matter of importance to which English firms should direct their attention. These representatives should be men of technical as well as business training, 'commercial engineers,' competent to discuss every point, commercial and mechanical, of a transaction. A more strict adherence to contract dates and a greater promptness in delivery would also obviate a common and well-founded ground of complaint against British firms. Dilatoriness and slackness in this direction have led to the loss of much work. Packing is another matter in which English manufacturers again lag sadly behind their Continental rivals.

Both America and Germany pay much attention to selling points and the attractive appearance of their goods. The English article, though fundamentally superior, is less taking to the eye. The manufacturer turns out something solid, and is in no way concerned as to its appearance. Packing is an important consideration, because goods are sent at buyers' risks, and the careless packing, too common among British firms, results in a heavy percentage of breakages. Americans score heavily in this respect. Their goods are neatly and efficiently packed in strong serviceable boxes, and they do not irritate their protesting customers by the delivery of cutlery and small hardware in brown-paper parcels or broken cardboard boxes.

Last, but not least, there is the whole great question of standardisation. The degree to which the fads and fancies of the Great George Street consulting engineer press upon the engineering world in this country is a well-founded ground of complaint familiar to all persons connected with business affairs. The absurd Board of Trade requirements, and the still more ridiculous conditions which the consulting engineer has the power of imposing on the manufacturer as regards large public or municipal undertakings, needlessly harass and complicate the maker's task. Specifications hampered by a mass of unnecessary detail are of course more costly to work from than those drawn on standard lines. So long as the practical man remains at the mercy of a college theorist, with ideas derived from text-books and a special set of well-oiled cranks running in his head, engineering work in this country will remain seriously hampered as regards American competition. And it is frequently over the largest and most important orders this class of hindrance is rampant. Standardisation

has not yet made its way in England, and so long as the Great George Street gentleman referred to above remains as the lion in the path its progress is likely to be slow. It is obvious, however, what an enormous advantage the American obtains from his habit of standardising types and working strictly to gauge so that spare parts may be stocked and quickly obtainable in case of accident. And if the advantage of quick repairs is manifest even in England, where individuals find themselves within easy reach of great industrial centres, what must it be in such a country as South Africa? Mr. Birchenough tells a story of two boiler-plates ordered by cable from England, for which the fellow-countrymen of George Stephenson have really occasion to blush. If an American machine breaks down, a spare is cabled for, and there is an end of the matter. If a similar breakdown takes place on an English machine, weeks and months often pass before the damage can be made good. It is impossible to insist too strongly on this point, because, if British machinery is to hold its own against American work on the Rand, it must, in addition to initial excellence, be as well prepared as its rival to meet the contingencies of break-downs.

We come to the question of freights. This is a very serious matter, and one on which it is highly desirable to bring the pressure of public opinion. The commercial tyranny exercised by the Ring known as the South African Shipping Conference is not sufficiently recognised even by the persons who travel to and from South Africa on their excellent and well-found steamers. The Conference consists of a combination of shipping companies, having as its aim the maintenance of uniform and high rates of freight between British and South

African ports. The recent admission of the principal German shipping firms has still further strengthened the autocratic power of the Ring. The latter is strong and wealthy, and able to crush down such independent competition as may struggle to assert itself. Hence its members have obtained a practical monopoly of all shipments to South Africa, and are able to dictate their terms to the unfortunate merchants. The system of rebates is another method by which the Ring coerce most effectually any customers with rebellious tendencies. Shippers are forced to pay what is known as primage—namely, an additional 10 per cent. on all freight charges when their goods are shipped. After nearly a year has elapsed the Conference magnanimously make a rebate of 10 per cent. on all freight and primage charges if the behaviour of the shippers in the meantime has been satisfactory—*i.e.* if they have despatched no goods by vessels other than those of the Ring. In the event of a shipper having exercised his liberty of thought and action as to the best means of forwarding his goods to their destination, the entire rebates standing to his credit are liable to confiscation. Fancy rates may be imposed on the culprit for a time by way of punishment, and the white-sheet-and-candle procedure is very popular with the Ring. The whole system is an admirable adaptation of the autocratic inquisitorial methods common in the Middle Ages, but distinctly at variance with twentieth-century doctrines. Emphatically it is not a system which is of advantage to British trade in South Africa. The high freights are a heavy tax on merchandise, and they are proportionately higher than any others in the world. South African merchants groan under the system; but they are helpless in the matter, the actual service being

quick and regular, and no other available. Of course, it is only fair to say the Ring make out a case for themselves too. They claim freights must necessarily be high because practically they bring no return cargo from South Africa; they supply a first-rate fleet; and they do not make abnormal profits. Also, the rebate system is not peculiar to their combination, but exists elsewhere. The minatory attitude of the Ring and the utter lack of tact displayed are largely responsible for the existing irritation and dislike. But the whole system is a bad one, and, as we shall now see, has inflicted the most real damage on British trade.

