Lord Milner's Work in South Africa

From its Commencement in 1897 to the Peace of Vereeniging in 1902

W. Basil Worsfold

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Author: W. Basil Worsfold

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Milner

Milner signature

LORD MILNER'S WORK
IN SOUTH AFRICA

FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT IN 1897 TO
THE PEACE OF VEREENIGING IN 1902

CONTAINING HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED INFORMATION

BY W. BASIL WORSFOLD

WITH PORTRAITS AND MAP

"What would have been the position to-day in South Africa if there had not been a man prepared to take upon himself responsibility; a man whom difficulties could not conquer, whom disasters could not cow, and whom obloquy could never move?"—LORD GOSCHEN *in the House of Lords, March 29th, 1906*

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY ALBEMARLE STREET W
1906

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PREFACE

In sending this book to press I have only two remarks to make by way of preface.

The first is wholly personal. It has been my good fortune to reside twice for a considerable period in South Africa—first in the neighbourhood of Capetown (1883-5), and afterwards in Johannesburg (1904-5). During these periods of residence, and also during the long interval between them, I have been brought into personal contact with many of the principal actors in the events which are related in this book. While, therefore, no pains have been spared to secure accuracy by a careful study of official papers and other reliable publications, my information is not derived by any means exclusively from these sources.

My second remark is the expression of a hope that the contents of this book may be regarded not merely as a chapter of history, but also as a body of facts essential to the full understanding of the circumstances and conditions of South Africa, as it is to-day. Since the restoration of peace—an event not yet five years old—a great change has been wrought in the political and economic framework of this province of the empire. None the less, with a few conspicuous exceptions, almost all of the principal actors in these pages are still there; and, presumably, they are very much the same men now as they were before, and during, the war. And in this connection it remains to notice an aspect of the South African struggle which transcends all others in fruitfulness and importance. It was a struggle to keep South Africa not a dependency of Great Britain, but a part of the empire. The over-sea Britains, understanding it in this sense, took their share in it. They made their voices heard in the settlement. The service which they thus collectively performed was great. It would have been infinitely greater if they had been directly represented in an administration nominally common to them and the mother country. No political system can be endowed with effective unity —with that organic unity which is the only effective unity—unless it is possessed of a single vehicle of thought and action. To create this vehicle—an administrative body in which all parts of the empire would be duly represented

—is difficult to-day. The forces of disunion, which are at work both at home and beyond the seas, may make it impossible to-morrow.

W. B. W.

RIDGE, NEAR CAPEL, SURREY,
October 19th, 1906

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LORD MILNER

CHAPTER I

DOWNING STREET AND THE MAN ON THE SPOT

The failure of British administration in South Africa during the nineteenth century forms a blemish upon the record of the Victorian era that is at first sight difficult to understand. If success could be won in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, in India and in Egypt, why failure in South Africa? For failure it was. A century of wars, missionary effort, British expansion, industrial development, of lofty administrative ideals and great men sacrificed, had left the two European races with political ambitions so antagonistic, and social differences so bitter, that nothing less than the combined military resources of the colonies and the mother-country sufficed to compel the Dutch to recognise the British principle of "equal rights for all white men south of the Zambesi." Among the many contributory causes of failure that can be distinguished, the two most prominent are the nationality difficulty and the native question. But these are problems of administration that have been solved elsewhere: the former in Canada and the latter in India. Or, to turn to agencies of a different order, is the cause of failure to be found in a grudging nature—the existence of physical conditions that made it difficult for the white man, or for the white and coloured man together, to wring a livelihood from the soil? The answer is that the like material disadvantages have been conquered in Australia, India, and in Egypt, by Anglo-Saxon energy. We might apply the Socratic method throughout, traversing the entire range of our distinguishable causes; but in every case the inquiry would reveal success in some other portion of the Anglo-Saxon domain to darken failure in South Africa.

Nevertheless, in so far as any single influence can be assigned to render intelligible a result brought about by many agencies, various in themselves and operating from time to time in varying degrees, the explanation is to be found in a little incident that happened in the second year of the Dutch East India

Company's settlement at the Cape of Good Hope. The facts are preserved for us by the diary which Commander Van Riebeck was ordered to keep for the information of his employers. Under the date October 19th, 1653, we read that David Janssen, a herdsman, was found lying dead of assegai wounds, inflicted by the Beechranger Hottentots, while the cattle placed under his charge were seen disappearing round the curve of the Lion's Head. The theft had been successfully accomplished through the perfidy of a certain "Harry," a Hottentot chief, who was living on terms of friendship with the Dutch—a circumstance which was sufficiently apparent from the fact that the raid was timed to take place at an hour on Sunday morning when the whole of the little community, with the exception of two sentinels and a second herdsman, were assembled to hear a sermon from the "Sick-Comforter," Wylant. It was the first conflict between the Dutch and the natives; for Van Riebeck had been bidden, for various excellent reasons, to keep on good terms with the Hottentots, and to treat them kindly. But the murder of a white man was a serious matter. Kindness scarcely seemed to meet the case; and so Van Riebeck applied to the Directors, the famous Chamber of Seventeen, for definite instructions as to the course which he must pursue.

ebeck's difficulty.

He was told that only the actual murderer of David Janssen (if apprehended) was to be put to death; that cattle equal in amount to the cattle stolen were to be recovered, but only from the actual robbers; and that "Harry," if necessary, should be sent to prison at Batavia. But he was not otherwise to molest or injure the offending Hottentots. Excellent advice, and such as we should expect from the countrymen of Grotius in their most prosperous era. But unfortunately it was quite impossible for Van Riebeck, with his handful of soldiers and sailors, planted at the extremity of the great barbaric continent of Africa, to think of putting it into effect. He replied that he had no means of identifying the individual wrong-doers, and that the institution of private property was unknown among the Hottentots. The only method by which the individual could be punished was by punishing the tribe, and he therefore proposed to capture the tribe and their cattle. But this was a course of action which was repugnant to the Directors' sense of justice. It aroused, besides, a vision of reinforcements ordered from Batavia, and of disbursements quite disproportionate to the practical utility of the Cape station as an item in the system of the Company. In vain Van Riebeck urged that a large body of slaves and ten or twelve hundred head of cattle would be a great addition to the resources of the settlement. The Chamber

of Seventeen refused to sanction the proposals of the commander, and, as its own were impracticable, nothing was done. The Beechranger tribe escaped with impunity, and the Hottentots, as a whole, were emboldened to make fresh attacks upon the European settlers.

frikander stock.

This simple narrative is a lantern that sheds a ray of light upon an obscure subject. Two points are noticeable in the attitude of the home authority. First, there is its inability to grasp the local conditions; and second, the underlying assumption that a moral judgment based upon the conditions of the home country, if valid, must be equally valid in South Africa. By the time that the home authority had become Downing Street instead of the peripatetic Chamber of Seventeen, the field of mischievous action over which these misconceptions operated had become enlarged. The natives were there, as before; but, in addition to the natives, there had grown up a population of European descent, some thirty thousand in number, whose manner of life and standards of thought and conduct were scarcely more intelligible to the British, or indeed to the European mind, than those of the yellow-skinned Hottentot or the brown-skinned Kafir. A century and a half of the Dutch East India Company's government—a government "in all things political purely despotic, in all things commercial purely monopolist"—had produced a people unlike any other European community on the face of the earth. Of the small original stock from which the South African Dutch are descended, one-quarter were Huguenot refugees from France, an appreciable section were German, and the institution of slavery had added to this admixture the inevitable strain of non-Aryan blood. But this racial change was by no means all that separated the European population in the Cape Colony from the Dutch of Holland. A more potent agency had been at work. The corner-stone of the policy of the Dutch East India Company was the determination to debar the settlers from all intercourse—social, intellectual, commercial, and political—with their kinsmen in Europe. One fact will suffice to show how perfectly this object was attained. Incredible as it may seem, it is the case that at the end of the eighteenth century no printing-press was to be found in the Cape Colony, nor had this community of twenty thousand Europeans the means of knowing the nature of the laws and regulations of the Government by which it was ruled. So long and complete an isolation from European civilisation produced a result which is as remarkable in itself as it is significant to the student of South African history. This phenomenon was the existence, in the nineteenth century, of a community of European blood whose

moral and intellectual standards were those of the seventeenth.

tionality difficulty.

Our dip into the early history of South Africa is not purposeless. It does not, of course, explain the failure of British administration; but it brings us into touch with circumstances that were bound to make the task of governing the Cape Colony—a task finally undertaken by England in 1806—one of peculiar difficulty. The native population was strange, but the European population was even more strange and abnormal. If we had been left to deal with the native population alone we should have experienced no serious difficulty in rendering them harmless neighbours, and have been able to choose our own time for entering upon the responsibilities involved in the administration of their territories. But, coming second on the field, we were bound to modify our native policy to suit the conditions of a preexisting relationship between the white and black races that was not of our creation, and one, moreover, that was in many respects repugnant to British ideas of justice. Nor was this all. The old European population, which should have been, naturally, our ally and fellow-worker in the task of native administration, gradually changed from its original position of a subject nationality to that of a political rival; and, as such, openly bid against us for the mastership of the native African tribes.

Now when two statesmen are pitted against each other, of whom one is a man whose methods of attack are limited by nineteenth-century ideas, while the morality of the other, being that of the seventeenth century, permits him greater freedom of action, it is obvious that the first will be at a disadvantage. And this would be the case more than ever if the nineteenth-century statesman was under the impression that his political antagonist was a man whose code of morals was identical with his own. When once he had learnt that the moral standard of the other was lower than, or different from, his own, he would of course make allowance for the circumstance, and he would then be able to contest the position with him upon equal terms. But until he had grasped this fact he would be at a disadvantage.

Generally speaking, the representatives of the British Government, both Governors and High Commissioners, soon learnt that neither the natives nor the Dutch population could be dealt with on the same footing as a Western European. But the British Government cannot be said to have thoroughly learnt the same lesson until, in almost the last week of the nineteenth century, the three

successive defeats of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso aroused it to a knowledge of the fact that we had been within an ace of losing South Africa. Many, indeed, would question whether even now the lesson had been thoroughly learnt. But, however this may be, it is certain that throughout the nineteenth century the Home Government wished to treat both the natives and the Dutch in South Africa on a basis of British ideas; and that by so doing it constantly found itself in conflict with its own local representatives, who knew that the only hope of success lay in dealing with both alike on a basis of South African ideas.

As the result of this chronic inability of British statesmen to understand South Africa, it follows that the most instructive manner of regarding our administration of that country during the nineteenth century is to get a clear conception of the successive divergences of opinion between the home and the local authorities.

At the very outset of British administration—during the temporary occupation of the Cape from 1795 to 1808—we find a theoretically perfect policy laid down for the guidance of the early English Governors in their treatment of the Boers, or Dutch frontier farmers. It is just as admirable, in its way, as were the instructions for the treatment of the Hottentots furnished by the Directors of the Dutch East India Company to Van Riebeck. In a despatch of July, 1800, the third Duke of Portland, who was then acting as Secretary for the Colonies, writes:

ıterference.

> "Considering the tract of country over which these border inhabitants are dispersed, the rude and uncultivated state in which they live, and the wild notions of independence which prevail among them, I am afraid any attempts to introduce civilisation and a strict administration of justice will be slow in their progress, and likely, if not proceeded upon with caution and management, rather to create a spirit of resistance, or to occasion them to emigrate still further from the seat of government, than answer the beneficent views with which they might be undertaken. In fact, it seems to me the proper system of policy to observe to them is to interfere as little as possible in their domestic concerns and interior economy; to consider them rather as distant communities dependent upon the Government than as subjects necessarily amenable to the laws and regulations established within the precincts of Government. Mutual advantages arising from barter and commerce, and a strict adherence to good faith and justice in all

arrangements with them, joined to efficient protection and occasional acts of kindness on the part of the Government, seem likely to be the best means of securing their attachment."

Who would have thought that this statement of policy, admirable as it is at first sight, contained in itself the germ of a political heresy of the first magnitude? Yet so it was. The principle of non-interference, here for the first time enunciated and subsequently followed with fatal effect, could not be applied by a nineteenth-century administration to the case of a seventeenth-century community without its virtually renouncing the functions of government. Obviously this was not the intention of the home authority. There remained the difficulty of knowing when to apply, and when not to apply, the principle; and directly a specific case arose there was the possibility that, while the local authority, with a full knowledge of the local conditions, might think interference necessary, the home authority, without such knowledge, might take an opposite view.

er's Nek.

A very few years sufficed to show that the most ordinary exercise of the functions of government might be regarded as an "interference with the domestic concerns and interior economy" of the European subjects of the British Crown in South Africa. At the time of the permanent occupation of the Cape (1806) the population of the colony consisted of three classes: 26,720 persons of European descent, 17,657 Hottentots, and 29,256 returned as slaves. One of the first measures of the British Governor, Lord Caledon, was the enactment of a series of regulations intended to confer civil rights on the Hottentots, while at the same time preventing them from using their freedom at the expense of the European population. From the British, or even European point of view, this was a piece of elementary justice to which no man could possibly take exception. As applied to the conditions of the Franco-Dutch population in the Cape Colony it was, in fact, a serious interference with their "domestic concerns and internal economy." And as such it produced the extraordinary protest known to history as the "Rebellion" of Slaghter's Nek. There was no question as to the facts. Booy, the Hottentot, had completed his term of service with Frederick Bezuidenhout, the Boer, and was therefore entitled, under the Cape law, to leave his master's farm, and to remove his property. All this Bezuidenhout admitted; but when it came to a question of yielding obedience to the magistrate's order, the Boer said "No." In the words of Pringle, "He boldly declared that he considered this interference between him (a

free burgher) and *his* Hottentot to be a presumptuous innovation upon his rights, and an intolerable usurpation of tyrannical authority."

And the danger of allowing the Boers to pursue their seventeenth-century dealings with the natives became rapidly greater when the European Colonists, Dutch and English, were brought, by their natural eastward expansion, into direct contact with the masses of military Bantu south and east of the Drakenberg chain of mountains—the actual dark-skinned "natives" of South Africa as it is known to the people of Great Britain. The Boer frontiersman, with his aggressive habits and ingrained contempt for a dark-skin, disintegrated the Bantu mass before we were ready to undertake the work of reconstruction. And therefore the local British authority soon learnt that non-interference in the case of the Boer generally meant the necessity of a much more serious interference at a subsequent date with both Boer and Kafir. And so non-interference, in the admirable spirit of the Duke of Portland's despatch, came to bear one meaning in Downing Street and quite another in Capetown.

ın's policy.

The earliest of the three crucial "divergences of opinion," to which collectively the history of our South African administration owes its sombre hue, was that which led to the reversal of Sir Benjamin D'Urban's frontier policy by Charles Grant (afterwards Lord Glenelg) at the end of the year 1835. The circumstances were these. On Christmas Day, 1834, the Kafirs (without any declaration of war, needless to say) invaded the Cape Colony, murdering the settlers in the isolated farms, burning their homesteads, and driving off their cattle. After a six months' campaign, in which the Dutch and British settlers fought by the side of the regular troops, a treaty was made with the Kafir chiefs which, in the opinion of D'Urban and his local advisers, would render the eastern frontier of the Colony secure from further inroads. The Kafirs were to retire to the line of the Kei River, thus surrendering part of their territory to the European settlers who had suffered most severely from the invasion; while a belt of loyal Kafirs, supported by a chain of forts, was to be interposed between the defeated tribes and the colonial farmsteads. In addition to these measures, D'Urban proposed to compensate the settlers for the enormous losses[1] which they had incurred; since, as a contemporary and not unfriendly writer[2] puts it, the British Government had exposed them for fourteen years to Kafir depredations, rather than acknowledge the existence of a state of affairs that must plainly have compelled it to make active exertions for their protection.

The view of the home authority was very different. In the opinion of His Majesty's ministers at Downing Street the Kafir invasion was the result of a long series of unjustifiable encroachments on the part of the European settlers. D'Urban was instructed, therefore, to reinstate the Kafirs in the districts from which they had retired under the treaty of September, 1835, and to cancel all grants of land beyond the Fish River—the original eastern boundary of the Colony—which the Colonial Government had made to its European subjects from 1817 onwards; while, as for compensation, any indemnity was altogether out of the question, since the colonists had only themselves to thank for the enmity of the natives—if, indeed, they had not deliberately provoked the war with a view to the acquisition of fresh territory.

The divergence between these two opinions is sufficiently well marked. To trace the precise agencies through which two diametrically opposed views were evolved on this occasion from the same groundwork of facts would be too lengthy a business; but, by way of comment, we may recall two statements, each significant and authentic. Cloete, writing while the events in question were still fresh in his mind, says of Lord Glenelg's despatch: "A communication more cruel, unjust, and insulting to the feelings not only of Sir Benjamin D'Urban ... but of the inhabitants ... could hardly have been penned by a declared enemy of the country and its Governor." And Sir George Napier, by whom D'Urban was superseded, stated in evidence given before the House of Commons: "My own experience, and what I saw with my own eyes, have confirmed me that I was wrong and Sir Benjamin D'Urban was perfectly right; that if he meant to keep Kafirland under British rule, the only way of doing so was by having a line of forts, and maintaining troops in them."

reat Trek.

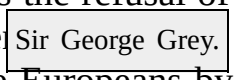
This settlement of a South African question upon a basis of British, or rather non-South African, ideas was followed by events as notorious as they were disastrous. It must be remembered that in 1819-20 the first and only effort to introduce a considerable British population into South Africa had been successfully carried out when the "Albany" settlers, to the number of some five thousand, were established in this and other districts upon the eastern border of the Cape Colony. The colonial farmers who suffered from the Kafir invasion of 1834-5 were not exclusively Boers. Among them there were many members of the new British population, and the divergence of opinion between D'Urban and Lord Glenelg was all the more significant, since in this case the British settlers

were in agreement with the Boers. It was no longer merely a divergence of views as between the local and the home authority, but as between the British in Britain and the British in South Africa. It must also be remembered that, in the same year as the Kafir invasion, a social revolution—the emancipation of slaves—had been accomplished in the Cape Colony by an Act of the British Parliament, in comparison with which the nationalisation of the railways or of the mines in England would seem a comparatively trifling disturbance of the system of private property to the Englishman of to-day. The reversal of D'Urban's arrangements for the safety of the eastern frontier was not only bad in itself, but it came at a bad time. Whether the secession of the Emigrant Farmers would in any case have taken place as the result of the emancipation of slaves is a matter which cannot now be decided. But, however this may be, the fact remains that two men so well qualified to give an opinion on the subject as Judge Cloete and Sir John Robinson, the first Prime Minister of Natal, unhesitatingly ascribe the determining influence which drove the Boers to seek a home beyond the jurisdiction of the British Government to the sense of injustice created by the measures dictated by Lord Glenelg, and by the whole spirit of his despatch.[3] And this judgment is supported by the fact that the wealthier Dutch of the Western Province were much more seriously affected by the emancipation of slaves than the "Boers" of the eastern districts of the Colony; yet it was these latter, of course, who provided the bulk of the emigrants who crossed the Orange River in the years of the Great Trek (1835-8) We shall not therefore be drawing an extravagantly improbable conclusion, if we decide that the movement which divided European South Africa was due to a well-ascertained divergence of opinion between the home and local authorities—both British.

rth of the republic.

The results of this secession of something like one-fourth of the Franco-Dutch population are common knowledge. Out of the scattered settlements founded by the Emigrant Farmers beyond the borders of the Colony were created, in 1852 (Sand River Convention) and 1854 (Bloemfontein Convention), the two Boer Republics, which half a century later withstood for two years and eight months the whole available military force of the British Empire. The first effect of the secession was to erect the republican Dutch into a rival power which bid against the British Government for the territory and allegiance of the natives. Secession, therefore, made the inevitable task of establishing the supremacy of the white man in South Africa infinitely more costly both in blood and treasure. The British nation accepted the task, which fell to it as paramount power, with the

greatest reluctance. The endless and apparently aimless Kafir wars exhausted the patience of the country, and the destruction of an entire British regiment by Ketshwayo's[4] *impis* created a feeling of deep resentment against the great High Commissioner, whose policy was held—unreasonably enough—responsible for the military disaster of Isandlhwana. Two opportunities of recovering the lost solidarity of the Europeans were presented before the republican Dutch had set themselves definitely to work for the supremacy of South Africa through reunion with their colonial kinsfolk. That both were lost was due at bottom to the disgust of the British people at the excessive cost and burden of establishing a civilised administration over the native population in South Africa. But in both cases the immediate agency of disaster was the refusal of the Home Government to listen to the advice of its local represe



Sir George Grey.

Sir George Grey would have regained the lost solidarity of the Europeans by taking advantage of the natural recoil manifested among the Free State Dutch from independence and responsibility towards the more settled and prosperous life assured by British rule. His proposal was to unite the Cape Colony, Natal, and the Free State in a federal legislature, consisting of representatives chosen by popular vote in the several states. In urging this measure he took occasion to combat the pessimistic views of South African affairs which were prevalent in England. The country was not commercially useless, but of "great and increasing value." Its people did not desire Kafir wars, but were well aware of the much greater advantages which they derived from the peaceful pursuits of industry. The colonists were themselves willing to contribute to the defence of that part of the Queen's dominions in which they lived. And, finally, the condition of the natives was not hopeless, for the missionaries were producing most beneficial effects upon the tribes of the interior. But the most powerful argument which Grey used was his ruthless exposure of the futility of the Conventions. By allowing the Boer emigrants to grow into independent communities the British Government believed that not only had they relieved themselves of responsibility for the republican Dutch, but that they had secured, in addition, the unfaltering allegiance of the larger Dutch population which remained behind in the Cape Colony. Grey assured the Home Government that in both respects it was the victim of a delusion bred of its complete ignorance of South African conditions. The Boer Republics would give trouble. Apart from the bad draftsmanship of the conventions—a fertile source of disagreement—these small states would be centres of intrigue and "internal commotions," while at the same time their revenues would be too small to provide efficiently for their protection against the warlike tribes. The policy of *divide et impera*—or, as Grey called it, the "dismemberment" policy—would fail, since the political barrier which had been

erected was wholly artificial.

"Although these European countries are treated as separate nations," he wrote, "their inhabitants bear the same family names as the inhabitants of this Colony, and maintain with them ties of the closest intimacy and relationship. They speak generally the same language—not English, but Dutch. They are for the most part of the same religion, belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church. They have the same laws—the Roman Dutch. They have the same sympathies, the same prejudices, the same habits, and frequently the same feelings regarding the native races....

"I think that there can be no doubt that, in any great public, or popular, or national question or movement, the mere fact of calling these people different nations would not make them so, nor would the fact of a mere fordable stream running between them sever their sympathies or prevent them from acting in unison.... Many questions might arise in which, if the Government on the south side of the Orange River took a different view from that on the north side of the river, it might be very doubtful which of the two Governments the great mass of the people would obey."[5]

The "divergence of opinion" between Capetown and Downing Street was complete. Grey was charged with "direct disobedience" for listening to the offers of the Free State inhabitants. Recalled by a despatch of June 4th, 1859, he was reinstated in August on condition that "he felt himself sufficiently free and uncompromised," both with the Cape Legislature and the people of the Free State, to be able personally to carry out the policy of the Home Government, which, said the despatch,

> "is entirely opposed to those measures, tending to the resumption of sovereignty over that State, of which you have publicly expressed your approval in your speech to the Cape Parliament, and in your answers to the address from the State in question."

Nor was that all. In his endeavours to establish a simple but effective system of European magistrates over the Kafirs beyond the eastern border of the Colony, he was hampered by the short-sighted economy of the Home Government. It seems incredible that a Colonial Governor, even at that epoch, should have been looked upon by Downing Street as a sort of importunate mendicant. But Grey's language shows that this was the attitude against which he had to defend himself.

rden of the empire.

> "I would now only urge upon Her Majesty's Government," he writes on September 8th, 1858, "that they should not distress me more than is absolutely necessary for the government and control of the people of the country which lies beyond the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. Stripping the country as I am of troops [to serve in putting down the Indian Mutiny], some great disaster will take place if necessary funds are at the same time cut off from me. I am sure, if the enormous reductions I have effected in military expenditure are considered, the most rigid economists will feel that the money paid by Great Britain for the control of this country has been advantageously laid out."

These extracts are not pleasant reading. They were written at the time when the Imperial spirit was at its nadir. In the plain language of the Secretary of State for the Colonies[6] in 1858, it was a time when ministers were "compelled to recognise as fact the increased and increasing dislike of Parliament to the maintenance of large military establishments in our colonies at Imperial cost." Yet one more passage must be cited, not so much because it is tinged by a certain grim humour—although this is a valuable quality in such a context—as because it affords an eminently pertinent illustration in support of the contention that the refusal of the Home Government to follow the advice of the "man on the spot" has been the operative cause of the failure of British administration in South Africa. The reply to the charge of "direct disobedience," which Grey formulates in one leisurely sentence, runs as follows:

> "With regard to any necessity which might exist for my removal on the ground of not holding the same views upon essential points of policy as Her Majesty's Government hold, I can only make the general remark that, during the five years which have elapsed since I was appointed to my present office, there have been at least seven Secretaries of State for the Colonial Department, each of whom held different views upon some important points of policy connected with this country."

scovery of diamonds.

Grey was not by any means the only Governor of the Cape to show the home authorities how impossible it was to govern South Africa from Downing Street, and to urge upon them the necessity of allowing their representative, the one

man who was familiar with local conditions, to decide by what methods the objects of British policy could be most effectively advanced. But it was not until some considerable time after the Colonial Department had been placed under a separate Secretary of State, and the Colonial Office had been constituted on its present basis, with a staff of permanent officials, that these protests produced any appreciable effect. What really aroused an interest in South Africa—that is to say a practical interest, as distinct from the interest created by the stories of missionary enterprise and travel, and by the records of Kafir warfare—was the discovery of diamonds in Griqualand West in 1870, and the subsequent establishment of the diamond industry at Kimberley. It was the first time that anything certain had occurred to show that the vast "hinterland" of the Cape might prove to be a territory of industrial possibilities. The earnings of the diamond mines provided the Cape Colony with a revenue sufficient to enable it to link together its main towns by a tolerable railway system. The industry, once established, attracted British capital and British population, and by so doing it did what Blue-books and missionary reports had failed to do: it brought the every-day life of the British Colonist in South Africa within the purview of the nation. Thanks to the Kimberley mines the Cape ceased to be thought of as a country whose resources were exclusively pastoral and agricultural.

The epoch of the next great divergence of opinion was a more hopeful time from an Imperialist point of view. Lord Beaconsfield, who was the first statesman to give practical expression to the belief that the maintenance of empire was not inconsistent with the welfare of the masses of the home population, was in power. British statesmen, and the class from which British statesmen are drawn, had begun to study Colonial questions in a more hopeful and intelligent spirit. Something had been learnt, too, of the actual conditions of South Africa. And yet it was at this epoch that what was, perhaps, the most ruinous of all the divergences of opinion between Capetown and Downing Street occurred.

rtle Frere.

When Sir Bartle Frere was sent out to South Africa to carry out a definite scheme for the union of the Republics with the British colonies in a federal system, British statesmen and the educated classes in general had adopted the views expressed by Grey twenty years before. Tardily they had learnt to recognise both the essential unity of the Dutch population and the value of the country as an industrial asset of the empire. But, in the meantime, the centre of

political power had shifted in England. The extension of the franchise had placed the ultimate control of British policy in South Africa in the hands of a class of electors who were, as yet, wholly uneducated in the political and economic conditions of that country. The divergence of opinion between the home and the local authority became in this case wider than ever. In short, it was the will of the nation that caused Frere to be arrested midway in the accomplishment of his task, and gave a mandate in 1880 to the Liberal party to administer South Africa upon the lines of a policy shaped in contemptuous indifference of the profoundest convictions and most solemn warnings of a great proconsul and most loyal servant of the Crown.

The facts of Frere's supersession and recall are notorious: the story is too recent to need telling at length. We know now that, apart from the actual discovery of the Witwatersrand gold-mines, all that he foresaw and foretold has been realised in the events which culminated, twenty years later, in the great South African War. The military power which at that time (1877-80) stood in the way of South African unity under the British flag was the Zulu people. The whole adult male population of the tribe had been trained for war, and organised by Ketshwayo into a fighting machine. With this formidable military instrument at his command Ketshwayo proposed to emulate the sanguinary career of conquest pursued by his grandfather Tshaka;[7] and he had prepared the way for the half-subdued military Bantu throughout South Africa to co-operate with him in a general revolt against the growing supremacy of the white man. Frere removed this obstacle. But in doing so he, or rather the general entrusted with the command of the military operations, lost a British regiment at Isandlhwana. This revelation of the strength of the Zulu army was, in fact, a complete confirmation of the correctness of Frere's diagnosis of the South African situation. His contention was that England must give evidence of both her capacity and her intention to control the native population of South Africa before she could reasonably ask the republican Dutch to surrender their independence and reunite with the British colonies in a federal system under the British flag. A native power, organised solely for aggressive warfare against one of two possible white neighbours, constituted therefore, in his opinion, not only a perpetual menace to the safety of Natal, but an insuperable obstacle to the effective discharge of a duty by the paramount Power, the successful performance of which was a condition precedent to the reunion of the European communities. The only point in dispute was the question whether the powers of Ketshwayo's *impis* had been exaggerated. To this question the disaster of Isandlhwana returned an emphatic "No."

call of Frere.

The divergence of opinion between Frere and Lord Beaconsfield's cabinet was trivial as compared with the profound gulf which separated his policy from the South African policy of Mr. Gladstone. After the return of the Liberal party to power in the spring of 1880, Frere was allowed to remain in office until August 1st, when he was recalled by a telegraphic despatch. But, as Lord Kimberley pointed out to him, there had been "so much divergence" between his views and those of the Home Government that he would not have been allowed to remain at the Cape, "had it not been for the special reason that there was a prospect of his being able materially to forward the policy of confederation." This prospect, of course, had then been removed by the failure of the Cape Government, on June 29th, to bring about the conference of delegates from the several States, which was the initial step towards the realisation of Lord Carnarvon's scheme of federal union.

The vindication of Frere's statesmanship has been carried, by the inexorable logic of events, far beyond the sphere of Blue-book arguments. But it is impossible to read this smug despatch without recalling the words which Mr. Krüger wrote to Mr. (now Lord) Courtney on June 26th of the same year: "The fall of Sir Bartle Frere will ... be useful.... We have done our duty and used all legitimate influence to cause the conference proposals to fail." That is to say, it was known to these faithful confederates of that section of the Liberal party of which Mr. Courtney was the head, that the Gladstone Government had determined to recall Sir Bartle Frere three days before "the special reason" for maintaining him at the Cape had disappeared.

forecast.

But what we are really concerned with is the nature of the opinions upon the central question of South African administration which Frere put forward at this critical period. With these before us, the most elementary acquaintance with the events of the last ten years will suffice to indicate the profound degree in which his knowledge of South African conditions surpassed the knowledge of those who took upon themselves to reverse his policy. What, above all, Frere realised was, that a point had been reached at which the whole of South Africa must be gathered under the British flag without delay. He had noted the disintegrating influences at work in the Cape Colony and the strength of the potential antagonism of the republican Dutch. The annexation of the Transvaal was not his

deed, nor did either the time or the manner in which it was done command his approval. But he asserted that British rule, once established there, must be maintained at all costs. With this end in view, he urged that every responsibility incurred by England in the act of annexation must be fulfilled to the letter. Utilising the information which he had gained by personal observation during his visit to the Transvaal in 1879, and availing himself of the co-operation of President Brand, of the Free State, and Chief Justice de Villiers, in the Cape Colony, he drafted a scheme of administrative reform sufficient to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Boers for self-government without endangering the permanency of British rule. It included proposals for administrative and financial reforms framed with a view of reducing the cost of government to the lowest point consistent with efficiency, for the reorganisation of the courts of law, for the survey of the proposed railway line to Delagoa Bay, and full details of a system of representative government. This measure he urged upon the Colonial Office as one of immediate necessity, since it embodied the fulfilment of the definite promises of an early grant of self-government made to the Boers at the time of annexation.[8]

He recognised the value of Delagoa Bay as an essential factor in the political and commercial system of a united South Africa, and he earnestly recommended its acquisition by purchase from the Portuguese Government. His perception of the extreme importance of satisfying all legitimate claims of the Boers, and his acute realisation of the danger of allowing the Transvaal to become a "jumping-off ground" either for foreign powers or Afrikander Nationalists, are exhibited in due relationship in a private memorandum which he wrote from the Cape at the end of July, 1879:

"Any reliance on mere force in the Transvaal must react dangerously down here in the old colony, and convert the Dutch Country party, now as loyal and prosperous a section of the population as any under the Crown, into dangerous allies of the small anti-English Republican party, who are for separation, thus paralysing the efforts of the loyal English party now in power, who aim at making the country a self-defending integral portion of the British Empire. Further, any attempt to give back or restore the Boer Republic in the Transvaal must lead to anarchy and failure, and probably, at no distant period, to a vicious imitation of some South American Republics, in which the more uneducated and misguided Boers, dominated and led by better educated foreign adventurers—Germans, Hollanders, Irish Home Rulers, and other European Republicans and Socialists—will become a pest to the whole of South Africa, and a most dangerous fulcrum to any European Power bent on contesting our naval supremacy, or injuring us in our colonies.

"There is no escaping from the responsibility which has already been incurred, ever since the British flag was planted on the Castle here. All our real difficulties have arisen, and still arise, from attempting to evade or shift this responsibility.... If you abdicate the sovereign position, the abdication has always to be heavily paid for in both blood and treasure.... Your object is not conquest, but simply supremacy up to Delagoa Bay. This will have to be asserted some day, and the assertion will not become easier by delay. The trial of strength will be forced on you, and neither justice nor humanity will be served by postponing the trial if we start with a good cause."

Could not the man who foresaw these dangers have prevented them? It is impossible to resist the momentum of this thought.

trocession.

The events by which this forecast was so closely realised are not likely to be effaced from the memory of this generation. Frere had scarcely left the Colony from which he had been recalled by the joint efforts of Mr. Krüger and Lord (then Mr.) Courtney before the former, with his fellow triumvirs, had raised the Vier-kleur upon the still desolate uplands of the Witwatersrand. The attempt to put down by force the Boer revolt of 1880-81 failed. Mr. Gladstone's cabinet recoiled before the prospect of a war in which the Boers might have been supported by their kinsmen in the Free State and the Cape Colony. The retrocession of the Transvaal under the terms of the Pretoria Convention (1881)

was followed by further concessions embodied in the London Convention of 1884. It is absolutely established as fact that Mr. Gladstone's Government intended, by certain articles contained in both conventions, to secure to all actual and potential British residents in the Transvaal the enjoyment of all the political rights of citizenship possessed by the Boers. But it is equally certain that the immediate contravention of Article XVI. of the Pretoria Convention, when in 1882 the period of residence necessary to qualify for the franchise was raised from two to five years, was allowed to pass without protest from the Imperial Government. And thus a breach of the Convention, which the discovery of the Witwatersrand gold-fields (1886) and the subsequent establishment of a great British industrial community made a matter of vital importance, was condoned. A few years more and the country which prided itself upon being the home of liberty and of free institutions was confounded by the spectacle of a South Africa of its own making, in which a British majority denied the franchise in a Dutch Republic, contrasted with a Dutch minority dominating and controlling the machinery of responsible government in a British colony.

This situation brings us (to use a military phrase) within striking distance of the objective of the present work—the personality and efforts of the man who administered South Africa in the momentous years of the struggle for equal rights for all white men from the Zambesi to Capetown.

If the records set out in the preceding pages leave any impression upon the mind, it is one that must produce a sense of amazement, almost exasperation, at the thought of the many mistakes and disasters that might have been avoided, if only greater weight had been attached to the advice tendered to the British Government by its local representative in South Africa. And with this sense of amazement a generous mind will associate inevitably a feeling of regret for the injustice unwittingly, but none the less irreparably, inflicted upon loyal and capable servants of the Crown—an injustice so notorious that it has made South Africa the "grave of reputations." Apart from the pre-eminence with which the period of Lord Milner's administration is invested by the occurrence within it of a military conflict of unparalleled magnitude, Lord Milner stands out in the annals of South Africa as the first High Commissioner whose knowledge of South African conditions was allowed to inspire the policy of the Home Government, and who himself was recognised by the Government and people of Great Britain as voicing the convictions and aspirations of all loyal subjects of the Crown in that province of the empire.

The state of affairs with which Lord Milner was called upon to deal was in its essence the situation sketched by Frere twenty years before in the memorable forecast to which reference has been made. But the working of the forces indicated by Frere as destined, if unchecked, to drive England one day to a life-and-death struggle for her supremacy in South Africa, had been complicated by an event which cannot be omitted altogether from a chapter intended, like a Euripidean prologue, to prepare the mind of the spectator for the proper understanding of the characters and action of the drama. This event is the Jameson Raid.

meson raid.

In order to see the Jameson Raid in its true perspective, it is not sufficient to place it in relationship to those familiar and notorious events by which it was followed. It must also be placed in relationship to the no less clearly defined events by which it was preceded. Thus placed it becomes the direct outcome of the refusal of the Imperial Government to use the advice of its local representative—or, more precisely, of the refusal to base its policy on South African instead of British conditions: and, as such, it convinced the Imperial Government of the need of reviving the power of its local representative. In other words, it is a connecting link between the High Commissionerships of Frere and Milner. The events which followed the recall of Frere were accepted by the British inhabitants of South Africa as a practical demonstration of the inherent viciousness of the system under which the decision of cardinal questions of South African administration was left in the hands of the House of Commons, a body in which they were not represented; which met 6,000 miles away; whose judgment was liable to be warped by irrelevant considerations of English party politics; and one which was admittedly unfamiliar with the country and peoples whose interests were vitally affected by the manner in which these questions were decided. The lesson of the retrocession was taken to heart so earnestly that, fifteen years later, the majority of the British residents in the Transvaal refused to support a movement for reform which involved the re-establishment of Imperial authority, while among those who were loyal to the British connection throughout South Africa its effect was to make them Rhodes. as did Rhodes, that the machinery of the various local British governments must be dissociated as much as possible from the principles and methods of the Home Government. Hence the necessity for what Rhodes called the "elimination of the Imperial factor." The expression, as he afterwards explained, was in no way inconsistent with attachment to the British connection. As read in the context in

which it was originally used, it meant merely that the European population of Bechuanaland,[9] being mainly Boer immigrants, could be administered more successfully by officers responsible to a government which, like that of the Cape Colony, was well versed in South African conditions, than by officers directly responsible to the Imperial Government. The phrase was a criticism of Downing Street, and still more of English party government. In short, Rhodes was convinced that if a system of British administration, based on South African conditions, was ever to be carried on successfully, the local British authority, and not the Home Government, must be the machine employed; and in order to allow it to work freely, its action must be made as independent as possible of Downing Street. For Downing Street was an authority which blew hot or cold, in accordance with the views of the party for the time being in power.[10]

orces.

And, in point of fact, both parties in England acquiesced in this judgment of the South African British. During the years between Frere's recall and the appointment of Lord Milner (1880-1897) the High Commissioner was a decreasing force. Both Lord Rosmead and Lord Loch did little to mould the destiny of South Africa: not because they lacked capacity, but because it was the determination of the Home Government to leave the difficult problem of South African unity to local initiative. On the other hand, the progress which was made in this direction by local initiative, aided as it was by the fortuitous discovery of the Witwatersrand gold-fields, was considerable. The highlands of South Central Africa were acquired for the British race, and the Boer was effectively prevented from carrying the Vier-kleur beyond the Limpopo; the railway, drawn through the Free State by the magnet of the Rand, disturbed the retirement of the republican Dutch; and finally the Cape Colony and Natal were linked together with the Free State in a Customs Union. But the development of the mineral resources of the country led to the appearance of a new factor in South African politics. The comparative decline in the activity of the High Commissioner had been accompanied by the establishment and growth of powerful industrial corporations. It is easy to understand how a man like Rhodes, with the wealth and influence of De Beers and the Chartered Company at his command, might seek, by an alliance with the "great houses" of the Rand, to find in private effort an instrument for remedying the deficiencies of the Imperial Government even more appropriate than the local governmental action upon which he had previously relied. For the work of these industrial corporations had powerfully enlisted the interest and sympathy of the British public. The Jameson Raid was

an illegitimate and disastrous application of an otherwise meritorious and successful effort to strengthen the British hold upon South Africa by private enterprise. It was at once the measure of Imperial inefficiency, and its cure.

One other circumstance must be recalled in estimating the extent to which the Home Government had earned the distrust of the British population in South Africa. Only eighteen months[11] before the Raid the High Commissioner, Lord Loch, had gone to Pretoria carrying a despatch in which the grant of a five years' franchise was advocated on behalf of the Uitlanders. His instructions were to present this despatch, and press upon President Krüger personally the necessity for giving effect to its recommendations. These instructions were cancelled at the last moment by Lord Ripon, because the German Ambassador had made representations in London that such action would be regarded as an interference with the *status quo* in South Africa, and, as such, detrimental to German interests in that country. And six months later[12] President Krüger, in attending a "Kommers" given by the German Club at Pretoria in honour of the Kaiser Wilhelm II.'s birthday, alluded to Germany as a grown-up power that would stop England from "kicking" the child Republic.

s's Plan.

The Raid was, therefore, a short cut to baffle German intrigue and solve the problem of South African unity at one blow. For to Rhodes the enfranchisement of the Uitlanders meant the withdrawal of the Transvaal Government from its opposition to his scheme of commercial federation. It is obvious that one ground of justification, and one only, can be found for the usurpation of the functions of government by a private individual, or group of individuals. This justification is success. It has been the custom to represent Dr. Jameson's decision to "ride in" as "an act of monumental folly," alike from a political and a military point of view. But this opinion overlooks the fact that the affair may have been so planned in Rhodes's mind that success did not depend upon the victory of the Uitlanders, aided by Jameson's troopers, but on the presence of the High Commissioner in the Transvaal under such conditions as would make the intervention of the Imperial Government at once imperative and effectual. The representative of the Imperial Government, backed by a Johannesburg in armed revolt against the Boer oligarchy, would find himself—so Rhodes thought—in a position highly favourable to the successful prosecution of the demands which had already been put forward on behalf of British subjects resident in the Transvaal. And in order that this essential part of the plan might be carried out without a moment of

unnecessary delay, Rhodes kept a train, with steam up, in the station at Capetown ready to speed Lord Rosmead northwards directly the news of Dr. Jameson's arrival at Johannesburg should have reached him. Once Jameson's force had "got through," he relied upon the Reform Committee, however incomplete its preparations, being able to hold Johannesburg for a couple of days against any force the Boers could bring.[13] Nor in the light of what happened, during the war, both at Mafeking and Kimberley, can this expectation be thought extravagant. Here his responsibilities would have ended. The High Commissioner and the Imperial Government would have done the rest. To indulge in metaphor, the Imperial locomotive was to be set going, but the lines on which it was to run were those laid down by Mr. Rhodes.

If this was the essence of Rhodes's plan, it would matter comparatively little whether the Reformers had, or had not, completed their preparations, or whether Dr. Jameson had 1,200 or 500 men. Certainly some such assumption is necessary to account for the fact that Rhodes treated his confederates at Johannesburg as so many pawns on a chess-board. It is equally necessary to account for Dr. Jameson's action. "Twenty years friends, and now he goes in and ruins me," was Rhodes's comment on the news that Dr. Jameson had "ridden in," in spite of his own orders to the contrary and the message to the same effect which Captain Heany had delivered on behalf of the Reformers. But what if Dr. Jameson knew, or thought that he knew, that Rhodes's object in forcing the insurrection was not to make the Uitlanders reduce Krüger, but to compel the Imperial Government to step in? In this case he may well have thought that what was essential was not that the rising should be successful, but that there should be a rising of any kind; provided that it was sufficiently grave to arrest the attention of the world, and claim the interference of the Imperial Government.

According to Mr. Chamberlain the continued inaction of the Imperial Government in the eighteen months that had passed since Lord Loch's visit to Pretoria in June, 1894, was due to two circumstances. In the first place, "the Uitlanders and their organs had always deprecated the introduction into the dispute of what is called in South Africa the 'Imperial factor'"; and in the second, the "rumours" of violent measures "were continually falsified by the event." Obviously, if Rhodes forced an insurrection with the intention of removing these obstacles—if, that is to say, the intervention of the Imperial Government, and not the success of the insurrection, was his primary object—the temerity of Dr. Jameson's invasion is materially diminished. Now Mr. Chamberlain's statement, made under date February 4th, 1896, *i.e.* five weeks after the Raid, is perfectly

consistent with the view of the attitude of the Reformers expressed by Rhodes on the day before the Raid took place.

Dr. Jameson's force, it will be remembered, started on the evening of Sunday, December 29th, 1895. Up to three days before—the 26th—nothing had occurred to interfere with the final arrangement, telegraphed to Dr. Jameson from Capetown, that the movement in Johannesburg would take place on Saturday, the 28th. The circumstances which caused the Reformers to alter their plans were explained by Rhodes in an interview with Sir Graham Bower, the Imperial Secretary, at Capetown on the same Saturday, the 28th, with his accustomed vivacity. The Johannesburg insurrection, he said—

formers divided.

> "had fizzled out as a damp squib. The capitalists financing the movement had made the hoisting of the British flag a *sine quâ non*. This the National Union rejected, and issued a manifesto declaring for a republic. The division had led to the complete collapse of the movement, and it was thought that the leaders would make the best terms they could with President Krüger."

The telegrams which reached Dr. Jameson between the 26th and 29th contained the same facts, with the further information that Captain Heany was travelling by special train to him with a message direct from the Reformers. In these circumstances it is said that Rhodes at Capetown imagined as little as the Reform leaders at Johannesburg that Dr. Jameson would cross the frontier. That, however, there was another point of view from which the situation might present itself to Dr. Jameson is shown by the fact that Mr. Chamberlain, in reply to the High Commissioner's telegram reporting the substance of Rhodes's statement to Sir Graham Bower, at once[14] inquired of Lord Rosmead, "Are you sure Jameson has not moved in consequence of the collapse?"

Was Mr. Chamberlain right? Did Dr. Jameson see in the fact that the Reformers were divided on such an issue only an additional reason for carrying out a plan which had for its object to compel the Imperial Government to intervene in the affairs of the Transvaal before it was too late; that is to say, before the British population had definitely committed itself to the policy of a purged republic, but a republic under any flag but that of Great Britain? Such a policy was not merely possible. It seemed inevitable to the vivacious French observer who wrote, not from hearsay, but "with his eyes upon the object," in December, 1893:

"The Transvaal will never be an English colony. The English of the Transvaal, as well as those of Cape Colony and Natal, would be as firmly opposed to it as the Boers themselves, for they have never forgiven England for letting herself be beaten by the Boers at Majuba Hill and accepting her defeat, a proceeding which has rendered them ridiculous in the eyes of the Dutch population of South Africa.... With me this is not a simple impression, but a firm conviction."[15]

ɔn's decision.

If these were the considerations which weighed with Dr. Jameson, his decision to "ride in" was inconsistent neither with friendship nor with patriotism. When Captain Heany had read from his pocket-book the message from the Reformers, Jameson paced for twenty minutes outside his tent. Having re-entered it, he announced his determination to disregard Heany's message no less than Rhodes's telegram. It was a momentous decision to take after twenty minutes' thought. Had he a reasonable expectation of carrying out the plan as Rhodes conceived it, in spite of the change in the position of affairs at Johannesburg? Had he any reason to believe that Rhodes desired him to force the insurrection in spite of his telegrams to the contrary? It is the answers to these questions that make the Raid, as far as Dr. Jameson is concerned, an "act of monumental folly," or a legitimate assumption of personal responsibility that is part of the empire-builder's stock-in-trade. The answer to the second question remains a matter of speculation. The answer to the first is to be found in the record of the expedition. Dr. Jameson reached Krügersdorp at three o'clock on Wednesday, January 1st. A few hours before a cyclist had brought him congratulatory messages from the Reform leaders. The goal was almost within sight. What prevented Sir John Willoughby from taking his little force safely over the remaining twenty miles from Krügersdorp to Johannesburg was the merest accident: the few hours' delay caused, naturally enough, by Dr. Jameson's desire that his force should be met and escorted by a small body of volunteers from the Rand. He did not want, as he said, to go to Johannesburg as "a pirate." Sir John Willoughby's evidence is perfectly definite and conclusive on the point. If the force had pushed on by road from Krügersdorp to Johannesburg on Wednesday evening—had not, in Willoughby's words, "messed about" at Krügersdorp in expectation of the welcoming escort—Johannesburg would have been reached in safety on Thursday morning. With Dr. Jameson in Johannesburg and Lord Rosmead speeding northwards in his special train, the way would have been prepared for that decisive and successful action on the part of the Imperial Government which

Rhodes had desired to bring about.

ıe raid failed.

But, unsuccessful as was the actual expedition, the decision to "ride in" had secured the intervention of the Imperial Government. If intervention could have done what Rhodes expected of it, Dr. Jameson's decision to "ride in" would have gained, at the cost of few lives and no increase of the national debt, what the war gained four years later at the cost of twenty thousand lives and £220,000,000. As it was, it failed to win the franchise for the Uitlanders. Why did not Lord Rosmead, with so strong a Colonial Secretary as Mr. Chamberlain at his back, brush the Raid aside, and address himself to the removal of the greater wrong that gave it birth? If Lord Rosmead had acted in the spirit of Mr. Chamberlain's despatches; if he had reminded the Government of the Republic from the first "that the danger from which they had just escaped was real, and one which, if the causes which led up to it were not removed, might recur, although in a different form"; if he had used "plain language" to President Krüger; and if, above all, he had remembered—as Mr. Chamberlain reminded him—that "the people of Johannesburg had surrendered in the belief that reasonable concessions would have been arranged through his intervention, and until these were granted, or were definitely promised to him by the President, the root-causes of the recent troubles would remain,"—might he not yet have saved South Africa for the empire without subjecting her to the dread arbitrament of the sword?

ıamberlain.

It is in the answer to this question that we find the actual cause of the utter failure of Rhodes's plan. The truth is that success in any real sense—that is to say, success which would have strengthened British supremacy and promoted the union of European South Africa—was impossible. The sole response which Lord Rosmead returned to Mr. Chamberlain's counsels was the weary confession: "The question of concessions to Uitlanders has never been discussed between President Krüger and myself." The methods employed by Rhodes were so questionable that no High Commissioner could have allowed the Imperial Government to have derived any advantage from them. To have gained the franchise for the Uitlanders as the result of violent and unscrupulous action, would have inflicted an enduring injury upon the British cause in South Africa for which the enfranchisement itself would have been small compensation. The disclosure of these methods and, with them, of the hollowness of Rhodes's alliance with the Afrikander Bond, alarmed and incensed the whole Dutch

population of South Africa. What this meant Lord Rosmead knew, and Mr. Chamberlain did not know. The ten years' truce between the forces of the Afrikander nationalists and the paramount Power was at an end. To combat these forces something better than the methods of the Raid was required. *Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis!* No modern race have excelled the Dutch in courage and endurance. In Europe they had successfully defended their independence against the flower of the armies of Spain, Austria, and France. The South African Dutch were not inferior in these qualities to the people of the parent stock. If such a race, embarked upon what it conceived to be a struggle for national existence, was to be overcome, the hands of the conqueror must be clean as well as strong. None the less the active sympathy with the Uitlanders exhibited in Mr. Chamberlain's despatches was welcomed by the British as evidence that the new Colonial Secretary was more alert and determined than his predecessors. For the first time in the history of British administration in South Africa, Downing Street had shown itself more zealous than Capetown. It was the solitary ray of light that broke the universal gloom in which South Africa was enshrouded by the catastrophe of the Raid.[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER II

THE CREED OF THE AFRIKANDER NATIONALISTS[16]

orckenhagen.

In the face of the colossal resistance offered to the British arms by the Boers and their colonial kinsmen in the South African War, it may seem unnecessary to produce any evidence in support of the contention that the military strength then displayed by the Dutch in South Africa was the result of long and careful preparation. But the same inability to grasp the facts of the South African situation which kept the Army Corps in England three months after it should have been sent to the Cape, is still to be met with. This attitude of mind—whether it be a consciousness of moral rectitude, or a mere insular disdain of looking at things from any but a British point of view—is still to be observed in the statements of those politicians who will even now deny that any trace of a definite plan of action, or of a concerted purpose, which could properly be

described as a "conspiracy" against British supremacy was to be found among the Dutch population of South Africa as a whole, prior to the outbreak of the war. It is for the benefit of such politicians in part, and still more with a view of bringing the mind of the reader into something approaching a direct contact with the actual working of the Afrikander mind, that I transcribe a statement of the pure doctrine of the Bond, as it was expounded by the German, Borckenhagen, and his followers in the Free State. It will, however, be convenient to preface the quotation with a word of explanation in respect both of the text and the personality of Borckenhagen.

The passage, which is taken *verbatim* from a work entitled, "The Origin of the Anglo-Boer War Revealed," is a collection of sentences gathered from Dutch pamphlets and articles "emanating from Holland," and translated literally into the somewhat uncouth English of the text. The author of the work, Mr. C. H. Thomas, was for many years a burgher of the Free State, where he shared the opinions of President Brand, and subsequently supported Mr. J. G. Fraser in opposing the policy of "closer union" with the South African Republic, advocated by Brand's successor, Mr. F. W. Reitz. The point of view from which the Dutch of Holland regarded the nationalist movement in South Africa was succinctly stated in an article published by the Amsterdam *Handelsblad* in 1881.

> "The future of England lies in India, and the future of Holland in South Africa.... When our capitalists vigorously develop this trade, and, for example, form a syndicate to buy Delagoa Bay from Portugal, then a railway from Capetown to Bloemfontein, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Delagoa Bay will be a lucrative investment. And when, in course of time, the Dutch language shall universally prevail in South Africa, this most extensive territory will become a North America for Holland, and enable us to balance the Anglo-Saxon race."[17]

Carl Borckenhagen, who, with Mr. Reitz,[18] advocated the establishment of the Bond in 1881, was a German republican. His name has been associated with Mr. Thomas's summary of the Bond propaganda in the Free State, because, as editor of *The Bloemfontein Express* up to the time of his death, early in 1898, he was probably the most consistent of all the South African exponents of the nationalist creed. Certainly it is no exaggeration to say that he converted the Free State of Brand into the Free State of Steyn.

"The Bond Programme

"The Afrikander Bond has as final object what is summed up in its motto of 'Afrika voor de Afrikaners.' The whole of South Africa belongs by just right to the Afrikander nation. It is the privilege and duty of every Afrikander to contribute all in his power towards the expulsion of the English usurper. The States of South Africa to be federated in one independent Republic.

The Afrikander Bond prepares for this consummation.

Argument in justification:—

(*a*) The transfer of the Cape Colony to the British Government took place by circumstances of *force majeure* and without the consent of the Dutch nation, who renounced all claim in favour of the Afrikander or Boer nation.

(*b*) Natal is territory which accrued to a contingent of the Boer nation by purchase from the Zulu king, who received the consideration agreed for.

(*c*) The British authorities expelled the rightful owners from Natal by force of arms without just cause.

The task of the Afrikander Bond consists in:

(*a*) Procuring the staunch adhesion and co-operation of every Afrikander and other real friend of the cause.

(*b*) To obtain the sympathy, the moral and effective aid, of one or more of the world's Powers.

The means to accomplish those tasks are:

Personal persuasion, Press propaganda, legislation and diplomacy.

The direction of the application of these means is entrusted to a select body of members eligible for their loyalty to the cause and their abilities and position. That body will conduct such measures as need the observance of special secrecy. Upon the rest of the members will devolve activities of a general character under the direction of the selected chiefs.

One of the indispensable requisites is the proper organisation of an effective fund, which is to be regularly sustained. Bond members will aid each other in all relations of public life in preference to non-members.

In the efforts of gaining adherence to the cause it is of importance to distinguish three categories of persons:

(1) The class of Afrikanders who are to some extent deteriorated by assimilative influences with the English race, whose restoration to patriotism will need great efforts, discretion, and patience.

(2) The apparently unthinking and apathetic class who prefer to relegate all initiative to leaders whom they will loyally follow. This class is the most numerous by far.

(3) The warmly patriotic class, including men gifted with intelligence, energy, and speech, qualified as leaders, and apt to exercise influence over the rest.

Among these three classes many exist whose views and religious scruples need to be corrected. Scripture abounds in proofs and salient analogies applying to the situation and justifying our cause. In this, as well as in other directions, the members who work in circulating written propaganda will supply the correct and conclusive arguments accessible to all.

Upon the basis of our just rights the British Government, if not the entire nation, is the usurping enemy of the Boer nation.

In dealing with an enemy it is justifiable to employ, besides force, also means of a less open character, such as diplomacy and stratagem.

nods.

The greatest danger to Afrikanderdom is the English policy of Anglicising the Boer nation—to submerge it by the process of assimilation.

A distinct attitude of holding aloof from English influences is the only remedy against that peril and for thwarting that insidious policy.

It is only such an attitude that will preserve the nation in its simple faith and

habits of morality, and provide safety against the dangers of contamination and pernicious examples, with all their fateful consequences to body and soul.

Let the Dutch language have the place of honour in schools and homes.

Let alliances of marriage with the English be stamped as unpatriotic.

Let every Afrikander see that he is at all times well armed with the best possible weapons, and maintains the expert use of the rifle among young and old, so as to be ready when duty calls, and the time is ripe for asserting the nation's rights and being rid of English thraldom.

Employ teachers only who are animated with truly patriotic sentiments.

Let it be well understood that English domination will also bring English intolerance and servitude, for it is only a very frail link which separates the English State Church from actual Romanism, and its proselytism *en bloc* is only a matter of short time.

Equally repugnant and dangerous is England's policy towards the coloured races, whom she aims, for the sake of industrial profit, at elevating to equal rank with whites, in direct conflict with spiritual authority—a policy which incites coloured people to rivalry with their superiors, and can only end in common disaster.

Whilst remaining absolutely independent, the ties of blood, relationship, and language point to Holland for a domestic base.

As to commerce, Germany, America, and other industrial nations could more than fill the gap left by England, and such connections should be cultivated as a potent means towards obtaining foreign support to our cause and identification with it.

If the mineral wealth of the Transvaal and Orange Free State becomes established—as appears certain from discoveries already made—England will not rest until these are also hers.

The leopard will retain its spots. The independence of both Republics is at stake on that account alone, with the risk that the rightful owners of the land will become the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the usurpers.

There is no alternative hope for the peace and progress of South Africa except by the total excision of the British ulcer.

Reliable signs are not wanting to show that our nation is designed by Providence as the instrument for the recovery of its rights, and for the chastisement of proud, perfidious Albion."[19]

These brief and disjointed sentences present in their shortest form arguments and exhortations with which the Dutch population of the Free State, the Transvaal, and the Cape Colony, were familiarised through the Press, the pulpit, the platform, and through individual intercourse and advocacy, from the time of the Retrocession in 1881 onwards. It is in effect the scheme of a Bond "worked out more in detail by some friends at Bloemfontein," as published by Borckenhagen in his paper, *The Bloemfontein Express*, on April 7th, 1881, to which Du Toit, the founder of the Bond in the Cape Colony, referred in the pamphlet, *De Transvaalse Oorlog* (The Transvaal War), which he issued from his press at the Paarl later on in the same year. The nationalist creed, as thus formulated, was preached consistently in the Free State; but in the Cape Colony it was modified by Hofmeyr to meet the exigencies of Colonial politics.

None the less it was in the Cape Colony that the Bond, as a political organisation, was destined to find its chief sphere of action. In the Free State it was discouraged by President Brand, and in point of fact the British population was too insignificant a factor in the politics of the central republic to make it necessary to maintain a distinct organisation for the promotion of nationalist sentiment. In the Transvaal, again, the Bond maintained no regular organisation. And this for two reasons. Every burgher of the northern Republic was sufficiently animated by the anti-British sentiments which it was intended to promote; and the only "constitution" which the Transvaal Dutch would accept was one which embodied principles so flagrantly inconsistent with submission to British authority that it could not be adopted by the branches of the Bond in the Cape Colony without exposing its members to immediate prosecution for high treason.[20]

In the politics of the Cape Colony, however, the Bond became the predominant force; and any picture, however briefly sketched, of South Africa as it was when Lord Milner's administration commenced, must include some account of the origin and methods of this remarkable organisation.

igin of the Bond.

The origin of the Afrikander Bond is to be found in the articles written by the Rev. S. J. du Toit, a Dutch predikant, in *De Patriot*, a newspaper published at the Paarl, of which he was the editor. Mr. du Toit's political standpoint is sufficiently revealed by the fact that in 1881 he claimed that *De Patriot* had done more than any other single agency to secure the successful revolt of the Boers from British authority accomplished in that year. The inspiration which drove his pen to advocate the founding of a political organisation, that should serve to prepare the way for a more general and complete "war of independence," was the defeat of the British troops by the Transvaal burghers.

> "This is now our time," he wrote, in the same year, "to establish the Bond, while a national consciousness has been awakened through the Transvaal War. And the Bond must be our preparation for the future confederation of all the States and Colonies of South Africa. The English Government keeps talking of a confederation under the British flag. That will never happen. We can assure them of that. We have often said it: there is just one hindrance to confederation, and that is the English flag. Let them take that away, and the confederation under the free Afrikander flag would be established. But so long as the English flag remains here the Afrikander Bond must be our confederation. And the British will, after a while, realise that Froude's advice is the best for them: they must just have Simon's Bay as a naval and military station on the road to India, and give over all the rest of South Africa to the Afrikanders."[21]

This general statement of the purpose of the Bond was supported by reiterated appeals to racial passion:

> "The little respect which the Afrikander had for British troops and cannons [up to the Majuba defeat]," he writes, "is utterly done away. And England has learnt so much respect for us Afrikanders that she will take care not to be so ready to make war with us again.... The Englishman has made himself hated, language and all. And this is well."

jects of the Bond.

When, by the use of these and even more violent expressions, the mind of the Dutch population had been sufficiently aroused, Du Toit proceeded to unfold his plan of campaign. His *modus operandi* is similar to that of Borckenhagen in its

main features. The Bond, says *De Patriot*, must boycott all English traders, except only those who are ready to adopt its principles. English signboards, advertisements, shops and book-keepers, must be abolished. The English banks must be replaced by a National Bank. No land must be sold to Englishmen. The Republics must "make their own ammunition, and be well supplied with cannon, and provide a regiment of artillery to work them." And he cheerfully notices that "at Heidelberg there are already 4,000 cartridges made daily, and a few skilful Afrikanders have begun to make shells, too. This is right: so must we become a nation." For the Cape Colony, however, "such preparations are not so especially necessary." But, most of all, Du Toit insists upon the need of combating the growing use of the English language. "English education," he laments, "has done more mischief to our country and nation than we can express." And, therefore, he urges "war" against the English language. In the schools, in the Church, and "in our family life above all," it must be considered a "disgrace to speak English.... Who will join the war? All true Afrikanders, we hope."

Thus was the Bond, the child of Majuba, quickened into conscious being by the fiery pen of the predikant, Du Toit. Poor Du Toit! His after life was a strange commentary upon this early triumph of his brain, won in the drowsy solitudes of the Paarl. Summoned to be Director of Education in the Transvaal, he was quickly disillusioned of his love of his Dutch mother-country by actual intercourse with the contemptuous Hollanders whom Krüger had invited to serve the Republic. Later, again, he was rejected by the Bond which he had himself created, and driven to find comfort in the broad freedom of allegiance to an Empire-state.

The object of the Bond, as stated by Du Toit in *De Transvaalse Oorlog*, was the "creation of a South African nationality ... through the establishment of this Bond in all states and colonies of South Africa." Its organisation was to consist of a central governing body (*bestuur*), with provincial, district, and ward *besturen*. The central *bestuur* was to be composed of five members, two for the Cape Colony, and one each for the Transvaal, Natal, and Free State, who were "to meet yearly in one or other of the chief towns of the component states." The provincial *besturen*, consisting of one representative from each of the district *besturen*, were to meet every six months at their respective colonial or state capitals.[22]

The first Congress of the Afrikander Bond was held at Graaf Reinet in 1882. In the draft constitution then drawn up for the approval of its members, the

relationship of the Bond to the British Government in South Africa was defined with commendable frankness. In the "Programme of Principles" was the article:

> In itself acknowledging no single form of government as the only suitable form, and whilst acknowledging the form of government existing at present, [the Bond] means that the aim of our national development must be a united South Africa under its own flag.

yr's influence.

And it was upon the basis of this "Programme of Principles" that the earliest Bond organisations were formed in the Transvaal, the Free State, and the Cape Colony. In the year following the Graaf Reinet Congress, however, the "Farmers' Protection Association" was amalgamated with the Bond in the Cape Colony, and the influence of Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr led the joint organisation to adopt a modified "programme." Mr. Hofmeyr, who was destined afterwards to assume the undisputed headship of the Bond, was an economist as well as a nationalist. He was intensely interested in the development of the country districts, and he saw that the conditions of agriculture could hardly be improved without the co-operation of the British and more progressive section of the farming class. He also knew that an organisation, professing to forward aims of avowed disloyalty, would rapidly find itself in collision with the Cape Government. With the growth of Mr. Hofmeyr's influence the policy, though not the aims, of the Bond was changed. All declarations, such as the clause "under its own flag," inconsistent with allegiance to the British Crown were omitted from the official constitution, and its individual members were exhorted to avoid any behaviour or expressions likely to prevent Englishmen from joining the organisation. As early as 1884 the Bond secured the return of twenty-five members to the Cape Parliament, and it was their support that enabled the Upington Ministry to maintain itself in office against an opposition which consisted of the main body of the representatives elected by the British population; and from this date onwards it was the recognised aim of Mr. Hofmeyr to control the Legislature of the Colony by making it impossible for any ministry to dispense with the support of the Bond members, although he refrained from putting a ministry of Bondsmen into office. To have done this latter might have united the British population and their representatives in a solid phalanx, and endangered the success of the effort to separate the British settlers in the country districts from the more recent arrivals from England—mostly townsmen—which remained a fruitful source of Afrikander influence up to the time of the Jameson Raid. By representing the

new British population, which followed in the wake of the mineral discoveries, as "fortune-seekers" and adventurers and not genuine colonists, the Bond endeavoured, not merely to widen the natural line of cleavage between the townsman and the countryman, but actually to detach the older British settlers from sympathy with the mother country, and, by drawing them within the sphere of Afrikander nationalist aspirations, to make them share its own antagonism to British supremacy.

nan and the Bond.

But, in spite of the change of policy due to Mr. Hofmeyr, the old leaven of stalwart Bondsmen remained sufficiently in evidence to draw from Mr. J. X. Merriman—then a strong Imperialist in close association with Mr. J. W. Leonard—a striking rebuke. The speech in question was made, fittingly enough, at Grahamstown, the most "English" town in South Africa, in 1885. It was reprinted with complete appropriateness, in *The Cape Times* of July 10th, 1899. The struggle which Mr. Merriman had foreseen fourteen years before was then near at hand; while Mr. Merriman himself had become a member of a ministry placed in power by the Bond for the avowed purpose of "combating the British Government."

> "The situation is a grave one," he said. "It is not a question of localism; it is not a question of party politics; but it is a question whether the Cape Colony is to continue to be an integral part of the British Empire.... You will have to keep public men up to the mark, and each one of you will have to make up his mind whether he is prepared to see this colony remain a part of the British Empire, which carries with it obligations as well as privileges, or whether he is prepared to obey the dictates of the Bond. From the very first time, some years ago, when the poison began to be instilled into the country, I felt that it must come to this—Is England or the Transvaal to be the paramount force in South Africa?... Since then that institution has made a show of loyalty, while it stirred up disloyalty.... Some people, who should have known better, were dragged into the toils under the idea that they could influence it for good, but the whole teaching of history goes to show that when the conflict was between men of extreme views and moderate men, the violent section triumphed. And so we see that some moderate men are in the power of an institution whose avowed object is to combat the British Government. In any other country such an organisation could not have grown; but here, among a scattered population, it has insidiously and

> successfully worked.... No one who wishes well for the British Government could have read the leading articles of the *Zuid Africaan*, and *Express*, and *De Patriot*, in expounding the Bond principles, without seeing that the maintenance of law and order under the British Crown and the object they have in view are absolutely different things. My quarrel with the Bond is that it stirs up race differences. Its main object is to make the South African Republic the paramount power in South Africa."

This was plain speaking. The rare insight revealed in such a sentence as this —"in any other country such an organisation could not have grown, but here, *among a scattered population*, it has insidiously and successfully worked"; the piquant incident of the reproduction of the speech on the eve of the war; the fact that the man who made this diagnosis was to drink the poison whose fatal effects he described so faithfully, was indeed to become the most bitter opponent of the great statesman that "kept South Africa a part of the British Empire,"—these things together make Mr. Merriman's Grahamstown speech one of the most curious and instructive of the political utterances of the period.

e of Bond policy.

In the year following (1886) the Bond met officially, for the first and only time, as an inter-state organisation. Bloemfontein was the place of assemblage, and in the Central Bestuur, or Committee, the South African Republic, the Free State, and the Cape Colony were each represented by two delegates. This meeting revealed the practical difficulties which prevented the Cape nationalists from adopting the definitely anti-British programme of the Bond leaders in the Republics; and the conflict of commercial interests between the Cape Colony and the Transvaal, already initiated by the attempt of the latter to secure Bechuanaland in 1884-5, confirmed the Cape delegates in their decision to develop the Bond in the Cape Colony upon colonial rather than inter-state lines. The result of the divergences of aim manifested at Bloemfontein was speedily made apparent in the Cape Colony. In 1887 Mr. T. P. Theron, then Secretary of the Bond, delivered an address in which the new, or Hofmeyr, programme was formulated and officially adopted. In recommending the new policy to the members of the Bond, Mr. Theron made no secret of the nature of the considerations by which its leaders had been chiefly influenced.

> "You must remember," he said, "that the eyes of all are directed towards you. The Press will cause your actions, expressions, and resolutions to be

known everywhere. You cannot but feel how much depends on us for our nation and our country. If we must plead guilty in the past of many an unguarded expression, let us be more cautious and guarded for the future."

And he then proceeded to sketch a picture of racial conciliation, when all "differences and disagreements" between Dutch and English would be merged in the consciousness of a new and common nationality—pointing out, however, that the advent of that day depended on "you and me, my fellow Bond members."

s and Hofmeyr.

Assuming that the predominance of Afrikander ideals could be secured only by the complete separation of the local governments from the Government of Great Britain, nothing could be more masterly than the manner in which the Bond approached the task of reuniting the European communities of South Africa—the task which the Imperial Government had abandoned as hopeless. As inspired and controlled by Hofmeyr during the years between this date (1887) and the Jameson Raid, the Bond embodied a volume of effort in which the most sincere supporter of the British connection could co-operate. It was the assistance afforded by the Bond in moulding British administration in South Africa upon South African lines that provided the common ground upon which Rhodes and Hofmeyr met in their long alliance. Hofmeyr probably never abandoned his belief that a republican form of government was the inevitable *dénouement* to which the administration of South Africa on a basis of South African ideas must lead. Rhodes never wavered in his loyalty to the British connection. But there was a great body of useful work which both men could accomplish in common, which each desired to see accomplished, which, when accomplished, would leave each free to choose the path—Republican or Imperial—by which the last stage was to be traversed and the goal of South African unity finally attained.

The character and career of Rhodes afford material for a study of such peculiar and engrossing interest that any adequate treatment of the subject would require a separate volume. Fortunately, the broad facts of his life are sufficiently well known to make it unnecessary to attempt the almost impossible task of condensing a volume within the limits of a few pages. None the less, there is one incident in his political career which must be recalled here, and that for the simple reason that it establishes two facts, each of which is essential to the

complete understanding of the situation in the Cape Colony as it developed immediately after the Raid. First, that all through the years of the Rhodes-Hofmeyr alliance the Bond remained at heart true to the aim which it had at first openly avowed—the aim of establishing a united South Africa under its own flag. And second, that Rhodes was equally staunch in maintaining his ideal of a united South Africa under the British flag. The incident which exhibits both these facts in the clearest light is the refusal by Rhodes of the overtures made to him by Borckenhagen. At the time when these overtures were made Rhodes was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, the Chartered Company had been successfully launched, and the alliance between himself and Hofmeyr was in full operation. The occasion which led to them was the opening of the railway at Bloemfontein in 1890—a railway constructed by the Cape Government under a friendly arrangement with the Free State. And it was one, therefore, which afforded a conspicuous example of the value of the Bond influence as a means of securing progress in the direction of South African unity. The story was told by Rhodes himself in a speech which he made in the Cape Colony on March 12th, 1898.

s and Borckenhagen.

"I remember," he said, "that we had a great meeting at Bloemfontein, and in the usual course I had to make a speech. I think I was your Prime Minister. And this speech pleased many there, and especially—and I speak of him with the greatest respect—a gentleman who is dead, Mr. Borckenhagen. He came to me and asked me to dictate to him the whole of my speech. I said, 'I never wrote a speech, and I don't know what I said; but I will tell you what I know about it.' He wrote it down, and afterwards came to Capetown with me.... He spoke very nicely to me about my speech. 'Mr. Rhodes, we want a united South Africa.' And I said, 'So do I; I am with you entirely. We must have a united South Africa.' He said, 'There is nothing in the way.' And I said, 'No; there is nothing in the way. Well,' I said, 'we are one.' 'Yes,' he said, 'and I will tell you: we will take you as our leader,' he said. 'There is only one small thing, and that is, we must, of course, be independent to the rest of the world.' I said, 'No; you take me either for a rogue or a fool. I would be a rogue to forget all my history and traditions; and I would be a fool, because I would be hated by my own countrymen and mistrusted by yours.' From that day he assumed a most acrid tone in his *Express* towards myself, and I was made full sorry at times by the tone. But that was the overpowering thought in his mind—an independent South

Africa."[23]

s of the raid.

The facts here disclosed explain how it was that the apparently satisfactory situation in South Africa before the Raid so rapidly developed into the dangerous situation of the years that followed it. The Raid tore aside the veil which the Rhodes-Hofmeyr alliance had cast over the eyes alike of Dutch and British, and left them free to see the essential antagonism of aim between the two men in its naked truth.[24] From that moment Rhodes was recognised by the Bond as its chief and most dangerous enemy; and as such he was pursued by its bitterest hostility to the day of his death; while Rhodes, on the other hand, was driven to seek support solely in the people of his own nationality. From that moment the Bond fell back upon the policy of 1881. The Dutch Press, pulpit, and platform commenced an active nationalist propaganda on the old racial lines; and the advocacy of anti-British aims increased in boldness and in definiteness as the Transvaal grew strong with its inflowing armaments.

We are now in a position to sum up the main features of the situation in South Africa as Lord Milner found it. British administration, controlled from Downing Street, had quickly led to what Sir George Grey called the dismemberment of European South Africa. The Imperial Government, having found out its mistake, had endeavoured to regain the lost solidarity of the European communities and its authority over them, by bringing the Republics into a federal system under the British Crown. It had been thwarted in this endeavour by the military resistance of the Boers in the Transvaal, and the fear of a like resistance on the part of the Dutch population throughout South Africa. Its impotency had invited, and in part justified, the efforts made by local British initiative to solve the problem of South African unity on South African lines, but in a manner consistent with the maintenance of British supremacy. The early success of these efforts, prosecuted mainly through the agency of Rhodes, had been obliterated by the Jameson Raid. All attempts to secure the reunion of South Africa under the British flag having failed alike under Imperial and local British initiative, the way was open for the Afrikander nationalists once more to put forward the alternative plan of a united South Africa under its own flag, which they had formulated in the year immediately following the retrocession of the Transvaal.

on in 1896.

In proportion as the friends and supporters of British supremacy were

discredited and depressed by the catastrophe of the Raid, the advocates and promoters of Afrikander nationalism were emboldened and encouraged. It was not Sir Gordon Sprigg, the Prime Minister of the Cape who succeeded the discredited Rhodes (January 13th, 1896), but Mr. Hofmeyr, the veteran leader of the Afrikander Bond, that dictated the policy which Lord Rosmead must pursue to re-establish the integrity of the Imperial Government in the minds of its Dutch subjects. At the next presidential election in the Free State (March 4th, 1896), Mr. J. G. Fraser, the head of the moderate party which followed in the steps of President Brand, was hopelessly beaten by Mr. Marthinus Steyn, an Afrikander nationalist of the scientific school of Borckenhagen, and a politician whose immediate programme included the "closer union" of that state with the South African Republic, the terms of which were finally settled at Bloemfontein on March 9th, 1897. In the Cape Colony the Bond organised its resources with a view of securing even more complete control of the Cape Legislature at the general election of 1898. And lastly, President Krüger, who had ceased to rely upon Holland for administrative talent, and opened the lucrative offices of the South African Republic to the ambitious and educated Afrikander youth of the Free State and Cape Colony, commenced methodically and secretly to supply arms and ammunition to the adherents of the nationalist cause in the British Colonies.

But disastrous as was the Jameson Raid in its method of execution and immediate effects, it produced certain results that cannot be held to have been prejudicial to the British cause in South Africa, if once we recognise the fact that the English people as a whole were totally ignorant, at the time of its occurrence, of the extent to which the sub-continent had already slipped from their grasp. Something of the long advance towards the goal of nationalist ambition, achieved by the Bond, was revealed. The emphatic cry of "Hands off" to Germany, for which the Kaiser's telegram of congratulation provided the occasion, was undoubtedly the means of arresting the progress of that power, at a point when further progress would have gained her a foot-hold in South Africa from which nothing short of actual hostilities could have dislodged her. And more important still was the fact that the Raid, with its train of dramatic incidents, had published, once and for all, the humiliating position of the British population in the Transvaal throughout the length and breadth of the Anglo-Saxon world, and compelled the Imperial Government to pledge itself to obtain the redress of the "admitted grievances" of the Uitlanders.

ıamberlain's policy.

Against the rallying forces of Afrikander nationalism Mr. Chamberlain, for the moment, had nothing to oppose but the vague and as yet unknown power of an awakened Imperial sentiment. Lord Rosmead's attitude at Pretoria had convinced him of the uselessness of expecting that any satisfactory settlement of the franchise question could be brought about through the agency of the High Commissioner. He, therefore, invited President Krüger to visit England in the hope that his own personal advocacy of the cause of the Uitlanders, backed up by the weight of the Salisbury Government, might remove the "root causes" of Transvaal unrest. But President Krüger refused to confer with the Colonial Secretary upon any other than the wholly inadmissible basis of the conversion of the London Convention into a treaty of amity such as one independent power might conclude with another. Mr. Chamberlain, therefore, having put upon record that the purpose of the proposed conference was to give effect to the London Convention and not to destroy it, proceeded to formulate a South African policy that would enable him to make the most effective use of the authority of Great Britain as paramount Power. His purpose was to win Dutch opinion in the Free State and the Cape Colony to the side of the Imperial Government, and then to use this more progressive Dutch opinion as the fulcrum by which the lever of Imperial remonstrance was to be successfully applied to the Transvaal Government. In the speech[25] in which he sketched the main lines of this policy he declared emphatically that the paramount power of England was to be maintained at all costs, that foreign intervention would not be permitted under any pretence, and that the admitted grievances of the Uitlanders were to be redressed:

> "We have," he continued, "a confident hope that we shall be able in the course of no lengthened time to restore the situation as it was before the invasion of the Transvaal, to have at our backs the sympathy and support of the majority of the Dutch population in South Africa, and if we have that, the opinion—the united opinion—which that will constitute, will be an opinion which no power in Africa can resist."

With the record of the last ten years before us it seems strange that Mr. Chamberlain should ever have believed in the efficacy of such a policy: still more strange that he should have spoken of his "confident hope" of winning the Afrikander nationalists to support the paramount Power. But it must be remembered that the evidence of the real sentiments and purposes of the nationalists here set forth in the preceding pages, and now the common property of all educated Englishmen, was then known only to perhaps a dozen journalists

and politicians in England; and if these men had attempted to impart their knowledge to the general public, they would have failed from the sheer inability of the average Englishman to believe that "British subjects" under responsible government could be anything but loyal to the Imperial tie.

But little as Mr. Chamberlain knew of the real strength of the forces of Afrikander nationalism, he discerned enough of the South African situation to realise that this policy would have no chance of success, unless the maintenance of the British cause in South Africa was placed in the hands of a personality of exceptional vigour and capacity. When, therefore, Lord Rosmead intimated his desire to be relieved of the heavy responsibility of the joint offices of High Commissionship for South Africa and Governor of the Cape Colony no attempt to dissuade him was made. His health had been enfeebled for some time past, and he did not long survive his return to England. Both in Australia and at the Cape he had devoted his strength and ability to the service of the Empire. In the years 1883-5 he had resolutely and successfully opposed the attempt of the Transvaal Boers to seize Bechuanaland. His failure to control his powerful and impatient Prime Minister is mitigated by the circumstance that it was solely on the ground of public interest that, upon the retirement of Lord Loch in 1895, he had allowed himself, in spite of his advanced years and indifferent health, to assume the office of High Commissioner for a third time.[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER III

A YEAR OF OBSERVATION

Lord Rosmead retired early in 1897. It is said that three men so different in character as Lord Salisbury, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Stead, each separately fixed upon the same name as being that of the man most capable of undertaking the position of High Commissioner in South Africa—a position always difficult, but now more than ever arduous and responsible. To nine out of every ten men with whom he had been brought into contact there was little in Sir Alfred Milner—as he then was—to distinguish him from other high-principled, capable, and pleasant-mannered heads of departments in the Civil Service. His *métier* was finance, and his accomplishment literature. Commencing with journalism and an unsuccessful contest (in the Liberal interest) for the Harrow division of Middlesex, he had been private secretary to Lord Goschen, Under-Secretary for Finance in Egypt, and Head of the Inland Revenue. In this latter office he had given invaluable assistance to Sir William Harcourt, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in respect of what is perhaps the most successful of recent methods of raising revenue—the death duties. The principle of the graduated death duties was Harcourt's; but it was Milner who worked out the elaborate system which rendered his ideas coherent, and enabled them eventually to be put into effect. Academic distinctions, however ample, cannot be said to-day to afford a definite assurance of pre-eminent capacity for the service of the State. Yet it was certainly no disadvantage to Sir Alfred Milner to have been a scholar of Balliol, or a President of the Oxford Union.[26] Whatever direct knowledge the educated public had of him was based probably upon the impression created by his book *England in Egypt*. This was a work which indicated that its author had formed high ideals of English statesmanship, and that his experience of a complex administrative system, working in a political society full of intrigue and international jealousy, had developed in him the rare qualities of insight and humour. Some of his readers might have reflected that an active association with so accomplished a master of financial and administrative method as Lord

Cromer was in itself a useful equipment for a colonial administrator.

But the British public, both in England and South Africa, took their view of the appointment from the opinions expressed by the many prominent men to whom Sir Alfred Milner was personally known. The leaders and the Press of both parties were unstinted in approval of the choice which Mr. Chamberlain had made. The banquet given to Sir Alfred Milner three weeks before his departure to the Cape (March 28th, 1897) provided an occasion for an expression of unrestrained admiration and confidence unique in the annals of English public life. "He has the union of intellect with fascination that makes men mount high," wrote Lord Rosebery. And Sir William Harcourt, "the most grateful and obliged" of Milner's "many friends and admirers," pronounced him to be "a man deserving of all praise and all affection." Mr. Asquith, who presided, stated in a speech marked throughout by a note of intimate friendliness that "no appointment of our time has been received with a larger measure both of the approbation of experienced men and of the applause of the public." The office itself was "at the present moment the most arduous and responsible in the administrative service of the country." Not only "embarrassing problems," but "formidable personalities" would confront the new High Commissioner for South Africa:

> "But," he added, "we know that he takes with him as clear an intellect and as sympathetic an imagination, and, if need should arise, a power of resolution as tenacious and as inflexible as belongs to any man of our acquaintance."

Milner's reply is significant of the spirit in which he had undertaken his task. Like Rhodes, he had found in his Oxford studies the reasoned basis for an enlightened Imperialism. Chief among his earliest political convictions was the belief that—

> "there was no political object comparable in importance with that of preventing a repetition of such a disaster [as the loss of the United States]: the severance of another link in the great Imperial chain.... It is a great privilege to be allowed to fill any position in the character of what I may be, perhaps, allowed to call a 'civilian soldier of the Empire.' To succeed in it, to render any substantial service to any part of our world-wide State, would be all that in any of my most audacious dreams I had ever ventured to aspire to. But in a cause in which one absolutely believes, even failure—personal

failure, I mean, for the cause itself is not going to fail—would be preferable to an easy life of comfortable prosperity in another sphere."

al traits.

This was the man who was sent to maintain the interests of the paramount Power in a South Africa shaken by racial antagonism, and already feverish with political intrigue and commercial rivalry. Of all the tributes of the farewell banquet, Sir William Harcourt's was closest to the life—"worthy of all praise and all affection." The quality of inspiring affection to which this impressive phrase bore witness was one which had made itself felt among the humblest of those who were fortunate enough to have been associated with Lord Milner in any public work. Long after Milner had left Egypt, the face of the Syrian or Coptic Effendi of the Finance Department in Cairo would light up at the chance mention of the genial Englishman who had once been his chief. And in remote English counties revenue officials still hang his portrait upon the walls of their lodgings. Such men had no claim to appraise his professional merit or his gifts of intellect; but their feelings were responsive to the charm of his nature. "He was so considerate": that was their excuse for retaining his name and personality among the pleasant memories of the past. But the other side of Milner's character, the power of "tenacious and inflexible resolution," of which Mr. Asquith spoke, was destined to be brought into play so prominently during the "eight dusky years" of his South African administration, that to the distant on-looker it came to be accepted as the characterising quality of the man. To some Milner became the "man of blood and iron"; determined, like Bismarck, to secure the unity of a country by trampling with iron-shod boots upon the liberties of its people: even as in the view of others his clear mental vision—never more clear than in South Africa—became clouded by an adopted partisanship, and he was a "lost mind." Nothing could be further from the truth. If the man lived who could have turned the Boer and Afrikander from hatred and distrust of England and English ideas by personal charm and honourable dealing, it was the man who had universally inspired all his former associates, whether equals or subordinates, with admiration and affection. Whatever bitterness was displayed against Lord Milner personally by the Boer and Afrikander leaders after the issue of the war was decided was due to their perception that he was then—as always—a source of strength and an inspiration for renewed effort to those whom they regarded as their rivals or opponents. They hated him just as the French hated Bismarck—because he was the strong man on the other side.

Lord Milner's inflexibility was, in its essence, a keener perception of duty than the ordinary: it was a determination to do what he believed to be for the good of South Africa and the Empire, irrespective of any consideration of personal or party relationship. It was in no sense the incapacity to measure the strength of an opponent, still less did it arise from any failure to perceive the cogency of an opinion in conflict with his own. Before the eight years of his administration had passed, Lord Milner's knowledge of the needs of South Africa and the Empire had become so profound that it carried him ahead of the most enlightened and patriotic of the home statesmen who supported him loyally to the end. Through the period of the war, when the issues were simple and primitive, they were wholly with him. But afterwards they supported him not so much because they understood the methods which he employed and the objects at which he aimed, as because they were by this time convinced of his complete mastery of the political and economic problems of South Africa. It is to this inability to understand the facts of the South African situation, as he had learnt them, that we must attribute the comparative feebleness shown by the Unionist leaders in resisting the perverse attempt which was made by the Liberal party, after the General Election of 1906, to revoke the final arrangements of his administration. The interval that separated Lord Milner's knowledge of South Africa from that of the Liberal ministers was profound; but even the Unionist chiefs showed but slight appreciation of the unassailable validity of the administrative decisions with which they had identified themselves, when the "swing of the pendulum" brought these decisions again, and somewhat unexpectedly, before the great tribunal of the nation.

l at Cape Town.

Lord Milner sailed for the Cape on April 17th, 1897. At the actual moment of his arrival the relations between the Home Government and the South African Republic were strained almost to the breaking point. In a peremptory despatch of March 6th, Mr. Chamberlain had demanded the repeal of the Aliens Immigration and Aliens Expulsion Laws of 1896—the former of which constituted a flagrant violation of the freedom of entry secured to British subjects by Article XIV. of the London Convention. This virtual ultimatum was emphasised by the appearance of a British squadron at Delagoa Bay, and by the despatch of reinforcements to the South African garrisons. The evident determination of the Imperial Government induced the Volksraad to repeal the Immigration Law and to pass a resolution in favour of amending the Expulsion Law. The crisis was over in June, and during the next few months the Pretoria Executive showed a

somewhat more conciliatory temper towards the Government of Great Britain. And in this connection two other facts must be recorded. In August, 1896, Sir Jacobus de Wet had been succeeded as British Agent at Pretoria by Sir William (then Mr.) Conyngham Greene, and the Imperial Government was assured, by this appointment, of the services of an able man and a trained diplomatist. The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the Raid, promised in July, 1896, met on February 16th, 1897, and reported on July 13th of the same year. Its report did little more than reassert the findings of the Cape Parliamentary Inquiry, which had been before the British public for the last year. It was otherwise remarkable for the handle which it gave (by the failure to insist upon the production of certain telegrams) to some extreme Radicals to assert Mr. Chamberlain's "complicity" in the "invasion" of the Transvaal as originally planned by Mr. Rhodes.

's thoroughness.

Lord Milner had expressed his intention of acquainting himself with the conditions of South Africa by personal observation before he attempted to take any definite action for the solution of the problems awaiting his attention. Nor, after the first month of anxious diplomatic controversy with the Pretoria Executive, was there anything either in the political situation in the Cape Colony, or in the attitude of the Transvaal Government, to prevent him from putting his purpose into effect. Apart from the circumstance that the reorganisation of the Chartered Company's Administration—a question in which the political future of Mr. Rhodes was largely involved—was a matter upon which his observation and advice were urgently required by the Colonial Office, Lord Milner had no intention, as he said, of "being tied to an office chair at Capetown." He had resolved, therefore, to visit at the earliest opportunity, first, the country districts of the colony which formed the actual seat of the Dutch population, and, second, the two protectorates of Bechuanaland and Basutoland, which were administered by officers directly responsible to the High Commissioner, as the representative of the Imperial Government. In point of fact he did more than this. Within a year of his arrival he had travelled through the Cape Colony (August and September, 1897), through the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Rhodesia (November and December, 1897), and visited Basutoland (April, 1898). And with characteristic thoroughness he set himself to learn both the Dutch of Holland and the "Taal"—the former in order that he might read the newspapers which the Afrikanders read, and the latter to open the way to that intercourse of eye and ear which most helps a man to know the character of his neighbour.

Lord Milner's year of observation may be said to have ended with the speech at Graaf Reinet (March 3rd, 1898), which held his first clear and emphatic public utterance. During the greater part of this period he was by no means exclusively occupied with the shortcomings of President Krüger. The discharge of his official duties as Governor of the Cape Colony required more than ordinary care and watchfulness in view of the disturbed state of South African politics. And as High Commissioner he was called upon to deal with a number of questions relative to the affairs of Rhodesia and the Protectorates, of which some led him into the new and unfamiliar field of native law and custom, while others involved the exercise of his judgment on delicate matters of personal fitness and official etiquette. But an account of these questions—questions which he handled with equal insight and decision—must yield to the commanding interest of the actual steps by which he approached the two central problems upon the solution of which the maintenance of British supremacy in South Africa depended—the removal of the pernicious system of race oligarchy in the Transvaal, and the preservation of the Cape Colony in its allegiance to the British Crown.

endliness to the Boers.

The position which Lord Milner took up in his relations with the Transvaal Government was one that was consistent alike with his personal characteristics and with the dictates of a high and enlightened statesmanship. Within the first few weeks of his arrival he let it be known, both through the British Agent at Pretoria, and through those of the Afrikander leaders in the Cape Colony who were on terms of intimacy with President Krüger, that he desired, as it were, to open an entirely new account between the two governments. He, a new High Commissioner with no South African past, with no errors to retrieve, no failures to rankle, could afford to bury the diplomatic hatchet. There was nothing to prevent him from approaching the discussion of any questions that might arise in a spirit of perfect friendliness, or from believing that the President would be inspired, on his side, by the same friendly feelings. It was his hope, therefore, that much of the friction incidental to formal diplomatic controversy might be avoided through the settlement of all lesser matters by amicable and informal discussion between President Krüger and himself.

This was no mere official pose. Milner never posed. He, too, desired to eliminate the Imperial factor in his own way. He saw from the first the advantage of limiting the area of dispute between Downing Street and Pretoria; and he

made it his object to settle as many matters as possible by friendly discussion on the spot. The desire to avoid unnecessary diplomatic friction, and to make the best of President Krüger, was manifested in all he did at this time. In the course of the preparations for the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee by the British community on the Rand, the new High Commissioner was asked to decide whether the toast of Queen Victoria, or that of President Krüger, should come first upon the list at the public banquet. He replied unhesitatingly that the courtesy due to President Krüger, as the head of the State, must be fully accorded. On this occasion, of all others, British subjects, he said, "should be most careful to avoid anything which might be regarded as a slight to the South African Republic or its chief magistrate."[27]

and the Conventions.

While to President Krüger Lord Milner said, "Let us see if we cannot arrange matters by friendly discussion between ourselves"; to the Colonial Office he said, "Give them time; don't hurry them. Reform there must be: if by no other means, then by our intervention. But before we intervene, let us be sure that they either cannot, or will not, reform themselves. Therefore let us wait patiently, and make things as easy as possible for President Krüger." More than this, he had almost as little belief in the utility of the Conventions[28] as Grey had in those of his epoch. Whether the Boers did, or did not, call the Queen "Suzerain" seemed to him to be a small matter—an etymological question, as he afterwards called it. What was essential was that men of British blood should not be kept under the heel of the Dutch. Moreover, the grievances for which the observance of the London Convention, however strictly enforced, could provide a remedy, were insignificant as compared with the more real grievances, such as the attack upon the independence of the law courts, the injury to industrial life caused by a corrupt and incompetent administration, and the denial of elementary political rights, which no technical observance of the Convention would remove. Nor did it escape Lord Milner's notice that a policy of rigid insistence upon the letter of the Conventions might place the Imperial Government in a position of grave disadvantage. If any breach of the Conventions was once made the subject of earnest diplomatic complaint, the demand of the Imperial Government must be enforced even at the cost of war. The Conventions, therefore, should be invoked as little as possible. For, if the Boers denied the British Law Officers' interpretation of the text, the Imperial Government might find itself on the horns of a dilemma. Either it must beat an undignified retreat, or it must make war upon the Transvaal for a mere technicality, a proceeding which would gain for

the Republic a maximum, and for the Imperial Government a minimum of sympathy and support. Therefore, he said, "Keep the Conventions in the background. If we are to fight let it be about something that is essential to the peace and well-being of South Africa, and not a mere diplomatic wrangle between the Pretoria Executive and the British Government."

aal affairs.

Lord Milner's hope that President Krüger might meet him half-way, although it was shown by subsequent events to have been devoid of foundation, had for the moment superficial appearances in its favour. After their retreat on the question of the Aliens Immigration Law the attitude of the Pretoria Executive remained for some time outwardly less hostile to the Imperial Government. Woolls-Sampson and "Karri" Davies were released from Pretoria gaol in honour of Queen Victoria's Jubilee,[29] and at the same period the first and only step was taken that offered a genuine promise of reform from within. The Industrial Commission, appointed earlier in the year by the Executive at the request of President Krüger, surprised the Uitlander community by conducting its inquiry with a thoroughness and impartiality that left no ground for complaint. Its report, reviewing in detail the conditions of the mining industry, was published in July. It afforded a complete confirmation of the fiscal and administrative complaints put forward by the Uitlanders against the Government; and as Mr. Schalk Burger, the Chairman of the Commission, was both a member of the Executive and the leader of the more progressive section of the Boers, there seemed to be a reasonable prospect of the recommendations of the Report being carried into effect. Scarcely more than six months later President Krüger proved conclusively that the hope of these, or of any other, reforms was entirely unfounded; but so long as there remained any prospect of the Uitlanders and the Transvaal Government being able to settle their differences by themselves, Lord Milner consistently pursued his intention of "making things easy" for the Transvaal Government. And this although the Pretoria Executive soon began to make heavy drafts upon his patience in other respects.[30]

If Lord Milner was prepared to make the most of Paul Krüger and the Boers, he showed himself no less ready to see the best side of the Dutch in the Cape Colony. As we have already had occasion to notice, the year of his appointment was that of the Diamond Jubilee celebration; and on June 23rd he sent home a brief despatch in which he dwelt with evident satisfaction upon the share taken by the Dutch in the general demonstrations of loyalty called forth by the

occasion in the Cape Colony. After a reference to the number of loyal addresses or congratulatory telegrams which had been sent to the Colonial Secretary for transmission to the Queen, he continued:

> "The enthusiasm evoked here ... seems to me to be of peculiar interest ... in view of recent events, which, as you are aware, have caused a feeling of considerable bitterness among different sections of the community. All I can say is that, so far as I am able to judge, these racial differences have not affected the loyalty of any portion of the community to Her Majesty the Queen. People of all races, the English, the Dutch, the Asiatics, as well as the African natives, have vied with one another in demonstrations of affection for her person and devotion to the throne. When every allowance is made for the exaggeration of feeling caused by the unparalleled scale and prolonged duration of the present festivities, and for the contagious excitement which they have produced, it is impossible to doubt that the feeling of loyalty among all sections of the population is much stronger than has sometimes been believed. In my opinion, the impression made by the world-wide celebration of Her Majesty's Jubilee has strengthened that feeling throughout South Africa, and is likely to have a permanent value."[31]

npressions of the Dutch.

It has been urged that the opinion here recorded is inconsistent with the charge of anti-British sentiment subsequently brought by Lord Milner against the Dutch leaders in the Cape Colony, and the despatch itself has been cited as affording evidence of the contention that the unfavourable view subsequently expressed in the Graaf Reinet speech, and more definitely in the despatch of May 4th, 1899, was not the result of independent investigation, but was a view formed to support the Imperial Government in a coercive policy towards the Transvaal. This criticism, which is a perfectly natural one, only serves to establish the fact that Lord Milner actually did approach the study of the nationality difficulty in complete freedom from any preconceived notions on the subject. As he said, he went to South Africa with an "open mind." So far from having any prejudice against the Dutch, his first impression was distinctly favourable, and as such he recorded it, suitably enough, in this Jubilee despatch. But it must be remembered that the opinion here recorded was based upon a very limited field of observation. At the time when this despatch was written Lord Milner had not yet been quite two months in South Africa, and his experience of the Dutch of the Cape Colony had been confined to intercourse with the Dutch of the Cape

peninsula; that is to say, he had only come into contact with that section of the Cape Dutch which is, as indeed it has been for a century, closely identified, from a social point of view, with the official and mercantile British population of Capetown and its suburbs.

What the Jubilee despatch really shows is that Lord Milner was prepared to make the best of the Dutch. The contrast between its tone of ready appreciation and the note of earnest remonstrance in the Graaf Reinet speech is apparent enough. The despatch is dated June 23rd, 1897; the speech was delivered on March 3rd, 1898. What had happened in this interval of nine months to produce so marked a change in the mind of the genial, clear-sighted Englishman, who, as Mr. Asquith said, took with him to South Africa "as sympathetic an imagination" as any man of his acquaintance? *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.* Whether the diagnosis of his Graaf Reinet speech was right or wrong, something must have happened to turn Lord Milner from ready appreciation to grave remonstrance.

The circumstances which provide the answer to this question form an element of vital importance in the volume of evidence upon which posterity will pronounce the destruction of the Dutch Republics in South Africa to have been a just and necessary, or a needless and aggressive, act. But to see them in true perspective, the reader must first be possessed of some more precise information of the political situation in the Cape Colony at this time.

rigg ministry.

At the period of Lord Milner's appointment the political forces set in motion by the Raid were operating already to prepare the way for the new and significant combinations of persons and parties in the Cape Colony that took definite form in the parliamentary crisis of May, 1898. The Ministry now in office was that formed by Sir Gordon Sprigg upon Mr. Rhodes's resignation of the premiership after the Raid (January 6th, 1896). Like every other Cape Ministry of the last thirteen years, it was dependent upon the support of the Afrikander Bond, which supplied two out of the six members of the cabinet—Mr. Pieter Faure, Minister of Agriculture, and a moderate Bondsman, and Dr. Te Water, the intimate friend of Mr. Hofmeyr, and his direct representative in the Ministry. Another minister, Sir Thomas Upington, who had succeeded Mr. Philip Schreiner as Attorney-General, had been himself Prime Minister in the period 1884-6, when he and Sir Gordon Sprigg (then Treasurer-General), had opposed the demand for the intervention of the Imperial Government in Bechuanaland,

successfully and strenuously advocated by Mr. J. W. Leonard and Mr. Merriman. It was, therefore, eminently, what would be called in France "a Ministry of the Centre." Sir Gordon Sprigg's regard for British interests was too lukewarm to command the confidence of the more decided advocates of British supremacy; while, on the other hand, his more or less friendly relations with Mr. Rhodes aroused the suspicions of the Dutch extremists. But Dr. Te Water's presence in the Ministry, offering in itself a sufficient assurance that no measures deemed by Mr. Hofmeyr to be contrary to the interests of the Bond would be adopted, had secured for the Government the votes of the majority of the Dutch members of the Legislative Assembly. An example of the subserviency of the Sprigg Ministry to the Bond at this date was afforded upon Lord Milner's arrival. As we have seen, the Home Government determined to reinforce the South African garrison, in order to strengthen its demand upon the Transvaal Government for the repeal of the Aliens Immigration Law. Although no direct opposition was offered by the Ministry to this measure, the insufficiency of barrack accommodation in the Cape Colony was used as a pretext for placing obstacles in the way of its accomplishment. These difficulties were successfully overcome by Lord Milner, and in the end the reinforcements arrived without giving rise to any political excitement.[32]

contribution bill.

A more disagreeable incident was the covert attempt made by the Bond to obstruct the business of the Cape Parliament, in order that Sir Gordon Sprigg might be prevented from taking his place among the other prime ministers of the self-governing colonies at the Colonial Conference, and representing the Cape in the Jubilee celebrations in England.[33] This was the beginning of a disagreement between the Ministry and the Bond, which gradually increased in seriousness after Sir Gordon's return from England, until it culminated in the resignation of Dr. Te Water (May, 1898). The offer of an annual contribution to the cost of the British Navy, which was affirmed in principle by the Cape Parliament at this time, was understood in England to be a mark of Afrikander attachment to the British connection. In point of fact the measure received practically no support from the Bondsmen in Parliament; while, outside of Parliament, on Bond platforms and in the Bond Press, the Government's action in the matter was employed as an effective argument to stimulate disaffection in the ranks of its Dutch supporters. Mr. Hofmeyr, however, was careful not to allow the Bond, as an organisation, to commit itself to any overt opposition to the principle of a contribution to the British Navy—an attitude which would have been obviously

inconsistent with the Bond's profession of loyalty—and with characteristic irony the third reading of the Navy Contribution Bill was eventually passed, a year later, without a division in the Legislative Assembly by a Ministry[34] placed in office by Bond votes for the declared purpose of opposing the policy of the Imperial Government on the one question—the reform of the Transvaal Administration—upon the issue of which depended the maintenance of British supremacy in South Africa.

s's position.

But circumstances of deeper significance contributed to deprive the Sprigg Ministry of the support of the Bond, causing its majority to dwindle, and driving Sir Gordon himself, in an increasing degree, into the opposite camp. The British population for the first time showed a tendency to organise itself in direct opposition to the Bond. As Sir Gordon Sprigg grew more Imperialist, the Progressive party was formed for parliamentary purposes; while for the purpose of combating the Afrikander nationalist movement in general an Imperialist organisation, called the South African League, was established with the avowed object of maintaining British supremacy in South Africa. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, immediately after the Raid, announced his intention of taking no further part in the politics of the Cape Colony, and of devoting himself, for the future, to the development of Rhodesia. But upon his return from England, after giving evidence before the Committee of Inquiry into the Raid, he was received with so much warmth by the British population at Capetown in July, 1897, that he had retracted this decision, and determined to assume the same position of real, though not nominal, leadership of what was afterwards the Progressive party as Mr. Hofmeyr held in the Bond. Mr. Rhodes's return to political life, following, as it did, upon the report of the Committee of Inquiry, aroused the most bitter hostility against him on the part of his former associates in the Bond. And the Sprigg Ministry, by their increasing reliance upon the new party of which he was the leader, incurred the distrust of its Dutch supporters to a corresponding extent. In the meantime the Bond leaders had adopted Mr. Philip Schreiner, who was not a member of the Bond, as their parliamentary chief in the place of Rhodes, and this new combination was strengthened by the accession of Mr. J. X. Merriman and Mr. J. W. Sauer. Thus the opening months of the new year, 1898, found the population of the Cape Colony grouping itself roughly, for the first time, into two parties with definite and mutually destructive aims. On the one side there was the Sprigg Ministry, now almost exclusively supported by the British section of the Cape electorate, soon to be organised on the question of "redistribution"

into the Progressive party, with Rhodes as its real, though not its recognised, leader; and on the other there was the Bond party, with Schreiner as its parliamentary chief and Hofmeyr as its real leader, depending in no less a degree upon the Dutch population of the Colony, and naturally opposed to an electoral reform that threatened to deprive this population of its parliamentary preponderance. And in a few months' time, as we shall see, the Schreiner-Bond coalition took for its immediate aim the prevention of British interference in the Transvaal; while the Progressive party came, no less openly, to avow its determination to promote and support the action of the Imperial Government in seeking to obtain redress for the Uitlander grievances.

The movements here briefly indicated were, of course, perfectly well known to Lord Milner as constitutional Governor of the Colony. But at Graaf Reinet he probes the situation too deeply, and speaks with too authoritative a tone, to allow us to suppose that the remonstrance which he then addressed to the Cape Dutch was based upon any sources of knowledge less assured than his own observation and experience. For the Graaf Reinet speech is not an affair of ministers' minutes or party programmes; it is the straight talk of a man taught by eye and ear, and informed by direct relationships with the persons and circumstances that are envisaged in his words. To restate our question, which among these facts of personal observation and experience produced the change from the ready appreciation of the Cape Dutch, shown in the Jubilee despatch, to the earnest remonstrance of the Graaf Reinet speech? The historian cannot claim, like the writer of creative literature, to exhibit the working of the human mind. In the terms of the Aristotelian formula, he can relate only what "has" happened, leaving to the craftsman whose pen is enlarged and ennobled by the universal truth of art to tell what "must" happen. But such satisfaction as the lesser branch of literature can afford is at the disposal of the reader, in "good measure, pressed down, and running over." Without assuming, then, the philosophic certainty of poetry, we know that between the Jubilee despatch and the Graaf Reinet speech the development of the great South African drama reached its "turning-point" in the Transvaal; while in the Cape Colony Lord Milner was learning daily more of the "formidable personalities" and the "embarrassing problems" to which Mr. Asquith had referred.

orm in the Transvaal.

The more hopeful situation in the Transvaal that followed upon the determined action of the Imperial Government in May was succeeded by a

period punctuated by events which, taken collectively, obliterated all prospect of "reform from within." The treatment accorded to the report of the Industrial Commission, which, as we have noticed, established the truth of practically all the fiscal and administrative complaints of the Uitlanders, was a matter of especial significance. The Commission was created by President Krüger; it was in effect the fulfilment of his promises, made after the Raid, to redress the grievances of the Uitlanders. The Commissioners were his own officials, Boers and Hollanders; men who had no prejudice against the Government, and no sympathy with the new population, yet their recommendations, if carried into effect, would have removed the most serious of the industrial grievances of the British community. The Report had raised great expectations. It was thought that, not all, but a substantial proportion of its recommendations would be put into effect. Here, then, was an opportunity for reform which involved no loss of prestige, entailed no danger to the independence of the Republic, and held not the slightest threat to the stability of burgher predominance. If what President Krüger was waiting for was a convenient opportunity, he had such an opportunity now. This reasonable forecast was utterly falsified by the event. Mr. Schalk Burger, the Chairman of the Commission, was denounced by Mr. Krüger in the Volksraad as a traitor to the Republic, because he had dared to set his hand to so distasteful a document. The report itself was thrown contemptuously by the grim old President from the Volksraad to the customary committee of true-blue "doppers," whose ignorance of the industrial conditions of the Rand was equalled only by their personal devotion to himself. Here the adverse findings of the commissioners on the dynamite and railway monopolies were reversed; and the recommendation for a Local Board for the Rand was condemned as subversive of the authority of the State. At length, after the report had been tossed about from Volksraad to committee, and from committee to Volksraad, until very little of the original recommendations remained, the Government took action. In addition to an immaterial reduction of the exorbitant rates charged by the Netherlands Railway Company—a concession subsequently alleged to have been the price paid by the Hollander Corporation to avoid further inquiry into its affairs—it was announced that, with the object of lessening the cost of living on the Rand, the import duties upon certain necessaries in common use would be reduced, in accordance with the recommendations of the Commissioners on this point; but that, since it was obviously inexpedient to diminish the revenue of the Republic, the duties upon certain other articles of the same class would be raised to an extent more than counterbalancing the loss upon the reduction. *Parturiunt montes; nascitur ridiculus mus.*

re-elected president.

This singular display of mingled effrontery and duplicity marked the closing months of the year (1897). In the February following Mr. Krüger was elected to the presidency of the South African Republic for the fourth time. It was generally recognised that the success of his candidature was inevitable, but few, within or without the Transvaal, had expected him to secure so decisive a victory over his competitors. The figures—Krüger 12,858, Schalk Burger 3,750, and Joubert (Commandant-General) 2,001—were additional evidence of the impotency or lukewarmness of the reform party among the burghers. The first act of President Krüger, on his return to power, was to dismiss Chief Justice Kotzé. Mr. Kotzé's struggle for the independence of the law courts, thus summarily closed, had commenced a year before with what was known as the "High Court crisis." At that time President Krüger had obtained power from the Volksraad by the notorious law No. 1 of 1897 to compel the judges, on pain of dismissal, to renounce the right, recently exercised, to declare laws, which were in their opinion inconsistent with the Grondwet (Constitution), to be, to that extent, invalid. As a protest against this autocratic proceeding the entire bench of judges threatened to resign, and the courts were adjourned. The deadlock continued until a compromise was arranged through the intervention of Chief Justice de Villiers. The President undertook to introduce a new law providing satisfactorily for the independence of the Courts, and the judges, on their side, pledged themselves not to exercise the "testing" right in the meantime. In February, 1898, Chief Justice Kotzé wrote to remind President Krüger that his promise remained unfulfilled,[35] withdrawing at the same time the conditional pledge not to exercise the "testing" right given by himself. The President then dismissed Mr. Kotzé under Law No. 1, compelled a second judge, Mr. Justice Amershof (who had supported the Chief Justice in the position he had taken up) to resign, and appointed, as the new Chief Justice, Mr. Gregorowski, who, as Chief Justice of the Free State, had presided at the trial of the Reformers in 1896, and at the time of the crisis a year before had declared that "no honourable man could possibly accept the position of a judge so long as Law No. 1 remained in force." The judicature was now rendered subservient to the Executive, and the Uitlanders were thus deprived of their last constitutional safeguard against the injustice of the Boer and Hollander oligarchy.

actionary policy.

This was the position in the Transvaal in February, 1898. President Krüger had

demonstrated by his refusal to carry out the recommendations of the Industrial Commission, and by the dismissal of Chief Justice Kotzé, that he was determined not merely to set himself against all measures of reform, but to increase the disabilities under which the Uitlanders had hitherto lived. He had been placed, for the fourth time, at the head of the Republic by an overwhelming majority; he had refused to sacrifice a penny of revenue, and he was in possession of ample resources, which were being sedulously applied in increasing his already disproportionate supply of munitions of war. Through Dr. Leyds, who had returned from his mission to Europe, he had opened up communications with European Powers, that placed him in a position to avail himself to the full of the possible embarrassment of Great Britain through international rivalries or disagreements. In South Africa he had carried through a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with the Free State, and he had received more than one recent assurance that the flame of Afrikander nationalism had been kindled anew by the Bond in the Cape Colony.

These events were disquieting enough in themselves; but what made the disappearance of any prospect of spontaneous reform in the Transvaal still more serious to the High Commissioner for South Africa, was the complaisance with which President Krüger's reactionary policy was regarded by the Dutch subjects of the Crown. It was just here that Lord Milner's observations must have yielded the most startling results. We know that the days which had passed since the Jubilee despatch was written had brought him constant and varied opportunities for seeing "things as they really were" in South Africa; we know that he was keenly alert in the accomplishment of his mission, and we may presume, therefore, that few, if any, of these opportunities were lost.

le of the Cape Dutch.

In September Lord Milner had travelled right round the Colony. At every little town and *dorp*—wherever, in fact, he went—he conversed with the Dutch, whom his pleasant manner quickly won to friendliness; and all the speeches that he made in reply to the addresses of welcome were extremely conciliatory in tone. This was the time when there were hopeful anticipations of the good results that were to come from the Industrial Commission; and Lord Milner often began his speech with an expression of the sense of relief which he felt—a feeling which his audience must share—that now there was to be peace in South Africa. These conciliatory utterances of the new High Commissioner were almost completely ignored by the Dutch Press. An exception to this rule of silence was

significant. The High Commissioner was accompanied by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. (now Sir Pieter) Faure. On one occasion Mr. Faure made some remarks in the same spirit as that in which Lord Milner had spoken. "People," he said, "talk of Africa for the Afrikanders; but what I say is, Africa for all." The expression of this moderate sentiment drew down upon Mr. Faure a sharp reproof from *Ons Land*. From this and many other such incidents it must have begun to dawn upon Lord Milner's mind that what the Dutch of the Cape Colony wanted was not conciliation but domination.

s off" the Transvaal.