In 1902 two English companies, the Prince and the Houston lines, carrying goods from New York to South Africa, made up their minds to defy the Conference. A freight war ensued, which has had very serious consequences. For months the two former lines shipped cargoes from America at an all-round price of 10*s.* per ton. The Conference rates from British ports at the same time varied from 25*s.* to 42*s.* 6*d.* per ton. The American rates, it is true, are rising now, but are still much below the English charges. The facilities given to the introduction of American goods owing to this freight war, and the proportionate damage done to British merchandise, are incalculable. In machinery tenders, when there is close competition in price and quality between English and American goods, 18*s.* to 25*s.* per ton difference in freightage is enough to determine the destination of the order. American merchants naturally took advantage of these low rates to flood the country with merchandise which in an ordinary way would never have obtained a foothold there. Mr. Birchenough lays particular stress more than once on these incidents and their lamentable results as regards

the British manufacturer. 'After careful inquiry,' he writes, 'I am convinced that no single circumstance has done so much to promote the growth of American trade during the past twelve months as these low freights between American and South African ports. It is not pleasant to reflect that they are the result of the action of British and not of foreign steamship companies.' The sting, indeed, lies in the fact that British trade has been thus severely wounded in the house, not of its foes, but of its friends.

The whole incident raises a very big question, which must come to a head sooner or later. How far trusts and monopolies should be allowed to damage the commercial interests of a whole country and penalise its trade for the sake of their own profits or quarrels is a matter on which the said monopolies some fine day will find public opinion unpleasantly active.

In addition to shipping freights, railway rates in South Africa are also high, and seriously affect the cost of living in the inland Colonies. They stand, however, in a different category from the Shipping Ring, as railways are State property, and their profits are used for revenue purposes. The whole principle of using State railways for revenue purposes is vicious theoretically, and open to serious objections on economic grounds. So long as freights and railway rates remain high, the up-country merchant is able to take refuge behind them, and charge exorbitant prices for his goods under the cloak of transit costs. It is the old moral of protective duties in any form—every person, save the unfortunate consumer, seeks to make an illegitimate profit out of them. But, for the moment, South Africa cannot help herself in this matter. As we saw in the first chapter, the railway profits in the new Colonies

constitute the main provision for the debt charges on the Guaranteed Loan. They are the most lucrative of all Government assets, and, for the time being, inter-Colonial finance cannot dispense with their receipts. The emergency character of the arrangement is, however, fully recognised by the Administration. As we have seen, the Bloemfontein Conference provided for a considerable reduction in charges, which must in turn tend to decrease the cost of living. As the general prosperity of the country advances, and more sources of revenue come into operation, it will be possible to lower the rates still further. We are brought back once again to the old, old story, the same eternal moral which South Africa presents from whatever point of view her affairs are regarded. Industrial development is the keystone of the situation, political, social, and commercial, and industrial development is purely a question of labour. The weighty evidence of the Board of Trade inquiry is valuable testimony on this point.

I stated at the beginning of this chapter that Mr. Birchenough's report inevitably suggests reflections touching a wider issue than South African trade. Where we have lost ground in South Africa it is mainly—apart from the question of freights—owing to our own slackness and want of adaptability. Is it unreasonable to apply the same line of argument to drawbacks from which our general trade may appear to be suffering? The perusal of this report must raise a question in any mind not fanatically attached to one side or another of the fiscal controversy, as to whether we are getting the best possible results out of the present system. At least it is not unreasonable to suggest that, before undertaking so vast an upheaval as a return to protection in any form would involve,

we should make quite sure that existing defects lie at the door of free trade, and not at that of our own incapacity and lack of enterprise. If it can be shown that failure has resulted not from a system, but from our own slackness, then to encourage such slackness with the protection of tariffs would of all steps be the most undesirable for industrial *morale*. When British merchants have demonstrated in neutral markets that their business methods are equal to those of their keenest rivals, and at the same time we find them losing ground at home and in protected countries, then tariff reform may indeed be looked upon as necessary and vital. Superiority in the neutral market would be the best possible proof that where ground is lost elsewhere the fault lies in the system and not in the individual.