And so it came about that in the months that President Krüger was busy shutting the door against reform, Lord Milner was learning to realise that on this all-important matter there was nothing to hope from the Cape Dutch. When once the question of reform, or no reform, in the Transvaal came up, all conciliatory speeches were useless. It made no difference whether the Transvaal was right or wrong; it was always, "*Our* Transvaal, good or bad." In short, all that happened both in the Transvaal and the Cape Colony during this (South African) spring and summer was of the nature to impress conclusively upon Lord Milner's mind that on the crucial issue between the Imperial Government and the Transvaal, the leaders of Dutch opinion in the Cape Colony were against the British cause. The rank and file of the Dutch population, if left to themselves, might be indifferent, possibly friendly; but the Bond organisation had placed them under the control of the Bond leaders; and the Bond was hostile. What, more than anything else, would serve to confirm this impression was Lord Milner's constant study of the Dutch Press. Among these journals, *Ons Land* presented the most authoritative and significant expression of the Bond policy, as directed by Mr. Hofmeyr's astute brain and unrivalled experience. The editorial columns of *Ons Land* rarely contained a sentence that, standing alone, could be quoted as evidence of its advocacy of anti-British action. Its method was far more subtle. In everything in which Great Britain was concerned the attitude which it adopted was one of profound alienation, rather than of aggressive hostility. England's position in the world was presented and discussed as though "Afrikanders" were no more interested in it than they were in that of any foreign country. And, in South African matters, the tone of the Dutch Press, and of the Bond leaders, was not merely discouraging; at any hint of possible British action for the improvement of the administrative conditions of the Transvaal, it took a note of menace. "Hands off" the Transvaal: that was the sum and substance of Bond policy.

Between the Jubilee despatch and the Graaf Reinet speech, then, the Transvaal Government had shown that it had set its face definitely against reform, and Lord Milner had had time to realise the true state of political feeling in the Colony of which he was Governor. While there was anger among the British at the hopeless situation in the Transvaal, among the Dutch was a fixed determination not to allow the Transvaal to be interfered with. And there was something else that Lord Milner would have observed during his travels throughout the Colony. It was the utter despondency of the British population, and the condition of abasement to which they had been reduced. Nor can he have failed to observe that everywhere among the British there was a constant apology for the Raid; while, on the part of the Dutch, there was no recognition of all that the British had done to wipe out its stain and to mitigate its effects: in a word, that the moral conquest of the Colony by the Dutch was practically complete.

at Graaf Reinet.

It was with this accumulated evidence in his mind that Lord Milner travelled down, on March 2nd, 1898, from Capetown to Graaf Reinet, expecting to take part in a Governor's function of the ordinary sort at the opening of the railway on the following day. The conventional expressions of loyalty to the Queen, and the scarcely veiled hypocrisy and defiance with which the Dutch reiterated them, at the time when the whole weight of their influence was thrown against Great Britain on the only South African question that really mattered, had become nauseating even to his serene temper and generous disposition. He was wearied, too, of receiving a frivolous or unfriendly reply from the Pretoria Executive to the most reasonable proposals of the Imperial Government. Late at night there was brought to him, in the train, a copy of an address from the Graaf Reinet branch of the Afrikander Bond, which was to be presented to him on the morrow. It contained, in more than usually pointed language, a protest against "the charges of disloyalty made against the Bond," and a request that the High Commissioner would "convey to the Queen the expression of its unswerving loyalty." As he read on we can imagine how, in ominous contrast to the superficial protestations of the text, something exceptionally aggressive in the tone of the address, something which emphasised the inconsistency of these formal professions of attachment to the throne with the very practical hostility of their authors to British policy, struck the High Commissioner with peculiar force. The Dutch, who, under British rule, enjoyed—one might almost say abused—every privilege of citizenship in the Cape Colony, were quite prepared to see the

British excluded, under Dutch rule, from these same privileges in the Transvaal. More than that, they were determined to employ all the agencies at their command to prevent any effective interference with the Transvaal oligarchy. Lord Milner evidently felt that the time had come for remonstrance, so, gathering up the impressions which had been accumulating in his mind, he wrote down then and there his answer, which was delivered on the following day.

"Of course, I am glad to be assured that any section of Her Majesty's subjects is loyal, but I should be much more glad to be allowed to take that for granted. Why should I not? What reason could there be for any disloyalty? You have thriven wonderfully well under Her Majesty's Government. This country, despite its great extent and its fine climate, has some tremendous natural disadvantages to contend against, and yet let any one compare the position to-day with what it was at the commencement of Her Majesty's reign, or even thirty years ago. The progress in material wealth is enormous, and the prospects of future progress are greater still. And you have other blessings which by no means always accompany material wealth. You live under an absolutely free system of government, protecting the rights and encouraging the spirit of independence of every citizen. You have courts of law manned by men of the highest ability and integrity, and secure in the discharge of their high functions from all external interference. You have—at least as regards the white races—perfect equality of citizenship. And these things have not been won from a reluctant sovereign. They have been freely and gladly bestowed upon you, because freedom and self-government, justice and equality, are the first principles of British policy. And they are secured to you by the strength of the power that gave them, and whose navy protects your shores from attack without your being asked to contribute one pound to that protection unless you yourselves desire it. Well, gentlemen, of course you are loyal; it would be monstrous if you were not.

"And now, if I have one wish, it is that I may never again have to deal at any length with this topic. But in order that I may put it aside with a good conscience, I wish, having been more or less compelled to deal with it, to do so honestly, and not to shut my eyes to unpleasant facts. The great bulk of the population of the Colony—Dutch as well as English—are, I firmly believe, thoroughly loyal, in the sense that they know they live under a good constitution, and have no wish to change it, and regard with feelings of reverence and pride that august lady at the head of it. If we had only domestic questions to consider; if political controversy were confined to the internal affairs of the country, there would, no doubt, be a great deal of hard language used by conflicting parties, and very likely among the usual amenities of party warfare somebody would call somebody else disloyal; but the thing would be so absurd—so obviously absurd—that nobody would take it seriously, and the charges would be forgotten almost as soon as uttered.

"What gives the sting to the charge of disloyalty in this case, what makes it stick, and what makes people wince under it, is the fact that the political controversies of this country at present unfortunately turn largely upon another question—I mean the relations of Her Majesty's Government to the South African Republic—and that, whenever there is any prospect of any difference between them, a number of people in the Colony at once vehemently, and without even the semblance of impartiality, espouse the side of the Republic. Personally I do not think that they are disloyal. I am familiar at home with the figure of the politician—often the best of men, though singularly injudicious—who, whenever any disputes arise with another country, starts with the assumption that his own country must be in the wrong. He is not disloyal, but really he cannot be very much surprised if he appears to be so to those of his fellow-citizens whose inclination is to start with the exactly opposite assumption. And so I do not take it that in this case people are necessarily disloyal because they carry their sympathy with the Government of the Transvaal—which, seeing the close tie of relationship which unites a great portion of the population here with the dominant section in that country, is perfectly natural—to a point which gives some ground for the assertion that they seem to care much more for the independence of the Transvaal than for the honour and the interests of the country to which they themselves belong.

"For my own part, I believe the whole object of those people in espousing the cause of the Transvaal is to prevent an open rupture between that country and the British Government. They loathe, very naturally and rightly, the idea of war, and they think that, if they can only impress upon the British Government that in case of war with the Transvaal it would have a great number of its own subjects at least in sympathy against it, that is a way to prevent such a calamity.

"But in this they are totally wrong, for this policy rests on the assumption that Great Britain has some occult design on the independence of the Transvaal—that independence which it has itself given—and that it is seeking causes of quarrel in order to take that independence away. But that assumption is the exact opposite of the truth. So far from seeking causes of quarrel, it is the constant desire of the British Government to avoid causes of quarrel, and not to take up lightly the complaints (and they are numerous) which reach it from British subjects within the Transvaal, for the very reason that it wishes to avoid even the semblance of interference in the internal affairs of that country, and, as regards its external relations, to insist only on that minimum of control which it has always distinctly reserved, and has reserved, I may add, solely in the interests of

the future tranquillity of South Africa. That is Great Britain's moderate attitude, and she cannot be frightened out of it. It is not any aggressiveness on the part of Her Majesty's Government which now keeps up the spirit of unrest in South Africa. Not at all. It is that unprogressiveness—I will not say the retrogressiveness—of the Government of the Transvaal and its deep suspicion of the intentions of Great Britain which makes it devote its attention to imaginary external dangers, when every impartial observer can see perfectly well that the real dangers which threaten it are internal.

"Now, I wish to be perfectly fair. Therefore, let me say that this suspicion, though absolutely groundless, is not, after all that has happened, altogether unnatural. I accept the situation that at the present moment any advice that I could tender, or that any of your British fellow-citizens could tender in that quarter, though it was the best advice in the world, would be instantly rejected because it was British. But the same does not apply to the Dutch citizens of this colony, and especially to those who have gone so far in the expression of their sympathy for the Transvaal as to expose themselves to these charges of disloyalty to their own flag. Their good-will at least cannot be suspected across the border; and if all they desire—and I believe it is what they desire—is to preserve the South African Republic, and to promote good relations between it and the British Colonies and Government, then let them use all their influence, which is bound to be great, not in confirming the Transvaal in unjustified suspicions, not in encouraging its Government in obstinate resistance to all reform, but in inducing it gradually to assimilate its institutions, and, what is even more important than institutions, the temper and spirit of its administration, to those of the free communities of South Africa, such as this Colony or the Orange Free State. That is the direction in which a peaceful way out of these inveterate troubles, which have now plagued this country for more than thirty years, is to be found."[36]

Here was a bolt from the blue! All South Africa stood to attention. No such authoritative and inspiring utterance had come from the High Commissioners for South Africa since Frere had been recalled, now eighteen years ago. The Afrikander nationalists saw that their action and policy were exposed to the scrutiny of a penetrating intellect, and grew uneasy.

The position which Lord Milner had taken up was impregnable. What is the

good of your loyalty, he said in effect to the Cape Dutch, if you refuse to help us in the one thing needful? And this the one thing of all others the justice of which you Afrikanders should feel—that the Transvaal should "assimilate its institutions ... and the tone and temper of its administration, to those of the free communities of South Africa such as this Colony and the Orange Free State."

The impact of these words was tremendous. The weight behind them was the weight of inevitable truth.

A week later Mr. J. X. Merriman wrote to President Steyn to beg him to urge President Krüger to be careful. Under date March 11th, 1898, he says:

"You will, no doubt, have seen both Sir Alfred Milner's speech at Graaf Reinet and the reported interview with Mr. Rhodes in *The Cape Times*. Through both there runs a note of thinly veiled hostility to the Transvaal and the uneasy menace of trouble ahead....

"Yet one cannot conceal the fact that the greatest danger to the future lies in the attitude of President Krüger and his vain hope of building up a State on a foundation of a narrow, unenlightened minority, and his obstinate rejection of all prospect of using the materials which lie ready to his hand to establish a true Republic on a broad Liberal basis. The report of recent discussions in the Volksraad on his finances and their mismanagement fill one with apprehension. Such a state of affairs cannot last. It must break down from inherent rottenness, and it will be well if the fall does not sweep away the freedom of all of us.

"I write in no hostility to republics; my own feelings are all in the opposite direction.... Humanly speaking, the advice and good-will of the Free State is the only thing that stands between the South African Republic and a catastrophe."[37]

and the Bond.

Still more striking and salutary was the effect produced upon the British population in the Cape Colony. All who were not utterly abased by the yoke of Bond domination stood upright. Those whose spirit had been cowed by the odium of the Raid took heart. Never had the essential morality of England's dealings with the Dutch been vindicated more triumphantly. The moral right of the Power which had done justice to the Dutch in its own borders to require the Dutch to do justice to the British within the borders of the Republic was unassailable. We have noticed before how in the year 1897 the different sections

of the British population were manifesting a tendency to draw closer together. After the Graaf Reinet speech this movement rapidly developed into a general determination to challenge the long domination of the Bond. It had been recognised for some time past that the recent and considerable growth of the urban population of the Colony, which was mainly British, had not been accompanied by any corresponding increase in the number of its parliamentary representatives. In February (1898), the anomalous condition of the Cape electoral system was brought before the Ministry. The indignation caused by the dismissal of Chief Justice Kotzé, and the growing evidence of President Krüger's determination to ride rough-shod over the British population in the Transvaal, contributed to unite the Colonial British of all sections, with the exception of the one or two men who were wholly identified with the Bond, in the common aim of obtaining a fair representation for the chief centres of British population in the Cape Colony; and the practically solid British party thus formed adopted the title of "Progressives." The Ministry knew, of course, that any such measure would be displeasing to Mr. Hofmeyr; but Sir Gordon Sprigg, being now assured of the almost united support of the British members in the Colonial Parliament, resolved to bring forward a Redistribution Bill. The draft Bill was approved by the Executive Council on May 13th, and Dr. Te Water, Mr. Hofmeyr's representative in the Ministry, thereupon resigned.[38]

ribution.

Sir Gordon Sprigg had now done a thing unprecedented in the parliamentary history of the Cape Colony in the last fifteen years. He had defied the Bond. He knew that the Bond was quite able to turn his Ministry out of Office. But he had made up his mind, in this event, to throw in his lot with the Progressive party, of which Mr. Rhodes was the actual chief. Mr. Hofmeyr did not leave him long in doubt. On the resignation of Dr. Te Water all the Bond artillery was at once turned on to the Ministry. On May 31st Mr. Schreiner gave notice of a vote of "no confidence." It was put off until June 13th, and in the meantime the second reading of the Redistribution Bill was met by the "previous question" moved by Mr. Theron, the Chairman of the Provincial Council of the Bond. No attempt was made, either in Parliament or in the Press, to conceal the fact that, under the question of redistribution, wider and more momentous issues were at stake. The counts in the Bond's indictment of the Ministry, as set out in *Ons Land*, were (1) its Imperialist tendencies as evidenced by the proposed gift of a warship to the British Navy; and (2) its lack of sympathy with the South African Republic. Against these crimes it had nothing to place, except that it had permitted the

employment of the captured Bechuanas, as indentured labourers[39]—its sole merit, in the opinion of the Bond journal. *The Cape Times*, on the other hand, declared with equal frankness that the real point to be decided was, whether the interests of President Krüger and the South African Republic, or those of the Cape Colony, as part of the British Empire, had the greater claim upon the Government and Parliament of the Colony. And Mr. Schreiner, when, on June 13th, he introduced the "no confidence" motion, asked the House to condemn the Ministry on the ground that it had not shown any "sympathy" with, or made any "conciliatory approach" towards, the "sister Republic." On Monday, June 20th, the second reading of the Redistribution Bill was carried by a majority of seven, but two days later, June 22nd, the Ministry found itself in a minority of five on Mr. Schreiner's motion of "no confidence."[40] In these circumstances Sir Gordon Sprigg determined not to resign, but to appeal to the electorate—a course justified by constitutional usage—and Parliament was dissolved.

neral election, 1898.

The election which ensued was fought with great determination and no little bitterness. Both the Progressive party and the Bond were supplied with ample funds; the former had the purse of Mr. Rhodes and other Englishmen to draw upon, while the latter was subsidised by President Krüger and his agents from the revenues of the Transvaal.[41] Mr. Schreiner's election utterances were studiously moderate; indeed, his letter of thanks to the electors of the Malmesbury division, by whom he was returned to Parliament, contained a reference to "the noble empire which was theirs, and to which they belonged." But such pronouncements by no means represented the sentiment of the party with which he had identified himself. The objects of the Afrikander party, as presented in their most attractive form by *Ons Land*, were to overthrow Rhodes and all his works, to oppose the "Chartered clique" and "the influence of Mammon in politics," and to secure a "pure administration" and "the cultivation of friendly relations with the neighbouring states:" in other words, to give every possible encouragement to the Transvaal in the diplomatic struggle with Great Britain. The Dutch press in general preached the creed of Afrikander nationalism without disguise. The under-current of anti-British feeling which prevailed among the Dutch population may be understood from the fact that the following frank appeal from a republican nationalist to the Cape Afrikanders was published in the columns of *Ons Land*:

"When one considers the state of affairs in the Cape Colony, it must be

confessed the future does not appear too rosy. The majority of the Afrikander nation in the Cape Colony still go bent under the English yoke. The free section of the two Republics is very small compared to that portion subject to the stranger, and, whatever may be our private opinion, one thing at least is certain, namely, that without the assistance of the Cape Colonial Afrikanders the Afrikander cause is lost. The two Republics by themselves, surrounded as they are by the stranger [*i.e.* British] are unable to continue the fight. One day the question of who is to be master will have to be referred to the arbitrament of the sword, and then the verdict will depend upon the Cape Colonial Afrikanders. If they give evidence on our side we shall win. It does not help a brass farthing to mince matters. This is the real point at issue; and in this light every Afrikander must learn to see it. And what assistance can we expect from Afrikanders in the Cape Colony?... The vast majority of them (Afrikanders) are still faithful, and will even gird on the sword when God's time comes."[42]

At the same period the Dutch Reformed Church in the Colony had become what was, to all intents and purposes, a vehicle for the advocacy of rebellion. The manner in which the principles of Afrikander nationalism were combined with religious doctrine may be gathered from certain extracts from the *Studenten Blad* of the Theological Seminary of Burghersdorp, which were translated and published by *The Albert Times*. The passage following appeared on May 26th, 1899; and by November 16th the Seminary was closed, since the bulk of the students had at that date joined the Boer forces:

ritish sentiment.

"Must we love this people [the English] who robbed our ancestors of their freedom, who forced them to leave a land dear to them as their heart's blood—a people that followed our fathers to the new fatherland which they had bought with their blood and snatched from the barbarians, and again threatened their freedom? Our fathers fought with the courage of despair, and retook the land with God's aid and with their blood. But England is not satisfied. Again is our freedom threatened by the same people, and not only our freedom, but our language, our nationality, our religion! Must we surrender everything, and disown our fathers? I cannot agree with this. The thought is hateful to me—the thought of trampling on the bodies of our fathers as we extend the hand of friendship to those who have slain our fathers in an unrighteous quarrel.... But some may say that the Bible teaches

us to love our enemies. I think, however, that the text cannot be here applied. Race hatred is something quite distinct from personal enmity. When I meet an Englishman as a private individual I must regard him as my fellow-creature; if, however, I meet him as an Englishman, then I, as an Afrikander, must regard him as the enemy of my nation and my religion—as a wolf that is endeavouring to creep into the fold. This is the chief reason why we must regard them as our enemies; they are the enemies of our religion."

At the beginning of September, when the bulk of the elections were over, 40 Afrikander members and 36 Progressives had been returned. Three seats remained to be filled. Mr. Rhodes, who had been returned both for Barkly West and Namaqualand, decided to sit for the former constituency, and the decision of the Bond to contest the seat thus vacated caused a delay in the new election for Namaqualand. The return of the two representatives of the Vryburg division was not to take place until the 15th. As all three constituencies were expected to elect Progressives—an expectation which was fulfilled—the result of the general election was to give the Bond a bare majority of one, and this in spite of the fact that a considerably larger total of votes had been cast for the Progressive than for the Bond candidates.[43]

's impartiality.

These somewhat unusual circumstances gave rise to an incident which is significant of the absolute impartiality with which Lord Milner discharged the duties of his office as constitutional Governor of the Cape Colony. In view of the circumstance that the Progressives had polled a majority of the electorate, although they were actually in a minority in the Assembly, Mr. Rhodes was of opinion that the Ministry should remain in office, and postpone the meeting of Parliament until the Namaqualand election had been held. He believed, further, that in the period of grace thus obtained it would be found possible to induce one or other of the Bond members to change sides, and thereby put the Ministry again in a majority. The immediate obstacle to the execution of this plan of action was the necessity of obtaining "supply." The partial appropriation made by Parliament before the dissolution was exhausted, and the only method by which funds could be provided without the authority of Parliament was the issue of Governor's warrants on the Treasury. Lord Milner was willing to sign warrants to enable the Ministry to carry on the administration during the unavoidable interval between the exhaustion of the last appropriation and the commencement of the new session. But, in view of the constitutional principle

that no ministry which cannot obtain supply is justified in remaining in office, he absolutely refused to issue warrants for any longer period. He held, moreover, that as the Namaqualand election was a bye-election, the new Parliament would be completed, and therefore competent to transact business, so soon as the two members for Vryburg had been duly returned. Lord Milner was, no doubt, aware that the Sprigg Ministry would have had a fair prospect of retaining office if Mr. Rhodes had been allowed time to put his tactics into effect. On the other hand, he can scarcely have failed to observe that there was another aspect of the question. A loyalist ministry, by showing an undue desire to cling to office, with or without the employment of questionable political methods, would run the risk of alienating the more scrupulous of the British members, and of failing to obtain the support of the moderate Afrikander, who might otherwise have been won to the Progressive and Imperialist side. But, as Governor of the Colony, he refused to allow any considerations of party interest, on this or on any subsequent occasion, to influence his judgment. While he conceived it to be his duty to give advice and criticism to public men of all shades of political opinion, he showed himself inexorably opposed to the thought of straining his constitutional powers in the slightest degree for the benefit of one side or the other.[44] Accordingly provision for the expenses of administration was made by Governor's warrants up to September 30th, and on the day following the Vryburg election (September 16th), a proclamation summoning Parliament for October 7th was issued.

ner, prime minister.

On October 11th the Government was again defeated on a vote of "no confidence" by a majority of two.[45] On the 17th the House assembled with an Afrikander Ministry formed by Mr. Schreiner. In addition to the Premier it contained Dr. Te Water and Mr. Herholdt, both members of the Bond; Messrs. Merriman and Sauer, who were now in close association with the Bond; and Mr. (now Sir) Richard Solomon. The latter, who had been defeated in the general election, was provided with a seat upon his accepting office as Attorney-General. The Progressives continued to be led in opposition by Sir Gordon Sprigg. Mr. (now Sir) James Rose Innes was returned as an "independent," since he had found himself unable to work in association with a party in which Mr. Rhodes had a dominant influence. The new Ministry was not strong enough to resist the continued demand of the Progressives for a measure of electoral reform; but the Redistribution Bill, as now passed, took the form of a compromise so disastrous to the British population that the Bond majority was increased to eight by the new elections held in April, 1899.[46]

Mr. Chamberlain's policy, as we have seen, was based upon the belief that it was possible to win over the Dutch in the Cape Colony and the Free State to the side of the Imperial Government. But here, in October, 1898, was an Afrikander ministry in power in the Cape Colony pledged to prevent the intervention of the Imperial Government in the affairs of the Transvaal. From that moment the issue became more and more one not of right, but of might. In the Free State, as we have seen, what was virtually an offensive and defensive alliance with the northern Republic had been ratified by the Volksraad. In the Transvaal the work of armament was proceeding apace, and Dr. Leyds had been despatched to Europe, as Envoy Extraordinary of the Republic, with authority and funds calculated to enable him to enlist the active sympathy of the Continental powers on behalf of the Pretoria Executive. His place as State Secretary had been filled, in July, by Mr. Reitz, the former President of the Free State, and one of the actual founders of the Afrikander Bond; and Mr. Smuts, a younger and even more enthusiastic believer in the nationalist creed, was appointed to the office of State Attorney.[47] With the exception of Rhodesia and Natal and the native territories immediately under the control of the Imperial Government, the Afrikander nationalists dominated the whole of South Africa. Nor is it surprising that, in these circumstances, the tone of the communications passing between the Transvaal Government and the paramount Power should have become increasingly unsatisfactory.[48]

's visit to England.

In the (English) winter of 1898-9 Lord Milner paid a visit to England. Sir William Greene, who had left Pretoria on a holiday on June 29th, was also at home during the same period. Lord Milner's visit was due in part to the necessity for medical treatment;[49] but, in any case, it had become desirable that he should be able to communicate fully to Mr. Chamberlain the grave views which he had formed on the South African situation. He left for England on November 2nd, landed on the 19th, sailed on January 28th, and reached Capetown again on February 14th. During the whole of the two months that he was in England he was engaged in an endeavour to impress upon Mr. Chamberlain, and everybody else with whom he could converse, that the existing state of affairs was one which, if allowed to remain unchanged, would end in the loss of South Africa.

During nineteen months of close observation and earnest, patient study, Lord Milner had grasped the situation in its completeness. What he saw was the demoralising effect of the spectacle of the Dutch ruling in the Cape Colony, and

the British being tyrannised over in the Transvaal. Looking at South Africa as a whole, there was the fact, as indisputable as it was grotesque, that the British inhabitant was in a position of distinct inferiority to the Dutch; and this although the Cape and Natal were British colonies, while the Transvaal and the Free State were states subject to the authority of Great Britain as paramount Power. It was an impossible position. What Lord Milner urged upon the Imperial Government was the plain necessity of putting an end to an intolerable state of things which showed no capacity of righting itself; of pressing for justice to the British population of the Transvaal, with an absolute determination to obtain it. That such a policy might result in war, he knew; though neither he nor any one else realised, in the beginning of 1899, how near war actually was. The reliance of the Transvaal oligarchy on the Orange Free State, now bound to them by a formal alliance, and on the party of the Bond now in power at the Cape, might tempt them to resist even the most moderate demands. But Milner no doubt hoped that, if the British Government grasped the nettle firmly, and, while treating the Transvaal with all possible diplomatic courtesy, yet left no doubt whatever of its inflexible resolution, war might still be avoided. And in any case he felt that there was no option for the British Government but to take up the case of the Transvaal British, if a shred of respect for the power and name of Britain was to be preserved in South Africa. To embark on such a policy involved two dangers: the danger of war, and what in Milner's eyes was perhaps even greater, the danger that, by advancing just claims and then, letting ourselves be "bluffed" out of them, we might yet further lessen, and indeed totally destroy, what hold we still possessed upon the affection of the South African British or on the respect either of British or Dutch. In the light of past experience the second danger may well have seemed to him the greater of the two. But, with perils on both hands, he still felt that there was nothing for it but to go forward, to make one supreme effort to save a situation which was rapidly becoming a hopeless one. To have remained quiescent, with the forces which were gradually edging us out of the Sub-Continent growing on every side, could only have ended in the overthrow, or at best, the euthanasia of British dominion in South Africa.

rdict.

It was in the course of this visit that Lord Milner realised the magnitude of the task that lay before him. To save England in spite of herself; to keep South Africa a part of the Empire in spite of ignorance at home, in the teeth of an armed Republic and an Afrikander ministry, required not merely an iron will and

mastership in statecraft, but a reasoned and unfaltering belief in the justice of the British cause. "Certainly I engaged in that struggle with all my might," he said long afterwards in his farewell speech at Johannesburg, "because I was, from head to foot, one mass of glowing conviction of the rightness of our cause."[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER IV

UNDER WHICH FLAG?

itlanders' petition.

Upon his return Lord Milner found that the storm clouds had gathered in the Transvaal. In a despatch of January 13th, 1899, Mr. Chamberlain had informed the Pretoria Executive that the proposed extension of the dynamite contract in its new form (*i.e.* as, in effect, a "privileged importation by one firm," although nominally "a State undertaking") was held by the law officers of the Crown to be as much a violation of the Convention as the original monopoly, which had been cancelled on the representations of the Imperial Government in 1892. Mr. Reitz's reply, which Lord Milner transmitted to the Colonial Office not long after his arrival at Capetown, was a blunt assertion that, in the opinion of his Government, the Imperial Government had no right to interfere. But in the meantime the whole question of the position of the British residents in the Transvaal had been raised directly by the agitation which had arisen out of the shooting of Edgar at Johannesburg on December 18th, 1898.[50] This event was followed by the petition for protection, which Sir William Butler (who was General-in-Command, and during Lord Milner's absence Acting High Commissioner) refused to transmit to the Secretary of State (January 4th, 1899); by the arrest of Messrs. Webb and Dodd and the breaking up of the Amphitheatre meeting (January 14th); by the attempt of the Pretoria Executive to buy off the capitalists (February 27th-April 14th); by the presentation of the second petition to the Queen (March 24th); by the agitation on the Rand in favour of the reforms for which it prayed; and lastly by the public meetings held in the Cape Colony and Natal for, and against, the intervention of the Imperial Government.[51]

Within three months of his return Lord Milner cabled the masterly statement in which he endorsed the petition of the Uitlanders[52] with the memorable words: "The case for intervention is overwhelming." Like the Graaf Reinet speech, this despatch of May 4th was written at white heat, but the opinions which it expressed were in no less a degree the mature and measured judgments of a mind fully informed upon every detail germane to the issue. So much is this the fact that all that is essential for the full comprehension of the second Reform Movement at Johannesburg—the salient features of which have been outlined above—is to be found within the limits of this brief and notable State document:

tervention despatch.

"Having regard to the critical character of the South African situation and the likelihood of an early reply by Her Majesty's Government to the Petition, I am telegraphing remarks which under ordinary circumstances I should have made by despatch. Events of importance have followed so fast on each other since my return to South Africa, and my time has been so occupied in dealing with each incident severally, that I have had no time for reviewing the whole position.

"The present crisis undoubtedly arises out of the Edgar incident. But that incident merely precipitated a struggle which was certain to come. It is possible to make too much of the killing of Edgar. It was a shocking and, in my judgment, a criminal blunder, such as would have caused a popular outcry anywhere. It was made much worse by the light way in which it was first dealt with by the Public Prosecutor and then by the judge at the trial. By itself, however, it would not have justified, nor, in fact, provoked the present storm. But it happened to touch a particularly sore place. There is no grievance which rankles more in the breasts of the Uitlander population than the conduct of the police, who, while they have proved singularly incompetent to deal with gross scandals like the illicit liquor trade, are harsh and arbitrary in their treatment of individuals whom they happen to dislike, as must have become evident to you from the recurrent ill-treatment of coloured people. There are absolutely no grounds for supposing that the excitement which the death of Edgar caused was factitious. It has been laid to the door of the South African League, but the officials of the League were forced into action by Edgar's fellow-workmen. And, the consideration of grievances once started by the police grievance, it was inevitable that the smouldering but profound discontent of the population who constantly find their affairs mismanaged, their protests disregarded, and their attitude misunderstood, by a Government on which they have absolutely no

means of exercising any influence, should once more break into flame.

"We have, therefore, simply to deal with a popular movement of a similar kind to that of 1894 and 1895 before it was perverted and ruined by a conspiracy of which the great body of the Uitlanders were totally innocent. None of the grievances then complained of, and which then excited universal sympathy, have been remedied, and others have been added. The case is much stronger. It is impossible to overlook the tremendous change for the worse, which has been effected by the lowering of the status of the High Court of Judicature and by the establishment of the principle embodied in the new draft Grondwet that any resolution of the Volksraad is equivalent to a law. The instability of the laws has always been one of the most serious grievances. The new Constitution provides for their permanent instability, the judges being bound by their oath to accept every Volksraad resolution as equally binding with a law passed in the regular form, and with the provisions of the Constitution itself. The law prescribing this oath is one of which the present Chief Justice said that no self-respecting man could sit on the Bench while it was on the Statute Book. Formerly the foreign population, however bitterly they might resent the action of the Legislature and of the Administration, had yet confidence in the High Court of Judicature. It cannot be expected that they should feel the same confidence to-day. Seeing no hope in any other quarter, a number of Uitlanders who happen to be British subjects have addressed a petition to Her Majesty the Queen. I have already expressed my opinion of its substantial The movement not artificial. and the absolute *bona fides* of its promoters. But the petition is only one proof among many of the profound discontent of the unenfranchised population, who are a great majority of the white inhabitants of the State."

"The public meeting of the 14th January was indeed broken up by workmen, many of them poor burghers, in the employment of the Government and instigated by Government officials, and it is impossible at present to hold another meeting of a great size. Open-air meetings are prohibited by law, and by one means or another all large public buildings have been rendered unavailable. But smaller meetings are being held almost nightly along the Rand, and are unanimous in their demand for enfranchisement. The movement is steadily growing in force and extent.

"With regard to the attempt to represent that movement as artificial, the work of scheming capitalists or professional agitators, I regard it as a wilful perversion of the truth. The defenceless people who are clamouring for a redress of

grievances are doing so at great personal risk. It is notorious that many capitalists regard political agitation with disfavour because of its effect on the markets. It is equally notorious that the lowest class of Uitlanders, and especially the illicit liquor dealers, have no sympathy whatever with the cause of reform. Moreover, there are in all classes a considerable number who only want to make money and clear out, and who, while possibly sympathising with reform, feel no great interest in a matter which may only concern them temporarily. But a very large and constantly increasing proportion of the Uitlanders are not birds of passage; they contemplate a long residence in the country, or to make it their permanent home. These people are the mainstay of the reform movement as they are of the prosperity of the country. They would make excellent citizens if they had the chance.

"A busy industrial community is not naturally prone to political unrest. But they bear the chief burden of taxation; they constantly feel in their business and daily lives the effects of chaotic local legislation and of incompetent and unsympathetic administration; they have many grievances, but they believe all these could gradually be removed if they had only a fair share of political power. This is the meaning of their vehement demand for enfranchisement. Moreover, they are mostly British subjects, accustomed to a free system and equal rights; they feel deeply the personal indignity involved in a position of permanent subjection to the ruling caste, which owes its wealth and power to their exertion. The political turmoil in the Transvaal Republic will never end till the permanent Uitlander population is admitted to a share in the government, and while that turmoil lasts there will be no tranquillity or adequate progress in Her Majesty's South African dominions.

"The relations between the British Colonies and the two Republics are intimate to a degree which one must live in South Africa in order fully to realise. Socially, economically, ethnologically, they are all one country. The two principal white races are everywhere inextricably mixed up; it is absurd for either to dream of subjugating the other. The only condition on which they can live in harmony, and the country progress, is equality all round. South Africa can prosper under two, three, or six Governments; but not under two absolutely conflicting social and political systems—perfect equality for Dutch and British in the British Colonies side by side with the permanent subjection of the British to the Dutch in one of the Republics. It is idle to talk of peace and unity under such a state of affairs.

"It is this which makes the internal condition of the Transvaal Republic a matter of vital interest to Her Majesty's Government. No merely local question affects so deeply the welfare and peace of her own South African possessions. And the right of Great Britain to intervene to secure fair treatment to the Uitlanders is fully equal to her supreme interest in securing it. The majority of them are her subjects, whom she is bound to protect. But the enormous number of British subjects, the endless series of their grievances, and the nature of those grievances, which are not less serious because they are not individually sensational, makes protection by the ordinary diplomatic means impossible. We are, as you know, for ever remonstrating about this, that, and the other injury to British subjects. Only in rare cases, and only when we are very emphatic, do we obtain any redress. The sore between us and the Transvaal Republic is thus inevitably kept up, while the result in the way of protection to our subjects is lamentably small. For these reasons it has been, as you know, my constant endeavour to reduce the number of our complaints. I may sometimes have abstained when I ought to have protested from my great dislike of ineffectual nagging. But I feel that the attempt to remedy the hundred-and-one wrongs springing from a hopeless system by taking up isolated cases, is perfectly vain. It may easily lead to war, but will never lead to real improvement."

t the remedy.

"The true remedy is to strike at the root of all these injuries—the political impotence of the injured. What diplomatic protests will never accomplish, a fair measure of Uitlander representation would gradually but surely bring about. It seems a paradox, but it is true, that the only effective way of protecting our subjects is to help them to cease to be our subjects. The admission of the Uitlanders to a fair share of political power would no doubt give stability to the Republic. But it would, at the same time, remove most of our causes of difference with it, and modify and, in the long run, entirely remove that intense suspicion and bitter hostility to Great Britain which at present dominates its internal and external policy.

"The case for intervention is overwhelming. The only attempted answer is that things will right themselves if left alone. But, in fact, the policy of leaving things alone has been tried for years, and it has led to their going from bad to worse. It is not true that this is owing to the Raid. They were going from bad to worse before the Raid. We were on the verge of war before the Raid, and the Transvaal was on the verge of revolution. The effect of the Raid has been to give the policy

of leaving things alone a new lease of life, and with the old consequences.

"The spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances, and calling vainly to Her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain, and the respect for the British Government within the Queen's dominions. A certain section of the Press, not in the Transvaal only, preaches openly and constantly the doctrine of a republic embracing all South Africa, and supports it by menacing references to the armaments of the Transvaal, its alliance with the Orange Free State, and the active sympathy which, in case of war, it would receive from a section of Her Majesty's subjects. I regret to say that this doctrine, supported as it is by a ceaseless stream of malignant lies about the intentions of the British Government, is producing a great effect upon a large number of our Dutch fellow-colonists. Language is frequently used which seems to imply that the Dutch have some superior right, even in this Colony, to their fellow-citizens of British birth. Thousands of men peacefully disposed, and, if left alone, perfectly satisfied with their position as British subjects, are being drawn into disaffection, and there is a corresponding exasperation on the side of the British.

"I can see nothing which will put a stop to this mischievous propaganda but some striking proof of the intention of Her Majesty's Government not to be ousted from its position in South Africa. And the best proof alike of its power and its justice would be to obtain for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal a fair share in the government of the country which owes everything to their exertions. It could be made perfectly clear that our action was not directed against the existence of the Republic. We should only be demanding the re-establishment of rights which now exist in the Orange Free State, and which existed in the Transvaal itself at the time of, and long after, the withdrawal of British sovereignty. It would be no selfish demand, as other Uitlanders besides those of British birth would benefit by it. It is asking for nothing from others which we do not give ourselves. And it would certainly go to the root of the political unrest in South Africa, and, though temporarily it might aggravate, it would ultimately extinguish the race feud, which is the great bane of the country."[53]

It was Lord Milner's intention that the text of this despatch should have been made public upon its receipt in England. It contained the essential facts of the South African situation; and, what is more, it exhibited with perfect frankness the connection between Dutch ascendancy in the Cape Colony and Dutch

tyranny in the Transvaal—a matter which was very imperfectly understood. The circumstance that these essential facts were before the British people, and, moreover, the circumstance that President Krüger knew that they were before the British people, would, he believed, greatly increase the effect of the strong demand for reforms which the Imperial Government had determined to address to the Pretoria Executive in response to the petition to the Queen.

yr's intervention.

Nor was he alone in this opinion. Mr. Hofmeyr knew that a despatch of grave importance had gone home. He had gathered, no doubt, a fairly accurate notion of its tenor from Mr. Schreiner, whom Lord Milner had warned some time before of "the gravity of the situation."[54] It is not going beyond the limits of probability to assume that the Master of the Bond realised the effect which the publication of these plain truths, backed by the authority of the High Commissioner, would produce upon the mind of the English people, and that he thereupon determined to take steps to prevent a turn of affairs which, as he conceived, would be most unfavourable to the nationalist cause. Surmises apart, it is certain, at least, that five days sufficed to place Mr. Hofmeyr in a position to ask Lord Milner if he would favourably consider an invitation to meet President Krüger in conference at Bloemfontein; and that within three days more (May 12th) a definite proposal to this effect had been made through the agency of President Steyn and accepted by Mr. Chamberlain. Nor, is it any less certain that, in view of the friendly discussion which was to take place so soon, the Secretary of State decided to postpone the publication of Lord Milner's despatch. This is the short history of the Bloemfontein Conference. It was a counter-stroke dealt by one of those "formidable personalities" of which Mr. Asquith spoke, and in all respects worthy of Mr. Hofmeyr's statesmanship. Indeed, the methods which he employed for paralysing the machinery of British administration in South Africa were always subtle: infinitely more subtle than those which Parnell adopted in the not very dissimilar circumstances of the Home Rule campaign.

The decision to postpone the publication of Lord Milner's despatch of May 4th was a serious mistake, the injurious effect of which was felt both at the Conference and afterwards. But before we observe the incidents by which this central event was immediately preceded, it is necessary to examine more fully the political environment in which Lord Milner found himself established now that the April elections[55] had given the Afrikander party an assured tenure of power, and, at the same time, the moment had arrived for the Imperial

Government to fulfil the pledge given on February 4th, 1896, for the redress of the "admitted grievances" of the Uitlanders.

ond and the ministry.

The Schreiner Ministry was the agent of the Bond; it could not exist for a day if the Bond withdrew its support. The Bond majority in the Legislative Assembly had been returned by the Dutch inhabitants of the Colony for the avowed purpose of preventing the intervention of the Imperial Government in the affairs of the Transvaal. The Ministry and its supporters had begun by ranging themselves definitely on the side of the Transvaal. And, therefore, in all that was done by either party from the Bloemfontein Conference to the Ultimatum, it followed, *ex hypothesi*, that, in their opinion, the Transvaal was right, and England was wrong. Twice, as we shall see, Mr. Schreiner, on behalf of the Cape Ministry, hastened to declare publicly that the proposals of the Transvaal were all that was satisfactory, before he even knew what those proposals were. The Cape nationalists represented themselves as "mediators." They had as little intention of mediating between the Pretoria Executive and the British Government as a barrister, heavily feed and primed with his client's case, has of mediating between his client and his client's opponent at the hearing of a case in court.

But the Bond was "loyal." The Bond members of the Cabinet—T. Nicholas German Te Water, and Albertus Johannes Herholdt, no less than William Philip Schreiner, John Xavier Merriman, Jacobus Wilhelmus Sauer, and Richard Solomon—had sworn, upon taking office, "to be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty."

chreiner ministry.

The situation in which Lord Milner now found himself was thus one of so extraordinary a character that it would be difficult to find a parallel to it in the annals of our colonial administration. As High Commissioner, he had advocated in the most emphatic terms the exercise of the authority of Great Britain, as paramount Power, in the Transvaal. As Governor of the Cape Colony, he was bound to administer the affairs of the Colony in accordance with the advice tendered by his ministers. And the advice which ministers were pledged to give him was the direct opposite of that which he himself, as High Commissioner, had given to the Imperial Government. To dismiss his ministers—the alternative to accepting this advice—would have been an extreme measure, to be justified

only upon clear evidence that they had failed in the duty which they, no less than he himself, owed to the Crown. Whether Mr. Schreiner's Cabinet did so fail is a matter that the reader must determine for himself; possibly it would be difficult to show that, collectively or individually, the Cape ministers did anything more injurious to British interests than was done by the Liberal Opposition—again collectively or individually—in England. One thing is certain: the action of the Afrikander Cabinet, whether within or beyond the letter of its allegiance, lessened—and was intended to lessen—the force of an effort on the part of the Imperial Government, which might otherwise have averted the necessity for war.

And here certain questions which will arise inevitably to the mind that pursues the narrative of the next few months, must be anticipated. What was the position of Mr. Schreiner? What was his real standpoint, and what was his relationship to Lord Milner? How was it that two Englishmen, Mr. Merriman and Sir (then Mr.) Richard Solomon, came to be in this Afrikander Cabinet, and what were their respective motives in thus associating themselves with the objects of the Bond?

ime minister.

Mr. Philip Schreiner was the son of a German by birth, a missionary of the London Missionary Society, who had married an Englishwoman, and afterwards settled in the Orange Free State. He had himself married a sister of Mr. F. W. Reitz, formerly President of the Free State, and now State Secretary of the South African Republic. The Schreiner family was remarkable for intellectual power. Of his sisters one is the authoress of *The Story of an African Farm*, and a second, Mrs. Lewis, like her brother Theophilus, was an active Imperialist and a determined opponent of the Bond. Mr. Schreiner himself was educated at the South African College at Capetown, and subsequently at Cambridge, where he was placed first in the First Class of the Law Tripos, and afterwards elected a Fellow of Downing. After a successful career at the Cape Bar he was appointed Attorney-General in Mr. Rhodes's Ministry, a position which he held at the time of the Raid. He was prevented by his strong disapproval of the part then played by Mr. Rhodes from joining the Progressive party; and, having accepted the position of Parliamentary leader of the Bond, he had become, as we have seen, Prime Minister through the Bond victory in the Cape General Election of 1898. It is characteristic alike of Mr. Schreiner and of his political position that the only word of sympathy with the British connection, uttered from first to last during this election by the Bond candidates or their supporters, was the conventional reference to the greatness of the British Empire which, as we have

noticed, occurred in his address to the electors of Malmesbury. With these political and social ties, Mr. Schreiner was compelled to be a South African first and a British subject second. His is precisely the kind of case where true allegiance can be expected only when a federal constitution has been created for the Empire.

> "See," said Lord Milner, in his farewell speech at Johannesburg, "how such a consummation would solve, and, indeed, can alone solve, the most difficult and most persistent of the problems of South Africa; how it would unite its white races as nothing else can. The Dutch can never own a perfect allegiance merely to Great Britain. The British can never, without moral injury, accept allegiance to any body politic which excludes their motherland. But British and Dutch alike could, without loss of integrity, without any sacrifice of their several traditions, unite in loyal devotion to an empire-state, in which Great Britain and South Africa would be partners, and could work cordially together for the good of South Africa as a member of that greater whole."[56]

With Schreiner, and such as he, loyalty to the Crown was for the moment the product of intellectual judgment or considerations of policy. All, or almost all, the instinctive feelings, born of pleasant associations with persons and places, which enter so largely into the sentiment of patriotism seem to have drawn him, as they drew his sister, Mrs. Cronwright-Schreiner, into sympathy with the cause of Afrikander nationalism. What his view was upon the particular issue now agitating South Africa may be gathered from an answer which he gave to a question put to him by Mr. Chamberlain in the course of the inquiry into the Raid (1897):

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I suppose your view is that the Imperial Government should adopt the same policy as the Cape Government, and should refrain from even friendly representations as not being calculated to advance the cause of the Uitlanders?

MR. SCHREINER: Yes, decidedly, so far as purely internal concerns are concerned. [57]

In other words, Mr. Schreiner was a consistent and convinced opponent of Imperial intervention. But there was a difference between his motive and that of the Bond leaders. Schreiner desired to prevent intervention, not because he did not recognise the justice of the claims of the Uitlanders, but because he believed that the Imperial Government was devoid of any right to intervene under the Conventions; while, at the same time, his instinctive sympathy with the Afrikander nationalists made him blind to the existence of any moral right of interference that England might possess, as the Power responsible for the well-being of South Africa as a whole. And so, partly by force of environment and partly by a narrow and erroneous interpretation of the principles of international law,[58] the Boer and Hollander oligarchy in the Transvaal, with all its moral obliquity and administrative incompetence, had become, as it were, a thing sacrosanct in his eyes. Mr. Hofmeyr and the Bond leaders, on the other hand, desired to prevent intervention because they were perfectly satisfied to see the British Uitlanders in a position of political inferiority, and perfectly content with the whole situation, the continuance of which, as they knew, was directly calculated to bring about the supremacy of the Dutch race in South Africa. Therefore Hofmeyr made no effort to improve the state of affairs in the Transvaal until he saw the storm bursting. And when, at a later stage, he set himself to work in earnest to induce President Krüger to grant reforms, he did so to save the cause of Afrikander nationalism and not to assist the British Government in winning justice for the Uitlanders.

hard Solomon.

Sir Richard Solomon, who was a nephew of Saul Solomon, the prominent radical politician chiefly instrumental in carrying the vote for Responsible Government through the Legislative Council of the Cape Colony (1872), was the leader of the Bar at Kimberley. His presence, at first sight, formed a wholly incongruous element in such a ministry. On the native question, in his fiscal views, as a supporter of the Redistribution Bill, and in his sympathy with the

Uitlanders, he was in direct conflict with the characteristic principles of the Bond. His one link with the Afrikander party was his distrust of Rhodes; and in view of his unquestioned loyalty to the British connection, his decision to join the Schreiner Ministry is probably to be attributed to his personal friendship for the Prime Minister. On the other hand, his ability, detachment from local parties, and the respect which he commanded, made him a valuable asset to Mr. Schreiner.

s. Merriman and Sauer.

Mr. Merriman, whose close political associate was Mr. Sauer, had twice held office under Mr. Rhodes (1890-96); but his separation from Rhodes, consequent upon the Raid, had thrown him into the arms of the Bond. Some of the more striking incidents in Mr. Merriman's political career have been already mentioned.[59] Fifteen years ago more Imperialist than Rhodes, he was soon to show himself more Bondsman than the Bond. Once the resolute, almost inspired, castigator of the separatist aims of that organisation, he was now in close and sympathetic association with the leaders of Afrikander nationalism in the Republics and the Cape Colony. The denunciations of "capitalism" and "capitalists" with which he now regaled his Afrikander allies, had an ill savour in the mouth of the man who had tried to amalgamate the Diamond Mines at Kimberley—failing where Rhodes and Beit afterwards succeeded—and who, attracted by the magnet of gold discovery, for a short time had acted as manager of the Langlaagte Estate and Mr. J. B. Robinson's interests at Johannesburg. With political principles thus unstable and a mind strangely sensitive to any emotional appeal, it is not surprising that Mr. Merriman displayed the proverbial enthusiasm of the convert in his new political creed. His original perception of the imprudence and administrative incompetency of President Krüger's *régime* was rapidly obliterated by a growing partizanship, which in turn gave place to an unreasoning sympathy with the Boer cause, combined with a bitter antipathy against all who were concerned, whether in a civil or military capacity, in giving effect to the intervention of the Imperial Government on behalf of the British industrial community in the Transvaal. Mr. J. W. Sauer was destined to exhibit his political convictions in a manner so demonstrative that his words and acts, as recorded in the sequel, will leave the reader in no doubt as to the reality of his sympathy with the Boer and Afrikander cause. For the moment, therefore, it is sufficient to notice that, although he shared Mr. Merriman's present abhorrence of "capitalism" and "capitalists," he was for many years of his life a promoter and director of mining and other companies.

Of the two Bondsmen in the Cabinet, Mr. Herholdt was a member of the Legislative Council, and a Dutch farmer of moderate views and good repute; while Dr. Te Water was the friend and confidant of Mr. Hofmeyr, and, as such, the intermediary between the Bond and the Afrikander nationalists in the Free State and in the Transvaal.

The Schreiner Cabinet was the velvet glove which covered the mailed hand of Mr. Hofmeyr. Dr. Te Water had been Colonial Secretary in the Sprigg Ministry up to the crisis of May, 1898. He was now "minister without portfolio" in the Schreiner Ministry. His presence was the sign and instrument of the domination of the Bond; and the domination of the Bond was as yet the permanent and controlling factor in the administration of the Colony under Responsible Government. The fact that only two out of six members of the Ministry were Bondsmen, is to be referred to the circumstance that the actual business of administration had been hitherto mainly in the hands of a small group of British colonial politicians, who were prepared to bid against each other for the all-important support of the Dutch vote. With the majority of these men, to be in office was an object for the attainment of which they were prepared to make a considerable sacrifice in respect of their somewhat elastic political principles. The denial of political rights to the British population in the Transvaal, by threatening the maintenance of British supremacy in South Africa, had now for the first time created a British party in the Cape Colony—the Progressives—strong enough to act in independence of the Bond. The existence of this British party, not only free from the Bond, but determined (although it was in a minority) to challenge the Bond predominance, was a new phenomenon in Cape politics. In itself it constituted an appreciable improvement upon the previously existing state of affairs; since the British population was thus no longer hopelessly weakened by being divided into two parties of almost equal strength, nor were its leaders any longer obliged to subordinate their regard for British interests to the primary necessity of obtaining office by Bond support.

of the ministry.

Mr. Schreiner's Ministry, however, in spite of a difference of motives on the part of its individual members, was unanimous in its desire to prevent that intervention of the Imperial Government for which, in Lord Milner's judgment, there was "overwhelming" necessity. The idea of inducing President Krüger to grant such a "colourable measure of reform"[60] as would satisfy the Imperial Government, or at least deprive it of any justification for interference by force of

arms, was in contemplation some months before the Bloemfontein Conference took place. On January 1st, 1899, Mr. Merriman wrote to President Steyn with this object in view. "Is there no opportunity," he said,[61] "of bringing about a *rapprochement* between us, in which the Free State might play the part of honest broker? We, *i.e.*, the Colony and Free State, have common material interests in our railway, apart from our anxiety to see the common welfare of South Africa increase from the removal of the one great cause of unrest and the pretext for outside interference."

And Lord Milner, very soon after his return from England, was sounded by Mr. Schreiner as to the possibility of settling the franchise question by means of a South African Conference. Early in March—when Mr. Smuts was in Capetown, and the Pretoria Executive was engaged in the abortive attempt to separate the leaders of the mining industry from the rank and file of the Uitlander population by offering them certain fiscal and industrial reforms, if only they would undertake to discourage the agitation for political rights—the same subject was brought before the High Commissioner by Mr. Merriman himself. In pursuance of the real purpose of the Afrikander Ministry—*i.e.* to obtain a fictitious concession from President Krüger, instead of the "fair share in the government of the country" required by the Imperial Government—it was proposed originally to exclude Lord Milner altogether from the negotiations by arranging that the Transvaal Government should bring forward proposals for reform at an inter-State Conference consisting of representatives of the governments of the two Republics and the self-governing British Colonies. But Lord Milner was, happily, High Commissioner as well as Governor of the Cape. As High Commissioner, he declared that at any such Conference the Imperial Government must be separately represented. Neither the Transvaal nor the Free State was willing to enter a Conference on these terms, although they were acceptable to the Cape Government; and the plan fell to the ground.

It was then that Mr. Hofmeyr intervened, in view of Lord Milner's despatch of May 4th; and President Steyn, persuaded with dramatic swiftness to accept the rôle of peace-maker, which his predecessor, Sir John Brand, had played with such success in 1881, secured the grudging consent of President Krüger to meet the High Commissioner at Bloemfontein.

yr's *tour de force*.

The incidents which led to the accomplishment of Hofmeyr's *tour de force* are

singularly instructive. Lord Milner's despatch was telegraphed from Capetown about midday on May 4th. It was soon apparent that there was a leakage, legitimate or illegitimate, from the Colonial Office. On Saturday, the 6th, Mr. Schreiner received warning telegrams from trusted sources in London, including "Hofmeyr's best friends"; and on this day he wrote a letter to President Steyn containing a "proposition" of so confidential a character that it could not be telegraphed in spite of the urgent need of haste.[62] On Monday, the 8th, Mr. Schreiner received more warning telegrams, and Dr. Te Water, in writing to President Steyn, expressed his hope that the proposition, made by Schreiner in his letter of Saturday, might by this time "have been accepted, or that something had been done which would achieve the same purpose."[63] On the same day the Cape papers published an alarming telegram reproducing from *The Daily Chronicle*[64] a statement that the South African situation was very serious, and that the British Government was prepared to "take some risk of war." On Tuesday, the 9th, Lord Milner was present at a dinner given by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly; and Mr. Hofmeyr, who was among the guests, in the course of a long conversation with him after dinner, broached the idea of his meeting President Krüger at Bloemfontein. On Wednesday, the 10th, Lord Milner sent for Mr. Hofmeyr and discussed the subject more at length; and, a little later, when he had gone to the Governor's Office, Mr. Schreiner came in with a telegram from President Steyn, in which the Cape Prime Minister was requested to ascertain formally whether the High Commissioner would be willing to accept an invitation to meet President Krüger. This telegram Lord Milner forwarded to Mr. Chamberlain, adding that the Cape Cabinet was "strongly" in favour of acceptance, and that Schreiner himself had declared that the invitation was the result of the "influence which he (Schreiner) had been using with the Transvaal Government ever since I had warned him of the gravity of the situation."[65] Mr. Chamberlain's reply (May 12th), authorised Lord Milner to accept President Steyn's invitation, and in doing so, to state that a despatch was already on its way which contained a similar proposal made by the Imperial Government—

nference arranged.

> "in the hope that, in concert with the President, you may arrive at such an arrangement as Her Majesty's Government could accept and recommend to the Uitlander population as a reasonable concession to their just demands and a settlement of the difficulties which have threatened the good relations"

between the two Governments. This was the famous despatch of May 10th, in which Mr. Chamberlain reviewed carefully and exhaustively the whole situation as between the Transvaal and the Imperial Government, and formally accepted the Uitlanders' Petition to the Queen. It was not published until June 14th, *i.e.*, after the Bloemfontein Conference had been held. It was then issued, together with Lord Milner's despatch of May 4th, in a Blue-book containing the complete record of all discussions of Transvaal affairs subsequent to Lord Milner's appointment.

In the course of the next few days communications passed rapidly between Lord Milner, Mr. Chamberlain, President Steyn, and President Krüger, with the result that, on May 18th, President Steyn's invitation was formally accepted, and on the following day it was arranged that the Conference should begin on May 31st. Never was intervention more effective, or less obtrusive. Mr. Hofmeyr's part in the affair was confined apparently to an after-dinner conversation with the High Commissioner. Nor was the directing hand of the Master of the Bond revealed more fully until Lord Roberts's occupation of Bloemfontein placed the British authorities in possession of part of the communications which passed at this time, and during the four succeeding months, between the Cape nationalists and their republican confederates. And even in these documents Hofmeyr's name is rarely found at the end of a letter or telegram. It is Schreiner or Te Water who writes or telegraphs to Steyn or Fischer, adding sometimes, by way of emphasis, "Hofmeyr says" this or that. In the meantime (May 22nd), Lord Milner had telegraphed, for "an indication of the line" which Mr. Chamberlain wished him to take at the Conference. He himself suggested that the franchise question should be put in the foreground; since it would be useless to discuss other matters in dispute until a satisfactory settlement of this all-important question had been achieved. Mr. Chamberlain replied (May 24th), agreeing with the line indicated by Lord Milner:

> "I think personally that you should lay all the stress," he telegraphed, "on the question of the franchise in the first instance. Other reforms are less pressing, and will come in time if this can be arranged satisfactorily, and the form of oath modified."

Mr. Chamberlain at the same time authorised Lord Milner to inform the Uitlander petitioners that they might rely upon obtaining the general sympathy of the Imperial Government in the prayers which they had addressed to the Queen.

es of Afrikander leaders.