In the meantime many persons will continue to suspect that when a general improvement all round is effected in method—that improvement we have seen to be so necessary in South Africa—British trade, even on its present basis, will have little to fear from the competition of Continental and American rivals.

CHAPTER XII

NATIVES AND THE NATIVE CHURCH MOVEMENT

I HAVE already referred to the truth of Mr. Benjamin Kidd's remark that all political and economic matters in the sub-continent are at present in the first instance related to the Native question.

We have traced in the preceding chapters the economic difficulties arising from that unique duality of race in which the secret of all South African anomalies must be sought. The political aspect of the case, on which I have not as yet touched, is no less serious; but since circumstances have not arisen to fling it into sudden and violent prominence, the public at large has by no means grasped its bearings. It is very doubtful whether the particular manner in which England has been aroused to the consciousness that a Native problem exists in South Africa will prove beneficial to any interest concerned. Violence and recrimination seem bound up inevitably with the discussion of South African difficulties, and Native affairs are not likely to prove an exception to the general rule. Yet, of all others, they call for calm dispassionate judgment, for strict justice and broad-based humanity. The general atmosphere of strife and confusion will not simplify the future discussion of the great racial issues confronting

South Africa in their dual aspects—that of blacks and whites, and that of Boers and British. Both aspects are of great importance; but, strange though it may seem at first sight, when we remember the life-and-death struggle from which we have but recently emerged, the former wholly outstrips the latter in gravity. Yet there can be no question that the real problem confronting the future South African Dominion will be connected with the black rather than with the Boer. Whatever friction may exist at present between the white races, there is no reason to anticipate that it will be perpetuated in the far future. Education, propinquity, the ties of friendship and marriage, and a common affection for the land, are all causes which will operate to soften down and eliminate the bitterness of the late struggle. When viewed on broad historical lines, the future of the white races gives no cause for anxiety, in spite of immediate difficulties which often appear formidable. It is all-important to remember, however, that in the same proportion as time helps to solve the problem of Dutch *versus* English, it complicates that of black *versus* white. South Africa is, as we have seen, at one and the same time a black and a white man's country, but the preponderating population is black, and must always remain so. As the native rises in the scale of civilisation the industrial difficulty will grow less acute, for his increasing wants will compel him to work with greater regularity. But civilisation, as it diminishes the industrial difficulty, is bound to aggravate proportionately the political dangers of the situation. South Africa, let it be remembered, is a land governed by representative institutions, and not by the Crown Colony system of other tropical countries possessing a native population. As

the Kaffir grows civilised and comes under the operation of European law, he also becomes possessed of a vote. Colour, under any democratic system, cannot be regarded as a disqualification for the exercise of electoral rights. Civilisation can alone be the test; but it is the measure and quality of that civilisation, as far as the Kaffir is concerned, which excites misgivings. In a land where the blacks largely outnumber the whites, the growth of European customs among the latter, and their ability to exercise the franchise, are bound sooner or later to raise controversy of an acute character. The proportion of civilised Kaffirs living under European law is as yet small, but their numbers must steadily increase as tribal tenure wanes, and in this fact lies the electoral crux of the future. That black men should be in a position to influence or control laws made for white men, is a state of affairs no European race will tolerate in the long run. And, with every wish to deal justly and fairly by the black, one cannot but feel that he is not fitted to exercise such authority. In years to come, however, if the Bantu races continue to multiply at their present rate, and civilisation spreads among them to any large extent, there can be no question that South Africa will be confronted with a racial issue to which the British and Boer controversy will appear mere child's play. It is a problem of to-morrow rather than of to-day, and European South Africa as a whole has not as yet evolved a definite policy on the subject. *Solvitur ambulando* is the motto of her politicians as regards the difficulties involved by the rights and status of the civilised Kaffir. Federation, when it comes, must bring the question to a head; and may that hour find wisdom and justice enthroned in the high places of South Africa!