There was no doubt in Lord Milner's mind as to the real motives which had prompted the Afrikander nationalist leaders to make this effort. They recognised at length that he was in earnest, and that Mr. Chamberlain was in earnest, and they desired, above all things, to avoid a crisis which would force a conflict before their ultimate plans had fully matured. Lord Milner knew that any delay which involved the continuance of the present position—a position which was one of moral superiority for the Dutch—would unite the whole of the Dutch, with a section of the British population, against Great Britain within a measurable period. He recognised that the franchise question was the one issue which could be raised between the paramount Power and the South African Republic in which the whole of the Cape Dutch would not throw in their lot bodily with their republican kinsmen. This very anxiety on the part of Mr. Hofmeyr to prevent the decisive action of the Imperial Government was evidence of the truth of his estimate. But as a response to the appeal of the Graaf Reinet speech, this Afrikander mediation came too late. "Hands off" the Transvaal was the first plank in the platform of the Schreiner Ministry; "reform" was a second and subsidiary plank, adopted in place of the first only when they had been driven to abandon it by Lord Milner's resolution and statesmanship. But the purpose of the Ministry now, no less than before, was to hinder, and not to help, the British Government in obtaining justice for the Uitlanders. Moreover, the Transvaal armaments were well advanced, and the Pretoria Executive was too deeply committed to a policy of defiance to allow it to draw back without humiliation. Nevertheless, Lord Milner felt bound to avail himself of any prospect of peace that the Conference might afford. When, however, Mr. Schreiner, in bringing President Steyn's telegram, had said that he regarded the proposal as "a great step in advance on the part of President Krüger," Lord Milner had replied that he could "hardly take that view, as the invitation did not emanate from President Krüger himself," and contained no indication of "the basis or subject of discussion."

r's obduracy.

The High Commissioner was right. The slight degree in which any appeal adequate to the occasion was likely to prove acceptable to President Krüger may be gathered from a passage in a letter of Sir Henry de Villiers to President Steyn (May 21st), in which the Chief Justice of the Cape refers to his recent experience in Pretoria when he was on this very errand of "mediation":

"On my recent visit to Pretoria I did not visit the President, as I considered it hopeless to think of making any impression on him; but I saw Reitz, Smuts, and Schalk Burger, who, I thought, would be amenable to argument: but I fear that either my advice had no effect on them, or else their opinion had no weight with the President.

"I urged upon them to advise the President to open the Volksraad with promises of a liberal franchise and drastic reforms.

"It would have been so much better if these had come voluntarily from the Government, instead of being gradually forced from them. In the former case, they would rally the greater number of the malcontents around them; in the latter case, no gratitude will be felt to the Republic for any concessions made by it. Besides, there can be no doubt that, as the alien population increases, as it undoubtedly will, their demands will increase with their discontent, and ultimately a great deal more will have to be conceded than will now satisfy them. The franchise proposal made by the President seems to be simply ridiculous.

"I am quite certain that if in 1881 it had been known to my fellow-Commissioners that the President would adopt his retrogressive policy, neither President Brand nor I would ever have induced them to consent to sign the Convention. They would have advised the Secretary of State to let matters revert to the condition in which they were before peace was concluded; in other words, to recommence the war....

"I should like to have said a word about the dynamite monopoly, but I fear I have already exhausted your patience. My sole object in writing is to preserve the peace of South Africa. There are, of course, many unreasonable demands; but the President's position will be strengthened, and, at all events, his conscience will be clear in case of war, if he has done everything that can reasonably be expected from him. I feel sure that, having used your influence to bring him and Sir Alfred together, you will also do your best to make your efforts in favour of peace successful. I feel sure also that Sir Alfred is anxious to make his mission a success; but there can be no success unless the arrangement arrived at is a permanent one, and not merely to tide over immediate difficulties."

And again, in writing to his brother, Mr. Melius de Villiers, Chief Justice of

the Free State, at a later date (July 31st), he says, in allusion to this same visit to Pretoria:

> "From an intimate acquaintance with what was going on, I foresaw, three months ago, that if President Krüger did not voluntarily yield he would be made to do so, or else be prepared to meet the whole power of England. I accordingly begged of Krüger's friends to put the matter to him in this way: On the one side there is war with England; on the other side there are concessions which will avoid war or occupation of the country. Now, decide at once how far you will ultimately go; adopt the English five years' franchise; offer it voluntarily to the Uitlanders, make them your friends, be a far-sighted statesman, and you will have a majority of the Uitlanders with you when they become burghers. The answer I got was: We have done too much already, and cannot do more. Yet afterwards they did a great deal more. The same policy of doing nothing except under pressure is still being pursued. The longer the delay, the more they will have to yield."

nder advice.

This was plain speaking and sound statesmanship. Nor was Mr. Merriman's appeal, written almost concurrently (May 26th) with Sir Henry's letter to President Steyn, any less emphatic. It was addressed to Mr. Abraham Fischer, a member of the Free State Executive and a convinced nationalist; and it is otherwise remarkable for an estimate of the economic conditions of the Boers which subsequent experience has completely justified:

> "I most strongly urge you," he writes, "to use your utmost influence to bear on President Krüger to concede some colourable measure of reform, not so much in the interests of outsiders as in those of his own State. Granted that he does nothing. What is the future? His Boers, the backbone of the country, are perishing off the land; hundreds have become impoverished loafers, landless hangers-on of the town population. In his own interests he should recruit his Republic with new blood—and the sands are running out. I say this irrespective of agitation about Uitlanders. The fabric will go to pieces of its own accord unless something is done.... A moderate franchise reform and municipal privileges would go far to satisfy any reasonable people, while a maintenance of the oath ought to be sufficient safeguard against the swamping of the old population."[66]

But the Schreiner Cabinet contained, as we have seen, a representative of Mr.

Hofmeyr in the person of Dr. Te Water. Mr. Merriman could see that the position in the Transvaal was one that could not go on indefinitely—that "the fabric would go to pieces of its own accord, unless something was done." Dr. Te Water was blind even to this aspect of the question. The correspondence found after the occupation of Bloemfontein (March 13th, 1900), from which these letters are taken, contains also certain letters to President Steyn that disclose both the nature of the Afrikander mediation, as it was understood by the nationalist leaders of the Cape Colony, and the faithfulness with which Dr. Te Water served them.

The Te Water correspondence, as we have it,[67] consists of three letters written respectively on May 8th, 17th, and 27th, from "the Colonial Secretary's Office, Capetown," to President Steyn. The replies of the latter have been withheld, not unnaturally, from the public eye. In the first of these letters Dr. Te Water "hopes heartily" that Schreiner's "proposition" for the Conference has been accepted, and then proceeds to impress upon him the advisability of President Krüger's yielding on the ground, not of justice, but of temporary expediency. In so doing, this Minister of the Crown completely identifies himself with the aspirations of the Afrikander nationalists, and he concludes by asking for "a private telegraphic code. The absence thereof was badly felt on Saturday, when Schreiner was obliged to write instead of telegraphing."

"Circumstances appear to me now," he writes, "to be such that our friends in Pretoria must be yielding; with their friends at the head of the Government here, they have a better chance that reasonable propositions made by them will be accepted than they would have had if we had been unsuccessful at the late elections and our enemies were advisers.

e".

"Schreiner, who knows more than any one of us, feels strongly that things are extremely critical.

"Telegrams from people in London, whom he thoroughly trusts, such as J. H.'s[68] best friends, received by him on Saturday and this morning, strengthen him in his opinion. We must now play to win time. Governments are not perpetual, and I pray that the present team, so unjustly disposed towards us, may receive their reward before long. Their successors, I am certain, will follow a less hateful policy towards us. When we hear that you have succeeded in Pretoria, then we must bring influence to bear here."

In the second letter Dr. Te Water regrets that he cannot share President Steyn's view that "all the noise about war is bluff." Then there follows a passage showing that Mr. Steyn had entertained expectations of assistance from the Schreiner Cabinet that even Dr. Te Water could not reconcile with his ideas of ministerial allegiance:

> "But now I should like a few words of explanation," he writes, "as to what you mean by saying that 'The Cape Ministry will be able to do much more good.' In what respect do you think that we can be of more use than before?"

Assuming, for the moment, that President Steyn had written, "In the event of war becoming inevitable, or having broken out, the Cape Ministry will be able to do much more good than it is doing now," or words to this effect, it would appear that he shared the erroneous views of Mr. Reitz, against which Sir Henry de Villiers had protested during his visit to Pretoria. In the letter to Mr. Melius de Villiers, from which we have quoted above, Sir Henry writes:

> "When I was in the Transvaal three months ago, I found that Reitz and others had the most extraordinary notions of the powers and duties of a Cape Ministry in case of war. They are ministers of the Crown, and it will be their duty to afford every possible assistance to the British Government. Under normal conditions, a responsible Ministry is perfectly independent in matters of internal concern, but in case of war they are bound to place all the resources of the Colony at the disposal of the British Crown; at least if they did not do so they would be liable to dismissal."

Dr. Te Water then continues:

> "I would very much like to know your views, and if we are not already working in that direction I will try, as far as possible, to do what I can to give effect to your wishes, which may be for the welfare of all. Please let me hear immediately and fully about this."

ter and Steyn.

The last letter, written on the eve of the Conference, opens with a curiously significant passage. There were some things discussed between Steyn and Te Water that Mr. Schreiner was not to know. President Steyn has been getting nervous. Dr. Te Water, therefore, reassures him:

"Yours received on my return this morning from Aberdeen. Telegram also reached me. I keep all your communications strictly private: naturally you do not exclude my colleagues and our friend Hofmeyr. I have often read extracts to them, but do not be afraid; I shall not give you away."

It also contains the information that, as President Steyn had no private code available, Dr. Te Water has borrowed the private telegraphic code of the Cabinet for President Steyn's use.

"To-day, by post, I send you personally our private telegraphic code for use. I borrowed one from Sauer; we have only three, and I must, therefore, ask you to let me have it back in a couple of weeks. Please keep it under lock, and use it yourself *only*. It is quite possible that you will have to communicate with us, and the telegraphic service is not entirely to be trusted. I am afraid that things leak out there in one way or another."

And he then drives home the advice given before: "It is honestly now the time to yield a little, however one may later again tighten the rope."

One other letter must be given to complete this view of the circumstances in which the conference met. It was written on May 9th, 1899—that is to say, on the day on which Mr. Hofmeyr proposed to Lord Milner that he should accept President Steyn's good offices to arrange the conference with President Krüger. It is addressed to President Steyn, and, translated, runs as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

"GOVERNMENT OFFICES, PRETORIA.

"May 9th, 1899.

"DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,—

"I am sorry that I could not earlier fulfil my promise as to the ammunition. The reason of it is that his honour the Commandant-General [General Joubert] was away, and I could consequently not get the desired information earlier.

"The General says that he has 15 to 20 (twenty) million Mauser and 10 to 12 million Martini-Henry cartridges, and if needed will be able to supply you with any of either sort.

"On that score your Excellency can accordingly be at rest.

"The situation looks very dark indeed, although nothing is as yet officially known to us. I trust that some change may still come in it through your proposed plan. The copies *re* dynamite will be sent to you at the earliest opportunity. With best greeting,

"Your humble servant and friend,

"P. GROEBLER."[69]

The Cape nationalists had asked the Republics to "play for time," because they believed that, with the return of the Liberal party to power in England, it would be possible to achieve the aims of their policy without the risk of a conflict in arms. The Republics were "playing for time," but in another sense. They were waiting until their military preparations were sufficiently complete to allow them to defy the British Government.

oemfontein conference.

It was in these circumstances that the High Commissioner met President Krüger in conference at Bloemfontein (May 31st—June 5th). He was accompanied only by his staff: Mr. G. V. Fiddes (Imperial Secretary), Mr. M. S. O. Walrond (Private Secretary), Colonel Hanbury Williams (Military Secretary) and Lord Belgrave (A.D.C.),[70] with Mr. Silberbauer (the interpreter) and a shorthand writer. Mr. Schreiner had been very solicitous to attend the Conference; but Lord Milner, following his usual practice, had determined to keep the affairs of the High Commissionership completely distinct from those in which he was concerned as Governor of the Cape Colony. The absence both of the Prime Minister and Mr. Hofmeyr was not unnaturally a matter of "sincere regret" to Dr. Te Water, as he informed President Steyn on the eve of the Conference.[71] Nor did Lord Milner avail himself of President Steyn's willingness to take part in the proceedings; but, at the High Commissioner's suggestion, Mr. Fischer (who was a member of the Free State Executive) was invited to act as interpreter—a duty which he discharged to the satisfaction of both parties. With President Krüger there went to Bloemfontein Mr. Schalk Burger and Mr. A. D. Wolmarans (members of the Transvaal Executive), Mr. J. C. Smuts (the State Attorney), and two other officials. All of these, the High Commissioner's Staff, and Mr. Fischer were present at the meetings of the Conference; but the actual discussion was confined to Lord Milner and President Krüger.[72] As regards the business in hand, the failure to publish the despatch of May 4th had deprived Lord Milner of what would have proved a helpful

influence. Mr. Hofmeyr's action had procured an opportunity for "friendly discussion." But the friendliness was to be all on the side of the Imperial Government. For the purpose of the Afrikander leaders was, as we have seen, to secure a fictitious concession on the part of President Krüger. Lord Milner's aim was to obtain by friendly discussion a genuine and substantial measure of reform; and the prospect of his success would have been greatly increased if this despatch and Mr. Chamberlain's reply to it had been before the public when the Conference took place. It was written with the object of making the British people and President Krüger alike aware how grave was the judgment which he had formed of the existing situation. With England alive to the near danger which threatened her supremacy in South Africa, and President Krüger brought to understand that the man with whom he had to deal was one who held these opinions, Lord Milner could have been "friendly" without the risk of having his friendliness mistaken for a readiness to accept the illusory concession which was all that the Afrikander mediation was intended to secure.

Milner's attitude.

As it was, Lord Milner was placed in a position of great embarrassment. If he "used plain language" he exposed himself to the charge of entering upon the discussion in an aggressive spirit, calculated to make agreement difficult. If he adopted a conciliatory tone, his arguments seemed to be nothing more than the abortive protests with which the grim old President had cheerfully filled the republican waste-paper basket for the last ten years. It has been suggested that Lord Milner might have obtained a better result if he had shown himself less "inflexible"; if, in short, he had been willing to accept a "compromise." But any such criticism is based upon an entire misunderstanding of the method which the High Commissioner did, in fact, adopt. The five years' franchise—the Bloemfontein minimum—was in itself a compromise. What Lord Milner said, in effect, to President Krüger was this: "I have a whole sheaf of grievances against you: the dynamite monopoly, excessive railway rates, interference with the independence of the judiciary, a vicious police system, administrative corruption, municipal abuses, and the rest. I will let all these go in exchange for one thing—a franchise reform which will give at once to a fair proportion of the Uitlander population some appreciable representation in the government of the Republic." Lord Milner not only offered a compromise, but a compromise that enormously reduced the area of dispute. His "inflexibility" arose from the simple fact that, having readily and frankly yielded all that could be yielded without sacrificing the paramount object of securing a permanent settlement of the Uitlander

question, he had nothing further to concede, and said so.

ent Krüger.

No two men more characteristic of the two utterly unlike and antagonistic political systems, which they respectively represented, could have been found. At the evening reception given by President Steyn on the opening day of the Conference, a big man, in a tightly buttoned frock-coat, stood just inside the door for ten minutes, and then moved awkwardly away. Above the frock-coat was a peasant's face, half-shrewd, half-furtive, with narrow eyes and a large, crooked mouth which somehow gave the man a look of power. This was President Krüger, *ætat.* 74. Once, doubtless, Paul Krüger's large and powerful frame had made him an impressive figure among a race of men as stalwart as the Boers. But he was now an old man: the powerful body had become shapeless and unwieldy; he had given up walking, and only left his stoep to drag himself clumsily into his carriage, and although he retained all his old tenacity of purpose, his mind had lost much of its former alertness. It needed all Mr. Smuts' mental resources—all that the young Afrikander had so recently learnt at Cambridge and the Temple—to enable the old President to maintain, even by the aid of his State-Attorney's ingenious paper pleadings, a decent show of defence against the perfect moderation and relentless logic with which the High Commissioner presented the British case. Lord Milner went to the Conference to make "one big straightforward effort to avert a great disaster"; Krüger to drive a "Kafir bargain." The end was as Lord Milner had foreseen. To yield the necessary instalment of reform seemed to President Krüger, in this mind, "worse than annexation"; and on June 5th Lord Milner declared, "The Conference is absolutely at an end, and there is no obligation on either side arising out of it."

The Bloemfontein Conference made retreat for ever impossible. Lord Milner himself was perfectly conscious that in holding President Krüger to the franchise question he had made the conference the pivotal occasion upon which turned the issue of peace or war. He knew, when he closed the proceedings with a declaration that his meeting with President Krüger had utterly failed to provide a solution of the franchise question, that from this day forward there could be no turning back for him or for the Imperial Government. But he knew, too, that poor as was the prospect of obtaining the minimum reforms by any subsequent negotiation, nothing could contribute more to the attainment of this object than the blunt rejection of the makeshift proposals put forward by President Krüger at Bloemfontein.

he conference.

The result of the Conference, from this point of view, and its effect upon the British population in South Africa, may be gathered from the address presented to Lord Milner on his return to Capetown, and from his reply to it. By the mouth of Mr. Alfred Ebden, a veteran colonist, the British population of the Colony then (June 12th) expressed their "admiration" of Lord Milner's "firm stand" on behalf of the Uitlanders, offered him their "earnest support," and declared their "entire confidence in his fairness and ability to bring these unhappy differences to a satisfactory settlement." The essence of Lord Milner's reply lies in the words, "some remedy has still to be found." The nationality problem would be solved if the principle of equality could be established all round. The Transvaal is "the one State where inequality is the rule, which keeps the rest of South Africa in a fever." It is inconsistent, he says, with the position of Great Britain as paramount Power, and with the dignity of the white race, that a great community of white men "should continue in that state of subjection which is the lot of the immigrant white population of the Transvaal." And he concludes:

> "I see it is suggested in some quarters that the policy of Her Majesty's Government is one of aggression. I know better than any man that their policy, so far from being one of aggression, has been one of singular patience, and such, I doubt not, it will continue. But it cannot relapse into indifference. Can any one desire that it should? It would be disastrous that the present period of stress and strain should not result in some settlement to prevent the recurrence of similar crises in the future. Of that I am still hopeful. It may be that the Government of the South African Republic will yet see its way to adopt a measure of reform more liberal than that proposed at Bloemfontein. If not, there may be other means of achieving the desired result. In any case, it is a source of strength to those who are fighting the battle of reform, and will, I believe, contribute more than anything else to a peaceful victory, to feel that they have behind them, as they perhaps never had before, the unanimous sympathy of the British people throughout the world."[73]

In the four months that followed the Bloemfontein Conference a burden of toil and responsibility was laid upon Lord Milner which would have crushed any lesser man into utter passivity or resignation. An Afrikander Cabinet, with a nationalist element reporting its confidential councils with the Governor to Mr. Hofmeyr, the Bond Master, and President Steyn, the secret ally of President

Krüger, would have been sufficient in itself to paralyse the faculties of any ordinary administrator at such a crisis. But this was not the only adverse influence with which circumstances brought Lord Milner into collision. Incredible as it may seem, it is none the less the fact that Sir William Butler, the General-in-Command of the British forces in South Africa, and the military adviser of the High Commissioner, was in close political sympathy with Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer, and in complete agreement with their views. For General Butler held that a war to compel the Boer oligarchy to grant the elementary political rights to the British in the Transvaal, which even Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet intended to secure for them, would be the "greatest calamity that ever occurred in South Africa." And more than this, that if the Home Government did make war, it would be merely playing the game of "the party of the Raid, the South African League."[74]

and Butler.

It is generally supposed that Lord Milner's disagreement with General Butler had its origin in the conduct of the latter, when Acting High Commissioner, in refusing the first Uitlander petition. This is quite untrue. Lord Milner's view of the Uitlander grievances was, of course, different from that of General Butler, who treated the appeal to the Queen as an unnecessary and artificial agitation against the Transvaal Government, and thereby placed the Acting British Agent, Mr. Edmund Fraser, in a position of extreme difficulty; since Mr. Fraser was, of course, desirous of carrying out his duties upon the general lines followed by Sir William Greene in accordance with the instructions of the Home Government. But the Transvaal question had never been discussed between Lord Milner and General Butler; and at the time of the Edgar incident Lord Milner was in England, and he had no means, therefore, of forming an opinion as to the significance which attached to this event, or the agitation to which it gave rise. On this particular point there was no opportunity for a conflict of opinion. Had Lord Milner been in South Africa he would, no doubt, have accepted the first petition to the Queen; but he made no complaint of General Butler's refusal to receive it. For the moment it was General Butler's business, as Acting High Commissioner, and not Lord Milner's. From a wider point of view, General Butler's action was injurious. It was one of the many instances in which their English sympathisers have led the Boers to destruction. But there was no friction, or argument, or unfriendliness between him and the High Commissioner on this account. This arose at a much later period; and arose, not on the general question of policy, but on the question of the necessity of military precautions in

view of the imminence of war.

rcements requested.

The friction between the High Commissioner and the General-in-Command in South Africa was the most disastrous manifestation of a disregard of the necessity for timely military preparations on the part of the Imperial Government, which, when war broke out, jeopardised the success of the British arms. For quite distinct reasons both General Butler and the Imperial Government were opposed to any preparations for war. The Salisbury Cabinet were reluctant to take any step that might seem to indicate that they considered that the door to a peaceful solution of the dispute was closed. In thus subordinating the needs of the military situation to those of the political, they acted in direct opposition to the maxim *si pacem vis, bellum para*. They carried this policy to such a point that they disregarded the advice of Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, and that of the Intelligence Department,[75] with the result that when the war did break out the available British forces in South Africa were found to be in a position of grave disadvantage. The motive of General Butler's opposition was entirely different. His view was that what made the situation dangerous was not President Krüger's obduracy, but what he called the "persistent effort" to "produce war" made by the British inhabitants who desired Imperial intervention in the Transvaal. And he, therefore, held that any reinforcements sent by the Home Government would "add largely to the ferment which he (General Butler) was endeavouring to reduce by every means."[76] The position in June and July, from a military point of view, was as extraordinary as it was harassing to Lord Milner. In England the civil authority, the Cabinet, was refusing to make the preparations which its military adviser declared to be necessary. In South Africa the civil authority, the High Commissioner, was provided with a military adviser who cabled to the Home Government political reasons for not sending the reinforcements which the High Commissioner then urgently required. In these circumstances it is obvious that nothing but the supreme efforts of Lord Milner could have saved England from an overwhelming military defeat, or from a moral catastrophe even more injurious to the interests of the empire.

When Lord Milner saw, before the Bloemfontein Conference, that the situation was becoming dangerous—and still more after the Conference—he desired that preparations for war should be made by the Imperial Government as a precautionary measure. Between December 1st, 1896, and December, 1898,

the South African garrison had been raised from 5,409 to 9,593 men.[77] It remained at a little under 10,000 up to the end of August, 1899. Lord Milner had repeatedly impressed upon the Home Government, from the middle of 1897 onwards, that 10,000 men was the minimum force consistent with safety. In view of the increased tension after Bloemfontein and of the enormous armament of the South African Republic, he felt that this minimum had become inadequate, and that it was desirable, and would strengthen the chance of a peaceful submission of the Boers, to steadily but unostentatiously increase the garrison. And what he desired especially was that the general on the spot should do, locally and quietly, all that could be done to advance these preparations. The measures which he urged were that plans should be prepared for the defence of Kimberley and other towns on the colonial borders, and that all supplies and material of war necessary to put these plans into effect should be accumulated, and, as far as possible, distributed.

ıl Butler's objections.

General Butler, as we have seen, was opposed to all preparations for war; and it is not surprising, therefore, that everybody who offered assistance, or advice on the military situation, was coldly received by him. Mr. (now Sir) Aubrey Wools-Sampson, who, after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference, threw up lucrative civil employment in Rhodesia in order to come to the Cape and place himself, as a volunteer, at the service of the military authorities in the event of war, was so completely discouraged that he went to Natal to form the nucleus of the splendid fighting force afterwards known as the Imperial Light Horse. When Colonel Nicholson, then head of the British South Africa Police in Rhodesia, suggested that, in the same event, an attack on the Transvaal, launched from the north, might prove valuable as a means of diverting a portion of the Burgher forces from employment against the Cape Colony and Natal, General Butler is said to have looked upon his proposal as another Jameson Raid.[78] And when, after the Bloemfontein Conference had been held, the Home Government, in response to Lord Milner's repeated appeals, proposed to send out the very inadequate reinforcements which formed its first effort to strengthen the British military position in South Africa, General Butler immediately represented to the War Office that these additional troops were unnecessary, and protested against their being despatched.

General Butler's action at this crisis is so remarkable, and so unprecedented, that the circumstances must be related with some precision. In 1896, and again

in 1897, General Goodenough had submitted to the War Office schemes for the defence of the British colonies, in which both the enormous extent of the frontiers to be protected and the great numerical superiority of the burgher forces to the then existing British garrison were fully exhibited. A memorandum of the Department of Military Intelligence, dated September 21st, 1898, urged "that defence schemes should be drawn up locally for the Cape and Natal"; that "the arrangements which would be made for the despatch of reinforcements from England, and for the provision of supplies and transport, be worked out fully in the War Office; and that the General Officer Commanding, South Africa, be informed what action under these arrangements would be required of him on the outbreak of war."[79] On December 21st, 1898, General Butler, upon succeeding to the South African command, was requested to furnish, at an early date, a fresh scheme of defence embodying his own proposals for the distribution of the 9,500 British troops then in South Africa in the event of war. At the same time the latest information as to the military strength of the two Republics—showing, among other things, a total of 40,000 burghers[80]—was forwarded to him, and his attention was directed to the fact that the troops under his command must be considered as a purely defensive force, whose *rôle* would be to repel invasion pending the arrival of reinforcements from England. In the absence of any reply to this communication General Butler was again requested, on June 6th, 1899 (*i.e.* after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference), to report on the defence of the British colonies. He then sent his scheme of defence, cabling the substance in cipher, on June 9th, and sending the text by despatch on June 14th. On June 21st he received a War Office telegram informing him that it had been decided to "increase the efficiency of the existing force" in South Africa. And to this communication was added the question: "Do you desire to make any observations?"

ng the War Office bell".

The sequel can be given in General Butler's words: "I looked on the one side," he said, in giving evidence before the War Commission, "and I saw what seemed to me a very serious political agitation going on with a Party that I had not alluded to yet, whom I had always looked upon as a Third Party; they were pressing on all they knew. The Government did not seem to be aware of that, and this telegram brought matters to such a point that I thought it gave me the opportunity to speak. So I took these words 'any observations,' and answered in a way which I thought would at least ring the War Office bell."

The telegram with which General Butler "rang the War Office bell" was this:

> "You ask for my observations: present condition of opinion here is highly excited, and doubtless the news *quoting* preparations referred to in your telegram, if it transpires, will add largely to the ferment which I am endeavouring to reduce by every means. Persistent effort of a party to produce war forms, in my estimation, gravest elements in situation here. Believe war between white races, coming as sequel to Jameson Raid, and subsequent events of last three years, would be greatest calamity that ever occurred in South Africa."

This telegram elicited the following reply from the Home Government:

> "You cannot understand too clearly that, whatever your private opinions, it is your duty to be guided in all questions of policy by the High Commissioner, who is fully aware of our views, and whom you will, of course, loyally support."

In the course of his evidence before the War Commission General Butler gave some further explanation of the motives which had prompted his reply to the telegram of June 21st. In response to the question, "It was never in your contemplation that Mr. Krüger would declare war?" he replied:

ıl Butler's view.

> "My view was this, that as long as I held the neck of the bottle, so to speak, there would be no war ... but to my mind the minute there was the least indication of the Imperial Government coming in, in front of, or behind, that party [*i.e.* "the party of the Raid, the South African League"], there would be a serious state of things. Until then there was, to my mind, no probability—no possibility—of an invasion. That was the state of my mind at the time ... [and] I wished to point it out before final decisions were arrived at."

And in a note which he desired to be appended to his evidence before the War Commission, General Butler wrote with reference to his failure to endorse Lord Milner's request for immediate reinforcements, that in his opinion "such a demand at such a time would be to force the hands of the Government, play into the hands of the 'Third Party,' and render [himself] liable to the accusation in the future that [he] had by this premature action produced or hastened hostilities."[81]

Here was an impasse from which obviously there was but one method of extrication. Either the High Commissioner or his military adviser must be recalled. That the Imperial Government did not recall General Butler then and there cannot be attributed to any ignorance on their part of Lord Milner's extreme anxiety for adequate military preparations. It arose, no doubt, from the circumstance that General Butler was known to be favourably inclined to the Boer cause, and that, therefore, his removal at this juncture would have been represented by the friends of the Boers in England, and by the official leader of the Opposition, as evidence of Mr. Chamberlain's alleged determination to force a war upon the Transvaal. General Butler was allowed, in these circumstances, to remain at the Cape until the latter part of August, when fresh employment was found for him, and Lieutenant-General Forestier-Walker was appointed to the Cape command. How General Butler was able to reconcile the opinions which he had expressed to the War Office with the discharge of his duties as military adviser to Lord Milner during these two critical months is a matter which need not be discussed. The decision to retain him in the South African command would seem, on the face of it, to have been a grave administrative error. It is enough for us to record the undoubted facts that Lord Milner was supremely dissatisfied with the action of General Butler as his military adviser, and that whereas the High Commissioner had requested the Home Government to provide him with a new military adviser in June, General Butler did in fact remain at the Cape until the latter part of August.

General Butler is reputed to be both an able man and a good soldier. It is interesting, therefore, to know what was his view, and to compare it with that of Lord Milner. In these opinions, which dominated General Butler during the period in question (May to August, 1899), there was only one point in which he and Lord Milner found themselves at one. This was the danger of the war; that is to say, the seriousness of the military task which would await Great Britain in the event of war with the Dutch in South Africa.

Lord Milner thought.

As a great deal has been written on the subject of the military unpreparedness of England, and it has, moreover, been frequently stated in this connection that Sir William Butler was the only man to form a just estimate of the military strength of the burgher forces, it is very desirable to place on record what was really in Lord Milner's mind at this time. He agreed with General Butler in his estimate of the formidable character of the Boers; but he differed from him in

everything else. To Lord Milner's mind the situation presented itself primarily from a political, and not from a military point of view. He believed that England was bound to struggle at least for political equality between the British and Dutch throughout South Africa. He felt that, after our bad record in the past, it would be absolutely fatal to begin to struggle for this equality unless we were prepared to carry our efforts to a successful issue. He thought that such a claim as this for the enfranchisement of the Uitlanders was one that admitted of only two alternatives—it must never be made, or, being made, it must never be abandoned. The whole weakness of our position in South Africa was a moral weakness. The contempt which the Dutch had learnt for England was writ large over the whole social and political fabric of South Africa. Englishmen could not look the Dutch in the face as equals. If, after all our previous humiliations and failures; after Majuba, and after the Raid, we were going to commence a struggle for equality—nothing more, and then not to get it, the shame would be too grave for any great Power to support, or for those who sympathised with us in South Africa to endure. We had raised the British party in South Africa from the dust by the stand which we had made against Dutch tyranny in the Transvaal. If we were going to retreat from that position, the discredit of our action would compel England to resign her claim to be paramount Power, and with the resignation of that claim England's rights in South Africa would inevitably shrink to the narrow limits of a naval base at Simon's Town, and a sub-tropical plantation in Natal. What was fundamental was not the possibility of war, but the impossibility of retreat.

t impossible.

Lord Milner still thought it possible, though not probable, that, if the British Government took a perfectly strong and unwavering line, the Dutch would yield, not indeed everything, but something substantial. He also foresaw that it was possible, perhaps probable, that they would not yield, and that in this case a state of tension would be created which must end in war. His position was, therefore, definite and consistent from the first. As we are pursuing a policy from which we cannot retreat—a policy that may lead to war—it is wholly unjustifiable, he said, to remain unprepared, unarmed, without a plan, as if war were quite out of the question. And so far from thinking that the preparations which he urged upon the Imperial Government, and more especially upon General Butler, would make war more likely, he believed that they would make it less likely. But even if they did lead the Dutch to fight, it was not war but "retreat" that must be avoided at all costs.[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER V

PLAYING FOR TIME

On June 8th, 1899, Mr. Chamberlain declared in the House of Commons, that with the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference, a "new situation" had arisen. If the Imperial Government had translated this remark into action, the South African War would have been less disastrous, less protracted, and less costly. But the same order of considerations which prevented the Salisbury Cabinet from recalling General Butler in June, caused it to withhold its sanction from the preparations advised by the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley. From the political point of view it was held to be desirable that the British Government should have an absolutely good case as before the world—a case which would not only ensure the whole-hearted support of the great bulk of the nation, and the active sympathy of the over-sea British communities; but one that would be so strong in justice as to overcome, or at least mitigate, the natural repugnance with which international opinion regards a great and powerful state that imposes its will upon a small and weak people by force of arms. Above all, it had become a cardinal principle in Mr. Chamberlain's South African policy to refrain to the last moment from any step which would necessarily close the door to a peaceful solution of the differences which had arisen between the South African Republic and the Imperial Government.

of Home Government.

Influenced by these considerations, the Government refused to give effect to the measures demanded by the military situation, as it existed after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference, except in so far as these demands could be satisfied without prejudice to the dominating political objects which it had in view. As to the nature of these measures there could be no reasonable doubt. It was necessary to raise the British forces in the Cape Colony and Natal to a point sufficient for defensive purposes, and to prepare an additional force—an army corps—for any offensive movement against one or both of the Republics. And as 6,000 miles of sea separated the seat of war from the chief base of the army, the United Kingdom, it was obvious that the defensive force should be despatched at once, and the offensive force prepared no less speedily, in order that it might be held in readiness to embark at the earliest moment that its services were required.

To Lord Milner's reiterated warnings of the last two years, there was now added the definite advice of Lord Wolseley and the Department of Military Intelligence. In a memorandum dated June 8th, 1899,[82] and addressed to the Secretary of State for War, the Commander-in-Chief advised the mobilisation in England of a force consisting of one complete army corps, one cavalry division, one battalion mounted infantry, and four infantry battalions for lines of communication; the collection of transport in South Africa; and the immediate initiation of all subsidiary arrangements necessary for conveying these additional troops and their equipment to the seat of war. This advice was disregarded; but in place of the immediate mobilisation of the Army Corps the Cabinet decided to increase the efficiency of the existing force in South Africa, and General Butler was informed of this decision, as we have seen, on June 21st. On July 7th,[83] Lord Wolseley recommended, in addition to the mobilisation of the offensive force—which he still deemed necessary—that "the South African garrisons should be strengthened by the despatch of 10,000 men at a very early date." Instead of adopting these measures, the Government confined itself to doing just the few necessary things, both for defence and offence, that could be done without creating any belief in its warlike intentions, and without involving any appreciable expenditure of the public funds. Undoubtedly this latter consideration—the desire to avoid any expenditure that might afterwards prove to have been unnecessary—added weight to the purely political argument against immediate military preparation.

ations delayed.

The course actually taken by the Salisbury Cabinet was this. Instead of the immediate mobilisation of the offensive force, Lord Wolseley was instructed to prepare a scheme for the "constitution, organisation, and mobilisation" of such a force; and to do this in consultation with Sir Redvers Buller, the General Officer commanding at Aldershot, who had been selected to lead the British forces in South Africa in the event of war. Instead of the immediate despatch of additional troops sufficient to render the South African garrisons capable of repelling invasion—which was what Lord Milner had especially desired—the actual deficiencies of the existing Cape garrison[84] were made good by the despatch in July of small additions of artillery and engineers, and by directing General Butler to provide the fresh transport without which even this diminutive force was unable to mobilise. At the same time certain special service officers,[85] including engineers and officers of the Army Service Corps, were sent out to organise the materials, locally existing, for the defence of the eastern frontier of

the Cape Colony and the southern districts of Rhodesia; and generally to make preliminary preparations for the provisioning, transport, and distribution of any British forces that might be despatched subsequently to the Cape Colony.

These were the utterly inadequate reinforcements sent in response to Lord Milner's urgent appeal, and in disregard of General Butler's protest that they were wholly undesirable—an opinion which was endorsed in England by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, when, on June 17th, 1899, he declared that there was nothing in the South African situation to justify even preparations for war.

During the interval between the Bloemfontein Conference and General Butler's recall in the latter part of August Lord Milner's position was one of unparalleled difficulty. The Cape and Natal garrisons were maintained in a state of perilous weakness by the policy of the Home Government. The measures to be undertaken locally for the defence of the colonies, which the Cabinet had sanctioned, were wholly insufficient in Lord Milner's opinion. And the general execution of these wholly insufficient local measures was left in the hands of a General Officer who had told the Secretary of State that he absolutely disapproved of them on political grounds, since the mere announcement of their being made would "add largely to the ferment," which he "was [then] endeavouring to reduce by every means." The Cape Ministry, with whom rested the disposal of the colonial forces, was a ministry placed in office by the Bond for the especial purpose of opposing British intervention in the Transvaal. In these circumstances it needed all Lord Milner's mastery of South African conditions, and all his tact and address, to make the relations between himself and his Afrikander Cabinet tolerable; and, above all, in view of the refusal of the Imperial Government to sanction the military preparations advised by the Commander-in-Chief, it required ceaseless vigilance on his part to prevent the acceptance of an illusory settlement which would have sounded the death-knell of British supremacy in South Africa.

ent Krüger's proposals.

On the last day of the Conference President Krüger had put in a memorandum in which he expressed his intention of introducing his franchise scheme to the Volksraad, and his hope that the High Commissioner would be able to recommend this, and a further proposal for the settlement of disputes by arbitration, to the favourable consideration of the Imperial Government. Lord Milner had replied that any such proposals would be considered on their merits;

but that the President must not expect them to be connected in any way with the proceedings of the Conference, out of which, as he then declared, no obligation had arisen on either side.

The Raad met on Friday, June 9th; and on Monday, the 12th—the day on which Lord Milner received the Ebden address[86]—President Krüger laid the draft Franchise law, containing his revised Bloemfontein scheme, before it. On Tuesday, 13th, Mr. Chamberlain's despatch of May 10th, on the position of the Uitlanders and the petition to the Queen, was delivered to the Transvaal Government by the British Agent; and on Wednesday, June 14th, as we have already noticed, the Blue-book containing this despatch, Lord Milner's despatch of May 4th, and the whole story of the franchise controversy up to the Bloemfontein Conference, was published in England. As the conditions under which Lord Milner's despatch had been telegraphed to England were now changed, it would have been better if it had remained unpublished, and the stage of fighting diplomacy, reached through the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference, had been at once opened—and opened in another way. What Lord Milner had learnt at Bloemfontein was not merely that President Krüger was unwilling to yield, but that he was psychologically incapable of yielding. He had learnt, that is to say, not that Krüger was determined to refuse the particular reform which the Imperial Government demanded, but that his whole system of thought was irreconcilably opposed to that of any English statesman. It is the knowledge which can be obtained only by personal dealings with the Boers, and no one who has had such personal dealings can fail to remember the sense of hopelessness that such an experience brings with it. The Boer may be faithful to his own canons of morality; but his whole manner of life and thought is one that makes his notion of the obligations of truth and justice very different from that of the ordinary educated European. He is not devoid of the conception of duty, but he applies this conception in methods adapted to the narrow and illiberal conditions of his isolated and self-centred life.

As for the mediation of the Cape Afrikanders, Lord Milner estimated it at its real value. The Cape nationalists believed that war would result in disaster to their cause; the Republican nationalists did not. They both hated the British in an equal degree. But the Afrikander leaders at the Cape knew that they had the game in their own hands. "For goodness' sake," they said, "keep quiet until we have got rid of this creature, Milner; and the Salisbury Cabinet—the 'present team so unjustly disposed to us'—is replaced by a Liberal Government."

Milner's task.

That was the meaning of their mediation—nothing more. Lord Milner

acquiesced in the negotiations after Bloemfontein, but what he wanted was a polite but absolutely inflexible insistence upon the Bloemfontein minimum, and at the same time such military preparations as, in view of the clear possibility of a failure of negotiations, seemed to him absolutely vital. This, however, was not the course which the Salisbury Cabinet thought right to adopt; and the problem that now lay before him was to convert the illusory concessions, which were all that Afrikander mediation was able or even desirous to wring from President Krüger, into the genuine reform that the British Government had twice pledged itself to secure.

But Lord Milner had also grasped the fact that the one issue which could drive a wedge into Dutch solidarity was the franchise question. He had determined, therefore, that nothing that transpired at the Bloemfontein Conference should permit President Krüger to change the ground of dispute from this central issue. During the negotiations between the Home Government and the Pretoria Executive that followed the Conference, and especially during the period of Mr. Hofmeyr's active intervention, his most necessary and pressing task was to prevent the Salisbury Cabinet from being "jockeyed" by Boer diplomacy out of the advantageous position which he had then taken up on its behalf. The pressure of the Hofmeyr mediation increased the difficulty of this task by driving President Krüger into a series of franchise proposals of the utmost complexity. The danger was that Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues in the Cabinet, in their earnest desire to avoid war, might recognise some illusory measures of reform as satisfactory, and then, after further consideration, finding them to be worthless, be driven by their previous admission to make war, after all, not on the single issue of "equality all round," but on an issue that might be plausibly represented to South Africa and the world as the independence of the Boers.

raft Franchise Law.

The period is crowded with demonstrations, despatches, mediations, petitions, and incidents of all kinds. A tithe of these—disentangled from the Blue-books, but vitalised by a knowledge of the master facts that lie behind the official pen—will serve, however, to present the play of the mingling, conflicting, and then frankly opposing forces. The "formidable personalities" are all in motion. At first it seemed as though the whole weight of the Schreiner Cabinet, acting in conjunction with General Butler's political objection to military preparation on the part of the Imperial Government, was to be thrown into the scale against Lord Milner's efforts. On June 12th President Krüger laid the draft of his new

Franchise Law before the Raad, which then (the 15th) adjourned, in order that the feeling of the burghers might be ascertained. On the 17th a great assemblage of Boers met at Paardekraal, and, among the warlike speeches then delivered was that of Judge Kock,[87] a member of the Transvaal Executive, who "dwelt upon the doctrine of 'what he called Afrikanderdom,' and said that he 'regarded the Afrikanders, from the Cape to the Zambesi as one great family. If the Republics are lost,' he continued, 'the Afrikanders would lose. The independence of the country was to them a question of life and death. The Free State would stand by the Transvaal, even to the death. Not only the Free State, but also the Cape Colony.'" Nor was this boast without some foundation. A week before (June 10th), Mr. Schreiner had requested Lord Milner to inform Mr. Chamberlain that, in ministers' opinion, President Krüger's franchise proposal was "practical, reasonable, and a considerable step in the right direction."[88] Four days later (June 14th) he further informed the Governor that, in ministers' opinion, there was nothing in the existing situation to justify "the active interference of the Imperial Government in what were the internal affairs of the Transvaal."[89] And this expression of opinion the Prime Minister also desired Lord Milner, as the only constitutional medium of communication between the Cape Ministry and the Secretary of State, to convey to Mr. Chamberlain. On the day (June 10th) on which the first of these interviews between Lord Milner and Mr. Schreiner took place, a meeting of five thousand persons—in Sir William Greene's words, "the largest and most enthusiastic ever held at Johannesburg"—passed three resolutions which sufficiently exhibit the extent to which the views of the Cape Ministry differed from those of the Transvaal British. After affirming the principle of equal political rights for all white inhabitants of South Africa, and declaring that President Krüger's Bloemfontein proposals were "wholly inadequate," this great meeting proceeded to place on record its "deep sense of obligation" to Lord Milner for his endeavour to secure the redress of the Uitlander grievances, and its willingness, in order to "support his Excellency in his efforts to obtain a peaceful settlement," to endorse "his very moderate proposals on the franchise question as the irreducible minimum that could be accepted."

of Schreiner ministry.

In other words, the Schreiner Cabinet, immediately after the failure of the Conference, used its influence unreservedly to assist the Pretoria Executive in refusing the franchise reform put forward by the High Commissioner—a reform which, in the opinion of the community most concerned and most capable of

judging of its effect, constituted an "irreducible minimum" only to be accepted in deference to Lord Milner's judgment, and in the hope of avoiding war. Mr. Schreiner's action on this occasion was characteristic of the blind partizanship of the Cape Ministry. On June 10th, when the Prime Minister pressed his and his colleagues' favourable view of President Krüger's proposals upon Lord Milner and Mr. Chamberlain, the draft Franchise Law, with its intricate provisions, had not been laid before the Volksraad. Mr. Schreiner, therefore, had made haste to bless before he knew what he was blessing. And a few weeks later, as we shall notice, he let his zeal for the Boer oligarchy outrun his discretion in an even more amazing manner.

In these difficult circumstances Lord Milner displayed the highest address in his relations with the Schreiner Cabinet. Thanks to his mingled tact and firmness, aided by the outspoken support which he received from Mr. Chamberlain, his intercourse with his ministers remained outwardly friendly, while at the same time he had the satisfaction of seeing that during the next few weeks the considerations of policy, which he laid before them with absolute frankness, appreciably modified their original attitude. He had at once availed himself of the one point on which he and they were in agreement. With reference to the first interview with Mr. Schreiner (June 10th), he telegraphed to the Colonial Secretary:

"In reply I told him [Mr. Schreiner] I was prepared to communicate this expression of his opinion, although I strongly held an opposite view, as he was aware.

"He admitted, in subsequent conversation, that the President of the South African Republic's scheme could, in his opinion, be improved in detail; for instance, by immediately admitting men who had entered the country previous to 1890, and by making optional the period of naturalisation....

"In reply, I told him that these were points of first-rate importance and not of detail, especially the latter; and that, since after all he seemed to agree with me more than with the President of the South African Republic, he had better address his advice to the latter, and not to Her Majesty's Government."

And at the long and rather unpleasant interview of June 14th, although, as we have seen, Mr. Schreiner desired Lord Milner to inform Mr. Chamberlain that the Cape Ministry considered the "active interference" of the British

Government unjustified, yet he also said "that he and his colleagues were agreed that there were two respects in which the Government of the South African Republic might better their franchise scheme: (1) By admitting to the full franchise at once persons who had entered the country before 1890; and (2) By making it optional to obtain the full franchise without previous naturalisation after seven years' residence."[90]

Mr. Chamberlain's reply (June 16th), contained a more direct admonition. Lord Milner was instructed to inform the Cape Ministers that the Government trusted that they would "use all the influence they could to induce the Transvaal Government to take such action as would relieve Her Majesty's Government from the necessity of considering the question of being obliged to have recourse to interference of such a nature."[91]

ıamberlain's speech.

This was admirable backing, and precisely what Lord Milner required to aid him in his two-fold task of bringing both the Cape Ministry and the Pretoria Executive to a more reasonable frame of mind. But Mr. Chamberlain's next step was one of questionable utility.

In his speech at Birmingham (June 26th), after reviewing the relations of Great Britain with the Transvaal Boers during the last twenty years, Mr. Chamberlain declared that the Imperial Government, although deeply anxious not to use force, must somehow see that things were put right in South Africa.

> "We have tried waiting, patience, and trusting to promises which are never kept," he said; "we can wait no more. It is our duty, not only to the Uitlanders, but to the English throughout South Africa, to the native races, and to our own prestige in that part of the world, and in the world at large, to insist that the Transvaal falls into line with the other states in South Africa, and no longer menaces the peace and prosperity of the whole."

This was the kind of speech which would have been suitable and effective, if the South African garrison had been 20,000 instead of 10,000 strong, and the expeditionary force had been mobilised on Salisbury Plain. It was unsuitable and ineffective under the existing circumstances; when, that is to say, the British Government, by refusing to sanction the measures advised by the Commander-in-Chief, had elected to put themselves at a military disadvantage for the sake of prolonging the stage of friendly discussion and in the hope of gaining their point

by diplomatic means. In these circumstances such speeches were merely food for President Krüger to use in feeding the enthusiasm of his burghers. What Lord Milner desired of the Home Government was, as we have seen, a polite but inflexible demand for the Bloemfontein minimum, coupled with unostentatious, but effective, military preparations. The Home Government, as the sequel will show, were driven by the unpatriotic attitude of the Liberal Opposition into a precisely opposite course in both these respects. Their demand was vague in substance, and irritating in manner; while their inadequate defensive preparations were more than neutralised by the loudness with which, in deference to the views of the Liberal Opposition, they proclaimed their reluctance to undertake military measures on a scale that would really have made an impression on the Boers.[92]

scher-Hofmeyr mission.

One result which Mr. Chamberlain's speech produced was to bring Mr. Hofmeyr once more upon the scene. Before this date (June 26th) Mr. Fischer, apparently considering that the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference cast a reflection upon the statesmanship and influence of the Free State Government, had commenced a second essay in mediation. Early in June he had paid a visit to Capetown, where he was in close communication with Mr. Hofmeyr and the Cape Ministers, and had twice called upon the High Commissioner. He had left Capetown on the 19th for Bloemfontein; and then proceeded to Pretoria, which he reached on the 25th. At the Transvaal capital he entered into negotiations with the Executive, calling upon the British Agent on the 26th, and again on the 28th, and maintaining communication, through him, with Lord Milner. From Pretoria Mr. Fischer returned to Bloemfontein in company with Mr. Smuts and Mr. Groebler,[93] on July 1st. Here he met Mr. Hofmeyr, who, leaving Capetown with Mr. Herholdt, on the same day (July 1st), reached Bloemfontein early on the following morning.

Mr. Hofmeyr was in Bloemfontein, because the events of the last few days had convinced him that the only hope of saving the situation—saving it, that is, from the Afrikander nationalist point of view—lay in prompt and energetic action on his part. On June 23rd Mr. Schreiner had been informed by the High Commissioner of the intention of the Home Government to "complete" the Cape garrison; and shortly afterwards the despatch of the special service officers was publicly announced in England. Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Birmingham on the 26th, cabled almost *in extenso* to the High Commissioner, was communicated to

the local press on the 28th. On the same evening a mass meeting, held in the Good Hope Hall at Capetown, declared its strong approval of the action of the Imperial Government on behalf of the British population in the Transvaal. With these signs of an approaching Armageddon before his eyes, Mr. Hofmeyr had overcome his objection to personal dealings with President Krüger, and had resolved to go to Pretoria to confer with the leaders of the Boer oligarchy. But, in order to protect himself from the risk of a useless rebuff, he had first arranged to meet Mr. Fischer at Bloemfontein, and obtain through him and President Steyn some definite assurance that his counsels would be treated with respect, before finally proceeding to the Transvaal.

On Sunday, July 2nd, and in these circumstances, a conference was held between the Master of the Bond and Mr. Fischer and Mr. Smuts—two men not unworthy to represent the cause of Afrikander nationalism in their respective republics. As the result of their discussions, carried on almost uninterruptedly from the early morning until nearly midnight, Mr. Fischer, Mr. Smuts, and Mr. Groebler, in the words of *Ons Land*, "knew precisely what had to be done, in the opinion of the Colonial representatives, to gain the moral support of Colonial Afrikanders and to lead in the direction of peace."[94]

yr at Bloemfontein.

On the following day (Monday, the 3rd) Mr. Fischer and his companions arrived again in Pretoria; but Mr. Hofmeyr remained at Bloemfontein, since he had decided not to go to the Transvaal capital, unless "he was assured of achieving something of importance there." Up to the afternoon of Tuesday (the 4th) no such assurance had been received; and, says *Ons Land*, "as it seemed the assurance was almost in a contrary direction, preparations were already made for the homeward journey." But a little later on in the day Mr. Hofmeyr and his companion "received a hint that, although their chances of success at Pretoria were but slight, they were not altogether hopeless." The facts thus far provided by *Ons Land* must now be supplemented by a reference to the telegrams which fell into the hands of the British authorities a year later upon the occupation of Bloemfontein. From these documents we know that President Krüger at first telegraphed to President Steyn a polite refusal of Mr. Hofmeyr's mediation. This was followed, on Tuesday morning, by a telegram from Mr. Fischer himself, informing President Steyn that the Transvaal Government "would be glad to meet Mr. Hofmeyr and Mr. Herholdt, but that he could not say what chance there was of their mission succeeding until the Volksraad had been consulted." This, as

we have seen, was by no means sufficient for Mr. Hofmeyr. But later on there came a second telegram—the telegram which *Ons Land* delicately calls a "hint"—in which Mr. Fischer said that President Krüger "was willing to see Mr. Hofmeyr before he brought the matter before the Raad," and that he himself "hoped to obtain certain concessions from the Executive Council, with the members of which he was in consultation."

Thus encouraged, Mr. Hofmeyr and Mr. Herholdt at once left Bloemfontein by special train, and, travelling all night, reached Pretoria on Wednesday, the 5th, at seven o'clock.

"From the station," says *Ons Land*, "they were escorted by various officials and friends to the Transvaal Hotel, where rooms had been engaged for them as guests of the State. Even before they had taken breakfast they had an audience with President Krüger. On the invitation of His Honour they accompanied Mr. Fischer to three meetings of the Executive Council—two on Wednesday and one on Thursday. They had the opportunity, too, of meeting the greater part of the Volksraad members, and of conversing with them. What occurred on this occasion is, of course, private, and not for publication."

Mr. Hofmeyr and Mr. Herholdt left Pretoria on Friday, the 7th, and reached Capetown on Monday, the 10th.

Milner and the mission.

Lord Milner did everything possible to secure the success of the Fischer-Hofmeyr mission. Provided President Krüger was induced to give the Uitlanders an appreciable share in the government of the Transvaal, it made no difference to the Imperial Government whether he did so from a desire to secure the "moral support

Bid for "moral support".

Cape Afrikander party, or from any other motive of political expediency. What was essential was that the existing franchise scheme should be so far improved as to become a genuine, and no longer a fictitious, measure of reform. On the understanding that the "mission" had no less an object in view—an understanding which he gained from conversation with Mr. Fischer himself as well as from Mr. Schreiner and Mr. Hofmeyr—Lord Milner placed the British Government code at the disposal of Mr. Fischer and the Prime Minister, and further arranged with the former to communicate with him (Lord Milner) through the British Agent at Pretoria. But Lord Milner especially impressed, alike upon Mr. Fischer, Mr. Hofmeyr, and Mr. Schreiner, the necessity of urging President Krüger to discuss any proposed modifications in

the Draft Law with the Imperial Government or its representatives, before they were submitted to the Raad. The objection to the adoption of this course, which, according to Mr. Fischer's statement,[95] the Pretoria Executive did in fact make, was their inability to "recognise the right of the British Government to be consulted on the franchise, which was an internal matter." This objection, however, as Lord Milner pointed out to the members of the Pretoria Executive, both directly through Sir William Greene,[96] and indirectly through Mr. Hofmeyr and Mr. Fischer, was a mere pretext. "The whole world," he said in effect, "knows that whatever alterations you make in the Draft Law—and indeed the Law itself—will be the result of the pressure brought to bear upon you by the British Government. That being so, to refuse to discuss these alterations with us privately, and in a friendly manner, because the franchise is an 'internal matter,' is to strain at a gnat while you are all the while swallowing a camel." But neither at this time, nor at any other period in the three months' negotiations, did President Krüger desire to come to an agreement with the British Government at the price of granting a genuine measure of reform. As a bid for the "moral support" of the Cape Ministry, but without the slightest attempt to consult with the British Government or its representatives, he recommended to the Volksraad, on July 7th, certain amendments, the effect of which was to confer the franchise upon a very small body of Uitlanders, and that only if they succeeded in complying with certain cumbersome and protracted formalities.[97] On the following morning the Bond Press announced, with a great flourish of trumpets, that Mr. Hofmeyr's mission had been remarkably successful, and set out the amendments of "The Great Reform Act" as representing the fruit of his and Mr. Fischer's efforts. This was for the public. To Mr. Fischer, Hofmeyr himself telegraphed on his return journey to Capetown, that he "deplored the failure" of his mission, when he "thought he had reason to expect success." Mr. Schreiner, on the other hand, was no less ready to bless the "Hofmeyr compromise" than Krüger's original scheme. Upon receiving by telegram the bare heads of the proposed amendments, and without waiting to learn what practical effect they would have upon the position of the Uitlanders, he hastily authorised *The South African News* to announce (July 8th) that the Cape Government considered the proposals of the amended law "adequate, satisfactory, and such as should secure a peaceful settlement."[98] This opinion he subsequently modified; and, at Lord Milner's request, he advised Mr. Fischer (July 11th) to urge his friends at Pretoria to delay the passage of the bill through the Volksraad. And Lord Milner was authorised by Mr. Chamberlain to instruct Sir William Greene to offer the same advice to the Transvaal Government, with the more precise intimation that "full particulars of the new scheme" ought to be furnished officially to the Imperial

Government, if the proposals which it embodied were to form "any element in the settlement of the differences between the two Governments."[99] The High Commissioner's object was, of course, to reduce the area of formal negotiations, and therefore the risk of official friction, to its narrowest limits. But this was not President Krüger's object. His principle was the very opposite of that of the Imperial Government. They abstained from preparations for war in order to improve the prospect of a peaceable settlement. The force upon which he relied was the warlike temper of his burghers, and the answering enthusiasm which the spectacle of the Republic, prepared to defy the British Empire, would arouse among the whole Dutch population of South Africa. Mr. Reitz was, therefore, instructed to decline Mr. Chamberlain's request on the ground that "the whole matter was out of the hands of the Government";[100] meaning, thereby, that it had already been submitted to the Volksraad. This, again, was the thinnest of excuses, since President Krüger had never yet shown any scruple in modifying or withdrawing proposals already laid before the Volksraad, when it suited him to do so.