That the danger to which I have referred—of coloured influence in white politics—is no chimerical one, the recent Cape elections prove conclusively. Certain features of that contest can only be looked upon as most disquieting. The natives practically dominated the whole situation, the Kaffir vote holding the balance of power in a number of constituencies. Not one good word can be said in favour of such an unedifying spectacle as Bond and Progressives alike, cap in hand, wooing the Native vote. Tengo Jabavu, the Kaffir editor of the 'Imvo,' was actually pressed to stand by Mr. Sauer as candidate for Beaufort West in the Dutch interest. When one reflects upon the great Imperial issues at stake during the last election, and the paramount importance at this present crisis that a loyal Government should hold office at the Cape, it is not pleasant to remember that such issues lay at the mercy of a number of Kaffirs but recently emerged from barbarism. The fact that matters most luckily turned out as we could wish cannot blind us to the highly dangerous character of the principle involved. The political complications of Africa are already sufficiently serious, without the assumption by the Kaffirs of the *rôle* of Parnellites—a *rôle* they undoubtedly aspire to play. Nevertheless, it is most puzzling to devise some system by which the rights—the legitimate rights—of the blacks can be recognised in electoral matters, without allowing them to exercise, in their present state of civilisation, any dominating influence in politics. Their preponderating numbers are disquieting, and the political aspirations of no uncertain character which they are developing may cause serious trouble.

It is not my intention, in the present chapter, to

describe the general outlines of the South African Colour problem as it affects the country at large. I am concerned here only with the sketch of a recent Native movement, the history of which is a most significant sign of the times. A strange leaven is at present working among the educated Kaffirs throughout the country, a leaven to which the affairs of the Ethiopian Church bear emphatic testimony. The struggle for supremacy between Boer and Briton has for a long time held the field to the exclusion of all other issues in South Africa; but impossible, pitiful even though it may seem to us, slowly, and in the shadow of the greater conflict, a new ideal is taking possession of the black man's mind—Africa for the Africans. It is a dream, a mad dream, the realisation of which is impossible; but it is a delusion which may bring strange events in its train.

Education is spreading rapidly among the natives, and they show the greatest eagerness to profit by its advantages, so much so, that there are not nearly enough schools to meet the demand. The aim of the latter-day educated native is freedom—freedom in all matters political and social. This spirit is manifesting itself by a series of what are called 'New Movements,' generally connected with religion. Certain enterprising natives have discovered that the desire for a free hand and uncontrolled action as regards their white neighbours can best be achieved by starting a new denomination. The result has been, in the first place, the creation of much restlessness and discontent throughout the country; and, in the second, the introduction of a new and pernicious factor into South African life—namely, the American negro.

Broadly speaking, there is perhaps no country in the world where missionary work is carried out on such sensible lines as in South Africa. Great mistakes, it is true, were made in the past; but to-day the large majority of missionaries fully recognise the vital importance of civil as well as theological training for the native, and approach his necessities of soul and body from that point of view. Whatever may be urged with force and justice against missionary enterprise in some parts of the world, and the folly of interfering with such highly developed religious systems as exist among the Hindoos or Chinese, one is forced to own that the circumstances are different in South Africa. A large indigenous black population in a low stage of mental development, occupying the same country as white settlers possessed of representative institutions, is bound sooner or later to develop needs which, in common justice, must be met by the dominant race. We do not allow the Kaffir to drink, rob, or carry on wars. We insist that he should adapt himself to our standards and learn to be decent and virtuous, because, if not, he would highly inconvenience his white neighbours and upset the machinery of the State. Some system of training must be given him accordingly by which he may learn those elementary principles on which civilised government rests. How that end is to be achieved for a raw Kaffir, whose aboriginal idea of bliss is massacre and brandy, is a problem which has nonplussed many thinkers. Mr. Rhodes, in the Glen Grey Act, made a great step towards its solution, but even the Glen Grey Act presupposes a certain amount of training. The Kaffir cannot be left to himself to annoy Europeans with his savage habits, and missionary work on sensible lines among them is certainly desirable

in South Africa. Sir George Grey, who was untiring in his efforts towards promoting the welfare of the coloured races, encouraged the establishment of industrial institutions in various parts of the country, where young natives might learn trades. When missionary work, as at the noble institution of Lovedale, is conducted on these principles, it can only be productive of good. The natives learn a most practical form of Christianity, based on work, duty, and example, well fitted to the needs of a transition period. Few people, whether they approve or disapprove of missionary work on principle, will call in question the self-sacrificing devotion which inspires men and women to give up their lives to labouring among the heathen. For many years, with varying aims and success, different missionary bodies have been established in South Africa, and have given the natives such training as they have acquired in religion and education. Certain missionaries, often with more zeal than discretion, have consistently upheld the rights of the natives, and to them, more perhaps than to any other class, the Kaffir should certainly owe gratitude and affection. The practical expression of that gratitude, however, as demonstrated by the history of the Ethiopian Church movement, must, to say the least, have proved deeply discouraging to the missionary authorities.