ɔgus Conspiracy.

It may be questioned, however, whether, even at this time, the "whole matter" had not passed, in another and more serious sense, "out of the hands" both of the Pretoria Executive and the British Government. The political atmosphere of South Africa had become electric. The Uitlanders themselves cherished no illusion on the subject of President Krüger's proposals. Amended and re-amended, the Franchise Law, as the Uitlander Council then and there declared, left the granting of the franchise at the discretion of the Boer officials or the Pretoria Executive, and as such it was "a most dangerous measure, and apparently framed with the object of defeating the end it was presumed to have in view."[101] Further and convincing evidence of the utterly vicious and depraved character of the *personnel* of the Boer administration was afforded by the proceedings arising out of the alleged "conspiracy" against the Republic, of which the unfortunate Englishman Nicholls was the innocent victim (May 18th to July 25th).[102] In this disgraceful affair the gravest offences against international comity were committed; high officials, including Mr. Tjaart Krüger, the President's youngest son, were implicated in a gross and scandalous prostitution of the machinery of justice; and yet no apology was offered to the Imperial Government, nor any compensation awarded to Nicholls for the two months' imprisonment and continuous persecution by the agents-provocateurs, to which he had been subjected. The impassioned speeches delivered at the

Paardekraal meeting was only one among many signs of the dangerous hostility to England and everything English that had taken possession of the Re

War fever in the Transvaal.

The British residents who had petitioned the Queen were denounced as "revolutionaries," and threatened with the vengeance of the burghers. "If war breaks out," wrote *De Rand Post*,"[103] the Johannesburg agitators are the real instigators, and to these ringleaders capital punishment should be meted out." In the Volksraad discussion of the Franchise Law the same passionate hatred of the Uitlanders was manifested. "Is it the English only who have the right to make conditions?" asked Mr. Lombard on July 15th. "If it comes to be a question of war, there will be a great destruction. And who will be destroyed if it comes to a collision? Why, the subjects of Her Majesty in Johannesburg."[104]

These expressions scarcely do justice to the spirit of vindictiveness with which certain of the republican leaders regarded the British population of the Rand. On May 22nd, 1900, less than a year after the date of the Volksraad discussion of the Franchise Bill, and when Lord Roberts was advancing rapidly upon Johannesburg, a conversation took place with Mr. Smuts in Pretoria, which was reported in *The Times*. In the course of this conversation the State Attorney said, with reference to the proposed destruction of the mines, that "he greatly regretted that Johannesburg should suffer, but that the Government had no choice in the matter, as the popular pressure upon them was too great to be resisted." This determination is rightly characterised by Mr. Farrelly, the late legal adviser to the Government of the South African Republic, as the "fiendish project of wrecking the mines and plunging into hopeless misery for years tens of thousands of innocent men, women, and children." But that is not all. He has put upon record[105] the sinister fact that the man entrusted with the execution of this infamous design was Mr. Smuts himself. The mines were saved, therefore, not by the Boer Government, but in spite of it, and solely through the independent action of Dr. Krause, the Acting-Commandant of Johannesburg, who "arrested the leader of the wreckers, sent by Mr. Smuts, the day before the surrender to Lord Roberts."[106]

of the British.

The British population, although it provided no such displays of racial passion, was in an equally determined mood. Undismayed by the threats of the Boers, the Uitlander Council continued calmly to analyse the Franchise Bill in each successive phase—an unostentatious but very useful service, which

materially assisted Lord Milner in following the windings and doublings of Boer diplomacy. After the great meeting at Johannesburg (June 10th), the British centres in the Cape Colony, Natal, and Rhodesia gave similar demonstrations of their confidence in Lord Milner's statesmanship, and their conviction of the justice and necessity of the five years' franchise demanded by the Imperial Government. On the other hand, the irritation against British intervention was growing daily in the Free State; and the Dutch Reformed Church and the Bond had organised a counter-demonstration in the Cape Colony. The Synod of the former, meeting on June 30th, drew up an address protesting that the differences between Lord Milner's franchise proposals and those of President Krüger were not sufficient to justify the "horrors of war," and requested the Governor to forward it to the Queen. At Capetown (July 12th) and in the Dutch districts throughout the Colony, Bond meetings were held at which resolutions were passed in favour of a "compromise" as between Lord Milner's five years' franchise and the scheme embodied in President Krüger's law. More sinister was the circumstance that the information, that a consignment of 500 rifles and 1,000,000 cartridges, landed at Port Elizabeth on July 8th, had been permitted by the Cape Government to be forwarded through the Colony to the Free State, only came to the ears of the High Commissioner by an accident. In the meantime, more definite evidence of the almost unanimous approval of Lord Milner's policy by the British population in South Africa was forthcoming. In all three British colonies petitions to the Queen praying for justice to the Uitlanders, and affirming absolute confidence in Lord Milner, were signed. The Natal petition contained the names of three-fourths of the adult male population of the Colony, while the signatures to the joint petition of the Cape and Rhodesia had already reached a total of 40,500 before the end of July. In other respects the testimony of Natal was clear and unmistakable. In this predominantly English Colony identical resolutions supporting the action and policy of the Imperial Government, were carried unanimously in both Chambers of the Legislature.

yr's warning.

In the middle of July the situation improved in a slight degree through the influence which Lord Milner had exercised upon the Afrikander leaders in the Cape Colony. On the 14th the Cape Parliament met, and on this day Mr. Hofmeyr, chagrined at a suggestion for further support which he had received from the republican nationalists at Pretoria, despatched a telegram to Mr. Smuts, in which he, as the recognised head of the Afrikander Bond, reminded the members of President Krüger's Executive that the promised co-operation of the

Cape Government with them had been definitely limited to "moral support." And he plainly hinted that, unless greater deference was shown to his advice, even this "moral support" might be withdrawn.

> "The most important suggestions sent from here will apparently not be adopted. The independence of the Republics is in danger. As to the Colony, the utmost prospect held out was moral support. The Ministry and the Bond have acted up to that. If Parliament [*i.e.* the Cape Parliament] goes too strongly in the same direction, there may be a change of Ministry, with Sprigg or Rhodes backed by Milner. Would your interests be benefited thereby? *Verb. sat. sap.*"[107]

As President Krüger wanted to retain the "moral support" of the Cape Government for a few weeks longer, he listened to Mr. Fischer's advice[108] to humour their prejudices, and forthwith recommended a further modification of the Franchise Bill to the Volksraad. This final amendment, under which a uniform seven years' retrospective franchise was substituted for a nine years' retrospective franchise, alternate with a seven years' retrospective franchise taking effect five years after the passing of the law (*i.e.* in 1904), was accepted on July 18th, and the new Franchise Law was passed on the 19th and promulgated on the 26th. Its provisions were so obscure that it was accompanied by an explanatory memorandum furnished by the State Attorney, Mr. Smuts. But even assuming that the legal pitfalls could be removed, and the law, thus simplified, would be worked in the most liberal spirit by the officials of the Republic, President Krüger's proposals failed to provide the essential reform which Lord Milner had pledged himself and the Imperial Government to obtain. That reform was the immediate endowment of a substantial proportion of the British residents in the Transvaal with the rights of citizenship. To use his own words,[109] "the whole point" of his Bloemfontein proposal was "to put the Uitlanders in a position to fight their own battles, and so to avoid the necessity of pressing for the redress of specific grievances."

No one in South Africa had any doubt as to the entire inadequacy of the Franchise Bill to fulfil this essential object. In the opinion of the Uitlander Council it was[110] "expressly designed to exclude rather than admit the newcomer." Sir Henry de Villiers complained[111] to Mr. Fischer:

> "Then there is the Franchise Bill, which is so obscure that the State Attorney had to issue an explanatory memorandum to remove the

obscurities. But surely a law should be clear enough to speak for itself, and no Government or court of law will be bound by the State Attorney's explanations. I do not know what those explanations are, but the very fact that they are required condemns the Bill. That Bill certainly does not seem quite to carry out the promises made to you, Mr. Hofmeyr, and Mr. Herholdt."

ısory measure.

And Lord Milner, in his final analysis of the law on July 26th, concludes[112] that "the Bill as it stands leaves it practically in the hands of the Government to enfranchise, or not to enfranchise, the Uitlanders as it chooses." And he then draws attention to the very grave consideration that if the paramount Power once accepts this illusory measure, it will deprive itself of any future right of intervention on the franchise question.

"And the worst of it," he wrote, "is that should the Bill, through a literal interpretation of its complicated provisions, fail to secure the object at which it avowedly aims, no one will be able to protest against the result."

For one moment it seemed to the anxious warden of British interests in South Africa as though the Home Government might be caught in President Krüger's legislative net. The incident is one that well exhibits the tireless effort and unflinching resolution with which Lord Milner discharged the duties of his office.

President Krüger's Bloemfontein scheme was a maze of legal pitfalls. What these pitfalls were the reader may learn from the analysis of the scheme which was published in *The Cape Times* of June 10th, 1899. When the Franchise Bill was before the Volksraad this complicated scheme, as we have seen, was amended and re-amended; and each new provision was as intricate in its working as the parent scheme. It is obvious that nothing short of a commission of inquiry could have determined with certainty the manner in which the representation of the Uitlanders was affected by each successive amendment. While these changes were in progress in the Raadzaal at Pretoria—changes so "numerous and so rapid," as Lord Milner said,[113] that it was "absolutely impossible at any given moment to know what the effect of the scheme, as existing at that moment, was likely to be"—Lord Milner himself at Capetown was at one and the same time overwhelmed with detailed criticisms from Uitlanders, anxious that no legal pitfall or administrative obstacle should remain undetected, and besieged with

cables from the Colonial Office requesting precise information upon any point upon which an energetic member of the House of Commons might have chosen to interrogate the Secretary of State. And, in addition to this rain of telegrams, people on the spot were constantly calling at Government House to ask if the High Commissioner had observed this or that defect or trap in clauses, the text of which he had not yet had time to receive, still less to read or comprehend. All this, too, was over and above the heavy administrative and official duties of the Governor and High Commissioner—duties which Lord Milner was called upon to perform with more than usual care, in view of the political ascendancy of the Dutch party in the Cape Colony.

ıamberlain's assumption.

On July 13th, Lord Milner sent warning telegrams to Mr. Chamberlain,[114] pointing out specific defects in the Franchise Bill, and showing how seriously President Krüger's proposals fell short of the Bloemfontein minimum. Five days later the Volksraad accepted the final amendments. The face value of the Bill, as it now stood to be converted into law, was a seven years' franchise, prospective and retrospective. When, therefore, Mr. Chamberlain heard this same day (July 18th) that the Volksraad had accepted the bill in this form with only five dissentients, he seems to have assumed that a really considerable concession had been made by President Krüger at the last moment, and that, with the President and the Volksraad in this mood, still further concessions would be forthcoming. Under this impression he informed the House of Commons lobby correspondent of *The Times* that "the crisis might be regarded as at an end." His words were reproduced in *The Times* on the day following (July 19th), and at once cabled to South Africa.

It is impossible for any one who has not lived in South Africa to realise the sickening distrust and dread produced in the minds of the loyal subjects of the Crown by this statement. War they were ready to face. But to go back to every-day life once again bowed down with the shame of a moral Majuba, to meet the eyes of the Dutch once more aflame with the light of victory, to hear their words of insolent contempt—was ignominy unspeakable and unendurable. The Uitlander Council at once cabled an emphatic message of protest[115] to Mr. Chamberlain, and every loyalist that had a friend in England telegraphed to beg him to use all his influence to prevent the surrender of the Government. How near the British population in South Africa were to this ignominy may be gathered from the fact that on this day Lord Milner received a telegram in which

Mr. Chamberlain congratulated him upon the successful issue of his efforts. Lord Milner's reply was one that could have left no doubt in Mr. Chamberlain's mind as to the gravity of the misconception under which he laboured. It was, of course, beyond the High Commissioner's power to prevent the Home Government from accepting the Franchise Bill; but he could at least remove the impression that he was anxious to participate in an act, which would have made the breach between the loyalists of South Africa and the mother country final and irrevocable.

lapse in England.

It is scarcely possible to believe that Mr. Chamberlain, with Lord Milner's telegrams before him, was himself prepared to accept President Krüger's illusory franchise scheme. The source of the weakness of the Government in the conduct of the negotiations, no less than in its refusal to make adequate preparations for war, is to be found in the inability of the mass of the people of England to understand how completely British power in South Africa had been undermined by the Afrikander nationalists during the last twenty years. How could the average elector know that the refusal or acceptance of the Volksraad Bill, differing only from the Bloemfontein minimum in an insignificant—as it seemed—particular of two years, would, in fact, make known to all European South Africa whether President Krüger or the British Government was master of the sub-continent? In view of this profound ignorance of South African conditions, and the consequent uncertainty of any assured support, even from the members of their own party, the Salisbury Cabinet may well have argued: "Here is something at last that we can represent as a genuine concession. Let us take it, and have done with this troublesome South African question; or leave it to the next Liberal Government to settle."

If the Cabinet did so reason to themselves, what English statesman could have "cast the first stone" at them? But how profound is the interval between the spirit of the policy of "the man on the spot," with his eyes upon the object, and the spirit of the policy of the island statesman with one eye upon the hustings and the other strained to catch an intermittent glimpse of an unfamiliar and distant Africa!

Milner's anxiety.

This 19th of July was a dark day for the High Commissioner. In the morning came Mr. Chamberlain's telegram with its ominous suggestion of a change for

the worse in the attitude of the Home Government. And this change in the Cabinet was, as Lord Milner knew, only the natural reflection of a wider change, which had manifested itself among the supporters of the Government and in the country at large since the publication, on June 14th, of his despatch of May 4th. Private letters had made him aware that to men to whom Dutch ascendancy at the Cape and Boer tyranny in the Transvaal, Afrikander nationalism and Boer armaments, were meaningless expressions, his resolute advocacy of the Uitlanders' cause and his frank presentation of the weakness of Great Britain had seemed the work of a disordered imagination or a violent partisanship. Nor was his knowledge of the relapse in England limited to the warnings or protests of his private friends. *The South African News*, the ministerial organ, which of late had filled its columns with adverse criticisms taken from the London Press, this morning contained a bitter article on him reprinted from *Punch*, which had arrived by the yesterday's mail. After all, it seemed, the long struggle against mis-government in the Transvaal was going to end in failure; and the British people would once more be befooled. With such thoughts in his mind, Lord Milner must have found the work of making up the weekly despatches for the Colonial Office—for it was a Wednesday[116]—a wearisome and depressing task. The mail was detained until long past the customary hour. But before it left, in spite of discouragement and anxiety, Lord Milner had gathered together into a brief compass all the documents necessary to put Mr. Chamberlain in possession of every material fact relative to the new law—passed only on the day before—and to the proceedings of the Transvaal Executive and the Volksraad between the 12th and the 19th. And, in addition to this, he had written a fresh estimate of the Franchise Bill in its latest form, in which he emphasised his former verdict that the proposals which it contained were not such as the Uitlanders would be likely to accept. And in particular he pointed out that the fact of the final amendment being thus readily adopted by the Volksraad disposed of the contention, upon which President Krüger had laid so much stress at Bloemfontein, that his "burghers" would not permit him to make the concessions which the British Government required. He wrote:

> "On July 12th Her Majesty's Government requested the Government of the South African Republic to give them time to consider the measure and communicate their views before it was proceeded with. To this the Government of the South African Republic replied, on July 13th, with a polite negative, saying that 'the whole matter was out of the hands of the Government, and it was no longer possible for the Government to satisfy the demands of the Secretary of State.' The State-Attorney informed Mr.

Greene[117] at the same time that 'the present proposals represented absolutely the greatest concession that could be got from the Volksraad, and could not be enlarged. He personally had tried hard for seven years' retrospective franchise, but the Raad would not hear of it, and it was only with difficulty that the present proposals were obtained.' This was on the 12th, but within a week the seven years' retrospective franchise had been adopted. Indeed, the statement of the absolute impossibility of obtaining more than a particular measure of enfranchisement from the Volksraad or the burghers has been made over and over again in the history of this question—never more emphatically than by the President himself at Bloemfontein—and has over and over again been shown to be a delusion."[118]

amberlain's statement.

But this full record of the shifts and doublings of Boer diplomacy would not reach London for another two weeks and a half. It was necessary, therefore, to use the cable. Early the next morning Lord Milner sent a telegram to the Secretary of State, in which he warned the Home Government of the extreme discouragement produced among all who were attached to the British connection by *The Times* statement of their readiness to accept the Franchise Bill. On that afternoon (July 20th), Mr. Chamberlain made a statement in the House of Commons in which he took up a much more satisfactory position. The Government, he said, were led to hope that the new law "might prove to be a basis of settlement on the lines laid down" by Lord Milner at the Bloemfontein Conference. They observed, however, that "a number of conditions" which might be used "to take away with one hand what had been given with the other" were still retained. But they—

> "felt assured that the President, having accepted the principle for which they had contended, would be prepared to reconsider any detail of his schemes which could be shown to be a possible hindrance to the full accomplishment of the objects in view, and that he would not allow them to be nullified or reduced in value by any subsequent alterations of the law or acts of administration."

That is to say, Mr. Chamberlain was no longer willing to take the bill at its face value, but in accordance with his determination to exhaust every possible resource of diplomacy before he turned to force, he gave President Krüger credit for a genuine desire to promote a peaceable settlement. A week later he

formulated the method by which the President was to be allowed an opportunity of justifying this generous estimate of his intentions. In the meantime Lord Milner had sent lengthy telegrams to the Secretary of State on the 23rd, and again on the 26th, and the Salisbury Cabinet had determined to make a definite pronouncement of its South African policy, and to endeavour to arouse the country to a sense of the seriousness of the situation with which President Krüger's continued obduracy would bring it face to face. On July 27th Mr. Balfour declared, in addressing the Union of Conservative Associations, that—

> "If endless patience, endless desire to prevent matters coming to extremities, if all the resources of diplomacy, were utterly ineffectual to untie the knot, other means must inevitably be found by which that knot must be loosened."

On the day following (July 28th) the Transvaal question was debated in both Houses of Parliament. In the House of Lords the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, delivered a moderate and almost sympathetic speech. After making all allowance for the natural apprehension experienced by President Krüger at the sudden inrush of population caused by the discovery of the Witwatersrand gold-fields, he expressed the opinion that an attempt "to put the two races fairly and honestly on the same footing" would bring a peaceful solution of the crisis. But, he added —

> "How long we are to consider that solution, and what patience we are bound to show, these things I will not discuss. We have to consider not only the feelings of the inhabitants of the Transvaal, but, what is more important, the feelings of our fellow-subjects.... Whatever happens, when the validity of the Conventions is impeached, they belong from that time entirely to history. I am quite sure that if this country has to make exertions in order to secure the most elementary justice for British subjects,—I am quite sure [it] will not reinstate a state of things that will bring back the old difficulties in all their formidable character at the next turn of the wheel. Without intruding on his thoughts, I do not think President Krüger has sufficiently considered this."

int Commission.

In the House of Commons Mr. Chamberlain announced that he had proposed to the Transvaal Government that a joint commission should be appointed to test the efficacy of the scheme of electoral reform embodied in the new Franchise Law. This proposal was set out in detail in a despatch already addressed to the

High Commissioner, the substance of which had been telegraphed[119] to him on the preceding day (July 27th). The British Government assumed that "the concessions now made to the Uitlanders were intended in good faith to secure to them some approach to the equality which was promised in 1881"; they proposed that the "complicated details and questions of a technical nature" involved in the new law should be discussed in the first instance by delegates appointed by the High Commissioner and by the South African Republic; and if, and when, a "satisfactory agreement" had been reached on these points, they further proposed that all disputes as to the terms of the Convention should be settled by a "judicial authority, whose independence ... would be above suspicion," and all remaining matters in respect of the political representation of the Uitlanders by "another personal Conference" between the High Commissioner and President Krüger.

Although the position which the Salisbury Cabinet had now taken up was one which placed them beyond the danger of accepting an illusory franchise scheme in lieu of an adequate measure of reform, it was not the course of action which was best to follow, except from the point of view of opening the eyes of the British public. In itself further delay was dangerous. It gave the Boers more time to arm, while we, for this very reason for which it was necessary to protract the negotiations, were prevented from arming vigorously. It discouraged our friends in South Africa, and made them even begin to doubt whether Great Britain "meant business." It was good policy to offer the Joint Inquiry, given the truth of the assumption upon which this offer was based—namely, that the Bill represented an honest desire on the part of President Krüger to provide a peaceable settlement of the Uitlander question. Lord Milner knew, within the limits of human intelligence, that this assumption was wholly unwarranted. The Home Government apparently did not. As the result of this difference, Lord Milner's policy was again deflected to the extent that two months of negotiation were devoted to a purely futile endeavour to persuade the Pretoria Executive to prove the good faith of a proposal, which was never intended to be anything more than a pretext for delay. And, as before, the injury to British interests lay in the fact that, while the Home Government was prevented from making any adequate use of this delay by its determination not to make preparations for war until war was in sight, the period was fully utilised by President Krüger, who since Bloemfontein had been resolutely hastening the arrangements necessary for attacking the British colonies at a given moment with the entire burgher forces of the two Republics.

urged to accept.

The offer of the Joint Inquiry was formally communicated to the Pretoria Executive in an eminently friendly telegram[120] from Lord Milner on August 1st. Efforts were made on all sides to induce President Krüger to accept it. Chief Justice de Villiers wrote strongly in this sense to Mr. Fischer,[121] and to his brother Melius, the Chief Justice of the Free State. Mr. Schreiner telegraphed to Mr. Fischer, and Mr. Hofmeyr to President Steyn, both urging that the influence of the Free State should be used in favour of the proposal. The Dutch Government advised the Republic "not to refuse the English proposal";[122] and further informed Dr. Leyds that, in the opinion of the German Government, "every approach to one of the Great Powers in this very critical moment will be without any results whatever, and very dangerous to the Republic."[123] Even the English sympathisers of the Boers were in favour of acceptance. Mr. Montagu White, the Transvaal Consul-General in London, cabled that "Courtney, Labouchere, both our friends, and friendly papers without exception," recommended this course; and that "refusal meant war and would estrange friends." The letter which he wrote to Mr. Reitz on the same day (August 4th), possesses an independent interest, as revealing the degree in which the friends of the Boers in England had identified themselves with the policy of the Afrikander party in the Cape Colony.

> "The essence of friendly advice," said Mr. White,[124] "is: Accept the proposal in principle, point out how difficult it will be to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to statistics, etc., and how undesirable it would be to have a miscarriage of the Commission. In other words: Gain as much time as you can, and give the public time here to get out of the dangerous frame of mind which Chamberlain's speeches have created.... Labouchere said to me this morning: 'Don't, for goodness' sake, let Mr. Krüger make his first mistake by refusing this; a little skilful management, and he will give Master Joe another fall.' He further said: 'You are such past-masters of the art of gaining time; here is an opportunity; you surely haven't let your right hands lose their cunning, and you ought to spin out the negotiations for quite two or three months.'"

A week later (August 11th), President Krüger received a telegram[125] in which fifty Afrikander members of the Cape Parliament advanced the same argument. The acceptance of the Joint Commission, they pointed out, would provide a way out of a crisis "which might prove fatal to the best interests, not

only of our Transvaal and Free State brethren, but also of the Afrikander party." They, therefore, begged his Honour to "lay their words privately" before the Executive and the Volksraad.

: resolved on war.

But President Krüger, like Lord Milner, had his eyes fixed upon the object. He looked beyond the Afrikander leaders to the rank and file of the Dutch population in the British colonies, with whom he had been in direct communication through his agents for many months past.[126] He knew that any such inquiry as Mr. Chamberlain proposed would expose the flagrant insincerity of the Franchise Bill. On August 2nd he had telegraphed to President Steyn that compliance with the Joint Commission was "tantamount to the destruction of the independence of the Republic."[127] To the Dutch Consul-General[128] he was perfectly frank: "Defeats such as the English had suffered in the war for freedom, and later under Jameson, had never been suffered by the Boers." His burghers were ready to "go on the *battue* of Englishmen," when he gave the word.[129]

r ceases to "mediate".

The burghers of the Free State could be counted upon with almost equal certainty. Mr. Fischer, a more potent influence than President Steyn, had by this time openly dissociated himself from the "mediation" policy of the Cape nationalists, and was again (August 4th to 9th) at Pretoria. Here he threw himself heart and soul into the work of completing the military preparations of the two Republics. On the 6th he telegraphed to President Steyn that the draft reply was prepared; that it "invited discussion and asked questions to gain time," and that, therefore, it "was not yet necessary to deliberate as to calling together the Volksraad" for the final decision of peace or war. "Military matters, especially artillery," he added, "seem to me very faulty. Care will be taken to make all necessary preparations."[130] Nor did he leave the Transvaal capital until he had settled the details of the invasion of Natal with General Joubert. Indeed, from this time onwards to the despatch of the ultimatum—a document which came, in its final form, from his pen—Mr. Fischer's part in the conduct of the negotiations was second only to that of President Krüger. In all he did he displayed the same reasoned determination to oppose British supremacy in South Africa which he has exhibited since the war in his control of the Bloemfontein *Friend*. Orders for the inspection of the commando organisation in the Free State had been given before Mr. Fischer had left Bloemfontein; and on his return from Pretoria he

responded to Mr. Schreiner's urgent and continued representations of the desirability of inducing President Krüger to accept Mr. Chamberlain's offer, by a request to be informed of any probable movements of British forces. Mr. Schreiner's reply, that the Free State must ask for such information from the High Commissioner, caused him to apply to Mr. Hofmeyr for an explanation of the Cape Premier's attitude. The inquiry produced a notable analysis of Mr. Schreiner's position.

> "Hofmeyr says," Dr. Te Water telegraphed, "that whatever the Premier's feelings or relations to our people are, he is at the same time a minister of the Crown. As such he has on him claims in two directions, of which he is acquitting himself to the best of his ability. He has no control over the movement of troops. You had better come and have a quiet talk. Meanwhile the Free State should surely refrain from an aggressive step."[131]

This well-meant advice was somewhat belated. In reply to a telegram from President Steyn, asking whether it was true that the Imperial Government was going to send 1,000 men to Bethulie Bridge, Lord Milner replied on August 16th, that, "as a matter of fact, no despatch of Imperial troops to the borders of the Orange Free State was in contemplation." But he added that in view of the much more substantial reports of the "importation of large quantities of munitions of war" into that State and "the general arming of the burghers," it "would not have been unnatural, if such military preparations had been responded to by a defensive movement" on the part of the British Government. [132] Indeed, the circumstances which had led to Mr. Fischer's co-operation in Mr. Hofmeyr's "mediation" were rapidly disappearing. The Port Elizabeth Mausers and ammunition were safely through the Cape Colony; a further consignment of Mauser ammunition arrived at Delagoa Bay (August 16th) in the German steamship *Reichstag* at the very time that these telegrams were passing; and both this and other enormous consignments were forwarded to Pretoria a fortnight later in spite of an abortive attempt on the part of the British Foreign Office to induce the Portuguese authorities to retain them. The possession of an adequate supply of ammunition was a matter of cardinal importance to which, as we have seen, President Steyn had drawn the attention of the Pretoria Executive nearly a month before the Bloemfontein Conference. It was these Mauser cartridges that were wanted especially, since, without them, the new arm—the splendid Mauser magazine rifle—must have been rejected in place of the inferior Martini-Henry for which the Boers had long been provided with an ample reserve of ammunition.

Greene negotiations.

In the meantime the British Government was still waiting for a reply to its offer of a Joint Inquiry. On August 7th the Volksraad discussed the question, and on the 12th a despatch was written by Mr. Reitz refusing the offer on the ground that such a proposal was inconsistent with the independence of the Republic. It was held back, however, until September 1st; that is to say, until the Portuguese authorities had allowed the Transvaal ammunition to leave Lorenzo Marques. Then, as we shall see, it was forwarded in conjunction with a second despatch of September 2nd. The delay was won by a characteristic display of "the art of gaining time," in which, as Mr. Labouchere remarked, the Boers were past-masters. On the same day that Mr. Reitz wrote his despatch (August 12th), Mr. Smuts approached Sir William Greene[133] with the offer of a still further simplified seven years' franchise in lieu of the Joint Commission. When, however, Sir William Greene assured him that the British Government would not accept anything less than the Bloemfontein minimum, he subsequently agreed to an arrangement of which the main items were: A five years' franchise; the workable character of the new law to be secured by the submission of its provisions to the British Agent with a legal adviser; and increased representation in the Volksraad, together with the use of the English language. After communications had passed between Sir William Greene, Lord Milner, and Mr. Chamberlain, these proposals, with certain reservations, were formally communicated to the British Government by Mr. Reitz on August 19th. Two days later a second note was forwarded in which the offer contained in the previous note (August 19th) was declared to be subject to the acceptance by the British Government of two conditions. These conditions—an undertaking not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Republic in the future and a specific withdrawal of the claim of suzerainty—amounted in effect to a formal renunciation by Great Britain of its position as paramount Power in South

Boer diplomacy.

In other words, the Pretoria Executive had repudiated the arrangement made by Mr. Smuts with Sir William Greene. Mr. Chamberlain, noticing the material variation between the original offer as initialled by Mr. Smuts and forwarded by Sir William Greene, and Mr. Reitz's note of August 19th, instructed Sir William Greene to obtain an explanation of the discrepancy from the Transvaal Government. The reply was a curt rejoinder that there was not "the slightest chance of an alteration or an amplification" of the terms of the arrangement as set out in the note of the 19th.[134] In these circumstances Mr. Chamberlain telegraphed a reply on August 28th, in which he accepted the original offer, and rejected the impossible conditions subsequently attached to it.

[135] The terms of settlement thus proposed were in substance the same as those of the despatch of July 27th, with the exception that an inquiry by the British Agent was substituted for the Joint Commission, and the five years' franchise of the Smuts-Greene arrangement was accepted in lieu of the seven years' franchise of the Volksraad law. The Transvaal reply was a further essay in the same useful "art of gaining time." It was dated September 2nd, and contained a definite withdrawal of the Smuts-Greene offer as embodied in the notes of August 19th and 21st, and a vague return to the Joint Commission.

"Under certain conditions," wrote Mr. Reitz,[136] "this Government would be glad to learn from Her Majesty's Government how they propose that the Commission should be constituted, and what place and time for meeting is suggested."[137]

And this with the consoling promise of a "further reply" to other questions arising out of the despatch of July 27th, which the Transvaal Government had not yet been able to consider.

The response to this astute document was the last effort of the Salisbury Cabinet to arrange a settlement upon the basis of the "friendly discussion" inaugurated at Bloemfontein. The British Government, Mr. Chamberlain wrote, had "absolutely repudiated" the claim, made in the notes of April 16th and May 9th, that the South African Republic was a "sovereign international state," and they could not, therefore, consider a proposal which was conditional on the acceptance of this view of the status of the Republic. They "could not now consent to go back to the proposals for which those of the note of August 19th were intended as a substitute," since they were "satisfied that the law of 1899, in which these proposals were finally embodied, was insufficient to secure the immediate and substantial representation" of the Uitlanders. They were "still prepared to accept the offer made in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of the note of August 19th," provided that an inquiry, joint or unilateral as the Transvaal Government might prefer, showed that "the new scheme of representation would not be encumbered by conditions which would nullify the intention to give substantial and immediate representation to the Uitlanders." They assumed that "the new members of the Raad would be permitted to use their own language." They expressed their belief that "the acceptance of these terms would at once remove the tension between the two Governments, and would in all probability render unnecessary any further intervention" on the franchise question, and their readiness—

nite demand.

"to make immediate arrangements for a further conference between the President of the South African Republic and the High Commissioner to settle all the details of the proposed Tribunal of Arbitration, and the questions ... which were neither Uitlander grievances nor questions of interpretation"

of the Convention. And they added that if the reply of the Republic was negative or inconclusive, "they would reserve to themselves the right to reconsider the situation *de novo*, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement." [138]

The text of this despatch was telegraphed to Lord Milner late at night on September 8th. It was presented to the Transvaal Government on the 12th, with a request that the reply might reach the British Agent not later than midday on the 14th. This limit of time was fixed by Sir William Greene on his own initiative, and it was withdrawn by Lord Milner's instructions, in order that the Pretoria Executive might not be unduly hurried. The Transvaal reply, which was delivered on the 15th, was a refusal to accept the Smuts-Greene arrangement, re-stated by the British Government, as the basis of the franchise reform, coupled with a charge of bad faith against Sir William Greene.

It was a cleverly composed document, which owed its diplomatic effect in no small degree to Mr. Fischer, who had revised it. It was written for publication, since, in Mr. Fischer's opinion, the time had come to write despatches which would "justify the Republic in the eyes of the world"; and with this end in view it contained the suggestion that the British Government was bent upon worrying the Pretoria Executive into war.

> "This Government," it explains, "continues to cherish the hope that Her Majesty's Government, on further consideration, will feel itself free to abandon the idea of making the new proposals more difficult for this Government, and imposing new conditions, and will declare itself satisfied to abide by its own proposal for a Joint Commission at first proposed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Imperial Parliament, and subsequently proposed to this Government and accepted by it."[139]

rcements sanctioned.

The British despatch of September 8th represented the united opinion of the Cabinet Council which had met on that day to consider the South African situation. In sending it, the Government also decided to raise the strength of the Natal and Cape forces to the total of 22,000, estimated by the War Office as sufficient for defensive purposes, by the immediate addition of 10,000 men, of whom nearly 6,000 were to be provided by the Indian Army.[140] The despatch itself, definite in contents and resolute in tone, was the sort of communication which, in Lord Milner's judgment, should have been forwarded to the Transvaal

Government after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference; and the additional troops now ordered out were nothing more than the substantial reinforcements for which he had applied in June. The three months' negotiations had led the Salisbury Cabinet to the precise conclusion which Lord Milner had formed at Bloemfontein. The only hope of a peaceable settlement lay in a definite demand, backed by preparations for war. But to do this in June, and to do it in September, were two very different things. Assuming that diplomatic pressure could in any case have availed to secure the necessary reforms, it is obvious that, whatever prospect of success attached to this course of action—Policy No. 2, as Lord Milner called it—in June, was materially diminished in September. During the interval the British Government had done practically nothing to improve its military position. That of President Krüger had been conspicuously improved. He had carried the Free State with him; he had got his Mauser ammunition and additional artillery, and he had completed his arrangements for the simultaneous mobilisation of the burghers of the two Republics. Even now the military action of the British Government was confined to preparations for defence; for the order to mobilise the army corps was not given until the next Cabinet Council had been held on September 22nd. The spirit of Pretoria was very different. The commandos were on their way to the Natal border before the reply to this British despatch of September 8th was delivered to the British Agent. That was President Krüger's real answer—not the diplomatic fencing of September 15th.

ce of the Boers.

More than this, the three months' negotiations had embittered the relations of the British and Dutch factions in every South African state to such a degree that any compromise of the sort proposed by Lord Milner at Bloemfontein was no longer sufficient to effect a settlement. The moderate measure of representation then suggested would have been rejected now by the Uitlanders as wholly inadequate for their protection, in view of the violent antipathy to them and the gold industry which the diplomatic struggle had evoked among all classes of the Dutch inhabitants of the Transvaal. The particulars of the outrageous treatment, and still more outrageous threats, to which the British Uitlanders were subjected from this time onwards up to the ultimatum are to be found in the Blue-books. As early as the middle of August, when the Smuts-Greene negotiations had just been commenced, Mr. Monypenny, the editor of the Johannesburg *Star*, was warned that the Transvaal Government intended to issue a warrant for his arrest on a charge of high treason. This intention, postponed during the fortnight of delay won by these negotiations, was carried out on September 1st, on which

day Mr. Pakeman, the editor of the *Transvaal Leader*, was secured, while Mr. Monypenny succeeded in effecting his escape. This indefensible act was followed by a characteristic attempt to disown it, made by Mr. Smuts, the State Attorney, the nature of which is sufficiently exhibited in the following telegram, despatched by the High Commissioner on September 4th to the Secretary of State:

"The charge against Pakeman has been reduced to one under the Press Law of 1896, and he has been admitted to bail. There have been no further arrests. Greene telegraphs as follows:

"*Begins.*—A statement has been published through the Press this morning by the State Attorney 'that no instructions had ever been issued from Pretoria for the arrest of the editors of the *Leader* or the *Star*.' The facts are as follows: On Friday morning the Public Prosecutor of Johannesburg and Captain Vandam, who had come over from Johannesburg to Pretoria, were interviewed by the State Attorney in his office here. In the afternoon these two officers returned to Johannesburg, and arrested the editor of the *Leader* the same evening, failing to capture the editor of the *Star*.—*Ends.*

"There is no doubt that the arrest of both editors was decided by the Government and other arrests contemplated, intimidation of Uitlander leaders being the object. The exodus from Johannesburg is taking formidable proportions. Many refugees of all classes have come to Capetown. In Natal there are an even larger number. A good deal of money is being spent on relief."[141]

The violence of the Boers culminated a week before the Ultimatum (October 9th-11th) in the wholesale expulsion of the British subjects still remaining in the two Republics. Assuming that this measure was justifiable on military grounds, there can be no excuse for the brutal precipitancy with which it was enforced. It crowded the colonial ports with homeless and impoverished fugitives; it inflicted unnecessary suffering and pecuniary loss upon inoffensive and innocent non-combatants, both European and native; and it was accompanied in some instances by displays of wanton cruelty and deliberate spite utterly unworthy of a people of European descent.

y of High Commissioner.

Thus it was only when Lord Milner's foresight had been unmistakably confirmed by the stern logic of facts that the British Government ordered these

10,000 troops to South Africa, 6,000 of whom—the Indian contribution—arrived just in time to save Natal from being overrun by the Boers. The three weeks preceding the Cabinet Council of September 8th, at which this decision was arrived at, had been a period of intense anxiety for the High Commissioner. With the spectacle of the increasing activity of England's enemies, and the increasing dismay of England's friends, before his eyes, his protests against the inactivity of the Home Government had become more urgent. In the middle of August he declared that he could no longer be responsible for the administration of South Africa unless he were provided immediately with another military adviser. General Forestier-Walker was then appointed, and after the departure of General Butler the Imperial Government intervened at length to check the further passage of munitions of war through the Colony to the Free State.[142] The *Norman*, the mail-boat of August 23rd in which Sir William Butler sailed for England, took home the masterly despatch[143] in which Lord Milner explained the position taken up by him at the Bloemfontein Conference, and showed how completely the proposals of the Transvaal Government differed from the spirit of the settlement which he had then invited President Krüger to accept. In doing so he reviewed the whole course of the subsequent negotiations, pointed out the insidious character of the last Transvaal proposal (August 19th and 21st), and emphatically protested against the suggestion that the Imperial Government should barter its rights as paramount Power for "another hastily framed franchise scheme," on account of its "superficial conformity" with what, after all, was only a single item in the long list of questions that must be adjusted before the peaceful progress of South Africa would be assured.[144] On August 28th Mr. Schreiner, when called to account in the Cape Parliament for having allowed, "in the usual course," the Mausers and ammunition for the Free State to pass through the Colony, made the strange declaration that in the event of war—

> "he would do his very best to maintain [for the Cape Colony] the position of standing apart and aloof from the struggle, both with regard to its forces and with regard to its people."

Three days later (August 31st) Lord Milner sent a still more impressive appeal for "prompt and decisive action" on the part of the Home Government. The despatch, which was telegraphed, is otherwise significant for its account of the situation in Johannesburg:

> "I am receiving representations from many quarters," he said, "to urge Her Majesty's Government to terminate the state of suspense. Hitherto I have

hesitated to address you on the subject, lest Her Majesty's Government should think me impatient. But I feel bound to let you know that I am satisfied, from inquiries made in various reliable quarters, that the distress is now really serious. The most severe suffering is at Johannesburg. Business there is at a standstill; many traders have become insolvent, and others are only kept on their legs by the leniency of their creditors. Even the mines, which have been less affected hitherto, are now suffering, owing to the withdrawal of workmen, both European and native. The crisis also affects the trading centres in the Colony. In spite of this, the purport of all the representations made to me is to urge prompt and decided action, not to deprecate further interference on the part of Her Majesty's Government. British South Africa is prepared for extreme measures, and is ready to suffer much in order to see the vindication of British authority. It is a prolongation of the negotiations, endless and indecisive of result, that is dreaded. I fear seriously that there will be a strong reaction of feeling against the policy of Her Majesty's Government if matters drag. Please to understand that I invariably preach confidence and patience—not without effect. But if I did not inform you of the increasing difficulty in doing this, and of the unmistakable growth of uneasiness about the present situation, and of a desire to see it terminated at any cost, I should be failing in my duty."[145]

isis in South Africa.

Indeed, while in England Mr. Chamberlain was remarking (at Highbury, August 27th) that he "could not truly say that the crisis was passed," and picturesquely complaining of President Krüger "dribbling out reforms like water from a squeezed sponge," every loyalist in South Africa knew that the time for words had gone by. On September 6th and 7th public meetings were held respectively at Maritzburg and Capetown, at which resolutions were passed affirming the uselessness of continuing the negotiations and the necessity for the prompt action of the Imperial Government.

Even this did not exhaust the evidence which was needed to persuade the Salisbury Cabinet to make effective preparations for the defence of the British colonies. The Cabinet Council of September 8th had before it, in addition to the Transvaal note of September 2nd, a direct and urgent request[146] for immediate reinforcements from the Government of Natal—the loyal colony which, as Lord Milner had declared, was to be defended "by the whole force of the empire."

These were the circumstances in which the Salisbury Cabinet did in September what Lord Milner had advised them to do in June. It is impossible to maintain that the British Government had gained anything in the way of political results comparable with the fatal loss of military strength incurred by the three months' delay. The over-sea British did not need to be taught either the justice or the necessity of securing citizen rights for the industrial population of the Transvaal. Before Lord Milner had been authorised to state that the petition of the Uitlanders had been favourably received by the Home Government, the citizens of Sydney had recorded in a public meeting their "sympathy with their fellow-countrymen in the Transvaal," and expressed their hope "that Her Majesty might be pleased to grant the prayer of her subjects." Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales had all three offered military contingents by July 21st;[147] the other colonies refrained only from a desire not to embarrass the Home Government in its negotiations with the Transvaal. Whatever good effect was produced upon the public opinion of the continent of Europe and the United States of America by the obvious reluctance of the British Government to make war upon a puny enemy, was more than counterbalanced by the spectacle of a great Power prevented from employing the most elementary military precautions by a nice regard for the susceptibilities of its political and commercial rivals. The idea that the sentiment either of the world at large or of the over-sea British would be favourably impressed by the three months of futile negotiations was a sheer delusion. It was the people of England who had to be educated.

anchester meeting.

How little they knew of the actual situation in South Africa, and of the real character of the Boers may be seen from what happened on September 15th. On this day a meeting was held at Manchester to protest against the mere idea of England having to make war upon the Transvaal. Lord (then Mr.) Courtney "hailed with satisfaction" the British despatch of September 8th, which, having been published in the Continental papers on the 13th, had appeared a day later (14th) in those of Great Britain. "It was a rebuke to the fire-eaters," he said, "and a rebuke most of all to one whom I must designate as a lost man, a lost mind—I mean Sir Alfred Milner." And Mr. John Morley, like Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was convinced that there was no need of any preparations for war; the Transvaal Government "could not withdraw from the five years' franchise." The day on which these words were uttered was the day on which the note containing President Krüger's determination to "withdraw" from the five years' franchise, and his refusal even to consider the British offer of September 8th—

hailed with satisfaction by his old ally, Lord Courtney—was handed to Sir William Greene.[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER VI

THE ULTIMATUM

The British people were destined to pay a heavy penalty for the ignorance and irresolution that caused them to withhold, from June to September, the mandate without which the Government was unable to prepare for war. What that penalty was will be made sufficiently clear when we come to consider the position of grave disadvantage in which the British forces designated for the South African campaign were placed at the outbreak of the war. For the moment it is enough to notice that, just as the real source of the military weakness of England in the war was the fact that only a very small proportion of her adult male population had received an elementary training in arms, so the futility of her peace strategy must be traced to the general ignorance of the bitter hatred with which British supremacy was regarded, not only by the Boers, but also by the Dutch subjects of the Crown in the Cape Colony and Natal. In a world-wide and composite State such as the British Empire, it is, of course, natural that the people of one component part should be unfamiliar, in a greater or lesser degree, with the conditions of any other part. What makes this mutual unfamiliarity dangerous is the circumstance that the control of the foreign relations, and of the effective military and naval forces, of the Empire as a whole, remains exclusively in the hands of the people of one part—the United Kingdom. In the absence of any administrative body in which the over-sea Britains are represented, the power, thus possessed, of moulding the destiny of any one province of the Empire lays upon the island people the duty of informing themselves adequately upon the circumstances and conditions of all its component parts. It is obvious that the likelihood of this duty being efficiently performed has been diminished greatly by the extension of the franchise. Fortunately, however, in the case of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, questions involving a decision to employ the Army or Navy which Great Britain maintains for the defence of the Empire have arisen rarely in recent years. It is in regard to India and South Africa that these decisions have been constantly required; and for half a century past each of these

two countries in turn has been the battlefield of English parties. But while the efficiency of British administration has suffered in both cases by variations of policy due to party oscillations, infinitely greater injury has been done in South Africa than in India.

le of the island people.

In respect of South Africa, while, speaking broadly, Liberal Governments have sought to escape from existing responsibilities, or to decline new ones, Conservative Governments have sought to discharge these responsibilities with the object of making this country a homogeneous and self-supporting unit of the empire. To persuade the nation to accept a policy which might, and probably would, involve it in an immediate sacrifice both of men and money, was plainly a more difficult task than to persuade it that no need existed for any such sacrifices. The "long view" of the Imperialist statesmen was supported in the present instance by past experience and by the judgment of the great majority of the British population actually resident in South Africa. The home English, remembering that the recall of Sir Bartle Frere had been followed by Majuba and the Retrocession, were anxious to maintain British supremacy unimpaired in South Africa. What kept them irresolute was the uncertainty as to whether this supremacy really was, or was not, in danger. Lord Milner had told them that the establishment of a Dutch Republic, embracing all South Africa, was being openly advocated, and that nothing but a striking proof of Great Britain's intention to remain the paramount Power—such as would be afforded by insisting upon the grant of equal rights to the British population in the Transvaal —could arrest the growth of the nationalist movement. He had pointed out also that the conversion of the Boer Republic into an arsenal of munitions of war, when, as in the case of Ketshwayo, there was no enemy against whom these arms could be turned other than Great Britain, was in itself a definite and unmistakable menace to British supremacy. This, moreover, was the deliberate and reasoned verdict of a man who had been commissioned, with almost universal approval, to ascertain the real state of affairs in South Africa. If the nation had believed Lord Milner in June, the British Government would have received the political support that would have enabled it to make the preparations for war in that month which, as we have seen, it was now making in September.

beral opposition.

The agency which, by playing upon the ignorance of the public, prevented the

nation from accepting at once the truth of Lord Milner's verdict, was the Liberal Opposition. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the official leader of the Liberal party, maintained throughout the three months in question that no reason existed for military preparation. Mr. Labouchere wrote, on the eve of the war: "The Boers invade Natal! You might just as well talk of their invading England." When Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman maintained that there was no need for the Government to make any military preparations, we must presume that he believed one of two things: either that President Krüger would yield, or that, if President Krüger did not yield, there was nothing in the condition of South Africa to make it necessary for Great Britain to give any proof of her ability to maintain her position as paramount Power by force of arms. The action of the Liberal Opposition resolves itself, therefore, into a declaration, on its own authority as against Lord Milner's, that neither the republican nor the colonial Dutch had any intention of making war upon Great Britain in South Africa, or any resources which would enable them to carry out such an intention with any hope of success. Now, apart from the overwhelming testimony to the utter falsity of this assertion which is afforded by the facts of the campaign, and apart from such documents as the manifestos issued by both Republics upon the outbreak of the war, we possess—thanks to the exertions of the Intelligence Department—a mass of evidence, in the shape of private and official correspondence, which enables us to learn what was actually passing in the minds of the Dutch at this time. On the 15th of this month of September, 1899, the meeting to which we have referred[148] was held at Manchester, with the object, not of strengthening the hands of the Government in the military preparations which they were making thus tardily, but of protesting against the very idea that there was anything in the attitude of the Dutch in South Africa to make war necessary. A perusal of two of these captured documents will enable the reader to judge for himself in what degree this Liberal view of the situation corresponded with the facts. The first is a letter written on September 25th—that is to say, ten days after Lord Courtney was denouncing Lord Milner as "a lost mind" at Manchester—by Mr. Blignaut, brother to the State Secretary of the Free State. It is concerned with the safe arrival in the Free State of a Colonial Afrikander, who has left his home in the Western Province of the Cape Colony to join the republican forces:

[Translation.]

"KROONSTADT, ORANGE FREE STATE,

"September 25th, 1899.

"Your wire to hand this morning, to which I replied. —— has arrived.

"I never gave the youngster credit for such plans to dodge Mr. ——, and not to be trapped and taken back. I think he owes his friend —— something for his advice how to proceed. As he is here now, he can remain. I see myself he will never be satisfied to stay there [*i.e.* in the colony] while there is war going on.

"The only thing we are afraid of now is that Chamberlain, with his admitted fitfulness of temper, will cheat us out of the war, and consequently the opportunity of annexing the Cape Colony and Natal, and forming the Republican United States of South Africa; for, in spite of [S. J. du Toit], we have forty-six thousand fighting men who have pledged themselves to die shoulder to shoulder in defence of our liberty, and to secure the independence of South Africa.

"Please forward ——'s luggage.

"J. N. Blignaut."[149]

nder aspirations.

This is not an isolated or exceptional expression of opinion. It is a typical statement of what was in the mind of ninety-nine out of every hundred republican nationalists at this time. The aspirations it contains were proclaimed a fortnight later to the world by President Krüger himself in the boast that his Republic would "stagger humanity." They appeared in the nonchalant remarks made a few days later by Mr. Gregorowski, the Chief Justice of the Transvaal, in bidding farewell to Canon Farmer,[150] who was preparing to leave his cure at Pretoria in view of the certainty of war.

> "Is it really necessary for you to go? The war will be over in a fortnight. We shall take Kimberley and Mafeking, and give the English such a beating in Natal that they will sue for peace."

War, then, for the Boer meant "an opportunity of annexing the Cape Colony and Natal, and forming the Republican United States of South Africa." When Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. John Morley, Lord Courtney, Mr. James Bryce, and other Liberal leaders saw no reason why the British Government should make military preparations—did, in fact, do all in their power to induce the English people to withhold the support necessary to allow the British Government to make these preparations—there were, twelve thousand British

troops in South Africa to oppose the "forty-six thousand fighting men who had pledged themselves to die shoulder to shoulder" to secure the independence, not of the Transvaal but of "South Africa".

And what of the Dutch in the Cape Colony? Our second document will enlighten us on this point. It is an invitation, composed in doggerel rhyme, to the Boer forces to invade Griqualand West, signed by the chairman of a district branch of the Afrikander Bond. The date is not given; but as the proclamation under which Head-Commandant C. J. Wessels annexed the districts in question is dated November 11th, 1899, it was obviously written during the first three or four weeks of the war.

[Translation.]

"Dear countrymen of the Transvaal: Brothers of our religion and language: Our hearts are burning for you all: when your brave men fall, we pray to God night and day to help you with His might; we are powerless by ourselves—the English are so angry with us that they have taken away our ammunition, all our powder and cartridges; if you can provide us each with a packet of ten and a Mauser, you will see what we can do; Englishmen won't stand before us, they will go to the devil. There are a few English here, but we count them amongst the dead; for the rest we are all Boers, and only wait for you to move us. Englishmen are not our friends, and we will not serve under their flag; so we all shout together, as Transvaal subjects, 'God save President Krüger, and the Transvaal army; God save President Steyn, and all Free Staters great and small!'" [151]

nce of Liberal leaders.

But, apart from this profound misconception of the real feeling and intentions of the Afrikander nationalists in South Africa, manifested with such disastrous effect during these critical months—June to September, 1899—the leaders of the Liberal Opposition otherwise displayed in their public utterances an ignorance of this province of the Empire that can only be characterised as "wanton." For what expression other than "wanton ignorance" can be used to describe the habit of mind which permits public men to make statements in direct conflict with the facts of South African history, as established by ascertainable evidence, or to state as facts allegations which proper inquiry would have shown to be untrue? Here again, from a mass of material provided by the utterances which came from the Liberal Opposition leaders on South African affairs, a few instances only can

be brought to the notice of the reader, and these in the briefest form consistent with precision. On September 5th Mr. John Morley, speaking at Arbroath, stated that Sir Bartle Frere had "annexed the Transvaal." The present baronet, the late High Commissioner's son, called him to account at once; but it required three successive letters[152] to wring from Mr. John Morley a specific acknowledgement of his error. The evidence which establishes the fact that Frere did not annex the Transvaal is the following statement, bearing his signature and published in February, 1881:[153]

> "It was an act which in no way originated with me, over which I had no control, and with which I was only subsequently incidentally connected.... It was a great question then, as now, whether the annexation was justifiable."

This was on the 5th. On the 27th a letter was published in *The Times* in which Sir William Harcourt wrote, in respect of the suzerainty question:

> "All further argument is now superfluous, as the matter is decisively disposed of by the publication at Pretoria of Lord Derby's telegram of February 27th, 1884, in which the effect of the London Convention of that date was stated in the following words: 'There will be the same complete independence in the Transvaal as in the Orange Free State.'"

In a letter written on the day following, and published in *The Times* of October 2nd, the writer of the present work pointed out, among other inaccuracies, that the words actually telegraphed by Lord Derby were: "same complete internal independence in the Transvaal as in Orange Free State." That is to say, before the word "independence" the word "internal"—vitally important to the present issue—was inserted in the original, and omitted in the Boer version, from which Sir William Harcourt had quoted without referring to the Blue-book, Cd. 4,036.

ırious effect.

The third instance occurred some three months later. Mr. James Bryce, speaking on December 14th, 1899, stated that Sir Bartle Frere "sent to govern the Transvaal Sir Owen Lanyon, an officer unfitted by training and character for so delicate and difficult a task."[154] The following passage, which the present writer subsequently published, affords precise and overwhelming evidence of the absolute untruth of Mr. Bryce's assertion. It appears in a letter written by Sir Bartle Frere on December 13th, 1878, to Mr. (now Sir) Gordon Sprigg, then Premier of Cape Colony.

"The Secretary of State has nominated Lanyon to take Shepstone's place whenever he leaves [*i.e.* when Lanyon leaves Kimberley, where he was Administrator of Griqualand West]. This was not my arrangement, and had it been left to me I think I should have arranged otherwise, for while I believe Lanyon to be one of the most right-minded, hardworking, and able men in South Africa, I know he does not fancy the work in the Transvaal, and I think I could have done better. However, it does not rest with me, and all I have to do is to find a man fit to take his place when he leaves."[155]

All of these three men were of Cabinet rank. Two of them, Mr. Morley and Mr. Bryce, enjoyed a great and deserved reputation as men of letters; and their public utterances on the South African question, accepted in large measure on the strength of this literary reputation, were responsible in an appreciable degree for the distrust and coldness manifested by the people of the United States of America towards Great Britain during the first year of the war. But this is a consideration of secondary importance. The vital point to recognise is that, so long as the Empire remains without a common representative council, a knowledge of the conditions of the over-sea Britains must be considered as necessary a part of the political equipment of any English statesman as a knowledge of Lancashire or of Kent. After the war had broken out, Lord Rosebery, almost alone among Liberal statesmen, did something to support the Government. This distinguished advocate of Imperial unity and national efficiency then recommended the English people to educate themselves by reading Sir Percy FitzPatrick's *The Transvaal from Within*, and encouraged them by declaring his belief that England would "muddle through" this, as other wars. It does not seem, however, to have occurred to Lord Rosebery that, if he had used his undoubted influence in time to prevent his party from making it impossible for the Salisbury Cabinet to carry out in June the effective peace strategy long recommended by Lord Milner, the prospect of a "muddle" would have been materially diminished, if not altogether removed.

ıamberlain's proposal.

There is one other fact that cannot be overlooked in estimating the degree in which the Liberal leaders are answerable to the nation for the fatal error of postponing effective military preparations from June to September. After the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference Lord Milner, as we have seen, asked for immediate and substantial reinforcements. Mr. Chamberlain then approached Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman with a proposal that the Government should inform the

Opposition leaders of the circumstances that made military preparations necessary, and of the precise measures which they might deem advisable to adopt from time to time, on the understanding that the Opposition, on their part, should refrain from raising any public discussion as to the expediency of these measures. The object of this proposal was, of course, to enable the Government to make effective preparations for war, without lessening the prospect of achieving a peaceful settlement by the negotiations in progress. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman's reply to this overture was a refusal to make the Opposition a party to any such arrangement. If the Government chose to make military preparations they must do so, he said, entirely on their own responsibility.