For many years past there has been a desire on the part of the educated natives to acquire control of the native churches and schools throughout South Africa. Whether this was a natural growth or a transported idea from America is difficult to say; probably both causes operated. Some of the better-class natives, hearing of negro colleges in America, staffed throughout by native teachers, were filled with a strong desire to

visit them. Among these was a Wesleyan native preacher named Dwane, formerly a Lovedale student. While in the United States he enlisted the sympathies of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, an important negro denomination in the States, the aim of which is to reach the natives in Africa through the natives. Up to the time of Dwane's visit the missionary efforts of the African Methodist Episcopal Church were confined to Sierra Leone, the native land of the American negro. But on Dwane placing before their minds, with all the skill and art of Kaffir eloquence, the sad picture of a race in South Africa without schools or churches of their own, the American negro Methodists resolved to take steps to remedy this sad state of affairs. They ignored all that the missionary churches and societies of England and Scotland had done; they regarded them as non-existent, if not actually harmful; and in their papers and on their platforms they spoke of the Kaffir race as destitute of all means and opportunities for their advancement. The European missionaries, indeed, were treated as though they were a hindrance rather than a help. Bishop Turner, the Primate of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was sent out to South Africa on an organising tour, Dwane accompanying him. They went from town to town and from district to district, founding their new church. Dwane was made a 'bishop,' many half-educated and wholly ignorant men were ordained pastors, deans, pro-bishops, &c. One or two dozen natives were sent back to America to be educated as teachers, and these teachers were on their return to found a college for natives—a college within the walls of which nothing white would ever be allowed to enter.

And needless to say, the movement proved eminently

successful among the natives, who were like children with a new toy. A wave of what might almost be called religious hysteria swept over the country. The first result of this agitation was the estrangement of a large number of Kaffirs from the churches to which they belonged. It is important to note that the Ethiopian Church has accomplished little or no work among the real heathen. Its main object has been to entice away the followers of other denominations and embroil the members of existing congregations in angry disputes. Following in the wake of Dwane and the Ethiopian Church, other natives were moved to start sects of their own. Among these latter must be mentioned a movement set on foot by the Rev. J. P. Mzimba, of the Lovedale Native Congregation. This energetic evangelist had indeed to be restrained from appropriating property belonging to the Free Church, the administration of which he was apparently convinced would prosper better in his hands than in those of its rightful owners. Religious propaganda even became popular among native headmen, some of whom actually proceeded to adopt coercive measures with their tribes on the subject of their doctrinal tenets—a true hallmark of theological ardour in all ages. So notorious did this spirit become that the Secretary for Native Affairs in Cape Colony was forced to interfere and warn the chiefs that, however desirable spiritual advancement might be, the Government could not permit coercion to be exercised in order to achieve such ends. The natives were greatly unsettled by this movement—a fact to which the Cape of Good Hope Native Affairs Blue Book for 1899 testifies in more places than one.

'The natives have been agitated by a Church move-

ment on professedly racial lines,' writes one inspector of Native locations. 'The leading idea is to cast off the white man altogether in Church matters. The doctrines taught, the form of Church government, are secondary considerations. The name of the Church conveys the leading and master thought of the organisation. In the designation "Ethiopian Church" is contained the very pith of the movement. She lays claim to being the Native national Church into which all tribes shall come; prophesies the birth of a great nation out of herself—viz. the Ethiopian Church; seeks to be entirely independent of all European control in Church matters; to this end has its own bishop (a Kaffir by birth), who is now the presiding elder in this country. Having freed themselves from the Churches of their fathers—namely, the Wesleyan, London Missionary Free Church and Presbyterian, and last, but not least, the Church of their Queen—ignoring all these, and figuratively locking their doors, they profess their ministers have the keys to open the true Native Church.'

Bishop Turner returned to the States in 1898 with a glowing report as to the field awaiting negro missionary effort in South Africa. After a time, however, a rift in the lute appeared between Dwane and his American friends. Brotherly love and concord were replaced by acrimonious disputes as to the seat of authority in this particular religion. Dwane finally cut the Gordian knot, as far as he was concerned, in a somewhat drastic manner. With true Kaffir recklessness, he repudiated the authority of the Church in the United States, and in August 1900 transferred himself *en bloc* with 10,000 of his followers to the bosom of the Anglican Church. The fracas caused by his

secession is better imagined than described. Mzimba, however, continued to work on independent lines, calling his denomination the South African Native Presbyterian Church.

The ludicrous elements in the above history are so numerous that at first sight it seems difficult to consider the story in other than a farcical light. Unfortunately this Ethiopian or Mzimba movement, as it is now called, proves on inquiry to be the outcome of a more serious state of affairs than is immediately apparent. The ideal to which I referred above—of Africa for the Africans—lies at the root of the entire propaganda. It is necessary to realise clearly that in spirit and purpose the whole movement is nothing more nor less than an anti-white crusade. It is impossible to go behind this fact, which is an explanation of all that has taken place. To undermine the influence of the white man in religious affairs, and thus break down his control in so important a branch of national life, is the real aim in view, not spiritual advancement or religious zeal. The whole matter is one of race prejudice, and especially of prejudice against the English as the dominant race in South Africa. Hence many natives are sending their children to be educated at American negro institutions, pleading that they are forced to obtain across the Atlantic the education denied them in South Africa; hence native ministers have severed themselves from their European connection; hence educated natives have been found to sympathise with the Dutch in the recent war, as representing the less powerful white element in the country. The question of Fingo *versus* Kaffir also enters into the matter, anti-British feeling being stronger among the Fingos than among any other native race in South Africa.

Generally speaking the native vote is always favourably inclined towards the Bond. Further, it must be noted that the Ethiopian movement has made more progress among the Fingos than elsewhere.

The introduction of the American negro into South Africa as a result of this propaganda is a most regrettable circumstance. Discordant elements the country possesses already in abundance without further racial bitterness being imported from the United States. Nurtured in a country where racial strife has attained to proportions far exceeding those which even exist in South Africa, shallow, excitable, semi-educated, the American negroes are already sowing seeds of discord from Cape Town to the Barotse Valley, which may bear grave fruit. The assumptions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the aims which the negro evangelists set before themselves in South Africa are not a little startling. They are explained in the American organ of the denomination, the 'Voice of Missions,' with a point and fullness which leave no doubts as to the self-confidence of this body as regards the task they set before themselves. They approach the subject, in fact, in a spirit marked by any characteristic save that of modesty. A twelve-roomed building has been acquired in Cape Colony by the African Methodist Episcopal Church and recently converted into a South African college for natives. The staff is, of course, to be a negro one, and from the college is to spring the regeneration of the land. It is politely intimated to the European missionaries that, having failed entirely in their work, it is advisable that they should pack up and depart, leaving missionary enterprise in the hands of their coloured American brethren. Many people may say that such aspirations are of so

absurd a character that it is waste of time to investigate them. But South Africa, more than any other land, must surely have proved already that aspirations, absurd in themselves, may suffice to plunge a whole nation into bloodshed. Contentions, however ludicrous, may contain elements of danger if unwisely handled.

'The South African College means the reorganisation of our South African work and the solution of the great problem that has baffled the astute Missionary Boards of the Protestant world,' says a recent article in the 'Voice of Missions.' 'With proper facilities for educating natives in Africa under the auspices of their own people, whose confidence and love they cannot question, it is a comparatively easy task to imbue the native mind with correct ideas of civilisation and Christianity. It is obvious to all unbiassed investigators that absolute confidence in the teacher is the key to success of his work, and that this can be had more easily by the native African in his educated brother is a fact that defies contradiction.' 'The negro comes in the morning of the twentieth century, clothed with the habiliments of righteousness and intellectual fitness, but to say to his white brother and co-labourer in the vineyard of the Lord: "Here am I. Send me to the rescue of bleeding Africa. Through God I will heal the world's open sore."'

The racial drift of all this, and much else that could be quoted, is clear. To stir up strife and ill-will between the native and European under the specious guise of a 'kindred relationship, giving him a free passport to the confidence and love of his unenlightened and uncivilised brethren;' to alienate the natives from the European Churches who have laboured unceasingly in their cause

for the last fifty years; to replace qualified white teachers who fulfil the standards of Western civilisation by negro bishops and professors trained at negro universities, where black men confer degrees upon each other—such are the disquieting aims which the emissaries of the African Methodist Episcopal Church are setting before themselves in South Africa. And among a people weak, credulous, unstable, weighed down by a sense of crushing inferiority as regards their white brethren, but moved nevertheless by vague aspirations towards liberty and freedom, newcomers who preach such a gospel of Kaffir competence and white incompetence are bound to be popular.