The significance of this refusal of Mr. Chamberlain's offer appears from the answer which was subsequently put forward by the Prime Minister, the late Lord Salisbury, to the charge of "military unpreparedness" brought against the British Government after the early disasters of the campaign. What prevented the Cabinet, according to the Premier, from taking the measures required by the military situation in June was the British system of popular government. Any preparations on the scale demanded by Lord Milner and Lord Wolseley could not have been set on foot without provoking the fullest discussion in Parliament and the Press. The leaders of the Opposition would have contested fiercely the proposals of the Government, and the perversion of these opportunities for discussion into an anti-war propaganda might have exhibited England as a country divided against itself. It may be questioned whether, in point of fact, the Liberal leaders could have done anything more calculated to injure the interests of their country if the Government had mobilised the army corps, and despatched the ten thousand defensive troops in June, than they did when these measures were postponed until September. But, however this may be, the circumstance that this proposal was made by Mr. Chamberlain, and refused by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, is noteworthy both as an indication of the spirit of lofty patriotism of which the Salisbury Cabinet, in spite of its initial error, was destined to give more than one proof in the course of the war and as an example of a method of escaping from the injurious results of a well-recognised defect in the democratic system of government—a method which, it is not unreasonable to hope, may be employed with success should the like occasion arise at any future time.

This, then, was the state of affairs in England. The Opposition throughout the negotiations was proclaiming that war was out of the question, and that preparations for war were altogether unnecessary. The people, being ignorant of

the progress which the nationalist movement in South Africa had made, were irresolute, and withheld from the Government the support without which it could not make adequate military preparations, except at the risk of defeat in Parliament and possible loss of office.

s of Afrikander policy.

What was the position in South Africa? Above all, what was the position of the man whose duty it was "to take all such measures and do all such things" as were necessary for the safety of the subjects of the Crown and for the maintenance of British interests? The ignorance of South Africa that led to the partial paralysis of the Government was in no sense attributable to him. The broad fact that the Afrikander nationalist[156] movement had made the moral supremacy of the Dutch complete was declared by Lord Milner, during his visit to England in the winter of 1898-9, to the Colonial Secretary and other members of the Salisbury Cabinet. His verdict that nothing but prompt and energetic action on the part of the Imperial Government could keep South Africa a part of the Empire was publicly made known (so far as he was concerned) in his despatch of May 4th, 1899, which was withheld, however, from publication until June 14th. The Bloemfontein Conference was a device of the Afrikander nationalists at the Cape to avert a military conflict between the South African Republic and Great Britain, which, they believed, would result not merely in the destruction of the Republics, but in the loss of the prospect—which they then enjoyed—of achieving through the existence of the Republics the independence of the Afrikander nation as a whole. All this Lord Milner made perfectly clear to Mr. Chamberlain. The illusory concessions embodied in President Krüger's Franchise Law were yielded by the Republics with the object of securing the "moral support" of the Cape Afrikanders in the negotiations, and thereby obtaining the delay which was required to complete their military preparations; since the Republican nationalists, unlike those of the Cape, believed that the independence of the Afrikander nation could be wrested from Great Britain by force of arms. The efforts made by the Cape nationalists, first to secure these concessions, and then to induce the republican nationalists to grant the further concessions which would have satisfied the British Government, were made for the same purpose as the Bloemfontein Conference had been arranged—namely, to avert a conflict which, being premature, would be disastrous to the nationalist cause, not only in the Republics but in the Cape Colony. The respective objects both of the republican and Cape nationalists had been divined by Lord Milner, and, therefore, immediately after the failure of the Conference, he had urged the

Home Government to send reinforcements to South Africa sufficient to defend British territory from attack, and to check any incipient rebellion in the Cape Colony. The negotiations might, or might not, result in a peaceful settlement; but it was futile, nay more, it was dangerous, he said, for Great Britain to go on as though war were out of the question.

Milner's position.

This was the view of the South African situation which Lord Milner laid before the Home Government in June. We have seen what was done by them in response to these representations. Some special service officers were sent out to organise locally the defences of the Cape Colony and Rhodesia. The Cape and Natal garrisons were strengthened by a few very inadequate reinforcements arriving in the course of the next two months. General Butler was not recalled until the latter part of August; his successor, General Forestier-Walker, did not arrive until September 6th. We have traced the causes which made it impossible for the Imperial Government, as they conceived, to do more than this; and when in due course we come to consider the broad phases of the war, the nature of the penalty which the British Army, and the British nation, had to pay for the partial paralysis of the Government will become sufficiently apparent.

The man who suffered most by all this was Lord Milner. When he asked for military preparations, he was told that he could not have them. When he asked for the removal of a military adviser with whom he was supremely dissatisfied, he was told that he must put up with General Butler for a little longer. He put up with him for two months. His Colonial ministers, whose advice on many points he was bound to accept so long as he did not dismiss them, were men placed in office by the Dutch subjects of the Crown for the very purpose of frustrating, by constitutional means, the successful intervention in the Transvaal, by which alone, in his opinion, British supremacy could be made a reality.

Indeed, the odds were heavily against Lord Milner in his task of saving England, in spite of herself and in spite of the enemies of whose power she was wholly ignorant, and to whose very existence she remained contemptuously indifferent. To the great mass of the British population in South Africa, he stood for England and English justice. To them he seemed the representative man, for whom they had waited many a long year. They felt that he was fighting their battle and doing their work; and, making allowance for local jealousies and accidental partialities, they never ceased to regard him thus. This was his one

and only source of assured support. But he was far removed from the active British centres: from the group of towns formed by the Albany settlers and their descendants in the Eastern Province, and from Kimberley, Durban and Maritzburg, and Johannesburg. In the Cape peninsula, of course, there was a considerable British population of professional and commercial men; but this population had been so closely related by business and social ties with the preponderant Dutch population of the Western Province that many among them hesitated to declare themselves openly against the Dutch party. All who were members of the Progressive party, from the time of the Graaf Reinet speech, had given unswerving support to Lord Milner's policy; but the strength of the influence created by years of alternate political co-operation with the Bond leaders may be gathered from the fact that even so staunch a supporter of the British connection as Sir James (then Mr.) Rose Innes did not publicly declare his adhesion to the intervention policy until after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference. Moreover, the increasing political solidarity of the British population in the Cape Colony augmented the bitterness with which the few English politicians, who had remained in alliance with the Dutch party, regarded the man whose resolution and insight had penetrated and exposed the designs of the Bond.

es and disaffection.

It is difficult to convey any adequate impression of the atmosphere of suspicion and intrigue by which Lord Milner was surrounded. The Dutch party was in the ascendant in the Colony. The Cape Civil Service was tainted throughout with disaffection. Even the *personnel* of the Government offices at Capetown, although it contained many excellent and loyal men, included also many who were disaffected or lukewarm. It is characteristic of the situation that during the most critical period of the negotiations with the Transvaal, the ministerial organ, *The South African News*, permitted itself to indulge, where Lord Milner, was concerned, not only in the bitterest criticisms but in outspoken personal abuse. To have abused the representative of the Sovereign in a British colony of which one-half of the population was seething with sedition, while a part had been actually armed for rebellion by the secret emissaries of a state with which Great Britain was on the verge of war, is an act which admits of only one interpretation. Lord Milner was to be got rid of at all costs; for the policy which *The South African News* was intended to promote was that not of Great Britain, but of the Transvaal. The paper was directly inspired—it is indeed not unlikely that the articles themselves were written—by some of the members of the

Ministry, Lord Milner's "constitutional advisers," whom throughout he himself treated with the respect to which their position entitled them.

But nothing, perhaps, shows more vividly how extraordinary was the position in which Lord Milner found himself than the fact, which we have already noted, that the passage of the large consignment of 500 Mauser rifles and 1,000,000 cartridges for the Free State, to which the Prime Minister's attention was "drawn specially, because it was large," on July 15th, was not made known to him, the Governor of the Cape Colony, until August 9th, and then only by accident.[157] There is only one explanation of this remarkable incident: the interests of the Dutch party were different from those of the British Government. The Cape Colony was only in name a British colony. Under the guise of constitutional forms it had attained independence—virtual, though not nominal. If Lord Milner had contracted the habit of Biblical quotation from the Afrikander leaders, he might well have quoted the words of the psalmist: "Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round."[158] Even the approaches to Government House were watched by spies in President Krüger's pay, who carefully noted all who came and went. Members of the Uitlander community were the special subjects of this system of espionage.

ound Government House.

> "When on a visit to Capetown," writes Sir Percy FitzPatrick, "I called several times upon the High Commissioner, and learning, by private advice, that my movements were being reported in detail through the Secret Service Department, I informed Sir Alfred Milner of the fact. Sir Alfred admitted that the idea of secret agents in British territory and spies round or in Government House was not pleasant, but expressed the hope that those things should not deter those who wished to call on him, as he was there as the representative of Her Majesty for the benefit of British subjects, and very desirous of ascertaining for himself the facts of the case."[159]

The Afrikander leaders in the Cape never identified themselves with the British cause. To them the Salisbury Cabinet was a "team most unjustly disposed towards us"; a team, moreover, which they earnestly, and not without reason, hoped might be replaced by a Liberal Government that would allow them undisturbed to carry forward their plans to full fruition. The motive of their "mediation," such as it was, was political expediency. It was not from any belief in the justice of the British claims that they endeavoured to persuade the

republican nationalists to give way; still less from any feeling that England's cause was their cause. When, at length, they became really earnest in pressing President Krüger to grant a "colourable" measure of franchise reform—to use Mr. Merriman's adjective—it was for their own sake, and not for England's, that they worked. This motive runs through the whole of their correspondence; but it emerges more frankly in the urgent messages sent during the three days (September 12th to 15th) in which the Transvaal reply to the British despatch of September 8th was being prepared. "Mind," telegraphs Mr. Hofmeyr to Mr. Fischer on September 13th, "war will probably have a fatal effect on the Transvaal, the Free State, and the Cape Afrikander party." And when, from Mr. Fischer's reply, war was seen to have come in spite of all his counsels of prudence, the racial tie asserted itself, and he found consolation for his impotence in an expression of his hatred against England. On September 14th Mr. Hofmeyr telegraphed to President Steyn:

> "I suppose you have seen our wires to Fischer and his replies, which latter I deeply regret. The 'to be or not to be' of the Transvaal, Free State, and our party at the Cape, depends upon this decision. The trial is a severe one, but hardly so severe as the outrageous despatches received by Brand from [Sir Philip] Wodehouse and [Sir Henry] Barkly. The enemy then hoped that Brand would refuse, as the Transvaal's enemy now hopes Krüger will do; but Brand conceded, and saved the State. Follow Brand's example. Future generations of your and my people will praise you."

yr's "bitter feelings".

And on the 15th:

> "You have no conception of my bitter feelings, which can hardly be surpassed by that of our and your people, but the stronger my feelings the more I am determined to repress them, when considering questions of policy affecting the future weal or woe of our people. May the Supreme Being help you, me, and them. Have not seen the High Commissioner for weeks."

The reply of the republican nationalists, addressed to Mr. Hofmeyr and forwarded through President Steyn, contains a characteristically distorted version of the course of the negotiations. They have made concession after concession, but all in vain. "However much we recognise and value your kind intentions," they write, "we regret that it is no longer possible for us to comply with the extravagant and brutal requests of the British Government." Thus the

Pretoria Executive declared themselves on September 15th, 1899, to the Master of the Bond, when they were in the act of refusing Mr. Chamberlain's offer to accept a five years' franchise bill, provided it was shown by due inquiry to be a genuine measure of reform. Very different was the account of the same transaction given by Mr. Smuts, when, in urging the remnant of the burghers of both Republics to surrender, he said, on May 30th, 1902, at Vereeniging, "I am one of those who, as members of the Government of the South African Republic, *provoked the war with England*". But the passage in this document which is most useful to the historian is that in which the republican nationalists remind the Afrikander leaders at the Cape of the insincerity of their original "mediation." In dialectics Mr. Fischer, Mr. Smuts, and Mr. Reitz are quite able to hold their own with Mr. Hofmeyr, Dr. Te Water, and Mr. Schreiner. They have not forgotten the Cape Prime Minister's precipitate benediction alike of President Krüger's Bloemfontein scheme and of the seven years' franchise of the Volksraad proposals. They remember also how the "Hofmeyr compromise" was proclaimed in the Bond and the ministerial press as affording conclusive evidence of the "sweet reasonableness" of President Krüger and his Executive. And so they remark, "We are sorry not to be able to follow your advice; but we point out that you yourself let it be known that we had your whole approval, if we gave the present franchise as we were doing."[160] Here we have the kernel of the whole matter. A nine years', seven years', or a five years' franchise was all one to the Cape Nationalists, provided only that England was kept a little longer from claiming her position as paramount Power in South Africa. For these men knew, or thought they knew, that for England "a little longer" would be "too late."

Milner and Mr. Schreiner.

It was a greater achievement to have frustrated so subtle a combination, directed by the astute mind of Mr. Hofmeyr—the man who refused to allow his passions to interfere with his policy—than to have prevented the British Government from falling a victim to the coarse duplicity of President Krüger. Tireless effort and consummate statesmanship alone would not have accomplished this purpose. To these qualities Lord Milner added a personal charm, elusive, and yet irresistible; and it was this "union of intellect with fascination," of which Lord Rosebery had spoken,[161] that enabled him to transcend the infinite difficulty of his official relationship to Mr. Schreiner. Even so that relationship must have broken down under the strain of the negotiations and the war, had not Mr. Schreiner's complex political creed included the saving clause of allegiance to his sovereign. When once the British troops had begun to

land Mr. Schreiner accepted the new situation. No longer merely the parliamentary head of the Dutch party and the agent of the Bond, he realised also his responsibility as a minister of the Crown. None the less there were matters of the gravest concern in which, both before and after the ultimatum, the Prime Minister used all the constitutional means at his disposal to oppose Lord Milner. When, upon the arrival (August 5th) of the small additions to the Cape garrison ordered out in June, Lord Milner determined to draw the attention of the Ministry to the exposed condition of the Colony, he found that the Prime Minister's views differed completely from his own. A few days later he addressed a minute to his ministers on the subject of the defence of Kimberley and other military questions. From this time onwards, in almost daily battles, Mr. Schreiner resisted the plans of local military preparation which Lord Milner deemed necessary for the protection of the Colony. His object, as he said, was to keep the Cape Colony out of the struggle.[162] On Friday, September 8th, when in London the Cabinet Council was held at which it was decided to send out the 10,000 troops to reinforce the South African garrison, at Capetown Lord Milner was engaged in a long endeavour to persuade his Prime Minister that it was necessary to do something for the defence of Kimberley.[163] Up to the very day on which the Free State commandos crossed the border, Mr. Schreiner relied upon the definite pledge given him by President Steyn that the territory of the Cape Colony would not be invaded; and not until that day was he undeceived.

ner and Steyn.

> "I said to the President," he declared in the Cape Parliament a year later,[164] "that I would not believe he would invade south of the Orange River.[165] President Steyn's reply was, 'Can you give me a guarantee that no troops will come to the border?' Of course, I could give no such guarantee, and I did not then believe that, although such a guarantee could not be given, the Free State would invade British territory with the object of endeavouring to promote the establishment of one Republic in South Africa, as the Prime Minister[166] has said."

As the Boer invasion spread further into the Colony Mr. Schreiner receded proportionately from his original standpoint of neutrality. Indeed, three distinct phases in the Prime Minister's progress can be distinguished. In the first stage, which lasted until the actual invasion of the Colony by the Boer commandos, he used all his constitutional power to prevent the people of the Colony, British and Dutch alike, from being involved in the war: and it was only after a severe

struggle that Lord Milner prevailed upon him even to call out the Kimberley Volunteers on October 2nd, *i.e.*, a week before the Ultimatum. This, "the neutrality" stage, lasted up to the invasion. After the invasion came the second stage, in which Mr. Schreiner seems to have argued to himself in this manner: "As the Boers have invaded this colony, I, as Prime Minister, cannot refuse that the local forces should be called out to protect its territory." And so on October 16th, after Vryburg had gone over to the Boers, after Kimberley had been cut off, and the whole country from Kimberley to Orange River was in the hands of the enemy, he consented to the issue of a proclamation calling out 2,000 volunteers for garrison duty within the Colony.[167] But in making this tardy concession he was careful to point out to Lord Milner that the British cause would lose more than it would gain. "I warn you," he said in effect, "that it is not to your advantage; because you are the weaker party. In the Cape Colony more men will fight for the Boers than will fight for you." The third stage in Mr. Schreiner's conversion was reached when, in November, 1899, the invading Boers had advanced to the Tembuland border, in the extreme east of the Colony. Then Mr. Schreiner allowed the natives to be called out for the defence of their own territory. In making this final concession the Prime Minister yielded to the logic of facts in a matter concerning which he had previously offered a most stubborn resistance to the Governor's arguments.

ner and local forces.

For in the discussion of the measures urged by Lord Milner as necessary for the protection of the Colony, the question of arming the natives and coloured people had necessarily arisen. The Bastards in the west and the Tembus in the east were known to be eager to defend the Queen's country against invasion. Mr. Schreiner declared that to arm the natives was to do violence to the central principle upon which the maintenance of civilisation in South Africa was based—the principle that the black man must never be used to fight against the white. Lord Milner did not question the validity of this principle; but he maintained—and rightly, as Mr. Schreiner admitted subsequently by his action in the case of the Tembu frontier—that it could not be applied to the case in question. "If white men," he said, "will go and invade the territory of the blacks, then the blacks must be armed to repel the invasion."

The change which came over Mr. Schreiner's attitude, due, no doubt, partly to his gradual enlightenment as to the real aims of the republican nationalists, but also to the skilful use which Lord Milner made of that enlightenment, may be

traced in the following contrasts. Before the Boer invasion he refused to call out the local forces of the Colony even for purposes of defence;[168] afterwards he not only sanctioned the employment of these forces in the Colony, but allowed them to take part in Lord Roberts' advance upon Bloemfontein and Pretoria. Before the invading Boers, having already possessed themselves of the north-eastern districts of Cape Colony, began to threaten the purely native territories to the south, he would not hear of the natives being armed for their own protection. But when the Boers had actually reached the borders of Tembuland he consented. In his advice to the Cape Government, no less than in that which he gave to the Home Government, Lord Milner was shown to be in the right. In both cases he urged an effective preparation for war. In both the measures which he advised were ultimately taken; but taken only when they had lost all their power as a means of promoting peace, and half of their efficacy as a contribution to the rapid and successful prosecution of the war. In both cases Lord Milner was able, in the face of unparalleled obstacles, to secure just the minimum preparation for war which stood between the British Empire and overwhelming military disaster.

We have observed the position in Great Britain, and found that the root cause of the impotence of the Home Government was the nation's ignorance of South Africa. In the Cape Colony the evil was of a different order. Lord Milner, although High Commissioner for South Africa, had within the Colony only the strictly limited powers of a constitutional governor. The British population were keenly alive to the necessity for active preparations for the defence of their country; were, indeed, indignant at the refusal of the Schreiner Cabinet to allow the local forces to be called out: but the Dutch party was in office, the Bond was "loyal," Mr. Schreiner was a minister of the Crown, and the most that the Governor could do was to urge upon his ministers the measures upon the execution of which he had no power to insist.

years after.

The best comment upon this strange situation is that which is afforded by a passage in Lord Milner's speech in the House of Lords on February 26th, 1906. Seven years have gone by, and the great proconsul has returned to England. He is drawn from his much-needed rest by a sudden danger to the country which he has kept a part of the Empire. The Unionist Government has fallen, and a Liberal Government has been placed in power. He is warning this Government of the danger of a premature grant of responsible government to the Orange River

Colony.

> "What is going to happen under responsible government? It is more than probable, it is, humanly speaking, certain, that the persons to whom I have referred will form a large majority, if not almost the whole, of that first elected Parliament of the Orange River Colony to which, from the first hour of its existence, the whole legislative and executive power in that colony is to be entrusted. I do not suggest that they will begin by doing anything sinister. All forms will be duly observed; as why should they not be? It will be perfectly possible for them, with the most complete constitutional propriety, little by little to reverse all that has been done, and gradually to get rid of the British officials, the British teachers, the bulk of the British settlers, and any offensive British taint which may cling to the statute-book or the administration. I can quite understand that, from the point of view of what are known as the pro-Boers, such a result is eminently desirable. They thought the war was a crime, the annexation a blunder, and they think to-day that the sooner you can get back to the old state of things the better. I say I quite understand that view, though I do not suppose it is shared by His Majesty's ministers, or, at any rate, by all of them. What I cannot understand is how any human being, not being a pro-Boer, can regard with equanimity the prospect that the very hand which drafted the ultimatum of October, 1899,[169] may within a year be drafting 'Ministers' Minutes' for submission to a British Governor who will have virtually no option but to obey them. What will be the contents of those minutes, I wonder? As time goes on it may be a proposal for dispensing with English as an official language, or a proposal for the distribution to every country farmer of a military rifle and so many hundred cartridges, in view of threatened danger from the Basutos."

eminiscences".

So far Lord Milner had dealt with the Orange River Colony. Then he let his thoughts range back to these months of his great ordeal.

"I think I can see the Governor just hesitating a little to put his hand to such a document. In that case I think I can hear the instant low growl of menace from Press and platform and pulpit, the hints of the necessity of his recall, and the answering scream from the pro-Boer Press of Britain against the ruthless satrap, ignorant of constitutional usage and wholly misunderstanding his own position, who dared to trample upon the rights of a free people. I may be told, I know I shall be told, that such notions are the wild imaginings of a disordered brain, that these are theoretical possibilities having no relation to fact or to probability. *My Lords, they are not imaginings. They are just reminiscences.*

"I know what it is to be Governor of a self-governing colony, with the disaffected element in the ascendant. I was bitterly attacked for not being sufficiently submissive under the circumstances. Yet, even with the least submissive Governor, the position is so weak that strange things happen. It was under responsible government, and in the normal working of responsible government, that 1,000,000 cartridges were passed through Cape Colony, on the eve of the war, to arm the people who were just going to attack us, and that some necessary cannon were stopped from being sent to a defenceless border town,[170] which directly afterwards was besieged, and which, from want of these cannon, was nearly taken."[171]

Thus, six and a half years later, Lord Milner spoke of these months of *Sturm und Drang* in the calm and passionless atmosphere of the House of Lords.

From Bloemfontein to the ultimatum, the British flag in South Africa was stayed upon the "inflexible resolution" of one man. Two months later, when the army corps was all but landed, the English at the Cape gave speech. Then Sir David Gill's words at the St. Andrew's Day celebration of November 30th, 1890 came as a fresh breeze dispersing the miasmic humours of some low-lying, ill-drained plain.

he loyalists thought.

"In the history of the British colonies," he said, "no Governor has ever been placed in greater difficulties. In spite of a support of the most shamelessly feeble character, and in spite of a want of understanding at home, His Excellency has not only had to originate and carry out a policy, but he has had to instruct the whole nation in the dangers which threatened; and the means which were necessary to remove that danger.

"When His Excellency came to this colony he found it honeycombed with sedition. He found a canting loyalty, which aimed at the overthrow of British supremacy in this colony, and not only in this colony, but in South Africa as well.... There have been a mighty lot of misunderstandings in this country, a mighty lot of mealy-mouthed loyalty, that did not mean loyalty at all, and a mighty working to overthrow the power of Englishmen (and Scotchmen) in this country—first of all to bring them into contempt with the native population; secondly, to deprive them of all political power; and thirdly, to deprive them of all material power.... We have a minister who has gone to the front,[172] but it is a remarkable fact that since that minister has gone to the front the accessions of colonists to the ranks of the rebels have been tenfold greater than they were before he went. It is in the face of these innumerable difficulties that Sir Alfred Milner has carried out his work."

This is how it struck a distinguished man of science, and one who was qualified, moreover, by a residence at the Cape which dated back to the days of the Zulu War, to understand the full significance of what was going on around him.

In July and August, President Krüger was winning all along the line. The Home Government was kept harmless and inactive by the Franchise Bill; the Cape Government tied the hands of the High Commissioner; supplies of arms and ammunition were pouring in, the temper of the burghers in both republics was rising, foreign military officers and M. Léon of the Creuzot Works had arrived; in short, the military preparations of four years were consummated without let or hindrance. September was less exclusively favourable to the republican cause. On September 8th, as we have seen, the Salisbury Cabinet determined to send out the defensive forces for which Lord Milner had asked three months before. Sir William Butler had been recalled; and General Forestier-Walker did all in his power to carry out the measures urged, and in most cases actually devised, by Lord Milner for the effective employment of the few thousand Imperial troops at his disposal. On the 18th and 19th the Lancashire regiment was sent up-country from Capetown—half to garrison Kimberley, and half to hold the bridge that carried the main trunk line over the Orange River on its way northwards to Kimberley and then past the Transvaal border to Rhodesia. In doing this, however, Lord Milner was careful to point out to President Steyn that no menace was intended to the Free State, which, "in case of war with the Transvaal Her Majesty's Government hoped would remain neutral, and the neutrality of which would be most strictly respected." Such

excellent use was made by Lord Milner of the six weeks which elapsed between the recall of General Butler and the ultimatum (October 9th-11th), that the handful of regulars dotted down before the Free State border of the colony, and skilfully distributed at strategic points upon the railways, sufficed to keep President Steyn's commandos from penetrating south of the Orange River, until the army corps had begun to disembark at the Cape ports. On this, as on another occasion to be subsequently noted, it is difficult to withhold a tribute of admiration to the gifted personality of the man who, himself a civilian, could thus readily apply his unique knowledge of South African conditions to the uses of the art of war. At the same time, the promptitude and efficiency displayed by the Indian military authorities provided Natal, by October 8th, with a force that proved just—and only just—sufficient to prevent the Boer commandos from sweeping right through that colony down to Durban.

gotiations closed.

In the meantime the negotiations, having served their purpose, were being brought rapidly to a conclusion by the Pretoria Executive. On September 15th, as we have seen, the Republic notified its refusal to accept the terms offered in the British despatch of the 8th; and before that date, as we have also noted, some of the Transvaal commandos had been ordered to take up their positions on the Natal border. On the 22nd a meeting of the Cabinet was held in London, at which it was decided to mobilise the army corps—a measure advised by Lord Wolseley in June. At the same time Lord Milner was instructed by telegraph to communicate to the South African Republic a despatch[173] in which the British Government "absolutely denied and repudiated" the claim of the South African Republic to be a "sovereign international state," and informed the Pretoria Executive that its refusal to entertain the offer made on September 8th—

> "coming as it did at the end of nearly four months of protracted negotiations, themselves the climax of an agitation extending over a period of more than five years, made it useless to further pursue a discussion on the lines hitherto followed, and that Her Majesty's Government were now compelled to consider the situation afresh, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement"

of the questions at issue. The result of these deliberations was to be communicated to Lord Milner in a later despatch.

urghers mobilised.

This note of September 22nd, together with a second communication of the same date, in which Mr. Chamberlain warmly repudiated the charges of bad faith brought against Sir William Greene, reached the Pretoria Executive on the 25th, and on the same day it was known that a British force had entrained at Ladysmith for Glencoe. On the 26th intelligence of so serious a nature reached Lord Milner, that he telegraphed to warn the Home Government that the Transvaal and Free State were likely to take the initiative. According to Mr. Amery,[174] an ultimatum had been drafted upon receipt of the British note, and telegraphed on the following day to President Steyn for his approval. At Bloemfontein, however, the document was entirely recast by Mr. Fischer. Even so, in its amended form, it was ready on the 27th. On that day the Free State Raad, after six days of secret session, determined to join the sister Republic in declaring war upon Great Britain, and on the 28th the Transvaal commandos were mobilised. The ultimatum, according to the same authority, would have been delivered to Sir William Greene on Monday, October 2nd, had not deficiencies in the Boer transport and commissariat arrangements made it impossible for the burgher forces to advance immediately upon the British troops in Natal. At the last moment, also, President Steyn seems to have had some misgivings. On September 26th, together with the draft ultimatum from Pretoria, a suggestive telegram from Capetown, signed "Micaiah," and bidding him "Read chapter xxii. 1st Book of Kings, and accept warning," had reached him;[175] and a few days later he received, through Mr. Fischer, a powerful appeal for peace from Sir Henry de Villiers.

However this may be, the few administrative acts that remained to be taken were quickly accomplished in both Republics. In the Transvaal the remnant of the British population was already in flight; the law courts were suspended; the control of the railways was assumed by the Government and, in order to protect colonial recruits from the legal penalties attached to rebellion, on September 29th the Executive was empowered by the Volksraad to confer citizen rights on all aliens serving in the forces of the Republic. Not content with their barbarous expulsion of the British population, the Governments of both Republics for a week before the expiry of the ultimatum treated those of them who still remained as though a state of war had already been in existence. During these last days telegrams and letters praying for protection against some act of violence or spoliation were constantly arriving at Government House. But what could the High Commissioner do? The Army Corps was 6,000 miles away; the 10,000

defensive troops were most of them still on the water. The Free State, in Mr. Fischer's words, "did not recognise international law, and claimed to commandeer all persons whatsoever" under its own. In the Transvaal, Mr. Reitz (after consultation with Mr. Smuts) was coolly replying to the British Agent's protest against the seizure of the property of British subjects, including £150,000 worth of bar gold, that "the property of private individuals of whatever nationality could be, and was being, commandeered to the value of £15 a head." [176] On October 2nd the Transvaal Raads adjourned, and on the same day President Steyn informed the High Commissioner that the Free State burghers had been summoned for commando service. An interchange of telegrams then ensued, of which one, despatched on October 6th, is important as showing how earnestly Lord Milner seconded Mr. Chamberlain's endeavour to keep the door open for a peaceful settlement up to the last moment.

ords.

> "I have the honour," he said, "to acknowledge Your Honour's long telegram of yesterday afternoon [the 5th], the substance of which I have communicated to Her Majesty's Government. There is, I think, a conclusive reply to Your Honour's accusation against the policy of Her Majesty's Government, but no good purpose would be served by recrimination. The present position is that burgher forces are assembled in very large numbers in immediate proximity to the frontiers of Natal, while the British troops occupy certain defensive positions well within those borders. The question is whether the burgher forces will invade British territory, thus closing the door to any possibility of a pacific solution. I cannot believe that the South African Republic will take such aggressive action, or that Your Honour would countenance such a course, which there is nothing to justify. Prolonged negotiations have hitherto failed to bring about a satisfactory understanding, and no doubt such understanding is more difficult than ever to-day, after the expulsion of British subjects with great loss and suffering; but until the threatened act of aggression is committed I shall not despair of peace, and I feel sure that any reasonable proposal, from whatever quarter proceeding, would be favourably considered by Her Majesty's Government if it offered an immediate termination of present tension and a prospect of permanent tranquillity."[177]

With this—practically the final communication of the British Government—it is instructive to compare the "last words" of the two other protagonists. The

Pretoria Executive, true to its policy of playing for time, sends through Mr. Reitz two long and argumentative replies to the British despatches of July 27th (the Joint Commission), and May 10th (Mr. Chamberlain's reply to the petition to the Queen). The Afrikander nationalists having failed to "mediate" in Pretoria and Bloemfontein, consoled themselves with a final effort in the shape of a direct appeal to the Queen. In a petition signed by the fifty-eight Afrikander members of both Houses of the Cape Parliament, including, of course, the members of the Schreiner Cabinet, they declare their earnest belief that the South African Republic "is fully awakened to the wisdom and discretion of making liberal provision for the representation of the Uitlanders," and urge Her Majesty's Government to appoint a Joint Commission—a proposal to which the British Government had declared that it was impossible to return. The effect of this somewhat half-hearted effort was, however, on this occasion appreciably diminished by the fact that the nationalist petition was accompanied by a resolution presented by fifty-three Progressive members of the Cape Parliament, embodying their entire disapproval of the opinion put forward by the petitioners, and containing the assurance that Her Majesty's Government might rely upon their strongest support.

timatum delivered.

The ultimatum was delivered to Sir William Greene on the afternoon of Monday, October 9th, and forthwith telegraphed to the High Commissioner at Capetown. Although it was a week behind time at Pretoria, its arrival was somewhat unexpected at Government House. Saturday and Sunday had been days of quite unusual calm. The Secretary, whose business it was to decode the official telegrams, commenced his task with but languid interest. He had decoded so many apparently unnecessary and inconclusive despatches of late. At first this seemed very much like the others. But, as he worked on, he came upon words that startled him to a sudden attention:

"This Government ... in the interest not only of this Republic, but also of all South Africa,... feels itself called upon and obliged ... to request Her Majesty's Government to give it the assurance:

"(*a*) That all points of mutual difference shall be regulated by the friendly course of arbitration, or by whatever amicable way may be agreed upon by this Government with Her Majesty's Government.

"(*b*) That the troops on the borders of this Republic shall be instantly

withdrawn.

"(*c*) That all reinforcements of troops which have arrived in South Africa since June 1st, 1899, shall be removed from South Africa within a reasonable time, to be agreed upon with this Government, and with a mutual assurance and guarantee upon the part of this Government that no attack upon or hostilities against any portion of the possessions of the British Government shall be made by the Republic during further negotiations within a period of time to be subsequently agreed upon between the Governments, and this Government will, on compliance therewith, be prepared to withdraw the armed burghers of this Republic from the borders.

"(*d*) That Her Majesty's troops which are now on the high seas shall not be landed in any part of South Africa.

"This Government must press for an immediate and affirmative answer to these four questions, and earnestly requests Her Majesty's Government to return such an answer before or upon Wednesday, October 11th, 1899, not later than five o'clock p.m., and it desires further to add that, in the event of unexpectedly no satisfactory answer being received by it within that interval, it will with great regret be compelled to regard the action of Her Majesty's Government as a formal declaration of war, and will not hold itself responsible for the consequences thereof, and that in the event of any further movements of troops taking place within the above-mentioned time in the nearer directions of our borders, the Government will be compelled to regard that also as a formal declaration of war.

"I have, etc.,

"F. W. Reitz, *State Secretary*."[178]

ɔeal to Afrikanders.

The war had come; and come in the almost incredible form of a naked assertion of the intention of the South African Republic to oust Great Britain from its position of paramount Power in South Africa. And the declaration of war,[179] published two days later by President Steyn, was no less definite. It referred to Great Britain's "unfounded claim to paramountcy for the whole of South Africa, and thus also over this State," and exhorted the burghers of the Free State to "stand up as one man against the oppressor and violator of right."

Even greater frankness characterised the appeal to "Free Staters and Brother Afrikanders" issued by Mr. Reitz. In this document[180] not only was the entire Dutch population of South Africa invited to rid themselves, by force of arms, of British supremacy, but the statement of the Boer case took the form of an impeachment that covered the whole period of British administration. Great Britain—

"has, ever since the birth of our nation, been the oppressor of the Afrikander and the native alike.

"From Slagter's Nek to Laing's Nek, from the Pretoria Convention to the Bloemfontein Conference—they have ever been the treaty-breakers and robbers. The diamond fields of Kimberley and the beautiful land of Natal were robbed from us, and now they want the gold-fields of the Witwatersrand.

"Where is Waterboer to-day? He who had to be defended against the Free State is to-day without an inch of ground. Where lies Lobengula in his unknown grave to-day, and what fillibusters and fortune-hunters are possessors of his country?

"Where are the native chiefs of Bechuanaland now, and who owns their land?

"Read the history of South Africa, and ask yourselves: Has the British Government been a blessing or a curse to this sub-continent?

"Brother Afrikanders! I repeat, the day is at hand on which great deeds are expected of us. WAR has broken out. What is it to be? A wasted and enslaved South Africa, or—a Free, United South Africa?

"Come, let us stand shoulder to shoulder and do our holy duty! The Lord of Hosts will be our Leader.

"Be of good cheer.

"F. W. Reitz."

That Monday night, besides repeating the ultimatum to the Home Government, Lord Milner telegraphed to warn the British authorities in Natal, Rhodesia, Basutoland, and the frontier towns.

The ultimatum reached the Colonial Office at 6.45 a.m. on Tuesday. The reply, which was cabled to Lord Milner at 10.45 p.m. on the same day, was not unworthy of the occasion:

itish reply.

> "Her Majesty's Government have received with great regret the peremptory demands of the Government of the South African Republic. You will inform the Government of the South African Republic, in reply, that the conditions demanded by the South African Republic are such as Her Majesty's Government deem it impossible to discuss."[181]

The High Commissioner was further desired to instruct Sir William Greene, in delivering the British reply, to ask for his passports.[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER VII

THE FALL OF THE REPUBLICS

With the presentation of the Boer ultimatum the first and most difficult part of Lord Milner's task was accomplished. The actual pretensions of President Krüger and his republican confederates in the Free State and the Cape Colony were declared in a manner that could not fail to make them understood by the British people at home. The nationalists were unmasked. To what assurance of victory their military preparations had led them may be seen from the story of Mr. Amery's meeting with Mr. Reitz, two days before October 2nd, the Monday originally fixed for the delivery of the ultimatum. On the afternoon of this day, September 30th, Mr. Amery was walking with the State Secretary in Pretoria. Mr. Reitz, he tells us,[182] "suddenly turned round and said, 'Have you read *Treasure Island*? 'Yes.' 'Then you may remember the passage where they "tip the black spot" to Long John Silver?' 'Yes.' 'Well, I expect it will fall to my lot on Monday to "tip the black spot" to Long John Greene.' And hereupon the State Secretary cheerily detailed to his astounded listener the terms of the ultimatum, compliance with which might yet save the British Empire from war."

of the ultimatum.

Very different was the position at Capetown. Here there was no room either for levity or the insolence of anticipated triumph. Knowing what Lord Milner did—what he, of all men, had most cause to know—both of our unreadiness, and of the preparedness and confidence of the enemy, he could scarcely have looked forward to the future without the very gravest apprehension. None the less the ultimatum brought with it a certain sense of relief. The negotiations, which had degenerated long since into a diplomatic farce, were terminated. The situation had become once more clear. It has been the duty of few men to bear so heavy and so prolonged a burden of responsibility as that from which Lord Milner was thus set free. The danger that the Home Government, in its earnest desire for peace, might accept a settlement that would leave undecided the central issue of Boer or British supremacy in South Africa had never been wholly absent from his mind during the harassing negotiations that succeeded the Conference. Up to the very end there had been a haunting dread lest, in spite of his ceaseless vigilance and unstinted toil, a manifestation of British loyalty that would never be repeated should be coldly discouraged, and the nationalist movement allowed to proceed unchecked, until every colonist of British blood had surrendered the hope of remaining a citizen of the Empire for the degrading necessity of securing for himself and his children a tolerable position in the United States of South Africa by a timely alliance with the more progressive Dutch. From the presence of this danger Lord Milner was now relieved, since, as he instantly foresaw, the whip-lash of this frank appeal to force brought conviction where marshalled arguments were powerless to move. He had done what the religious enthusiasm of Livingstone, the political sagacity of Grey, the splendid devotion and prescience of Frere, and the Elizabethan statecraft of Rhodes, had failed to do. *He had made the Boer speak out.*

England was far from knowing all that these Boer aspirations meant, or the progress already achieved in the direction of their realisation. But this ignorance made the demands of the ultimatum seem the more insolent. To Mr. Balfour it was as though President Krüger had gone mad. But madness or insolence, the effect was the same. With the mass of the nation all hesitation, all balancing of arguments, were at an end. The one thing that was perceived was that any further attempt to treat with a people so minded would be an admission to the world that British supremacy had disappeared from South Africa. On this point, outside the narrow influence of a few professional partisans and peace-makers, there had never been any doubt: the only question was whether British supremacy was, or was not, in danger. The Boer challenge having resolved this question, the mind of the nation was made up. The army, as the instrument of its will, was called

upon to give effect to its decision.

xious situation.

Two years and eight months elapsed between the expiration of the two days' grace allowed by the ultimatum and the surrender of Vereeniging. During the first twelve months of this period Lord Milner's initiative, though his position remained arduous, anxious, and responsible, and his activity unceasing, was necessarily subordinated to that of the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in South Africa. But during the second period of the war—that is to say, from November 29th, 1900, when Lord Kitchener succeeded Lord Roberts—the constructive statesmanship of the High Commissioner was called forth in an increasing degree as the area secured for peaceable occupation became widened, and the problems involved in the settlement and future administration of the new colonies emerged into increasing prominence and importance. But even during the first period, when the task of the army was the comparatively simple one of overcoming the organised resistance of the Republics and subduing the rebellion in the Cape Colony, Lord Milner's unshaken confidence and perfect mastery of South African conditions proved of inestimable value.

s and unpreparedness.

Five years later he described himself as an "incorrigible optimist." Optimist or not, at this time he harboured no illusions. He knew that the postponement or neglect of military preparations had left thousands of loyal subjects of the Crown in a position of entire defencelessness, and made rebellion easy for thousands of the disaffected Dutch. The first days of war, like the last days of peace, were punctuated by appeals for the troops that should have been in South Africa, but were in England; or for guns, rifles, and ammunition which Mr. Schreiner had kept idle in the colonial armouries until it was too late. On Friday, October 13th, he held a long and anxious consultation over the wires with Colonel Kekewich at Kimberley. A thousand rifles were wanted, and wanted instantly. The Cape Artillery 15-pounders, reluctantly conceded at the last moment by Mr. Schreiner, had not come. They never came, for the next day Kimberley was cut off, and by Sunday morning Capetown had lost count of the border districts from Kimberley southward to Orange River. On this Friday the first definite piece of bad news reached the High Commissioner. An armoured train, trying to run back to Mafeking, had been captured by the Boers. In proportion as Lord Milner had urged the need of preparation for war, so now he was the first to realise how grave would be the results of unpreparedness. Fortunately, his comments upon

the events of these first three months of the war have been preserved; and the record of what was passing in his mind from day to day reveals a burden of anxiety that contrasts sharply with the easy tolerance with which the first bad news was received in England. On Wednesday, the 18th, a week after the ultimatum had expired, he wrote of Natal: "We are being slowly surrounded, and our force unwisely split up." He was gravely concerned for the safety of Kimberley, and he "doubted the ability of Mafeking to hold out." On November 1st, the day after General Buller had landed at Capetown, he wrote: "Things are going from bad to worse to-day. In Natal the Orange Free State Boers are making a move on Colenso, while in the Colony they have crossed in force at Bethulie; and there is also some suspicion of an attack on the line between Orange River bridge and De Aar." On November 9th, the arrival of the *Rosslyn Castle*, the first of the Army Corps transports, brought a gleam of brightness. She was a little late, as she had been warned to go out of her course after leaving Las Palmas, to avoid a suspicious vessel. But Methuen's first engagements seemed to him to be Pyrrhic victories. It was "the old story of charging positions from which the enemy simply clears, after having shot a lot of our men." On December 5th "alarming rumours came pouring in from all over the Colony," and two days later Lord Milner telegraphed to warn the Secretary of State that the war was now aggravated by rebellion. On Saturday, December 16th, the day after Colenso, he wrote: "This has been a week of disasters, to-day being the worst of all. News was received this morning that Buller had been severely defeated yesterday in attempting to force the passage of the Tugela."

It was a time when he was receiving the panic outcry for the immediate relief of Kimberley, in which Rhodes vented his rage at the military impotence to which for the moment England had allowed herself to be reduced in South Africa; when his councils with his ministers were "gloomy functions," and his Prime Minister's arguments against the measures which he deemed necessary for the defence of the Colony and the protection of the native territories had become not merely wearisome but embittered. His main resource lay in his intense activity. It was his custom, during this critical period, to begin the day by seeing Mr. Eliot and Mr. Price, the heads of the railways, and Mr. French, the Postmaster-General. In this way he received information of every movement of any significance that had occurred within the range of the railway and post-office systems during the preceding twenty-four hours—information which was of the highest utility both to him and to the military authorities. Then followed an endless succession of visitors, from the Prime Minister to the most recent newspaper correspondent out from home, and a long afternoon and evening of

concentrated and unbroken labour upon despatches, proclamations, minutes, and other official documents. A short ride or walk was sometimes interpolated, but his days were a dead round of continuous occupation. "One day is so like another—crowded with work; all hateful, but with no very special feature," he wrote. But of another he says: "Worked very hard all day; the usual interviews. It was very difficult to take one's mind off the absorbing subject of the ill success of our military operations."

Mr. Balfour called the insolence of the ultimatum "madness." But Lord Milner knew that it was no madness, but an assured belief in victory; a confidence founded upon long years of earnest preparation for war; upon the blood-ties of the most tenacious of European peoples; upon a Nature that spread her wings over the rough children of the veld and menaced their enemies with the heat and glamour of her sun, with famine and drought and weariness, with all the hidden dangers that lurked in her glittering plains and rock-strewn uplands.

s of the war.

It is not proposed to give any detailed account of the military operations which led, first, to the annexation of the Boer Republics, and then to the actual disarmament of the entire Dutch population of South Africa. The most that the plan of this work permits of is to present the broad outlines of the war in such a manner that the several phases of the military conflict may be seen in true perspective, and the relationship between them and the administrative efforts of Lord Milner be correctly indicated. But it will not be found inconsistent with this restricted treatment to refer to certain conspicuous features of the war upon which contemporary discussion has chiefly centred, and in respect of which opinions have been pronounced that do not seem likely to harmonise in all cases with the results of a more mature judgment and a less interested inquiry.

The test by which the success or failure of any given military effort is to be measured is, of course, the test of results. But the application of this test must not be embarrassed by the assumption, which seems to have vitiated so much otherwise admirable criticism on the conduct of the war in South Africa, that every action in which a properly equipped and wisely directed force is engaged must necessarily be successful: or that, if it be not successful, it follows, as a matter of course, that the officer in command, or one of his subordinates, must have committed some open and ascertainable violation of the principles of military science. So far is this from being the case, that military history is full of

examples in which the highest merit and resolution of a commander have been nullified or cheated by the wanton interferences of physical nature, or by acts on the part of subordinates admittedly beyond the control of any human skill or foresight.[183]

of operations.

Any just appreciation of the events of the first year of the war must be based upon a clear understanding of the degree in which the military action of the Salisbury Cabinet fell short of the advice given by Lord Milner, and, in an equal degree by Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief. We have noticed already[184] the grave inadequacy of the measures of preparation for war carried out in South Africa between the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference and the recall of General Butler. On June 1st the South African garrison consisted of 4,462 men in Cape Colony, and 5,827 men in Natal; or 10,289 men with 24 field-guns in all.[185] On August 2nd the Government decided to send 2,000 additional troops to Natal, and the Indian Government was warned, a little later, that certain troops might be required for service in South Africa. In spite of Lord Milner's urgent representations of the danger of leaving the colonies unprotected, no considerable body of troops, as we have seen, was ordered out, until the diplomatic situation had become seriously aggravated by the definite failure of the negotiations initiated by Sir William Greene through Mr. Smuts.

Of the 10,000 men despatched after the Cabinet meeting of September 8th, more than half were requisitioned from the Indian Army, while the remainder were drawn mainly from the Mediterranean garrisons.

Thus, by the beginning of the second week in October there were 22,104 British troops in South Africa, of whom 7,400 were at the Cape and 14,704 in Natal, and 60 field-guns.[186] But the Army Corps, the "striking force," was still in England. In pursuance of its determination to postpone to the last moment any action that could be represented as an attempt to force a war upon the Boers, the British Government had refrained from giving orders for the mobilisation of the offensive force until October 7th, or a fortnight after the Cabinet meeting of September 22nd, when its determination to "formulate its own proposals" was communicated to the Transvaal Government.[187] It was then calculated that three months must elapse before this force could be equipped, transported, and placed in the field in South Africa.

itical gain.

Before recording the disastrous effects of the postponement of effective military preparations, from June to September, it remains to consider whether any political gains, sufficient to compensate for the loss of military strength, were secured. The policy of relying upon Afrikander advice failed; since, as we have seen, the admonitions of Sir Henry de Villiers and Mr. Hofmeyr came too late to turn President Krüger from an obduracy founded upon long years of military preparation. The over-sea British had made up their minds in June; and nothing occurred in the subsequent negotiations to deepen their conviction of the essential justice of the British cause. India was unmoved; indeed, the Hindu masses were slightly sympathetic, while the feudatory princes came forward with offers of men and treasure to the Government of the Queen-Empress. The attitude of the respective governments of France, Germany, and Russia was correct. But what secured this result was not any perception of the moderation of the British demands, or any recognition of the genuine reluctance of the British Government to make war, but the sight of the British Navy everywhere holding the seas, the rapidity and ease with which large bodies of troops were transported from every quarter of the British world, and the manner in which each reverse was met by a display of new and unexpected reserves of military strength.

If the British Government thought that it would win the peoples of Continental Europe to its side by a show of hesitation to make war upon a weak state, the sequel proved that it had gravely misunderstood the conditions under which international respect is produced. Hatred of England rose in inverse ratio to the evidence of the justness of her cause. When the Boers were victorious, or seemed to be most capable of defying the efforts of the largest fighting force that Great Britain had ever put into the field; when, that is to say, it was most clearly demonstrated that British supremacy in South Africa could only have been maintained by force of arms against the formidable rival which had risen against it, then the wave of popular hatred surged highest. When the British arms prospered, the clamour sank; but only to rise again until it was finally allayed by the knowledge that the Boer resistance was at an end, and that the British Empire had emerged from the conflict a stronger and more united power.

le of the United States.

The case of the United States was somewhat different. Here was an industrial nation like our own; and one, moreover, whose people were qualified alike by

constitutional and legal tradition, habits of thought, and identity of language, to have discerned the reality of the reluctance displayed by the British Government to employ force until every resource of diplomacy and every device of statecraft had been exhausted, and to have drawn the conclusion that the power which drove the Government into war was a sense of duty, and not greed of territory. Moreover, there was at this time, at any rate among the more cultivated classes, a feeling of gratitude for the action of Great Britain in preventing European intervention during the Spanish-American war, and a genuine desire, on that ground alone, to show sympathy with the English people in the conflict in which they had become involved. In these circumstances it is somewhat strange that public opinion in the United States was unmistakably inclined to favour the Boers during almost the entire period of the war. It is perfectly true that the United States Government was consistently friendly; but this did not alter the fact that the dominant note in nearly all public expressions of the sentiment of the United States' people was one of sympathy with the Boer, and of hostility to the British cause. It might have been thought that, just as most Englishmen, in the case of the conflict between the United States and Spain, were prepared to assume that a nation imbued with the traditions and principles of the Anglo-Saxon race would not have undertaken to enforce its will upon a weak Power without having convinced itself first of the justice of its cause, so the Americans would have entertained an equally favourable presumption in respect of the people of Great Britain. That this was not done is due to a cause which is as significant as it is well ascertained. Making all allowance for the prejudice against England inevitably aroused in the minds of the less thoughtful members of a great democratic community, by the fact that her opponent was both a weak state and a republic, this very general refusal to accept the political morality of the English people as a guarantee of the justice of their action in South Africa suggests the presence of another and more specific influence. The explanation given by Americans is that the English nation was itself divided upon the question of the morality of the South African War—or, at any rate, that the public utterances that reached the United States were such as to convey this impression. That being so, they ask, Can you blame us for hesitating to adopt what was at the most, as we understood it, the opinion of a majority? In support of this view they point to the public utterances, before and after the war had broken out, of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. Bryce. Of these, the former was the official head of the Liberal Party, while the two latter were men whose literary achievements had made their names and personalities both familiar and respected in the United States. If the opinions of these public men were on this occasion wholly unrepresentative, why, they ask,

were their speeches and articles unrefuted; or, at any rate, allowed to go forth to the world uncondemned by any clear and authoritative manifestation of the dissent and displeasure of their countrymen?

...us declarations.

That declarations such as these did in fact produce injurious effects directly calculable in human lives, in money, and in the waste and devastation of war, is a fact which will claim the attention of the reader on a subsequent occasion. They came not merely from the mouths of the Irish Nationalists, and of advanced Radicals such as Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr. John Burns, but from men of wider repute. That public opinion should have allowed responsible Englishmen in time of war to "speak and write as though they belonged to the enemy,"—whether due to an exaggerated regard for our traditional freedom of speech, or to a failure to recognise that the altered conditions produced by the extension and perfection of telegraphic communication, and the development of the Press throughout the civilised world, gave such utterances a value in international relations altogether different from that possessed (say) by similar utterances on the part of the anti-nationalists during the Napoleonic wars—is a circumstance that merits the most serious consideration. No one will deny that this unpatriotic form of opposition, so long as it exists, constitutes an ever-recurring danger to the most vital interests of the community. The ultimate remedy lies in the creation of a representative council of the Empire, and the consequent separation of questions of inter-imperial and foreign policy from the local and irrelevant issues of party politics. Until this is done, it remains to establish a mutual understanding under which such questions would be recognised as being outside the sphere of party recrimination; and for this purpose it is necessary to create a force of public opinion strong enough to compel the observance of this understanding; or, failing this, to visit its non-observance with political penalties commensurate to the injury inflicted.

...rmy Corps absorbed.

The conflict which followed the expiration of the forty-eight hours allowed by the Boer ultimatum is in more than one respect the most extraordinary in the annals of war. The existence of the cable and telegraph made instant and continuous communication possible between the army in the field and the nation at home. Public opinion, informed by the daily records furnished by the Press, became a factor in determining the conduct of the war. Nor is it strange that a civilian population, separated by 6,000 miles from the theatre of operations,

should have proved an injurious counsellor. The army was ordered to conquer a people, but forbidden to employ the methods by which alone it has been hitherto held that conquest is attainable. But no influence exercised upon the course of the war by false humanitarianism or political partisanship produced any results comparable to the original injury inflicted upon the British Army by the ignorance and irresolution displayed by the nation. The postponement of effective military preparations by the Home Government until the necessity for these preparations had become so plain that no effort of the Opposition could embarrass its action, was the *fons et origo* of all subsequent disaster. The failure to mobilise the Army Corps in June had placed the Army in a position of disadvantage at the outbreak of the war, from which it never wholly recovered. The original striking force—the Army Corps—was not employed in its proper function, but absorbed, upon its arrival in South Africa, in the task of supporting the defensive forces. Twenty-two thousand men, with an Army Corps advancing upon Bloemfontein or Pretoria, would have sufficed to repel attacks upon the colonial frontiers, and to check rebellion in the Cape Colony. But twenty-two thousand men defending one thousand miles of frontier from a mobile force nearly twice as numerous with the Army Corps six thousand miles away in England, was a very different thing. Yet this was the situation in which the nation, by withholding from the Government the support necessary to enable it to give effect to the advice of Lord Wolseley, had elected to place the British Army. The plan of mobilisation, long prepared and complete in all particulars, worked with perfect success. Twenty Companies of the Army Service Corps sailed on October 6th, a day before the actual mobilisation order was issued. The rest of the offensive force—one Cavalry Division, one Army Corps, and eight battalions of lines of communication troops—began to be embarked on October 20th, and by November 17th the long succession of transports, bearing the whole of the men, horses, and guns of which it was composed (with the exception of one cavalry regiment detained by horse sickness), had sailed for South Africa. This was Lord Wolseley's task, and it was promptly and efficiently performed. The War Office was not inefficient; but the refusal to mobilise in June had thrown the whole scheme of the offensive and defensive campaign out of gear.

ıl Buller.

With the evidence of the War Commission before us, it is impossible to divest General Buller of a share of responsibility for the disastrous conditions under which the war was commenced. He was nominated to the South African command in June, and he was consulted upon the strength and composition of

the force which was to be employed. On July 7th Lord Wolseley asked the Government, apart from the immediate mobilisation of the Army Corps which he still urged, to "consider whether we should not at a very early date send one Infantry Division and one Cavalry Brigade—say 10,000 men—to South Africa," adding that he had "no doubt as to the present necessity of strengthening our military position." But ten days later the despatch of this reinforcement of 10,000 men was "not considered urgent." Since, according to Lord Wolseley's minute of the proceedings of the meeting held at the War Office on July 18th, 1899, General Buller used the weight of his authority to support General Butler's opposition to Lord Milner's urgent request for immediate reinforcements. In reply to a question as to the desirability of strengthening the South African garrisons, he said on this occasion, that—

> "he had complete confidence in Butler's ability and forethought, and that as long as clever men like Butler and Symons on the spot did not say there was danger, he saw no necessity for sending out any troops in advance of the Army Corps to strengthen our position against any possible attack by the Boers on our frontiers."