It is as a characteristic product of the unrest which is at present operating among the educated South African natives that the Ethiopian Church movement deserves attention. It is but another indication of that painful waking to the higher possibilities of life, unaccompanied by any qualities which bring such possibilities within practical reach, which inevitably troubles a black race sooner or later as a result of its juxtaposition with European civilisation. To the black man, indeed, the path of knowledge would appear to be wholly the path of pain. It leads him within sight of heights from the ascent of which his mental disabilities would seem for ever to bar him. Little wonder that such a realisation raises within him a spirit of impotent revolt, of angry rebellion against the natural limitations of his lot—limitations which education makes only too plain to him. All observers of native affairs in South Africa are well aware that this spirit is abroad in the land, and that grave political and social complications are bound in the long run to result from its spread and increase. The Mzimba movement, which

is at present only a swell on the surface of the deep, may develop into a storm. The object lesson of the United States has only too clearly demonstrated that civilisation and progress have not the smallest tendency to eliminate distinctions between the white man and the black; though as the weaker vessel the native has the right to demand from us a full measure of toleration and understanding in all matters affecting his welfare. Our position as the superior race can only be made good by the rightful use of our better faculties and wider opportunities. We cannot afford to laugh at or despise such movements as that of the Ethiopian Church. Our sovereignty entails heavy burdens; and however irksome and wearisome, we must give of our best to those less happily endowed. Such a spirit alone can solve the innumerable difficulties of our task.

There are moments when it is difficult not to feel oppressed by the character and the gravity of the problems confronting the Empire in all quarters of the globe. Michael Angelo's great figure of Dawn waking to the tortured realisation of a painful world might almost be considered as symbolical of the birth of the twentieth century. Each country in turn seems weighted down with cares. War, suspicion, and distress make a mock of civilisation and Christianity. We are passing through a moment of chaos and transition when a nation requires to set first principles before itself with unswerving steadiness. It is as though the whole world had been led out into the desert, and its temptation is to cry aloud that the stones be made bread lest it faint by the way. But there can be no doubt, if the temptation is resisted, the ordeal will endow those who endure to the end with new powers

of strength and purpose. This is particularly the case with South Africa. She has come through a very furnace of affliction—the furnace which either destroys or refines. In this critical moment of her history all will depend on the direction she gives to the cooling mass of her own purposes. Rugged but alluring land, land of sorrow and of sunshine, it rests with herself to rise purged and great from the ordeals of the past few years. The very passion of feeling she has stirred in thousands of hearts should be no trifling help to her to-day. For Africa has received greatly and must repay greatly: perhaps we can render her no better service than to insist on the magnitude of her debt. She owes it to the Empire to justify its faith in her. Pain and sorrow have gone forth like vivifying spirits throughout the length and breadth of the land; the memory of the dead should check all unworthy impulse, should stir her ever to noblest endeavour. Responsibilities and duties have been placed within her hands, and the spirit in which she accepts them is the touchstone of her destiny. May her men and women rally round her in this hour of trial and inevitable reaction, and see to it that she falls not below the highest possibilities of that destiny! For the great angels which stand round the Throne of Life—Justice, Mercy, Truth, Charity—turn not with covered faces from the *sursum corda* of nations or of individuals, but are swift to succour, sure to heal.

APPENDIX A.

Summary of Area and Population of British South Africa, Portuguese East Africa, and German West Africa.

—	Area in Square Miles	Population		
		White	Coloured	Total
Cape Colony	277,151	388,324	1,652,036	2,040,360
Natal	42,000	82,600	791,010	873,610
Basutoland	10,293	647	262,561	263,208
Bechuanaland Protectorate	213,000	?	147,000	147,000
Orange River Colony	48,326	77,716	129,787	207,503
Transvaal (and Swaziland)	120,639	238,597	665,666	904,263
Southern Rhodesia	143,830	11,032	563,271	574,303
Northern Rhodesia	?	188	556,000	556,188
Total	855,239	799,104	4,767,331	5,566,435
German West Africa	325,000	3,388	300,000	303,388
Portuguese East Africa	275,000	7,000	3,630,360	3,637,360
Grand Total	1,455,239	809,492	8,697,691	9,507,183

APPENDIX B.

Estimated Native Population of South and Central Africa, based upon data accepted by both the Majority and Minority Reports of the Transvaal Labour Commission.[1]