This memorandum, Lord Wolseley added, contained not the "exact words," but the "exact meaning" of what he said.[188] It was the precise opposite of the view which Lord Milner had laid before the Home Government.[189] Indeed the degree in which General Buller had misconceived the entire military situation in South Africa became at once apparent when he reached Capetown. He had come out to South Africa with the not unnatural idea that he was to command a definite British army, which was to engage a definite Boer army. When he had learnt from Lord Milner and others what the situation actually was, he is said to have gathered up his new impressions in the remark: "It seems to me that I have got to conquer the whole of South Africa." General Buller even appears to have shared the common belief of his fellow-countrymen at home that the Cape was a British colony not only in name but in fact. Nor was he prepared to abandon this belief all at once. He suggested to the High Commissioner that it would be possible to form local defence forces out of the Dutch farmers in the Colony. Lord Milner said that this was totally impracticable; but he added that he would consult Mr. Schreiner on the matter. It is needless to say, however, that the Prime Minister deprecated the proposal in the most emphatic terms.[190]

The War Office scheme was designed to provide a defensive force to hold the colonies, and an offensive force to invade the Republics. In the three months that

elapsed before this scheme was put into effect, the conditions upon which it was based had changed completely. On the day that Buller reached Capetown (October 31st) White, with almost the whole of the Natal defensive force, was shut up in Ladysmith by Joubert. When at length the last units of the Army Corps were landed (December 4th) in South Africa, Buller was at Maritzburg, organising a force for the relief of White; and practically the entire offensive force had been broken up to disengage the defensive forces, or save them from destruction. Buller himself had 14,000 of the Army Corps in Natal, and more were to follow; Methuen was taking 8,000 men for the relief of Kimberley; and the balance were being pushed up to strengthen the original defensive forces that were holding the railways immediately South of the Orange Free State border, and checking the rebellion in the eastern districts of the Cape Colony. Gatacre's defeat at Stormberg (December 10th), Methuen's defeat at Magersfontein (December 11th), and Buller's defeat at Colenso (December 15th) together provided ample evidence of the fact that, however desirable it might be to assume the offensive, a purely defensive *rôle* must for the time be assigned to the troops then in South Africa; and that this state of affairs must continue until the arrival of very considerable reinforcements.

riking force necessary.

The perception of this fact caused the Government to appoint (December 17th) Lord Roberts, with Lord Kitchener as his Chief-of-Staff, to the South African command, and to prepare and despatch an entirely new striking force. It was this new force and not the original Army Corps that "marched to Pretoria," and struck the successive blows which enabled Lord Roberts to report to the Secretary of State for War (November 15th, 1900) that; "with the occupation of Komati Poort, and the dispersal of Commandant-General Louis Botha's army, the organised resistance of the two Republics might be said to have ceased." It was not, therefore, until Lord Roberts was able to march from Modder River Station (February 11th, 1900), after a month spent at the Cape in reorganising the transport and other preparations essential to the success of an army destined to advance for many hundreds of miles through a hostile country, that the British Army in South Africa was in the position in which the acceptance of Lord Wolseley's advice, given in June and July, 1899, would have put it upon the outbreak of war. Nor was the force with which Lord Roberts then advanced, 36,000 men, more numerous than the striking force which would have been provided, by Lord Wolseley's scheme, had it been carried out in the manner in which he desired. For the business with which the scattered Army Corps was

occupied when Lord Roberts arrived at Capetown (January 10th, 1900)—the relief of Ladysmith and Kimberley, and the defence of the eastern districts of the Cape Colony from the Free State commandos and the colonial rebels—was work directly caused by the absence of the Army Corps from South Africa when the war broke out. It is not too much to say that the whole of the serious losses incurred by the British forces in South Africa from the commencement of the war up to the date of Lord Roberts's advance into the Free State territory, would have been avoided if the state of public opinion had permitted the Salisbury Cabinet in June to make military preparations commensurate with the gravity of the situation as disclosed by Lord Milner.

gular army exhausted.

In forming an estimate of the performance of the British Army in South Africa, from a military point of view, it is necessary to remember the grave initial disadvantage in which it was placed; and that this initial disadvantage was due, not to the War Office, not to the Cabinet, but to the nation itself. The manner in which the losses thus caused were repaired is significant and instructive. By the end of the year (1899), the troops composing three divisions in excess of the Army Corps were either landed in South Africa or under orders to proceed to the seat of war. In addition to the 22,000 defensive troops in South Africa on October 11th, the War Office had supplied, not merely the 47,000 men of the Army Corps, but 85,000 men in all. But, having done this, it had practically reached the limit of troops available in the regular army for over-sea operations. By April, 1900, all the reserves had been used up. There remained, it is true, 103,023 "effectives" of all ranks of the regular army in the United Kingdom on April 1st; but this total was composed of 37,333 "immature" troops; of the recruits who had joined since October 1st, 1899; of reservists unfit for foreign service; and of sick and wounded sent home from South Africa: that is to say, of men who, for one reason or another, were all alike unfit for service abroad.[191] Further drafts might have been made upon the British regulars in India; but this course was held to be imprudent. In plain words, the exhaustion of the regular army compelled the Government to avail itself more fully of the offers of military aid which had reached it from the colonies, and to utilise the militia and volunteer forces. On December 18th, 1899, the announcement was made that the War Office would allow twelve militia battalions to volunteer for service abroad, and that a considerable force of yeomanry and a contingent of picked men from the volunteers would be accepted. This appeal to the latent military resources of the Empire met with a ready and ample response.

Throughout the whole course of the war the United Kingdom sent 45,566 militia, 19,856 volunteers, and 35,520 yeomanry, with 7,273 South African Constabulary, and 833 Scottish Horse; the over-sea colonies (including 305 volunteers from India) provided 30,633 men;[192] while of the small British population in South Africa no less than the astonishing total of 46,858 took part in the war.[193] In all some 200,000 men—militia, volunteers, and irregulars—came forward to supplement the regular army.

ary forces utilised.

It was mainly from the auxiliary forces and the colonial contingents, and not from the regular army, that the reinforcements were supplied which repaired the critical losses of the defensive campaign, and enabled the new striking force to be organised. Nor can it be said that the British Government failed to do all that was possible to retrieve its original error, when once the defeats inflicted by the Boer forces had awakened it to a knowledge of the real situation in South Africa. In his despatch of February 6th, 1900, Lord Roberts was able to report that, on January 31st, there was an effective fighting force of nearly 40,000 men in Natal and another of 60,000 in the Cape Colony. Mr. Chamberlain put the case for the Government at its highest in speaking at Birmingham on May 11th, 1900:

> "Supposing that twelve months ago any man had said in public that this country would be able to send out from its own shores and from its own citizens an army of more than 150,000 men, fully equipped, and that it would be joined by another force of more than 30,000 men, voluntarily offered by our self-governing colonies ... if he had said that this army, together numbering 200,000 men, or thereabouts, could have been provided with the best commissariat, with the most admirable medical appliances and stores that had ever accompanied an army—if he could have said that at the same time there would have remained behind in this country something like half a million of men, who although they may not be equal man to man to the regulars and best-drilled armies, are nevertheless capable of bearing arms to some purpose—if he had said all this, he would have been laughed to scorn."

Moreover, the army was successful. The work which it was required to do was done. In order to realise the merit of its success two circumstances must be borne in mind: first, the enormous area of South Africa, and, second, the fact that practically the whole of this area, if we except the few considerable towns, was

not only ill-provided with means of communication and food supplies, but inhabited by a population which was openly hostile, or, what was worse, secretly disaffected. Lord Roberts, in the course of his despatches, endeavoured to bring home both of these circumstances to the public in England.

Of the area he wrote:[194]

ss of South Africa.

"The magnitude of the task which Her Majesty's Imperial troops have been called upon to perform will perhaps be better realised if I give the actual number of miles of the several lines of communication, each one of which has had to be carefully guarded, and compare with the well-known countries of Europe the enormous extent of the theatre of war, from one end of which to the other troops have had to be frequently moved.

"The areas included in the theatre of war are as follows:

	Square Miles.
Cape Colony	277,151
Orange River Colony	48,326
Transvaal	113,640
Natal	18,913
Total	458,030
Rhodesia	750,000

"And the distances troops have had to travel are:

By Land	Miles.
Capetown to Pretoria	1,040
Pretoria to Komati Poort	260
Capetown to Kimberley	647
Kimberley to Mafeking	223
Mafeking to Pretoria	160
Mafeking to Beira	1,135
Durban to Pretoria	511

"From these tables it will be seen that, after having been brought by sea 6,000 miles and more from their base in the United Kingdom, the army in South Africa had to be distributed over an area of greater extent than France (204,146 square miles) and Germany (211,168 square miles) put together, and, if we include that part of Rhodesia with which we had to do, larger than the combined areas of France, Germany, and Austria (261,649 square miles)."

Of the nature of the country and its inhabitants he wrote:[195]

"And it should be remembered that over these great distances we were

dependent on single lines of railway for the food supply, guns, ammunition, horses, transport animals, and hospital equipment, in fact, all the requirements of an army in the field, and that, along these lines, bridges and culverts had been destroyed in many places, and rails were being constantly torn up."

And of the Cape Colony he wrote:[196]

"The difficulties of carrying on war in South Africa do not appear to be sufficiently appreciated by the British public. In an enemy's country we should know exactly how we stood; but out here we have not only to defeat the enemy on the northern frontier, but to maintain law and order within the colonial limits. Ostensibly, the Dependency is loyal, and no doubt a large number of its inhabitants are sincerely attached to the British rule and strongly opposed to Boer domination. On the other hand, a considerable section would prefer a republican form of government, and, influenced by ties of blood and association, side with the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Even the public service at the Cape is not free from men whose sympathies with the enemy may lead them to divulge secrets and give valuable assistance to the Boer leaders in other ways."

fensive campaign.

Bearing in mind that the offensive campaign dates, not from the expiry of the Boer ultimatum on October 11th, 1899, but from Lord Roberts's advance from Modder River Station on February 11th, 1900, the mere record of dates and events is sufficiently impressive. On February 12th the Free State border was crossed; on the 15th Kimberley was relieved, on the 27th Cronje's force surrendered at Paardeberg, on the 28th Ladysmith was relieved, and on March 13th Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State, was occupied. The army again advanced early in May; Kroonstad was entered on the 12th; on May 24th, the Queen's birthday, the Free State was annexed; the Vaal was crossed on the 27th, Johannesburg was occupied on the 31st, and on June 5th the British flag was hoisted on the Raadzaal at Pretoria. In the meantime Mafeking had been relieved with absolute punctuality on May 17th.[197] On June 11th the Boers evacuated Laing's Nek and Majuba, and the Natal Field Force, under Buller, entered the Transvaal from the south-east. The next day Roberts defeated the Boers under Louis Botha at Diamond Hill. On July 30th Prinsloo and 4,000 burghers surrendered to Hunter; on August 27th the main Transvaal army, under Louis

Botha, was again defeated at Dalmanutha, and on September 1st the Transvaal was annexed. On the 11th President Krüger fled the Transvaal; Komati Poort, the eastern frontier town on the railway line to Delagoa Bay, was entered on the 24th, and two days later railway communication was re-opened between Delagoa Bay and Pretoria.

In spite of the vast area and harassing conditions of the war, in spite of its own military unpreparedness, and the unexpected strength of the Boer attack, the Power which created the Republics had destroyed them within less than a twelvemonth from the day on which they had defied it.

At this point it will be convenient to place on record certain general conclusions which arise out of the events and circumstances of the South African War, and to consider certain military criticisms which have been offered upon the conduct of the British Army in the field.

We have seen that the initial losses of the campaign were due, not to any defects in the Army as a fighting force, but to the position in which the Army was placed by the irresolution of the nation. We have seen also that within less than a year of the ultimatum the capitals of the two Republics were occupied, and their power of "organised resistance" was destroyed. During this stage of the war the regular Army, small as it was, supplemented by selected reinforcements from the auxiliary services, and by the colonial contingents, sufficed to do the work required of it. In the second stage, when the work to be accomplished was nothing less than the disarmament of the entire Dutch population of South Africa, the character of the reinforcements supplied had greatly depreciated,[198] and the prolongation of the war was in part to be attributed to this circumstance. For the present, however, it will be sufficient to confine our observations to the period of "organised resistance."

ıl conclusions.

The first of these conclusions is the fact that the real evil revealed by the South African War is not the inefficiency, or unpreparedness of the War Office, but the ignorance,[199] and therefore unpreparedness, of the country. From this unreadiness for war on the part of the nation as a whole there sprang two results: (1) the refusal of the Salisbury Cabinet to allow the War Office to make adequate military preparations in June, and the disregard of the advice alike of Lord Milner and Lord Wolseley; (2) the insufficient supply of reserves for the forces in the field, arising ultimately from the small percentage of men in the nation

trained to the use of arms.

The second conclusion to which we are led is that the specific result of the absence of effective preparations for War in June was to throw the War Office scheme of a fighting force out of gear. Twenty-two thousand defensive troops, with a striking force of fifty thousand in South Africa, would have proved sufficient to attain the ends of British policy. As it was, the Army Corps being in England when hostilities commenced, and not arriving in its entirety until December 4th, the fifty thousand offensive force was absorbed in the work of extricating the twenty-two thousand defensive force. In other words, the British Army was not put in the position contemplated by Lord Wolseley's scheme until an entirely new fighting force had been organised and advanced from Modder River in the beginning of February, 1900. This new striking force was identical in numbers with the original striking force, the Army Corps,[200] provided by Lord Wolseley's scheme.

sms examined.

Among criticisms on the British Army in the field there are two that claim attention. The first of these is the allegation that military efficiency was sacrificed to a desire to spare life. In so far as this criticism is concerned with the handling of their troops by British commanders, it is strenuously denied that either Lord Roberts, or any of his subordinates, allowed a desire to spare the lives of the troops under their command to interfere with the successful execution of any military operation. The specific example of the alleged interference of this motive, usually cited, is the conduct of the attack upon the Boer position at Paardeberg. In respect of these operations the actual facts, as they presented themselves to the mind of Lord Roberts, are these. On reaching the Paardeberg position from Jacobsdal the Commander-in-Chief found that in the operations of the preceding day Lord Kitchener had lost a thousand men without gaining a single advantage. The position held by the Boers, although it was commanded by rising ground on all sides, was one which afforded admirable cover in repelling an attacking force. In these circumstances Lord Roberts decided, as an application of the principles of military science, to "sap up" to the Boer positions. The correctness of this decision was proved by the result. The moment that the Boers realised that they were to be given no further opportunity—such as a repetition of a direct attack upon their position would have afforded—of inflicting heavy loss on the British troops, whilst their eventual surrender was no less inevitable, the white flag was hoisted.

It is denied with equal definiteness that any general feeling of the kind alleged existed among subordinate officers or the rank and file of the British troops. Where, however, the allegation of "a desire to spare life" has regard to the enemy and not to the British troops, the answer is to be found in the fact that any humanity inconsistent with military efficiency was apparent and not real. The comparative immunity enjoyed by the enemy on occasions when he was defeated is due to physical conditions wholly favourable to the Boers, to the knowledge of the country possessed by the burghers individually and collectively, and to the circumstance that the inhabitants of the country districts were, in almost all cases, ready to give them every possible assistance in escaping from the British. There is one particular statement in connection with this criticism which admits of absolute denial. It has been said that Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, received instructions from the Home Government directing him to spare the enemy as much as possible. This statement, in spite of its *prima facie* improbability, has met with very general acceptance. None the less it is entirely baseless. The only limitations imposed by the Home Government upon Lord Roberts's complete freedom of action in the conduct of the military operations which he directed were such as arose from the difficulty experienced in supplying him upon all occasions with troops of the precise number and character required.

erman general staff.

The second criticism is one put forward by the German General Staff, forming, as it does, the only valid complaint against the professional merits of Lord Roberts advanced by that body. The British Commander-in-Chief, say these German critics, made it his object to "manœuvre" the Boers out of positions instead of inflicting severe losses upon them. The answer to this criticism, in its general form, is to be found in the physical conditions of the country. On the occasions to which reference is made the burgher forces were found to be posted on high ground, behind rocks or in intrenchments, with fine open ground in front of them. Obviously in these circumstances what military science required of the commander directing the attacking force was to find a means of placing his own troops on equal terms with the enemy; and this was what Lord Roberts did. The criticism, however, as more precisely stated and applied to the battle of Diamond Hill in particular, and to the engagements fought in the course of Lord Roberts's advance from Bloemfontein to Pretoria, takes the form of the allegation that, while the enveloping movement on both flanks was executed successfully, the full result of this initial success was not

obtained because the attack upon the Boer centre was not pressed home. In other words, the enemy's centre was never caught and destroyed by the envelopment of his flanks. This is historically true, and yet the German critics cannot be said to have established their case, for they omit to take the tactics of the Boers into consideration. Stated briefly, these were to hold on to a position and inflict such losses as they could upon the attacking troops, until the final assault became imminent; and then to mount their ponies and gallop away. Against such tactics as these, it would have been of no avail to push in a frontal attack with the certainty of incurring heavy loss, and without the chance of securing a decisive success. It would have been merely playing into the hands of the Boers.

Under such conditions all that was possible was to demonstrate against the Boer centre in the hope of holding them in their position, until the flanking columns should have nullified their mobility by cutting in on their line of retreat. The Boers, however, took every precaution against such an eventuality; and the result was generally, as stated by the German critics, that the Boers were "manœuvred" out of their positions. But this does not prove that the course adopted by Lord Roberts was wrong; it merely proves the extreme difficulty of inflicting a severe defeat upon an enemy who declines to risk a decisive action, and whose mobility gives him the power to do so. The course advocated by the critics would have been equally barren of result, while the cost in lives would have been far greater.

ɔers not in uniform.

It remains to notice certain definite circumstances which caused the British Army in South Africa to be confronted by difficulties which no other army has been required to face. The Boers were accorded all the privileges of a civilised army, although at the same time they violated the most essential of the conditions upon the observance of which these privileges are based. This condition is the wearing, by the forces of a belligerent, of such a uniform and distinctive dress as will be sufficient to enable the other belligerent to discriminate with facility between the combatant and non-combatant population of his enemy. The fact that the burgher forces were not in uniform and were yet accorded the privileges claimed by civilised troops, was in itself a circumstance that increased both the efforts required, and the losses incurred, by the British Army to an extent which has not as yet been fully realised. In the operations which Lord Roberts had conducted in Afghanistan it was not the organised army but the tribesmen that had proved difficult to overcome. The Afghan army

retreated, or, if it stood its ground, was defeated. But the tribesmen who "sniped" the British troops from the mountain slopes and from behind stones and rocks, who assembled from all sides as rapidly as they melted away, constituted the real difficulty of the campaign. In South Africa the burgher forces were army and tribesmen alike. Owing to the absence of any distinctive uniform the combatant Boers mingled freely with the British soldiers, and went to and fro among the non-combatant Boer population in the towns and districts occupied by the British. On one day they were in the British camp as ox-drivers, or provision-sellers, or what not, and on the next they were in the burgher fighting line. A single instance will serve to convey an impression of the complete immunity with which not merely the rank and file, but commandants and generals, entered and left the British lines. It is believed that on one night General Louis Botha slept in Johannesburg close to Lord Roberts, the British Commander-in-Chief. The next morning he left the town in company with some of the British troops. And in the Natal campaign it is notorious that the camps of the Ladysmith relieving force were swarming with Boer spies whom it was impossible to detect and punish. Even in the besieged town itself the utmost secrecy at headquarters did not always avail to prevent a timely intimation of a contemplated attack from reaching the enemy's lines. Add to this the fact that every Boer farmhouse throughout South Africa was an Intelligence Depôt for the enemy, and it is easy to understand the facility displayed by the mobile and ununiformed Boer forces in evading the British columns.

Whether the humanity displayed by the British Government in thus recognising the burghers as regular belligerents, and in other respects, did not tend to bring about the very evil sought to be avoided is another question. It is quite possible to maintain that the comparative immunity from punishment and the disproportionate military success which the Boers enjoyed did in fact, by contributing to the prolongation of the war, ultimately produce a greater loss of life, and a greater amount of material suffering, than would have been incurred by the South African Dutch if the war had been waged with greater severity on the part of Great Britain. That it increased the cost of the war both in lives and in treasure to the British nation is obvious. But this is a consideration which does not affect any estimate of the merit or demerit displayed by the British Army in the field that may be formed either by British or foreign critics. In order to prove competency it is not necessary to show that no single mistake was made or that nothing that was done might not have been done better. No war department, no army ever has been or ever will be created that could come scatheless from the application of such a test of absolute efficiency. What we require to know is

whether the same standard of efficiency was shown to have been attained in the War Office and in the Army as is required and obtained in any other branch of the public service, or in any successful or progressive undertaking conducted by private enterprise. The circumstances of the war were abnormal. From one point of view it was a civil war; from another it was a rebellion, and from a third it was a war between two rival military powers, each of whom desired to become supreme in South Africa. What the military critic has to consider is not so much how these circumstances arose, or whether they could have been changed or avoided by any political action on the part of Great Britain, but the degree in which the conditions imposed by them upon the British Army must be taken into account in applying the ordinary tests of military efficiency to the work which it accomplished in this particular campaign.

ılties of the campaign.

The nature of the difficulties presented by the vast extent of the theatre of war, the deficiency of means of communication, the imperfect cultivation of the land, the sparseness of the population and their hostility to the British, and the physical and climatic aspects of South Africa in general, have been broadly indicated in the passages taken from Lord Roberts's despatches. To pursue the inquiry further would be to travel beyond the scope of this work. That, however, there is nothing unusual in the fact that civilian forces, inspired by love of country and aided by physical conditions exceptionally favourable to themselves, should be able to offer a successful resistance to professional soldiers may be seen by a reference to one of the little wars of the seventeenth century. In the year 1690 twenty-two thousand French and Savoyard troops were sent by Louis XIV. to storm the Balsille—a rocky eminence *mutatis mutandis* the equivalent of a South African kopje—held by 350 Piedmontese Vaudois. Even so the besieged patriots made good their escape, and, owing to the sudden change in the politics of Europe brought about by the accession of William of Orange to the crown of England, actually concluded an honourable peace with their sovereign, Victor Amadeus of Savoy, a few days after they had been driven from the Balsille. Assuming that the British troops employed from first to last in the South African War were five times as numerous as the forces placed in the field by the Dutch nationalists—say 450,000 as against 90,000—we have here a numerical superiority which dwindles into insignificance beside the magnificent disproportion of the professional troops required to deal with a civilian force in this seventeenth-century struggle.[201][Back to Contents]

CHAPTER VIII

THE REBELLION IN THE CAPE COLONY

The direct share which Lord Milner took in the skilful disposition of the handful of British troops available at the outbreak of the war for the defence of the north-eastern frontier of the Cape Colony has been mentioned. The part which he played during the first period of the war in his relationship to the military authorities is sufficiently indicated by the words which appear in Lord Roberts's final despatch.

> "This despatch," writes the Commander-in-Chief on April 2nd, 1901, "would be incomplete were I to omit to mention the benefit I have derived from the unfailing support and wise counsels of Sir Alfred Milner. I can only say here that I have felt it a high privilege to work in close communication with one whose courage never faltered however grave the responsibilities might be which surrounded him, and who, notwithstanding the absorbing cares of his office, seemed always able to find time for a helpful message or for the tactful solution of a difficult question."

That this is no conventional compliment, even in the mouth of so great a general as Lord Roberts, will appear from the fact that on one occasion—to be presently noted—Lord Milner's judgment did not entirely recommend itself at the moment to the Commander-in-Chief.

natural alliance.

But such services, important as they were, are mere accidents in comparison with the volume of continuous and concentrated effort required to keep the machinery of administration available for the Imperial Government in a colony in which not merely the majority of the inhabitants, but the majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly, and half of the ministers of the Crown, were in more or less complete sympathy with the enemy. The Boer ultimatum, by making it impossible for the British Government to be any longer cajoled into an elusory settlement by Boer diplomacy, had relieved Lord Milner of a load of anxiety, and closed a period of unparalleled physical and mental strain. But it by no means brought Lord Milner's task to an end. The open rebellion of the Dutch subjects of the Crown, considerable alike in point of numbers and area, was not the most dangerous aspect of the state of utter disaffection, or rather

demoralisation, to which the Cape Colony had been reduced by twenty years of Dutch ascendancy and nationalist propaganda. Just as before the ultimatum it was the influence, exercised by constitutional means, and ostensibly in the interests of the Imperial Government, over the Republics that brought the Salisbury Cabinet within measurable distance of diplomatic defeat; so, during the war, what was done and said by the Afrikander nationalists within the letter of the law constituted in fact the most formidable obstacle to the success of the British arms. If the Dutch in the Cape Colony had been left to themselves, their efforts to encourage the resistance of the Boers, in view of the rapid and effective blows struck by Lord Roberts, would probably have been without result. But unhappily their efforts stimulated the traditional sympathisers of the Boers in England to fresh action; and they were themselves stimulated in turn by the excesses of the party opposition which sprang into life again directly Lord Roberts's campaign had relieved the British people from any fear of military humiliation. Just as in the period before the war we found the Afrikander leaders striving to "mediate" between the Transvaal and the British Government; so now during the war we find them striving to "conciliate" the two contending parties. In both cases their aim was the same—to prevent the destruction of the Republics and the consequent ruin of the nationalist cause. As in the former case "mediation" was a euphemism for the diplomatic defeat of the British Government, so now "conciliation" is synonymous with the restoration of the independence of the Boers—that is, the renunciation of all that the British people, whether islander or colonist, had fought to secure. That any considerable body of Englishmen should have allowed themselves to become a second time the dupes of so coarse a political hypocrisy may well arouse surprise to-day; to a future generation it will seem almost incredible. The fact, however, admits of neither doubt nor contradiction. It is writ large in Hansard, in the Blue-books, and in the daily journals. The whole force of this strange and unnatural alliance between England's most bitter and most skilful enemies in South Africa and a section of her own sons at home, was directed against Lord Milner during the remaining years of his High Commissionership.

ıreiners's attitude.

For the moment, however, the ultimatum had rendered the British people practically unanimous in the desire to chastise the insolence of the Boer, and, in the face of this determination, no opposition was manifested by the Afrikander Government to the free movement and disembarkation of the Imperial troops. The employment of the local forces in the defence of the colony was another

matter. The Free State commandos crossed the Orange River on October 31st, 1899. The delay was not due to any regard felt by President Steyn for Mr. Schreiner, but solely to military considerations. On the previous day General Joubert had shut up Sir George White's force in Ladysmith; and there was, therefore, no longer any likelihood that these commandos would be required in Natal. The invasion of the Colony south of the Orange River produced, as we have noticed, a marked change in Mr. Schreiner's attitude; causing him finally to abandon the neutrality policy and recognise the necessity of employing the local volunteer forces in the defence of the Colony. None the less the injury inflicted upon British interests by the Prime Minister's attempt to keep the people of the Cape Colony out of the conflict was unquestionable. The ministers of the Crown in this British Colony had allowed arms and ammunition to go through to the Free State, until the Imperial authorities had interfered; they had refused to supply Mafeking and Kimberley with much-needed artillery; they had refused to call out the volunteers until the Colony was about to be invaded by the Free State as well as by the Transvaal, and even then they had delayed to supply these forces with Lee-Enfield rifles. These were injuries the effect of which could not be repaired by any subsequent co-operation with the representatives of the British Government. In addition to calling out the volunteers, Mr. Schreiner allowed the Imperial military authorities to take over the Cape Government railways, and he consented to the proclamation of martial law in those districts of the Colony in which the Dutch were in rebellion. But he was far from yielding, even now, that full and complete assistance to the Governor which would have been expected, as a matter of course, from the Prime Minister of any other British colony. On one occasion, at least, during this period the conflict between his views and those of Lord Milner became so acute that his resignation seemed to be inevitable. But this was not to be the end of the Afrikander Ministry. In proportion as Mr. Schreiner approached gradually to agreement with Lord Milner, so did he incur the displeasure of Mr. Hofmeyr and the Dutch, until (in June, 1901) the Ministry perished of internal dissension.

A week after Lord Roberts reached Capetown (January 10th, 1900), Lord Milner sent home a despatch in which he tells the story of the rebellion in the Cape Colony. The state of the districts on the western border of the Republics, north of the Orange River, is described in the words of a reliable and unbiassed witness who has just arrived at Capetown from Vryburg, where he has been lately resident:

"All the farmers in the Vryburg, Kuruman, and Taungs districts," says this

witness, "have joined the Boers, and I do not believe that you will find ten loyal British subjects among the Dutch community in the whole of Bechuanaland. The Field Cornets and Justices of the Peace on the Dutch side have all joined ... the conduct of the rebels has been unbearable."

Of the position of that part of the Eastern Province of the Cape Colony which, lying to the south of the Free State, formed the main seat of the rebellion, Lord Milner himself writes:

ıent of loyalists.

"Within a space of less than three weeks from the occupation of Colesberg, no less than five great districts—those of Colesberg, Albert, Aliwal North, Barkly East, and Wodehouse—had gone over without hesitation, and, so to speak, bodily, to the enemy. Throughout that region the Landdrosts of the Orange Free State had established their authority, and everywhere, in the expressive words of a magistrate, British loyalists were "being hunted out of town after town like sheep." In the invaded districts the method of occupation has always been more or less the same. The procedure is as follows:—A commando enters, the Orange Free State flag is hoisted, a meeting is held in the courthouse, or market-place, and a Proclamation is read annexing the district. The Commandant then makes a speech, in which he explains that the people must now obey the Free State laws generally, though they are at present under martial law. A local Landdrost is appointed, and loyal subjects are given a few days or hours in which to quit, or be compelled to serve against their country. In either case they lose their property to a greater or less extent. If they elect to quit they are often robbed before starting or on the journey; if they stay their property and themselves are commandeered.

"The number of rebels who have actually taken up arms and joined the enemy during their progress throughout the five annexed districts can for the present only be matter of conjecture. I shall, however, be on the safe side in reckoning that during November it was a number not less than the total of the invading commandos, that is, 2,000, while it is probable that of the invading commandos themselves a certain proportion were colonists who had crossed the border before the invasion took place. And the number, whatever it was, which joined the enemy before and during November has been increased since. A well-informed refugee from the Albert district has estimated the total number of colonial Boers who have joined the enemy in the invaded districts south of the

Orange River at 3,000 to 4,000. In the districts north of that river, to which I referred at the beginning of this despatch, the number can hardly be less. Adding to these the men who became burghers of the Transvaal immediately before, or just after, the outbreak of war, with the view of taking up arms in the struggle, I am forced to the conclusion that, in round figures, not less than 10,000 of those now fighting against us in South Africa, and probably somewhat more, either are, or till quite recently were, subjects of the Queen."[202]

As it turned out, this eastern rebellion was kept within limits by General French's advance upon Colesberg, and by the skilful and successful cavalry operations which he subsequently carried out upon the Free State border; but there is abundant evidence to support the belief that any second reverse in the Eastern Province, such as that which General Gatacre suffered at Stormberg, would have proved the signal for a rising in the Western Province. The Bond was active; and the tone of the meetings held by the various branches throughout the Colony was as frankly hostile to the Imperial Government as it was sympathetic to the Republics.

f western province.

The extent to which Mr. Schreiner's qualified co-operation with the Imperial authorities had aroused the hostility of the Bond will be seen from the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Cape Distriks-bestuur, held at the office of *Ons Land* at the end of January (1900). It was a small meeting, but among those present were Mr. Hofmeyr himself and Mr. Malan, the editor of *Ons Land*. On the motion of the latter, it was unanimously determined that the forthcoming Annual Congress of the Bond should be asked to pass a—

> "resolution (*a*) giving expression of Congress's entire disapproval of the policy which led to the present bloody war instead of to a peaceful solution of the differences with the South African Republic by means of arbitration; and (*b*) urging a speedy re-establishment of peace on fair and righteous conditions, as also a thorough inquiry by our Parliament into the way in which, during the war, private property, the civil liberties, and constitutional rights of the subject have been treated."[203]

Even more significant—as evidence of the dangerous feeling of exaltation which possessed the Dutch at this time—was the New Year's exhortation of *Ons Land*, the journalistic mouthpiece of Mr. Hofmeyr. And Mr. Hofmeyr, it must be remembered, was not only the head of the *Commissie van Toezicht*, or Executive

of three which controlled the Afrikander Bond, but the real master of the majority in the Cape Parliament, upon which the Schreiner Cabinet depended for its existence. After setting out the "mighty deeds" achieved by the Afrikander arms during the last three months, this bitter and relentless opponent of British supremacy in South Africa proceeded to declare that "still mightier deeds" were to be seen in the coming year (1900), and that the Afrikander nation, so far from being extinguished by the conflict with Great Britain, would be welded into one compact mass, and flourish more and more.

Nor was this all. In the closing days of the year (1899) information reached the British military authorities that a plot was on foot to seize Capetown. The Dutch from the country districts were to assemble in the capital in the guise of excursionists who had come to town to enjoy the Christmas and New Year holidays. On New Year's Eve, the night reported to have been fixed for the attempt, all the military stations in Capetown were kept in frequent communication by telephone; the streets were paraded by pickets; and, in the drill-shed the Capetown Highlanders slept under arms. Whether any attempt of the sort was seriously contemplated or not, there is no question as to the fact that the utmost necessity for precaution was recognised by the military authorities at Capetown during this period, in spite of the security afforded by the reinforcements which the Home Government was pouring into the Colony. It was an old boast of the militant Dutch in the Cape Colony that they would find a way to prevent British troops from using the colonial railways to attack the Boers.[204] And when at length, a month after Lord Roberts had arrived, the transport system had been reorganised, the troops concentrated at De Aar and Modder River, and everything was ready for the forward movement, the most complete secrecy was observed as to the departure of the Commander-in-Chief and Lord Kitchener. Instead of leaving for the front with the final drafts from the Capetown station in Adderley Street, amid the cheering of the British population, these two distinguished soldiers were driven in a close carriage, on the evening of February 6th, from Government House to the Salt River Station, where they caught the ordinary passenger train for De Aar.

obert's advance.

No one was more aware of the reality of the Dutch disaffection in the Colony than Lord Milner. Before Lord Roberts left Capetown for the front he addressed a memorandum to him, in which the attention of the Commander-in-Chief was drawn to certain special elements of danger in the whole situation in South

Africa as affected by the rebellion of the Dutch in the Cape Colony. With reference to this memorandum Lord Roberts writes, in the second of his despatches (February 16th, 1900):

> "Before quitting the seat of Government I received a memorandum from the High Commissioner, in which Sir Alfred Milner reviewed the political and military situation, and laid stress on the possibility of a general rising among the disaffected Dutch population, should the Cape Colony be denuded of troops for the purpose of carrying on offensive operations in the Orange Free State. In reply I expressed the opinion that the military requirements of the case demanded an early advance into the enemy's country; that such an advance, if successful, would lessen the hostile pressure both on the northern frontiers of the Colony and in Natal; that the relief of Kimberley had to be effected before the end of February, and would set free most of the troops encamped on the Modder River, and that the arrival of considerable reinforcements from home, especially of Field Artillery, by the 19th of February, would enable those points along the frontier which were weakly held to be materially strengthened. I trusted, therefore, that His Excellency's apprehensions would prove groundless. No doubt a certain amount of risk had to be run, but protracted inaction seemed to me to involve more serious dangers than the bolder course which I have decided to adopt."

Milner's proposal.

There cannot, of course, be any question as to the general wisdom of this decision. Both in this case, and again in deciding to advance from Bloemfontein upon Johannesburg and Pretoria, it was just by taking his risks—risks that would have reduced a lesser man to inaction—that Lord Roberts displayed the distinguishing quality of a great captain of war. In both cases the best defence was to attack. But as Lord Roberts, in this brief reference, does not indicate the real point of the High Commissioner's representations, it is necessary to state with some precision what it was that Lord Milner had actually in his mind. The last thing which occurred to him was to advocate any course that could weaken our offensive action. But the peculiarity of the South African political situation, which enabled even a defeated enemy, by detaching a very small force, to raise a new war in our rear, in what was nominally our country, and thus to hamper, and possibly altogether arrest, the forward movement, was constantly present to his thought. The proposal which Lord Milner desired Lord Roberts to adopt was that

a certain minimum of mobile troops should be definitely set aside for the defence of the Colony, and kept there, whatever happened; since, in Lord Milner's opinion, it was only in this way that a real and effective form of defence could be made possible, and the number of men locked up in the passive defence of the railway lines greatly reduced. If this suggestion had been carried out, as Lord Milner intended, there would have been no second rebellion. What prevented Lord Roberts from adopting the High Commissioner's suggestion was the numerical insufficiency of the troops at his disposal. In order to carry the war into the enemy's country, he had practically to denude the Cape Colony of troops. The subsequent course of the war will reveal the direct and disastrous influence which the situation in the Cape Colony was destined to exercise upon the military decisions of the republican leaders—an influence which would have been lessened materially, if not altogether removed, by the creation of this permanent and mobile force. And, in point of fact, Lord Milner's apprehension that the rebellion might even now interfere with the success of the forward movement, unless adequate provision was made to keep it in check, received almost immediate confirmation. While Lord Roberts was engaged in the capture of Cronje's force at Paardeberg, the north-midland districts of Prieska, Britstown, and Carnarvon, lying to the west of the railway from De Aar to Orange River, broke out into rebellion. Although Lord Roberts at once directed certain columns to concentrate upon this new area of disaffection, the situation had become so serious that on March 8th—*i.e.*, the day after Poplar Grove, and in the course of the rapid march upon Bloemfontein—Lord Roberts—

> "desired Major-General Lord Kitchener to proceed to De Aar with the object of collecting reinforcements, and of taking such steps as might be necessary to punish the rebels and to prevent the spread of disaffection."[205]

That is to say, the disclosure of a new centre of active rebellion in the Colony deprived the Commander-in-Chief of the services of Lord Kitchener, his Chief-of-Staff, when he was in the act of executing one of the most critical movements of the campaign.

ɔer peace overtures.

The complete revolution in the military situation produced by Lord Roberts's victorious advance into the Free State elicited from Presidents Krüger and Steyn the "peace overtures" cabled to Lord Salisbury on March 5th, 1900. In this characteristic document the two Presidents remark that—

> "they consider it [their] duty solemnly to declare that this war was undertaken solely as a defensive measure to safeguard the threatened independence of the South African Republic, and is only continued in order to secure and safeguard the incontestable independence of both Republics as sovereign international states, and to obtain the assurance that those of Her Majesty's subjects who have taken part with [them] in this war shall suffer no harm whatever in person or property."

They further declare that "on these conditions, but on these conditions alone," they are now, as in the past, desirous of seeing peace re-established in South Africa; and they add considerately that they have refrained from making this declaration "so long as the advantage was always on their side," from a fear lest it "might hurt the feelings of honour of the British people." They conclude:

> "But now that the prestige of the British Empire may be considered to be assured by the capture of one of our forces by Her Majesty's troops, and that we are thereby forced to evacuate other positions which our forces had occupied, that difficulty is over, and we can no longer hesitate clearly to inform your Government and people, in the sight of the whole civilised world, why we are fighting, and on what conditions we are ready to restore peace."[206]

The best comment upon this grossly disingenuous document is that which is afforded by certain passages in Mr. Reitz's book, *A Century of Wrong*, which was written in anticipation of the outbreak of war and issued so soon as this anticipation had been realised:

> "The struggle of now nearly a century," he writes in his appeal to his brother Afrikanders, "hastens to an end; we are approaching the last act in that great drama which is so momentous for all South Africa.... The questions which present themselves for solution in the approaching conflict have their origin deep in the history of the past.... By its light we are more clearly enabled to comprehend the truth to which our people appeal as a final justification for embarking on the war now so close at hand.... May the hope which glowed in our hearts during 1880, and which buoyed us up during that struggle, burn on steadily! May it prove a beacon of light in our path, invincibly moving onwards through blood and through tears, until it leads us to a real union of South Africa.... Whether the result be victory or death, Liberty will assuredly rise on South Africa ... just as freedom dawned over

the United States of America a little more than a century ago. Then from Zambesi to Simon's Town it will be Africa for the Afrikander."[207]

And to this may be added the following extract from a letter written by "one of the distinguished members of the Volksraad" who voted for war against Great Britain, to one of his friends, a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Cape Colony:

"Our plan is, with God's help, to take all that is English in South Africa; so, in case you true Afrikanders wish to throw off the English yoke, now is the time to hoist the Vier-kleur in Capetown. You can rely on us; we will push through from sea to sea, and wave one flag over the whole of South Africa, under one Afrikander Government, if we can reckon on our Afrikander brethren."[208]

itish reply.

Lord Salisbury's reply, sent from the Foreign Office on March 11th, is as follows:

"I have the honour to acknowledge Your Honours' telegram dated the 5th of March, from Bloemfontein, of which the purport is principally to demand that Her Majesty's Government shall recognise the 'incontestable independence' of the South African Republic and Orange Free State 'as sovereign international states,' and to offer, on those terms, to bring the war to a conclusion.

"In the beginning of October last peace existed between Her Majesty and the two Republics under the Conventions which then were in existence. A discussion had been proceeding for some months between Her Majesty's Government and the South African Republic, of which the object was to obtain redress for certain very serious grievances under which British residents in the South African Republic were suffering. In the course of these negotiations the South African Republic had, to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government, made considerable armaments, and the latter had, consequently, taken steps to provide corresponding reinforcements to the British garrisons of Capetown and Natal. No infringement of the rights guaranteed by the Conventions had up to that point taken place on the British side. Suddenly, at two days' notice, the South African Republic, after issuing an insulting ultimatum, declared war upon Her Majesty, and the Orange Free State, with whom there had not even been any discussion, took a similar step. Her Majesty's dominions were immediately invaded by the two Republics, siege was laid to three towns within the British frontier, a large portion of the two colonies was overrun, with great destruction to property and life, and the Republics claimed to treat the inhabitants of extensive portions of Her Majesty's dominions as if those dominions had been annexed to one or other of them. In anticipation of these operations, the South African Republic had been accumulating for many years past military stores on an enormous scale, which by their character could only have been intended for use against Great Britain.

"Your Honours make some observations of a negative character upon the object with which these preparations were made. I do not think it necessary to discuss the questions you have raised. But the result of these preparations, carried on with great secrecy, has been that the British Empire has been compelled to confront an invasion which has entailed upon the Empire a costly war and the loss of thousands of precious lives. This great calamity has been the penalty which Great Britain has suffered for having in recent years acquiesced in the existence of the two Republics.

"In view of the use to which the two Republics have put the position which

was given to them, and the calamities which their unprovoked attack has inflicted upon Her Majesty's dominions, Her Majesty's Government can only answer your Honours' telegram by saying that they are not prepared to assent to the independence either of the South African Republic or of the Orange Free State."

ntions to be annulled.

This reply has been cited at length for two reasons. In the first place it affords a concise and weighty statement of the British case against the Republics, and, in the second, it contains a specific and reasoned declaration of the central decision of the Salisbury Cabinet, against which the efforts both of the Dutch party in the Cape and of the friends of the Boers in England continued to be directed, until the controversy was closed by the surrender of the republican leaders at Vereeniging. In the Cape Colony the cry of "conciliation" was raised to cloak the gross appearance of a movement which was, in fact, a direct co-operation with the enemy. And the same specious word was adopted in England, so soon as the strain of the war had begun to make itself felt in the constituencies, as a decent flag under which the party opponents of the Unionist Government in general could join forces with the traditional friends of the Boers and other convinced opponents of Imperial consolidation. The decision of the Salisbury Cabinet not to restore the system of the Conventions, which was in fact the decision of the great mass of the British people both at home and over-sea, was not reversed. It was confirmed in the House of Commons by 208 votes against 52 on July 25th, 1900, and by the verdict of the country in the General Election which followed. [209] But the political agitation by which it was sought to reverse this decision was none the less injurious alike to the Boer and British peoples, since it acted as a powerful incentive to the republican leaders to continued struggle which, except for the illusions created by this agitation, they would have recognised as hopeless in itself and unjustified by any prospect of military success. In both cases the effect of the agitation was the same: the war was unnecessarily prolonged—intentionally by the Afrikander nationalists, and unintentionally by Lord (then Mr.) Courtney, Mr. Morley, Mr. Bryce, and other opponents in England of the annexation of the Republics.

onciliation' movement.

The Presidents had demanded the recognition of the independence of the Republics and a free pardon for the Cape rebels as the price of peace. The Afrikander nationalists at once began to co-operate with the Republics in the

endeavour to wrest these terms from the British Government. Mr. Schreiner, as we have seen, had already incurred Mr. Hofmeyr's displeasure by allowing the Cape Government to render assistance to the Imperial authorities in the prosecution of the war. The breach thus created between the Prime Minister and Sir Richard (then Mr.) Solomon, on the one hand, and Dr. Te Water, Mr. Merriman, and Mr. Sauer, who shared the views of the Bond, on the other, was, rapidly widened by the "conciliation" meetings held throughout the Colony by the Afrikander nationalists in support of the "peace overtures" of the Presidents. The British population at the Cape was quick to realise the insidious and fatal character of the "conciliation" movement thus inaugurated by the Afrikander nationalists. The universal alarm and indignation to which it gave rise among the loyalists of both nationalities found expression in the impassioned speech which Sir James (then Mr.) Rose Innes delivered at the Municipal Hall of Claremont[210] on March 30th, 1900. The purpose of the meeting was to allow the British subjects thus assembled to record their approval of Lord Salisbury's reply to the Republics, and their conviction that "the incorporation of these States within the dominions of the Queen could alone secure peace, prosperity, and public freedom throughout South Africa." In supporting this resolution, Sir James Rose Innes said:

> "This question of permanent peace is the key-stone of the whole matter, because, I take it, we none of us want to see another war of this kind. We do not want to see the misery and the suffering and the loss which a war of this kind entails. We do not want to see our sandy plains drenched with the best blood of England again, fighting against white men in this country. We do not want to see the flower of colonial manhood shot down on the plains of the Orange Free State and the Karroo, and neither do we want to see brave men, born in South Africa, dying in heaps, dying for what we know is a hopeless ideal. Therefore we say, 'In Heaven's name give us peace! Have a settlement, but make no settlement which shall not be calculated, as far as human foresight can provide, to secure a permanent peace.'"

These were strong words, and their significance was heightened by the well-known independence of Sir James Innes's political outlook.

Milner at Bloemfontein.

A fortnight later Lord Milner declared his mind on the same question. Both the occasion and the speech are of special interest. The High Commissioner had

just returned from a fortnight at the front. On March 19th he left Capetown in company with Sir Richard Solomon for the north-eastern districts of the Colony, which, having rebelled in November, had just been reduced to order by General Brabant and the "Colonial Division," when the Free State invaders had been drawn off by Lord Roberts's advance. After a week in the Colony, Lord Milner travelled on by rail to Bloemfontein, which he reached on the 27th. It was a stimulating and suggestive moment. He was now the guest of the British Commander-in-Chief at the Presidency, where, just ten months ago, as the guest of President Steyn, he had met Paul Krüger for the first time. The little Free State capital, then wrapped in its accustomed quietude, was now filled with the tumultuous presence of a great army. But, complete as was the revolution accomplished by Lord Roberts's advance, there were signs that the Boer was dying hard, even if he were not coming to life again. On the 30th a disquieting engagement was fought at Karree Siding, and on the 31st de Wet dealt his second shrewd blow at Sannah's Post.

With this experience of the actualities of war, Lord Milner, leaving Bloemfontein on April 2nd, had returned to Capetown. On the 12th he was presented with an appreciative address, signed by all, except one, of the Nonconformist ministers of religion resident in and around Capetown, in which personal affection for himself and approval of his policy were expressed. The action of these men was altogether exceptional. It was justified by the circumstance that in England Lord Milner's policy had been subjected to the bitterest criticism in quarters where Nonconformist influence was predominant. Not only to Lord Courtney, but to other Liberal friends and associates, the High Commissioner had become a "lost mind." To the Afrikander nationalists he was "the enemy"; the efforts which had barely sufficed to keep the administrative machinery of a British colony at the disposal of the Imperial Government were represented as the unconstitutional acts of a tyrannical proconsul; having ruthlessly exposed the aspirations of the Afrikander nationalists he was now to become the destroyer of the Boer nation. The personal note in the address was, therefore, both instructive and welcome, and it elicited a response in which the charm of a calm and generous nature shines through an unalterable determination to know and do the right:

"As regards myself personally, I cannot but feel it is a great source of strength at a trying time to be assured of the confidence and approval of the men I see before me, and of all whom they represent. You refer to my having to encounter misrepresentation and antagonism. I do not wish to make too much of that. I

have no doubt been exposed to much criticism and some abuse. There has, I sometimes think, been an exceptional display of mendacity at my expense. But this is the fate of every public man who is forced by circumstances into a somewhat prominent position in a great crisis. And, after all, praise and blame have a wonderful way of balancing one another if you only give them time.

"I remember when I left England for South Africa three years ago, it was amidst a chorus of eulogy so excessive that it made me feel thoroughly uncomfortable. To protest would have been useless: it would only have looked like affectation. So I just placed the surplus praise to my credit, so to speak, as something to live on in the days which I surely knew must come sooner or later, if I did my duty, when I would meet with undeserved censure. And certainly I have had to draw on that account rather heavily during the last nine months. But there is still a balance on the right side which, thanks to you and others, is now once more increasing. So I cannot pose as a martyr, and, what is more important, I cannot complain of any want of support. No man, placed as I have been in a position of singular embarrassment, exposed to bitter attacks to which he could not reply, and unable to explain his conduct even to his own friends, has ever had more compensation to be thankful for than I have had in the constant, devoted, forbearing support and confidence of all those South Africans, whether in this Colony, in Natal, or in the Republics, whose sympathy is with the British Empire.

"In the concluding paragraph of your address you refer in weighty and well-considered language to the conditions which you deem necessary for the future peace and prosperity of South Africa, and for the ultimate harmony and fusion of its white races. I can only say that I entirely agree with the views expressed in that paragraph. The longer the struggle lasts, the greater the sacrifices which it involves, the stronger must surely be the determination of all of us to achieve a settlement which will render the repetition of this terrible scourge impossible. 'Never again,' must be the motto of all thinking, of all humane men. It is for that reason, not from any lust of conquest, not from any desire to trample on a gallant, if misguided, enemy, that we desire that the settlement shall be no patchwork and no compromise; that it shall leave no room for misunderstanding, no opportunity for intrigue, for the revival of impossible ambitions, or the accumulation of enormous armaments. President Krüger has said that he wants no more Conventions, and I entirely agree with him. A compromise of that sort

is unfair to everybody. If there is one thing of which, after recent experiences, I am absolutely convinced, it is that the vital interests of all those who live in South Africa, of our present enemies as much as of those who are on our side, demand that there should not be two dissimilar and antagonistic political systems in that which nature and history have irrevocably decided must be one country. To agree to a compromise which would leave any ambiguity on that point would not be magnanimity: it would be weakness, ingratitude, and cruelty—ingratitude to the heroic dead, and cruelty to the unborn generations.

"But when I say that, do not think that I wish to join in the outcry, at present so prevalent, against the fine old virtue of magnanimity. I believe in it as much as ever I did, and there is plenty of room for it in the South Africa of to-day. We can show it by a frank recognition of what is great and admirable in the character of our enemies; by not maligning them as a body because of the sins of the few, or perhaps even of many, individuals. We can show it by not crowing excessively over our victories, and by not thinking evil of every one who, for one reason or another, is unable to join in our legitimate rejoicings. We can show it by striving to take care that our treatment of those who have been guilty of rebellion, while characterised by a just severity towards the really guilty parties, should be devoid of any spirit of vindictiveness, or of race-prejudice. We can show it, above all, when this dire struggle is over, by proving by our acts that they libelled us who said that we fought for gold or any material advantage, and that the rights and privileges which we have resolutely claimed for ourselves we are prepared freely to extend to others, even to those who have fought against us, whenever they are prepared loyally to accept them."[211]

It is the third of three critical utterances of which each is summarised, as it were, in a single luminous phrase. To the Cape Dutch he spoke at Graaf Reinet, after their own manner: "Of course you are loyal!" To England, on the Uitlander's behalf, he wrote: "The case for intervention is overwhelming." And now he gathered the whole long lesson of the war into the two words, "never again."

policy.

A month later Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at Birmingham (May 11th), made a general statement of the nature of the settlement upon which the British Government had determined. The separate existence of the Republics, "constantly intriguing as they had done with foreign nations, constantly

promoting agitation and disaffection in our own colonies," was to be tolerated no longer; but the "individual liberties" of the Boers were to be preserved. After the war was over a period of Crown Colony government would be necessary; "but," he added, "as soon as it is safe and possible it will be the desire and the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce these States into the great circle of self-governing colonies." In making this pronouncement Mr. Chamberlain referred in terms of just severity to the injurious influence which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, as the official leader of the Liberal party, had exercised upon the diplomatic contest of the preceding year. At the precise period when a word might have been worth anything to the cause of peace, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, he said—

> "had again and again declaimed his own opinion that not only was war out of the question, but that military preparations of any kind were altogether unnecessary. I do not speak of the wisdom which dictated such an expression of opinion," Mr. Chamberlain continued, "although he repeated that statement three days before the ultimatum was delivered, and a week before the invasion of Natal took place. I do not speak, therefore, of his foresight. But what is to be said of the patriotism of a man who is not a single individual but who represents a great party by virtue of his position—although he does not represent it by virtue of his opinion—what is to be said of such a man who, at such a time, should countermine the endeavours for peace of Her Majesty's Government?"

And in the same speech Mr. Chamberlain warned his fellow-countrymen "against the efforts which would be made by the politicians to snatch from them the fruits of a victory which would be won by their soldiers; and in particular against the campaign of misrepresentation which had been commenced already by Mr. Paul, the Stop-the-War Committee, and the other bodies which were so lavish with what they were pleased to call their 'accurate information.'"

Campbell-Bannerman.

Had Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman seen fit to profit by the experience of the past, the whole of the suffering and loss of the next year and a half of wanton hostilities, in all human probability, would have been avoided. But Mr. Chamberlain's rebuke was disregarded. The senseless and unnatural alliance between the Afrikander nationalists and the Liberal Opposition was renewed. It is quite true that the official leader of the Opposition, in speaking at Glasgow on

June 7th, two days after Lord Roberts had occupied Pretoria, declared that, in respect of the settlement, "one broad principle" must be laid down—

> "the British Imperial power, which has hitherto been supreme in effect in South Africa, must in future be supreme in form as well as in effect, and this naturally carries with it the point which is sometimes put in the foreground, namely, that there must be no possibility that any such outbreak of hostilities as we have been witnessing shall again occur.... The two conquered States must, in some form or under some condition, become States of the British Empire."

But when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman proceeded to inform his audience how this was to be done, he used expressions which not only robbed his original statement of all significance as an indication of British unanimity, but conveyed a direct intimation to the Afrikander nationalists that their endeavours to frustrate the declared objects of the Unionist Government would receive the support and encouragement of the Opposition in England. His words were:

> "We need have no doubt how it is to be done. By applying our Liberal principles, the Liberal principles from which the strength of the Empire has been derived, and on which it depends. Let us apply our Liberal principles, and whether our party be in a majority, or in a minority, I think that it is well in our power to secure that these principles shall be applied. [The General Election was imminent.] Let us restore as early as possible, and let us maintain, those rights of self-government which give not only life and vigour, but contentment and loyalty to every colony which enjoys them...."

"Liberal principles," when applied to a given administrative problem, as Mr. Chamberlain took occasion to point out (June 19th), meant, for practical purposes, the opinions which prominent members of the Liberal party were known to hold upon the matter in question. Lord (then Mr.) Courtney was for autonomy—"the re-establishment of the independence of the two Republics." Mr. Bryce advocated "the establishment of two protected States, which would have a sham independence of not much advantage to them for any practical or useful purpose, but very dangerous to us." And then there was Mr. Morley. Now Mr. Morley, only a week before, at Oxford (June 10th), had condemned not only the war, but by implication, the rejection of President Krüger's illusory Franchise Bill.

hn Morley.

> "I assert," said Mr. Morley, "that the evils which have resulted from the war immeasurably transcend the evils with which it was proposed to deal.... I abhor the whole transaction of the war. I think in many ways it is an irreparable situation. We have done a great wrong—a wrong of which I believe there is scarcely any Englishman living who will not bitterly repent." [212]

With these words fresh in his memory, Mr. Chamberlain continued:

> "Is Mr. Morley a Liberal? I do not know in that case what would become of the new territories if his principles were applied. But this I do know—that in that case you would have immediately to get rid of Sir Alfred Milner, who is the one great official in South Africa who has shown from the first a true grasp of the situation; and you would have also to get rid of the Colonial Secretary, which would not, perhaps, matter."[213]

And so in 1900—after the Raid, after the long diplomatic conflict, after the sudden revelation of the military strength of the Republics, after the ambitions of the Afrikander nationalists had been unmasked, and after the Dutch subjects of the Queen had risen in arms—the Liberal friends of the South African Dutch set themselves to do again what they had done in 1880. Just as then President Krüger wrote,[214] on behalf of himself and his Afrikander allies, to Lord (then Mr.) Courtney: "The fall of Sir Bartle Frere ... will be useful.... We have done our duty, and used all legitimate influence to cause the [Federation] proposals to fail"; so now these Boer sympathisers prepared to work hand in hand with the Afrikander nationalists in their endeavour to secure the "fall" of Lord Milner, and to cause the Annexation proposals to "fail." Happily the analogy ends here. Upon the "anvil" of Lord Milner the "hammers" of the enemies of the Empire were worn out—*Tritantur mallei, remanet incus*.[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER IX

THE "CONCILIATION" MOVEMENT

The correspondence forwarded to the Colonial Office during the first half of the year 1900 by Lord Milner, and presented to the House of Commons in time for the Settlement debate of July 25th, furnishes a complete record of the origin of the "conciliation" movement. The whole of this interesting and significant collection of documents is worthy of attention; but all that can be done here is to direct the notice of the reader to one or two of its more salient features—features which illustrate the extraordinary condition of the Cape Colony, and explain how the disaffection of the Dutch subjects of the Crown was to be first aggravated, and then used as a means of saving the independence of the Republics. The position taken up by the Bond at the end of January (1900) in view of Mr. Schreiner's gradual conversion to the side of the Imperial Government, is sufficiently indicated in the resolution prepared for submission to the annual Congress, to which reference has been already[215] made. It was, in effect, a condemnation not only of the British Government, but of the Cape Government also, in so far as it had co-operated with the Imperial authorities, and a determination to prevent the war from being carried to a logical and successful conclusion by the incorporation of the Boer Republics into the system of British South Africa. The annual Congress, at which these opinions were to be affirmed, was announced to be held at Somerset East, on March 8th. Lord Milner, however, represented to Mr. Schreiner that it was very undesirable that such a demonstration should take place; and, through Mr. Schreiner's influence, the Congress was postponed. But the Prime Minister, in undertaking to use his influence with the Bond to prevent a denunciation of the policy of the Imperial Government at so critical a period, expressed the hope that the loyalists on their side would refrain from any public demonstration of an opposite character.