South Africa, South of the Zambesi	Numbers	Source of Information
Cape Colony, including British Bechuanaland	1,652,036	Government, June 30, 1903.
Natal	791,010	Blue Book, 1902.
Orange River Colony	129,787	Assistant Colonial Secretary, August 2, 1903.
Southern Rhodesia	563,271	Native Commissioners, 1903.
German South-West Africa	300,000	Telegram from Consul-General.
Bechuanaland Protectorate	147,000	Resident Commissioner, August 11, 1903.
Swaziland	60,000	Sir Godfrey Lagden's Estimate.
Basutoland	262,561	Resident Commissioner, August 12, 1903.
Transvaal	605,666	Sir G. Lagden.
Portuguese East Africa—		
Southern Province	1,815,180	Calculated on Breyner & Worth's official figures.
Total	6,326,511	
British Possessions North of the Zambesi—		
Northern Rhodesia	556,000	Major Coryndon and Statesman's Year Book.
British Central Africa	900,000	Statesman's Year Book, 1903.
Uganda Protectorate	4,000,000	Statesman's Year Book, 1903.
Portuguese East Africa—		
Northern Province	1,815,180	
Total	7,271,180	

Total for South Africa . . 6,326,511
Total for Central Africa . . 7,271,180

Grand Total . . 13,597,691

[1] Blue Book, Cd., 1894.

APPENDIX C.

Estimated Labour Requirements of the Transvaal, as embodied in the Majority Report of the Labour Commission, 1903. *Blue Book, Cd.,* 1894.

—	Estimated number required	At work	Shortage
Agriculture	80,000	27,715	52,285
Mining	197,644	68,280	129,364
Other industries	69,684	69,684	No data obtainable
Central South African Railways.			
Open lines	16,000	12,402	3,598
New construction	40,000	3,848	36,152
	403,328	181,929	221,399

Estimated Labour Requirements of the Transvaal, as embodied in the Minority Report of the Labour Commission.

Witwatersrand gold-mining (producing)	75,000
Witwatersrand gold-mining (developing)	16,000
Witwatersrand coal-mining	12,000
Other districts (gold)	12,250
Railways	20,000
Agriculture	55,000
Other industries	69,700
Total	259,950

APPENDIX D.

Analysis of Population, White and Coloured, in the African Continent.

—	Population	
	White	Coloured
British Possessions—		
British South Africa	799,104	4,767,331
British Central Africa	450	900,000
Uganda Protectorate	300	4,000,000
East African Protectorate	500	3,999,050
Somaliland Protectorate	?	153,000
British West Africa — Gold Coast	646	1,486,433
British West Africa — Lagos	308	1,500,000
British West Africa — Gambia	198	90,206
British West Africa — Sierra Leone	224	74,611
British West Africa — Sierra Leone Protectorate	?	1,000,000
Nigeria	399	25,000,000
Total	802,129	43,070,631
French Possessions—		
Tunis	121,556	1,900,000
Algeria	357,341	4,072,080
French Congo	?	10,000,000
French Somali Coast	?	200,000
Western Sahara and Wadai	?	2,550,000
Senegal	3,000	4,520,000
Military Territories	?	12,000
French Guinea	?	2,200,000
Ivory Coast	347	2,000,000
Dahomey	?	1,000,000
Senegambia and Niger Territories	?	3,000,000
Total	482,244	31,454,080

APPENDIX D (*continued*).

	Population	
	White	Coloured
Portuguese Territories:		
Portuguese East Africa	6,000	3,637,360
Portuguese Guinea	?	820,000
Angola	?	4,119,000
Total	6,000	8,576,360
German Territories:		
Togoland	159	2,500,000
Cameroon	581	3,500,000
German South-West Africa	3,388	300,000
German East Africa	1,247	6,847,000
Total	5,375	13,147,000
Italian Possessions:		
Eritrea	2,014	450,000
Italian Somaliland	?	400,000
Total	2,014	850,000
Independent States:		
Morocco	?	5,000,000
Abyssinia	?	3,500,000
Congo Free State	2,346	30,000,000
Liberia	?	2,060,000
Total	2,346	40,560,000
Semi-Independent States:		
Egypt	112,574	9,621,879
Anglo-Egyptian Soudan	?	1,870,500
Total	112,574	11,492,379

GRAND TOTALS.

—	Population	
	White	Coloured
British Possessions	802,129	43,070,631
French ,, ...	482,244	31,454,080
German ,, ...	5,375	13,147,000
Portuguese ,, ...	6,000	8,576,360
Italian ,, ...	2,014	850,000
Congo Free State	2,346	30,000,000
Morocco	?	5,000,000
Abyssinia	?	3,500,000
Liberia	?	2,060,000
Egypt	112,574	9,621,879
Anglo-Egyptian Soudan . . .	?	1,870,500
Total	1,412,682	149,150,450

NOTE.—The author desires to draw attention to the approximate character of the figures in Appendix D. Though compiled from the best available sources, accurate statistics of the African continent as a whole are not forthcoming. The estimate of the native population is likely, however, to be under rather than over the mark.

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