This abstinence from agitation, which was obviously desirable in the public interests at a time of intense political excitement, by no means suited the leaders of the Bond. *Ons Land*, in commenting upon the postponement of the Congress, incidentally reveals the real consideration which made it worth while for the Bond to promote an agitation of this kind. The Bond organ regrets that the Congress has been postponed. And why?

> "It is said that the [South African] League would have held a Congress had the Bond Congress been held. We have nothing to do with what the League does or does not do; as a matter of fact, its opinion has already been published in the Imperial Blue-books. We were of opinion that it would have been the duty of the Afrikander party to express itself at the Congress in unmistakable terms, and resolutely, in order thereby to maintain its true

position and strengthen the hands of its friends in England who have courageously and with self-sacrifice striven for the good and just cause."[216]

This, then, was the real object of the agitation—to "strengthen the hands of the friends of the Afrikander party in England." The writer of this article suggests, however, that there is still a prospect that the "good cause" may be promoted, after all, in the way which he desires.

of the movement.

This prospect was speedily realised. With characteristic astuteness, the Bond leaders discovered a method by which their object could be achieved without exposing themselves to the reproach of "stirring up strife." The meetings were to be held, not as Bond meetings, but as "conciliation" meetings. The manner in which the machinery of the conciliation movement was originally set in motion will appear from the following telegram, which President Krüger sent to President Steyn, on January 20th—that is, a little more than a month before the Bond Congress was postponed:

"A certain E. T. Hargrove, an English journalist, about whom Dr. Leyds formerly wrote that he had done much in Holland to work up the peace memorial to Queen Victoria, has come here, as he says, from Sauer and Merriman, who are ready to range themselves openly on our side, to make propaganda in the Cape Colony, provided an official declaration is given that the Republics only desire to secure complete independence. He wished that I should write a letter to Queen Victoria, but this I refused, and thought it desirable that I should write a letter to him personally, in which an answer is given to his question. He thinks that a great propaganda can be made in the Cape Colony, whereby influence can be brought to bear again on the English people and the world. I myself do not expect much result, but think that a letter can do good, and should be glad to have your opinion and observations as soon as possible."[217]

This telegram, one of the many documents found at Bloemfontein upon its occupation by Lord Roberts, is supplemented by the further facts disclosed by the investigations of the Concessions Commission, that a sum of £1,000 was advanced to Mr. Hargrove by the manager of the Netherlands Railway on February 3rd, 1900, and that this loan, paid in specie, was "debited to the account 'Political Situation,' to be hereafter arranged with the Government." The purposes for which Mr. Hargrove secured this large sum are stated in the

following question and answer:

ırgrove's £1,000.

Q. 591. "Did he ask for money to carry out this object [*i.e.* to stop the war on the assurance that the Boers wanted nothing more than their independence]?"

MR. J. VAN KRETSCHMAR, General Manager of the Netherlands South African Railway Company: "Yes; he said he had travelling expenses to defray, a lot of publications to issue, and books to be written, and he asked for money for these purposes."[218]

Three months later President Krüger's telegram was laid before the two ministers whose names it contained by Mr. Schreiner, at Lord Milner's request, in order that they might have an opportunity of "repudiating or explaining the allegations affecting themselves which it contained." Both Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer denied that Mr. Hargrove had received any authority from them to use their names "in the manner which he appeared to have done." And on April 19th Mr. Merriman himself wrote to Mr. Hargrove to ask for an explanation. To this letter Mr. Hargrove replied immediately:

> "This is not an answer to your note of this date, but is to ask you to allow me to show your note to a friend of yours and of mine. As it is marked 'private' I cannot do this until I hear from you. Would you be so good as to send word by the driver of the cab which waits?..."

In a second letter, written on the same day (April 19th), and presumably after he had consulted the mutual friend in question, Mr. Hargrove wrote:

> "Knowing as you do that I never told you of my proposed trip to Pretoria, that I never talked the matter over with you in any shape or form, you may be sure that when I got there I did not speak or make promises in your behalf. But I did mention your name in this way: I told President Krüger of a conversation I had had with Mr. Sauer, in which I had asked him what his attitude would be in the event of the Republics offering to withdraw their forces from colonial territory on the condition that their independence would be recognised. Mr. Sauer's reply was that, in those circumstances he would, in his personal capacity, most certainly urge the acceptance of that offer, and that, although he could speak for himself only, he thought it probable you would do the same."

Mr. Hargrove adds that the "misconception" embodied in President Krüger's telegram is due to the circumstance that it was probably "dictated in a hurry, amidst a rush of other business," and contained a "hasty and more or less careless account" of a "long talk" translated to the President by Mr. Reitz from English into Dutch.

Mr. Hargrove at the same time forwarded a copy of this letter to Mr. Sauer. With this latter minister of the Crown he enjoyed a more intimate acquaintance, since, as Lord Milner points out,[219] he had been Mr. Sauer's travelling companion during this latter's "well-meant, but unsuccessful, journey to Wodehouse, which was immediately followed by the rebellion of that district."

raaf Reinet congress.

This, then, was the character of the man who travelled throughout the Colony, addressing meetings of the Dutch population, in order that "the hands of the friends of the Afrikander party in England might be strengthened." At the People's Congress, held at Graaf Reinet (May 30th) he rose to his full stature. "The worst foes of the British Empire," he said,[220] "were not the Boers, but those who had set up the howl for annexation." And he concluded by urging his audience to renew their hopes, for he believed that "if they did everything in their power to show what was right they would win in the end." On the following day Mr. Hargrove was asked, in the name of the Congress, to continue his agitation in England. The Congress, however, did not propose to rely exclusively upon Mr. Hargrove's efforts. It resolved to send a deputation of Cape colonists "to tell the simple truth as they know it" to the people of Great Britain and Ireland.

There is one other fact which is disclosed by this official correspondence from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State which cannot be overlooked. Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer both repudiated absolutely President Krüger's statement that Mr. Hargrove "had come here [*i.e.* to Pretoria], as he says, from Sauer and Merriman." In view of this repudiation, it is somewhat startling to find that the letters covering the minutes of the conciliation meetings, forwarded to Lord Milner from time to time with the request that they may be sent on to the Colonial Office, bear the signature of Mr. Albert Cartwright, as honorary secretary of the Conciliation Committee of South Africa. Mr. Albert Cartwright was editor of *The South African News*—that is to say, of the journal which, as we have noticed before, served as the medium for the expression of the political

views of Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer. At the period in question *The South African News* rendered itself notorious by circulating the absurd, but none the less injurious, report that General Buller and his army had surrendered to the Boers in Natal and agreed to return to England on parole; by publishing stories of imaginary Boer victories; by eulogising Mr. Hargrove, whose acceptance of the £1,000 from the Netherlands Railway it definitely denied; and by its persistent and vehement denunciations of Lord Milner. At a later period Mr. Cartwright was convicted of a defamatory libel on Lord Kitchener, and condemned to a term of imprisonment.[221]

evous effects.

The situation thus brought about is described by Lord Milner in a passage in the despatch[222] which covers the transmission of the newspaper report of the People's Congress at Graaf Reinet. After stating that in return for Mr. Schreiner's efforts to secure the postponement of the Bond Congress, he had himself persuaded the leaders of the Progressive party to abstain from any public demonstration of their opinions, he writes:

> "There was a truce of God on both sides. Then came the 'conciliation' movement, and the country was stirred from end to end by a series of meetings much more violent and mischievous than the regular Bond Congress would have been, though, of course, on the same lines. The truce being thus broken, it would have been useless—and, as a matter of fact, I did not attempt—to restrain an expression of opinion on the other side. Hence the long series of meetings held in British centres to pronounce in favour of the annexation of both Republics, and to give cordial support to the policy of Her Majesty's Government and myself personally. On the whole, the utterances at these meetings have been marked by a moderation totally absent in the tone of the conciliators. But no doubt a certain number of violent things have been said, and a certain amount of unnecessary heat generated. I do not think, however, that those [the loyalists] who have held these meetings, under extraordinary provocation, are greatly to blame if this has occasionally been the case."

That the "conciliation" movement exercised a most injurious influence in a colony of which a considerable area was in rebellion or under martial law, and where the majority of the inhabitants were in sympathy with the enemy is obvious. But from the point of view of the Afrikander nationalists it was an

intelligible and effective method of promoting the objects which they had in view. What is amazing is the part which was played in it by Englishmen, and the confident manner in which the promoters of the movement relied upon the political co-operation of the friends of the Boers in the ranks of the Liberal party in England. Every Afrikander who attended these meetings knew that he was doing his best to arouse hatred against the Englishman and sympathy for the Boer. The nature of the resolutions to which he gave his adherence left him in no doubt on this point.

> "The war," said Mr. A. B. de Villiers, at the People's Congress, "was the most unrighteous war that was ever pursued. The simple aim was to seize the Republics. If that was persisted in, Afrikanders would not rest.... Britain would efface the Republics and make the people slaves. Race hatred would then be prolonged from generation to generation."

To publish abroad such opinions as these was obviously to invite rebellion in the Cape Colony, to encourage the resistance of the Boers, and to embarrass the British authorities, both civil and military, throughout South Africa. This was precisely what the Afrikander nationalist desired to do. But what is to be thought of the Englishmen who, both in the Cape Colony and in England, took part in this "conciliation" movement? Surely they did not desire these same results. Were they, then, the comrades or the dupes of the Afrikander nationalists? This is a question upon which the individual reader may be left to form his own judgment.

des or dupes.

This much, at least, is certain. What gave the Afrikander nationalists the power to bring about the second invasion of the Cape Colony, and to inflict a year and a half of guerilla warfare upon South Africa, was the co-operation of these Englishmen—whether comrades or dupes—who opposed the annexation of the Republics. The intense sympathy felt by the Afrikanders for their defeated kinsmen was natural; but the means by which it was enflamed were artificial. Lord Milner himself, with his accustomed serenity of judgment, refused to take a "gloomy view" of the question of racial relations in the Colony, still less in South Africa as a whole.

> "If it is true," he wrote on June 6th, "as the 'conciliators' are never tired of threatening us, that race hatred will be eternal, why should they make such furious efforts to keep it up at the present moment? The very vehemence of

their declarations that the Afrikanders will never forgive, nor forget, nor acquiesce, seems to me to indicate a considerable and well-justified anxiety on their part lest these terrible things should, after all, happen."

But while the Cape Colony was in the throes of this agitation, British soldiers were gallantly fighting their way to Johannesburg and Pretoria. During the six weeks of Lord Roberts's "prolonged and enforced halt" at Bloemfontein (March 13th—May 1st), and subsequently, while the Army was advancing upon the Transvaal, considerable progress was made in the work of clearing the Colony of the republican invaders and re-establishing British authority in the districts in which the Dutch had risen in rebellion. In the course of these operations a large number of rebels had fallen into the hands of the Imperial military authorities, and it was the question of the treatment of these colonial rebels that was destined to bring Mr. Schreiner into direct conflict with those of his ministers who still held the opinions of the Bond.

nishment of rebels.

In the middle of April Lord Milner had received from Mr. Chamberlain a despatch containing a preliminary statement of the opinion of the Home Government upon the two questions of the compensation of loyalists and the punishment of rebels, and on April 14th he requested his ministers to give formal expression to their views upon the subjects to which Mr. Chamberlain had drawn his attention. A fortnight later Lord Milner reported to the Home Government the conclusions at which Mr. Schreiner and his fellow-ministers had arrived. Trial by jury for persons indicted for high treason must be abandoned, since it would be impossible for the Crown to obtain the necessary convictions, and a special tribunal must be established by statute. As regards the nature of the punishment to be inflicted upon the rebels, Mr. Schreiner wrote:

"Ministers submit that the ends of justice would be served by the selection of a certain limited number of the principal offenders, whose trials would mark the magnitude of their offence and whose punishment, if found guilty, would act as a deterrent. For the remainder, ministers believe that the interests both of sound policy and of public morality would be served if Her Gracious Majesty were moved to issue, as an act of grace, a Proclamation of amnesty under which, upon giving proper security for their good behaviour, all persons chargeable with high treason, except those held for trial, might be enlarged and allowed to return to their avocations."[223]

The substance of the Ministers' Minutes containing these conclusions, and the arguments by which they were supported—notably an appeal to the "Canadian precedent"—were telegraphed to the Home Government, and on May 4th Mr. Chamberlain replied, also by telegram. While the people of Great Britain were animated by no vindictive feeling against "those who had been or were in arms against Her Majesty's forces, whether enemies or rebels"—did, in fact, desire that all racial animosity should disappear in South Africa at the earliest possible moment after the war was over—the "sentiments of both sides" must be taken into consideration. The consequences which would ensue from "the rankling sense of injustice" that would arise if the rebels were actually placed in a better position after the struggle was over than those who had risked life and property in the determination to remain "loyal to their Queen and flag," would be no less serious than the bad results to be anticipated from any display of a revengeful policy on the part of the loyalists. He continued:

"Clemency to rebels is a policy which has the hearty sympathy of Her Majesty's Government, but justice to loyalists is an obligation of duty and honour. The question is, how can these two policies be harmonised? It is clear that, in the interest of future peace, it is necessary to show that rebellion cannot be indulged in with impunity, and above all that, if unsuccessful, it is not a profitable business for the rebel. Otherwise the State would be offering a premium to rebellion. The present moment, therefore, while the war is still proceeding, and while efforts may still be made to tempt British subjects into rebellious courses, is in any case not appropriate for announcing that such action may be indulged in with absolute impunity. And if, as has been suggested, a great many of the Queen's rebellious subjects are the mere tools of those who have deceived them, it is important that these should be made aware individually that, whatever their leaders may tell them, rebellion is a punishable offence.

ıstice.

"Up to this time very lenient treatment has been meted out to rebels. Although, according to the law of the Cape Colony, and under martial law, the punishment of death might have been inflicted, in no case has any rebel suffered the capital penalty, and the vast majority have been permitted for the present to return to their homes and to resume their occupations. There are many degrees in the crime of rebellion. Her Majesty's Government desire that in any case means shall be found for dealing effectually with: (1) The ringleaders and promoters; (2) those who have committed outrages or looted the property of their loyal

fellow-subjects; (3) those who have committed acts contrary to the usages of civilised warfare, such as abuse of the white flag, firing on hospitals, etc. There remain (4) those who, though not guilty, of either of those offences, have openly and willingly waged war against Her Majesty's forces; (5) those who confined themselves to aiding Her Majesty's enemies by giving information or furnishing provisions; and (6) those who can satisfactorily prove that they acted under compulsion. In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government a distinction ought to be, if possible, drawn between these different classes.

"Her Majesty's Government recognise the difficulty of indicting for high treason all who have taken part with the enemy, and they would suggest, for the consideration of your ministers, the expediency of investing either the Special Judicial Commission which, as stated in your telegram of 28th April, is contemplated by your ministers, or a separate Commission, with powers to schedule the names of all persons implicated in the rebellion under the various heads indicated above. It would be necessary to decide beforehand how the different categories should then be dealt with. As regards 1, 2, and 3, they would, of course, be brought before the Judicial Commission and tried by them. Might not 4 and 5 be allowed to plead guilty, and be thereupon either sentenced to a fine carrying with it disfranchisement, or released on recognisances, to come up for judgment when called upon (this also to involve disfranchisement), while 6 might be subjected to disfranchisement alone? Her Majesty's Government offer these as suggestions for the consideration of your ministers.

"In regard to the reasons urged by your ministers in favour of a general amnesty, Her Majesty's Government would point out that they are of a highly controversial character, and it is impossible to discuss them fully at a moment when an indication of the views of Her Majesty's Government is urgently required. Her Majesty's Government would only observe that the policy which they have indicated in this telegram appears to them to be one not merely of justice, but of clemency, which the whole white population of the Colony might well accept as satisfactory, and which should not, any more than the ordinary administration of justice, encourage the natives to think that the two white races are permanently disunited, while with especial reference to the third reason, it may be observed that the expediency of the action to be taken in such cases depends upon circumstances which must vary greatly according to date and locality. In Lower Canada in 1837-38 there was a revolt during peace against the Queen's authority, founded on grievances under constitutional conditions which were recognised as unsatisfactory by the Government of the day, and altered by

subsequent legislation. In the Cape there has been adhesion to the Queen's enemies during war by those who have not even the pretext of any grievance, and who have for a generation enjoyed full constitutional liberty. In Canada the insurrection was never a formidable one from a military point of view; in the Cape it has added very largely to the cost and difficulty of the war, and has entailed danger and heavy loss to Her Majesty's troops."[224]

inistry divided.

This estimate of the guilt of the Cape rebels—moderate in the light of British colonial history, merciful beyond dispute as judged by the practice of foreign States—failed to commend itself to the Afrikander Ministry. On May 29th, when the full text of the Cape ministers' minutes and enclosures had reached the Colonial Office, Lord Milner inquired of Mr. Chamberlain, on behalf of his ministers, whether the disfranchisement proposed was for life or for a period only; and further, whether, in view of their fuller knowledge of the representations of the Cape Ministry, the views of the Home Government were still to be accepted as those expressed in the despatch of May 4th. To these questions Mr. Chamberlain replied, by telegram, on June 10th, that the Government continued to hold the opinion that the policy already suggested should be substantially adhered to; while, as to the period of disfranchisement, he pointed out that—

> "conviction and sentence for high treason carried with it disfranchisement for life, and if the offenders were spared the other and severer penalties of rebellion, justice seemed to demand that they should suffer the full political penalty. Disfranchisement for life did not seem to Her Majesty's Government to be a very serious punishment for rebellion."

hreiner resigns.

On June 11th Lord Milner was informed by Mr. Schreiner that ministers were hopelessly divided on the subject of the treatment of the rebels, and that their differences could not be composed, and on the following day he replied that, if he could not receive the support of a unanimous Cabinet to which he, as Governor, was constitutionally entitled, he would be compelled, in the discharge of his duty, to seek it elsewhere. Mr. Schreiner's resignation, which was placed in Lord Milner's hands on the next day, was followed by the appointment, on June 18th, of a Progressive Ministry with Sir Gordon Sprigg as Prime Minister and Sir James Rose Innes as Attorney-General. Mr. Schreiner, in his memorandum of

June 11th, had forwarded to Lord Milner documents containing particulars of the individual views of the members of his Cabinet. Mr. Solomon, the Attorney-General, was prepared to adopt a policy in respect of the treatment of the rebels, and the machinery by which that policy was to be carried out, which appeared to him to involve nothing that would prevent "complete accord between Her Majesty's Government and this Government on the question." And in this view both Mr. Schreiner and Mr. Herholdt concurred. But the remaining members of the Cabinet were entirely opposed to any policy other than that of granting a general amnesty to all rebels except the "principal offenders," and allowing these latter to be tried by the machinery of justice already in existence—*i.e.* by Afrikander juries. The minutes which they respectively addressed to the Prime Minister were bitter invectives directed alike against the Home Government and Lord Milner.

> "We are asked," Mr. Merriman wrote, on his own and Mr. Sauer's behalf, with reference to the suggestions of the Home Government, "to deal with a number of men who have, at worst, taken up arms in what they, however erroneously, considered to be a righteous war—a war in which they joined the Queen's enemies to resist what prominent men both here and in England have repeatedly spoken of as a crime.... These men, irrespective of class, we are asked to put under a common political proscription, to deprive them of their civil rights, and by so doing (in fact, this is the main commendation of the measure to the "loyals") to deprive their friends and kinsfolk, who have rendered the Colony yeoman service at the most critical time, of that legitimate influence which belongs to a majority. We are asked, in fact, to create a class of political 'helots' in South Africa, where we are now waging a bloody and costly war ostensibly for the purpose of putting an end to a similar state of affairs."

Of course, all this and much more might have been read at any time since the war began in the columns of *The South African News*, but in a minister's memorandum to the Prime Minister, and over the signature "John X. Merriman," its naked hostility arrests the mind. Dr. Te Water's memorandum, although much shorter than that of Mr. Merriman, is even more outspoken. To him, the direct representative of the republican nationalists in the Afrikander Cabinet, amnesty for the rebels is the "sound and proper policy." And naturally, since in his eyes the rebels themselves are—

> "British subjects of Dutch extraction who, after vainly endeavouring, by

all possible constitutional means, to prevent what they, in common with the rest of the civilised world, believe to be an unjust and infamous war against their near kinsmen, aided the Republics in the terrible struggle forced upon them."[225]

ressive ministry.

This is vitriol-throwing, but it is none the less significant. These three men formed half of the six ministers to whom collectively, Lord Milner, as Governor of the Cape Colony, had to look for advice during the two critical years that the Afrikander party was in power. Fortunately, in his capacity of High Commissioner for South Africa, he was free to act without their advice, as the representative of the Queen. Even so, his achievement is little less than marvellous. Aided by Mr. Schreiner's pathetic sense of loyalty to the person of the sovereign, he had kept the Cape Government outwardly true to its allegiance. The long hours of patient remonstrance, the word-battles from which the Prime Minister had risen sometimes white with passionate resentment, had not been useless. By tact, by serenity of disposition, by depth of conviction, and latterly by sheer force of argument, Lord Milner had won Mr. Schreiner, not indeed to the side of England, but at least to the side of that Empire-State of which England was the head. With the Prime Minister went Sir Richard Solomon, Mr. Herholdt, and one or two of the Afrikander rank and file. Thus reinforced, the Progressives commanded a working majority in the Legislative Assembly, and the ascendancy of the Afrikander party was at an end.

Apart from the secession of Mr. Schreiner and his immediate followers, the Parliamentary strength of the Afrikander party was lessened by another circumstance, to which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman referred in the debate on the South African Settlement in the House of Commons on July 25th. Certain members of the Cape Parliament, said the leader of the Liberal Opposition, had been arrested for high treason, with the result that the Afrikander party was deprived of their votes, and the balance of power between that party and the Progressive party was upset. And he protested against this manner of turning an Afrikander majority into a minority. The reply which these remarks on the part of this friend of the Afrikander party in England drew from the Government is instructive:

"May I remind the right honourable gentleman," said Mr. Balfour, "that the balance of parties was disturbed by another and different cause on which

> he has made no protest? Some members of that Parliament, not sharing the views of those who are imprisoned, are now fighting at the front and risking their lives in the defence of the Empire. Their party is deprived of their services in the Cape Parliament, and I should have thought that this would have affected the right honourable gentleman much more than the absence of men who, under any circumstances, must be supposed to be under the darkest suspicion as to their view and policy respecting the country to which they owe allegiance."

The Cape Parliament met under the new Ministry in July, and the chief business of the session, which lasted until the middle of October, was the passing of the Treason Bill. On July 9th Lord Milner was able to inform Mr. Chamberlain (by telegram) that the Bill had been prepared, and to indicate the nature of its main provisions. These were: (1) An indemnity for acts done under martial law; (2) the establishment of a Special Court to try cases in which the Attorney-General might decide to indict any person for high treason, such cases to be tried without a jury; (3) the establishment of a Special Commission to "deal with rebels not so indicted and to punish all found guilty with disfranchisement for five years from the date of conviction"; and (4) the legalisation of the already existing Compensation Commission. In a despatch dated July 26th—the day after the Settlement debate in the House of Commons—Mr. Chamberlain replied at length to the arguments put forward by the Schreiner Ministry in favour of a general amnesty, and exposed in particular the historical inaccuracy of the appeal to the "Canadian precedent." At the same time he stated that Her Majesty's Government, while they could not be a consenting party to a policy condoning adhesion to the enemy in the field, had no doubt that "such a measure of penalty as the mass of loyal opinion in the Colony considered adequate would meet with their concurrence." That is to say, the proposal of the Home Government for disfranchisement for life was not pressed, but was abandoned in favour of the lenient penalty originally proposed by Sir Richard Solomon, independently of any consideration of the views of the Colonial Office, and now adopted by the Progressive Ministry.

eason bill.

In spite of its leniency, the Treason Bill met with the violent and protracted resistance of the Afrikander party in the Legislative Assembly. The opportunity thus afforded for the delivery of fierce invectives against the Imperial authorities was utilised to the full, and the fires of disaffection lighted by the "Conciliation"

meetings were kindled anew into the second and more disastrous conflagration that culminated in the proceedings of the Worcester Conference (December 6th). In the Cape Parliamentary Reports the picture of this nightmare session is to be found faithfully presented in all its ugly and grotesque details. Two facts will serve to show to what a degree the members of the Legislative Assembly of this British colony had identified themselves with the cause of the enemy. The first is the circumstance that it was a common practice of the Afrikander members to refer in Parliament to the military successes of the Boers with pride as "our" victories. The second is the fact that Mr. Sauer, only three months ago a minister of the Crown, declared, in opposing the second reading of the Bill, that "a time would come when there would be very few Dutchmen who would not blush when they told their children that they had not helped their fellow-countrymen in their hour of need."[226] Morally, though not legally, the Afrikander members had gone over to the enemy no less than the rebels who had taken up arms against their sovereign. This was the "loyalty" of the Bond.

visits the colonies.

The Treason Bill was promulgated, under the title of "The Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act, 1900," on October 12th. On the same day Lord Milner left Capetown for a brief visit to the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. The intention of the Home Government to place the administrative and economic reconstruction of the new colonies in his hands had been made known to him informally; and it was obviously desirable, therefore, that he should acquaint himself with the actual state of affairs as soon as possible. After a somewhat adventurous journey through the Orange River Colony, he reached Pretoria on the 15th, and remained at the capital until the 22nd. He then proceeded to Johannesburg, where he spent the next three days (October 22nd to 25th). At both places he made provisional arrangements, in consultation with Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, for the early establishment of so much of the machinery of civil administration as the exigencies of the military situation permitted. Leaving Johannesburg on the 25th, the High Commissioner stopped for the night at Kroonstad, *en route* for Bloemfontein. On the morning following he woke up to find the train still motionless, since the line had been cut by the Boers—an almost daily occurrence at this period of the war. After a few hours, however, the journey was resumed; but the High Commissioner's train was preceded by an armoured train as far as Smalldeel, from which point it ran without escort to Bloemfontein, where he remained until November 1st. Here, in addition to making the necessary arrangements for the beginning of civil

administration in the Orange River Colony, Lord Milner had the satisfaction of inaugurating the career of the South African Constabulary under the command of Major-General Baden-Powell. The departure from Bloemfontein was delayed for a few hours by the destruction of the span of a railway bridge by the Boers; but at 12 o'clock the High Commissioner's train, again preceded by its armoured companion, was able to resume its journey southwards. In the course of the following day (November 2nd) the English mail, going northwards from Capetown, was met, and among other communications which Lord Milner then received was the despatch of October 18th enclosing the commissions under which he was appointed to administer the new colonies upon Lord Roberts's approaching return to England.

Lord Milner arrived at Capetown on November 3rd. During his three weeks' absence the situation in the Cape Colony had changed for the worse. After the Treason Bill debates the anti-British propaganda, still carried on under the grotesque pretence of promoting "conciliation," had taken a different and more sinister form. To their denunciation of the Home Government and its treatment of the Republics, the Afrikander nationalists now added slander and abuse of the British and colonial troops in South Africa. In order to understand how such calumnies were possible in the face of the singular humanity with which the military operations of the Imperial troops had been conducted, a brief reference to the course of the war is necessary. The change from regular to guerilla warfare initiated by the Boer leaders in the later months of this year (1900), and the consequent withdrawal of British garrisons from insecurely held districts both in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, were accompanied by the return to arms of many burghers who, on taking the oath of neutrality, had been allowed to resume their civil occupations. This breach of faith, whether voluntary or compulsory, compelled the British military commanders to adopt measures of greater severity in the operations undertaken for the reconquest of the revolted areas. The punishment inflicted upon the inhabitants of such areas, especially those adjoining the colonial border, although merciful in comparison with the penalties actually incurred under the laws of war by those who, having surrendered, resumed their arms, was considerably more rigorous than the treatment to which the republican Dutch had been originally subjected. This legitimate and necessary increase of severity, displayed by the British commanders in districts where the burghers had surrendered, and then taken up arms a second, or even a third time, was the sole basis of fact upon which the Afrikander nationalists in the Cape Colony founded the vast volume of imaginary outrage and inhumanity on the part of the Imperial troops which Sir

Henry Campbell-Bannerman was held subsequently to have endorsed by accusing the British Government of carrying on the war in South Africa by "methods of barbarism."[227]

on the British troops.

The weapon now adopted for the anti-British campaign was the circulation through the Bond Press, Dutch and English, of accounts of cruel or infamous acts alleged to have been committed by British soldiers, and described with every detail calculated to arouse the passionate resentment of the colonial Dutch. There is only one way in which the reader can be brought to understand the wantonly false and wholly disgraceful character of these libels. It is to place before his eyes the literal translation of two examples, printed in Dutch in *The Worcester Advertiser* of November 23rd, 1900; that is to say, in anticipation of the People's Congress, which was to be held less than a fortnight later (December 6th) at the little town in the Western Province so named. The article is headed: "Dreadful Murders perpetrated on Farmers, Women, and Children, near Boshoff:

xamples.

"... This unfortunate man [a Boer prisoner] left behind him his dear wife and four children. One or two days after his departure there came a couple of heroes in the house of the unfortunate woman, locked the doors and set fire to the curtains. The woman, awfully frightened by it, was in a cruel way handled by these ruffians, and compelled to make known where the guns and ammunition were hidden. The poor woman, surrounded by her dear children (who were from time to time pushed back by these soldiers), answered that she could swear before the holy God that there was not a single gun or cartridge or anything of that sort hidden on that farm. In the meantime the curtains were destroyed by the smoke and flames to ashes. The house, at least, was not attacked by the flames, but the low, mean lot put at the four corners of the house a certain amount of dynamite, to destroy it in this way.

"The heroic warrior and commander over a portion of the civilised (?) British troops knocked with great force at the door of the house—where still the poor wife and children were upon their knees praying to the Heavenly Father for deliverance—saying, 'I give you ten minutes' time to acquaint me and point out to me where the weapons and ammunition are hidden, and if you do not comply I shall make the house and all fly into the air.' The poor wife fell upon her knees before the cruel man; prayed the cruel man to spare her and her children, where God was her witness there was nothing of the kind on the farm, neither was there anything stowed away in the house.

"Standing before him, as if deprived of her senses, [was] the poor wife with her four innocent children, and when the ten minutes had expired house and all were blown to atoms with dynamite, and [there were] laid in ruins, the bodies of the deplorable five. May the good God receive their souls with Him!...

"A wife of a Transvaal Boer (who is still in the field, fighting for his freedom and right) was lodging with one of her relations, when, two days later, after she had given birth to a baby boy, she was visited by seven warriors, or so-called Tommy Atkins; the young urchin was taken away from its mother by its two legs, by the so-called noble British, and his head battered in against the bed-post until it had breathed its last, and thereupon thrown out by the door as if it was the carcase of a cat or dog. Then these damn wretches began their play with this poor and weak woman, who only 48 hours before was delivered of a child. The poor wife was treated so low and debauched by this seven that she, after a few hours, gave up the spirit, and like her child [was] murdered in the most dissolute

manner.... Can we longer allow that our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, relatives, yes, our children, are murdered by these coward and common murderers? or has not the time yet arrived to prevent this civilised nation, or to punish them for their atrocities?"[228]

On November 26th *The South African News* published the translation of a letter to the Press, written by a member of the Legislative Assembly, in view of the same meeting:

"I am yet glad that another People's Congress will be held.

"It is our duty to speak now; it is more than time to protest, as British subjects, against the extermination of defenceless women and children....

"But, in Heaven's name, let the Congress be a People's Congress in reality. Let no one or other stay away for one or other small difficulty. Let members of Parliament, clergymen, yes, every man, old or young, be present at Worcester on the 6th of December next. Let them turn up in numbers. Let us use our rights as British subjects in a worthy and decided manner. Let us at least adopt three petitions or resolutions: (1) Praying Her Majesty, our Gracious Queen, to make an end to the burning of homes and the ill-treatment of helpless women and children; if not, that they may be murdered at once, rather than die slowly by hunger and torture; (2) a petition in which it be urged that the war should be ended, and the Republics allowed to retain their independence; and finally, a pledge that those who do not wish to sign these petitions will no longer be supported by us in any way.

"[No shopkeeper, attorney, doctor, master, or any one—no victuals, meat, bread, meal, sheep, oxen, horses, vegetables, fruit whatsoever will he sell to the jingoes until the wrong is righted and compensated.]

"The dam is full. Our nation cannot, dare not, say with Cain, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' There must be a way out for the overflowing water. Disloyal deeds and talk are wrong. But if we, as a nation, as one man, earnestly and decisively lay our hands to the plough in a constitutional manner, and are determined, I trust, through God's help, we shall—yes, we must—win."

The passage placed in brackets, in which this member of the Cape Parliament urges that all who may refuse to sign the two "petitions" should be rigorously boycotted, was omitted—without any indication of omission—by *The South*

African News. *Ons Land*, on the other hand, expressed approval of the letter as it stood.[229]

orcester congress.

These were the kind of stories, and the kind of appeals, with which the mind of the colonial Dutch had been inflamed by the nationalist leaders when the Worcester Congress met. The gathering is said to have consisted of between 8,000 and 10,000 persons; and its promoters claimed that a far larger number—120,000 persons—were represented by the deputies sent from ninety-seven districts in the Colony. At the close of the meeting a deputation was appointed to lay the resolutions passed by the Congress before the High Commissioner, and request him to bring them officially to the notice of the Home Government. It was composed of Mr. de Villiers, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church; a member of the Legislative Council; the member of the Legislative Assembly for Worcester, and two others. This deputation was received by Lord Milner at Government House on December 11th, and the circumstances of the remarkable interview which then took place present a striking picture of the state of the Colony at this time, and of the extraordinary attitude which the mass of the Dutch population had assumed towards the representative of their sovereign. It is one of those illuminating occasions in which a whole situation is, as it were, gathered up into a single scene.

The disloyal purpose of the deputation is heightened rather than concealed by the disguise of the constitutional forms in which it is clothed. The scarcely veiled demand for the independence of the Cape Colony, now put forward by the Afrikander nationalists, is as magnificently audacious as the ultimatum. Knowing the infamous character of the methods by which the agitation in favour of the Boers was being promoted, Lord Milner might have been excused if he had given way to some strong expressions of indignation. No such note, however, is heard in his reply. He is as dry and passionless as an attorney receiving his clients. Yet his words are as frank as his manner is composed. To these delegates he speaks the most terrible truths with the same freedom as he would have used, if the business of their errand had been a pleasant interchange of compliments, instead of a grim defiance that might, or might not, be converted from words into deeds.

ation to Lord Milner.

Lord Milner, who is accompanied only by his private secretary, surprises the

deputation at the outset by requesting that the resolutions may be read forthwith in his presence. They are:

"1. We, men and women of South Africa assembled and represented here, having heard the report of the people's deputation to England, and having taken into earnest consideration the deplorable condition into which the peoples of South Africa have been plunged, and the grave dangers threatening our civilisation, record our solemn conviction that the highest interest of South Africa demand (1) A termination of the war now raging, with its untold misery and horror, as well as the burning of houses, the devastation of the country, the extermination of a white nationality, and the treatment to which women and children are subjected, which was bound to leave a lasting legacy of bitterness and hatred, while seriously endangering the future relationship between the forces of civilisation and barbarism in South Africa; and (2) the retention by the Republics of their independence, whereby alone the peace of South Africa can be maintained.

"2. That this meeting desires a full recognition of the right of the people of this Colony to settle and manage its own affairs, and expresses its grave disapproval of the policy pursued and adopted in this matter by the Governor and High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner.

"3. That this Congress solemnly pledges itself to labour in a constitutional way unceasingly for the attainment of the objects contained in the above resolutions, and resolves to send a deputation to His Excellency Sir Alfred Milner to bring these resolutions officially to the notice of Her Majesty's Government."

These resolutions having been read, Mr. de Villiers proceeds to make two points. First, there will be no lasting peace in South Africa until the independence of the Republics is restored; unless this is done, race feeling will go on prevailing "for generations." And, second, it is the "devastation of property" and "the treatment of the women and children" by the British that has roused the colonial Dutch to assemble at the Congress. Mr. Pretorius, the member of the Legislative Council, then drives home both of these points by a short but emphatic speech, delivered in Dutch, in which he asserts that one of the consequences of the war will be a "never-ending irreconcilable racial hatred" between the British and Dutch inhabitants.[230] Lord Milner then rises from his chair and replies to the deputation:

Milner's reply.

"I accede to your request to bring these resolutions to the notice of Her Majesty's Government. I think it is doubtful whether I ought to do so, but in view of the prevailing bitterness and excitement it is better to err, if one must err, on the side of conciliation and fairness. And, having regard especially to the fact that one of the resolutions is directed against myself, I wish to avoid any appearance of a desire to suppress its companions on account of it. But, having gone thus far on the road of concession, I take the liberty, in no unfriendly and polemical spirit, of asking you quite frankly what good you think can be done by resolutions of this character? I am not now referring to the resolution against myself. That is a matter of very minor importance. The pith of the whole business is in resolution number one, a resolution evidently framed with great care by the clever men who are engineering the present agitation in the Colony. Now, that resolution a

War no longer justifiable.

things—a termination of the war, and the restoration of the independence of the Republics. In desiring the termination of the war we are all agreed, but nothing can be less conducive to the attainment of that end than to encourage in those who are still carrying on a hopeless resistance the idea that there is any, even the remotest chance, of the policy of annexation being reversed. I am not now speaking for myself. This is not a question for me. I am simply directing your attention to the repeatedly declared policy of Her Majesty's Government, a policy just endorsed by an enormous majority of the nation, and not only by the ordinary supporters of the Government, but by the bulk of those ordinarily opposed to it. Moreover, that policy is approved by all the great self-governing colonies of the Empire, except this one, and in this one by something like half the white population, and practically the whole of the native. And this approving half of the white population, be it observed, embraces all those who, in the recent hour of danger, when this Colony itself was invaded and partially annexed, fought and suffered for the cause of Queen and Empire. I ask you, is it reasonable to suppose that Her Majesty's Government is going back upon a policy deliberately adopted, repeatedly declared, and having this overwhelming weight of popular support throughout the whole Empire behind it? And if it is not, I ask you further: What is more likely to lead to a termination of the war—a recognition of the irrevocable nature of this policy, or the reiteration of menacing protests against it? And there is another respect in which I fear this resolution is little calculated to promote that speedy restoration of peace which we have all at heart. I refer to the tone of aggressive exaggeration which characterises its

allusions to the conduct of the war. No doubt the resolution is mild compared with some of the speeches by which it was supported, just as those speeches themselves were mild compared with much that we are now too well accustomed to hear and to read, in the way of misrepresentation and abuse of the British Government, British statesmen, British soldiers, the British people. But even the resolution, mild in comparison with such excesses, is greatly lacking in that sobriety and accuracy which it is so necessary for all of us to cultivate in these days of bitterly inflamed passions. It really is preposterous to talk, among other things, about 'the extermination of a white nationality,' or to give any sort of countenance to the now fully exploded calumny about the ill-treatment of women and children. The war, gentlemen, has its horrors—every war has. Those horrors increase as it becomes more irregular on the part of the enemy, thus necessitating severer measures on the part of the Imperial troops. But, having regard to the conditions, it is one of the most humane wars that has ever been waged in history. It has been humane, I contend, on both sides, which does not, of course, mean that on both sides there have not been isolated acts deserving of condemnation. Still, the general direction, the general spirit on both sides, has been humane. But it is another question whether the war on the side of the enemy is any longer justifiable. It is certainly not morally justifiable to carry on a resistance involving the loss of many lives and the destruction of an immense quantity of property, when the object of that resistance can no longer, by any possibility, be attained. No doubt, great allowance must be made for most of the men still under arms, though it is difficult to defend the conduct of their leaders in deceiving them. The bulk of the men still in the field are buoyed up with false hopes. They are incessantly fed with lies—lies as to their own chance of success, and, still worse, as to the intention of the British Government with regard to them should they surrender. And for that very reason it seems all the more regrettable that anything should be said or done here which could help still further to mislead them, still further to encourage a resistance which creates the very evils that these people are fighting to escape. It is because I am sincerely convinced that a resolution of this character, like the meeting at which it was passed, like the whole agitation of which that meeting is part, is calculated, if it has any effect at all, still further to mislead the men who are engaged in carrying on this hopeless struggle, that I feel bound, in sending it to Her Majesty's Government, to accompany it with this expression of my strong personal dissent."[231]

The comment of *Ons Land* upon Lord Milner's reply to the Worcester

Congress deputation was an open defiance of the Imperial authorities and a scarcely veiled incitement to rebellion. Mr. Advocate Malan, the editor, who had been elected for the Malmesbury Division upon the retirement of Mr. Schreiner —now rejected by the Bond—wrote:[232]

> "Sir Alfred Milner considers the request of the Afrikanders for peace and justice unreasonable. The agitation has now reached the end of the first period—that of pleading and petitioning. A deaf ear has been turned to the cry of the Afrikanders and their Church. But the battle for justice will continue from a different standpoint—by mental and material powers. The path will be hard, and sacrifices will be required, but the victory will be glorious!"

There were, of course, some voices that were raised, among both the republican and colonial Dutch, in favour of more moderate counsels. In the preceding month (November) Mr. Melius de Villiers, the late Chief Justice of the Free State, wrote to a Dutch Reformed minister in the Cape Colony to beg him to use all his influence against the efforts being made in the Cape Colony to encourage the Boers to continue the struggle. "However much I loved and valued the independence of the Free State," he says, "it is now absolutely certain that the struggle on the part of the burghers is a hopeless and useless one." And he then suggests that the Dutch Reformed ministers in the Cape Colony, instead of petitioning the Queen to grant the independence of the Republics, should intercede with ex-President Steyn and the Federal leaders and induce them to discontinue the fight. Women's Congresses and People's Congresses, held to denounce the barbarities perpetrated in the war, will avail nothing; but the Dutch Reformed Church could fulfil no higher mission than this genuine peace-making. "It may go against their grain to urge our people to yield," he adds, "but it seems to me a plain duty."[233] But such voices were powerless to counteract the effect produced upon the Boers by the demonstrations of hatred against the British Government, manifested by men whose minds had been inflamed by the infamous slanders of the Imperial troops to which the "conciliation" movement had given currency.

l invasion of the colony.

On the morning of December 16th, five days after he had received the Worcester Congress deputation, Lord Milner heard that the burgher forces had again crossed the Orange River between Aliwal North and Bethulie. Before them

lay hundreds of miles of country full of food and horses, and inhabited by people who were in sympathy with them. On the 20th martial law was proclaimed in twelve additional districts. On the 17th of the following month the whole of the Cape Colony, with the exception of Capetown, Simon's Town, Wynberg, Port Elizabeth, East London, and the native territories, was placed under the same military rule. In the words of a protest subsequently addressed by the Burgher Peace Committee to their Afrikander brethren, the "fatal result of the Worcester Congress had been that the commandos had again entered the Cape Colony." The friends of the Boers in England, duped by the Afrikander nationalists, had involved England and South Africa in a year and a half of costly, destructive, and unnecessary war.[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER X

THE DISARMAMENT OF THE DUTCH POPULATION

The new year (1901) opened with a full revelation of the magnitude of the task which lay before the Imperial troops. Lord Roberts had frankly recognised that the destruction of the Governments and organised armies of the Republics would be followed by the more difficult and lengthy task of disarming the entire Boer population within their borders.

> "Recent events have convinced me," he wrote from Pretoria on October 10th, 1900, "that the permanent tranquillity of the Orange River Colony and Transvaal is dependent on the complete disarmament of the inhabitants; and, though the extent of the country to be visited, and the ease with which guns, rifles, and ammunition can be hidden, will render the task a difficult one, its accomplishment is only a matter of time and patience."

That this task proved altogether more lengthy and more arduous than Lord Roberts at this time expected, was due mainly, though not exclusively, to the same cause as that which had placed the British army in a position of such grave disadvantage at the outbreak of the war—the play of party politics in England. Lord Roberts had foreseen that the process of disarming the Boers would be slow and difficult; but he had not anticipated that the Imperial troops would be

hindered in the accomplishment of this task by the political action of the friends of the Boers in England, or that the public utterances of prominent members of the Liberal Opposition would re-act with such dangerous effects upon the Afrikander nationalists that, after more than a year of successful military operations, the process of disarmament would have to be applied to the Cape Colony as well as to the territories of the late Republics.

Looking back to the year 1900, with the events of the intervening period before us, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the decision of the Boer leaders to continue the struggle was determined by political, and not by military considerations. More than one circumstance points to the fact that both the Boer generals and the civilian members of the Executives of the late Republics recognised that their position was practically hopeless from a military point of view.[234] And while Louis Botha, the Commandant-General of the Transvaal, urged his fellow-burghers to lay down their arms after the battle of Dalmanutha, it was President Steyn, a politician, and not a fighting man, who manifested the stubborn determination that was directly responsible for the unnecessary devastation and suffering which the guerilla war entailed upon the Boer people. The remote, but still carefully cherished possibility of foreign intervention, the belief that the colonial Dutch would even yet rise *en masse*, and the reliance upon the traditional sympathy of the Liberal party with the Boer aspirations for independence, were all considerations that contributed to the decision. But of these three influences the last was incomparably the most important; since it not only affected the disposition of the republican leaders, but, what was more, stimulated the Afrikander nationalists to make the efforts which brought the Dutch in the Cape Colony to the condition of passionate resentment that drew the Boer commandos, in the last month of 1900 and the opening months of 1901, a second time across the Orange River.

urious influence.

We have seen the actual origin of this most injurious influence. The "conciliation" movement was initiated in the Cape Colony by the Afrikander nationalists in concert with President Krüger, in order that "the hands of the friends of the Afrikander party in England might be strengthened." They were strengthened. We have observed the formation of a Conciliation Committee in England, working in close connection with the parent organisation, founded by Mr. Hargrove, in the Cape Colony; and we have noticed the declarations of Mr. Morley, Lord Courtney, and Mr. Bryce, in favour of the restoration of the

internal independence of the Boers—declarations all made in opposition to the expressed determination of the British Government to incorporate the Republics into the system of the British Empire. The official leader of the Liberal party was less consistent. In June, 1900, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman signified in general terms his recognition of the necessity of this measure. But he returned in October to vague expressions of sympathy with the Boers, which, after the general election had resulted in the return of the Unionist majority, took the form of a direct condemnation of the South African policy of the Government. In the course of the year 1901 he reiterated two charges with increasing vehemence. The conduct of the war was inhuman; and the Government, by refusing to offer any terms to the republican leaders inconsistent with the decision to incorporate the Republics into the Empire, were exacting the unnecessary humiliation of an unconditional surrender from a gallant foe. These injurious utterances at length provoked Lord Salisbury's indignant comment: "England is, I believe, the only country in which, during a great war, eminent men write and speak publicly as if they belonged to the enemy;" and elicited from Lord Rosebery, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Haldane, and Sir Henry Fowler, the assurance that the determination of the British people to "see the war through" had in no way weakened. But, in spite of these patriotic utterances on the part of the Liberal Imperialists, the fact remains that, throughout the whole period of the guerilla war, the Boer commandos were encouraged to resist the Imperial troops by the knowledge that prominent members of the Liberal party in England had declared themselves to be opposed to what they termed the "suppression" of the Boer people,[235] and were condemning in unmeasured terms the British military authorities for employing the sole methods by which the guerilla leaders could be encountered on equal terms, and the disarmament of the Dutch population could be accomplished.

party among the Boers.

There is another element in the attitude of the burgher population at this critical period, a knowledge of which is essential to a correct understanding of the methods and conditions of the guerilla war. The existence among the republican Dutch of a considerable body of opinion in favour of submission was a circumstance of which the Imperial authorities were aware, and one of which they desired, naturally enough, to take the fullest advantage. It was known also to the militant Boer leaders; and it is obvious that any estimate of the degree in which these leaders are to be held directly responsible for the loss and suffering entailed by the decision to continue the war, will depend largely upon the

manner in which they dealt with those members of their own community who were prepared, after Lord Roberts's victories, to become peaceable citizens of the British Empire.

The action of the Boer leaders in this respect is established by the indisputable testimony of the official documents which fell into the hands of the British authorities in the subsequent progress of the war. Every endeavour of the peace party to make itself heard was punished with rigorous, sometimes brutal, severity; fictitious reports, calculated to raise false hopes of foreign intervention, were circulated among the burghers in the field; and every effort was made to prevent a knowledge of the British Government's proposals for the future administration of the new colonies from reaching the rank and file of the burgher population. The details of this action on the part of the Boer leaders constitute collectively a body of evidence sufficient to have justified the employment of measures infinitely more severe than those which were in fact adopted by the British military authorities for the capture of the Boer commandos and the disarmament of the Dutch inhabitants of South Africa; and in the face of this evidence, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's reiterated charges against the Government, whether of "methods of barbarism" or of prolonging the war by the neglect to offer reasonable terms to the Boers, must be held as wanton in their origin as they were injurious in their results.

istrative changes.

The despatch of October 18th, 1900, which, as we have seen, Lord Milner received as he was returning from his visit to the new colonies, contained certain new commissions, under the terms of which the "prospective administration" of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony was placed in his hands in succession to Lord Roberts, while at the same time he remained Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa. This combination of offices was purely temporary, since Her Majesty's Government (Mr. Chamberlain wrote to Lord Milner) "were anxious to take advantage of his unique fitness for the great task of inaugurating the civil government of the two new colonies." It was proposed therefore, that, as soon as the necessary legal provision could be made for establishing constitutions for the two new colonies, Lord Milner should be appointed as their Governor, with a Lieutenant-Governor for the Orange River Colony, and should cease to be the Governor of the Cape Colony. This new arrangement, which, as Mr. Chamberlain pointed out, involved the severance of the High Commissionership from the Governorship of the Cape

Colony to which it had been attached for so long a period,[236] did not take effect, however, until the end of February, 1901, when Lord Milner finally left the Cape Colony for the Transvaal.

Lord Roberts relinquished the command of the British forces in South Africa on November 29th, 1900. The Home Government at this time attached great importance to the issue of a proclamation setting out clearly the generous terms upon which the Boers would be received into the empire; and, in connection with this question, Lord Milner, during his recent visit to Pretoria, had discussed with Lord Kitchener the methods by which the influence of the surrendered Boers and the more moderate Afrikanders, who were in favour of submission, could be brought to bear upon the general mass of the fighting burghers. Lord Milner, however, upon his return to the Cape Colony, expressed the opinion that the issue of a proclamation in the then existing circumstances would be a mistake, since it would only be regarded as a sign of weakness. And in support of this opinion he states, in a telegram of December 11th, that the cabled summary of Mr. Chamberlain's

> "recent speech in the House of Commons, containing virtually the principal points in the proposed proclamation, has been instantly seized upon by the Bond leaders [in the Cape Colony] and is represented by them as a sign that Her Majesty's Government is wavering in its policy, and that the reaction in British public opinion, which they have always relied on, is setting in."[237]

Both Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener confirmed this judgment at the time; and on January 28th, 1901—when de Wet was on the point of breaking through the British troops into the Cape Colony—the latter telegraphed to Lord Milner:

> "When the Boers are inclined to peace, they will want, I think, to discuss various questions, and when that time comes a proclamation which would meet as far as possible the points raised would, no doubt, be very valuable.... But just now I do not think they have any idea of making peace whilst the Colony question is so prominent. I have let it be known that I would be glad to see an officer or meet Botha at any time if he wished to do so."[238]

Three days afterwards Lord Milner received a further telegram from Lord Kitchener on the same subject, which he also forwarded to the Colonial Office:

"Ex-President Pretorius has just returned from seeing L. Botha and Schalk Burger [the Commandant-General and the Acting President of the South African Republic]. They stated that they were fighting for their independence, and meant to continue to do so to the bitter end, and would not discuss any question of peace."[239]

eaders irreconcilable.

In view of this irreconcilable attitude on the part of the Boer leaders, Mr. Chamberlain abandoned the proposal, and the proclamation was not issued until six months later, when the blockhouse system had been successfully initiated.

But, although Lord Milner had recognised the futility of the appeal by proclamation, he had readily approved of Lord Kitchener's endeavour to make the British proposals known to the placable but terrorised section of the fighting burghers, through the agency of those of their kinsmen and friends who had surrendered. After all advances to the Boer leaders in the field had totally failed, "it seemed to us," Lord Milner reported to Mr. Chamberlain,[240]

"that those who had already surrendered would have means not open to us of communicating with the bulk of the Boers still under arms, persuading them of the hopelessness of their resistance, and removing the misapprehension of our intentions, which some of the commanders who were still holding out had sedulously fostered."

It was in these circumstances and with these objects in view that, after Lord Roberts's departure, the Burgher Peace Committee was formed at Pretoria; and it is to the address which Lord Kitchener then delivered (December 21st, 1900) to this Committee that we must look for the origin and purpose of the Burgher, or Concentration Camps.

of the Burgher camps.

"It having been brought to Lord Kitchener's notice," says the published report, "that the principal difficulty that burghers, desirous of surrendering, experienced was that they were not allowed to remain in their own districts, and were afraid of the penalties attached to not having adhered strictly to the oath of neutrality, which they had, in most cases, been made to break by the coercive measures of Boers out on commando, he wished to give the burghers still in the field every opportunity of becoming acquainted with the treatment he proposed now to

extend to them, their families, and their property.

"Instructions had been issued to form laagers for all surrendered burghers, their wives, families, and stock, on the railway in their own districts under military protection; and, except where it was proved that a burgher had voluntarily broken his oath and gone out on commando, no difference would be made between those who had not taken the oath. To protect deserted women and children they would also be brought into these laagers, where their husbands and sons, who desired to live peacefully, could freely join them.

"It was essential that the country should be thus cleared, because so long as the means of subsistence remained in and on the farms, so long small commandos were enabled to continue in the field. In return, Lord Kitchener expected every assistance from those to whom he gave protection. They must each and all help to the best of their ability by influencing in every way in their power those still in the field to surrender. These measures would be applied gradually, and extended if they proved successful. Burghers must understand that no responsibility could be accepted for stock or property, except for that which they brought in with them, and then only if they kept it within the limits of the protection he was prepared to afford."[241]

The report of Lord Kitchener's speech from which these paragraphs are taken was printed in Dutch and circulated by the Burgher Peace Committee. It is certainly significant that a measure which was subsequently held up to the execration of the civilised world by the official leader of the Liberal party and the friends of the Boers in England, should have been carefully explained by Lord Kitchener to an audience of Boers at Pretoria, and accepted by them as a means of enabling the peaceably disposed burghers to escape from the compulsion of their leaders. In this, as in many other matters, the English friends of the Boers were *plus royalistes que le roi même*.

oercive measures.

These, then, were the means employed by the British military authorities to avert a needless protraction of the war. We have now to observe the methods by which the Boer leaders prevented their efforts from producing the desired result. In view of the destruction of the organised resistance of the Republics, Lord Roberts had made known by proclamation that all burghers who surrendered their arms and took the oath of neutrality would be allowed to return to their homes, or, if at home, to remain there undisturbed. This implied an intention on

the part of the British authorities to provide such protection as would enable the surrendered burghers to remain in peaceable possession of their property. General Botha, as we have already noted, was personally in favour of a general surrender after the battle of Dalmanutha; but, when once the majority of the Boer leaders had decided to continue to resist the establishment of British authority by force of arms, it became his business to keep every fighting burgher in the field. Here, again, the work of the Intelligence Department provides us with instructive evidence of the purposes and acts of the enemy. In the course of the subsequent military operations Sir Bindon Blood captured a number of official documents in the Boer Government laager at Roos Senekal. One of these, referring to the period in question, sufficiently indicates the nature of the "coercive measures" to which Lord Kitchener had alluded. Under date October 6th, 1900, General Botha gives instructions to the Boer commandant at Bethel to telegraph round to the Boer generals and officers certain military instructions, and he then adds:

> "Do everything in your power to prevent the burghers from laying down their arms. I will be compelled, if they do not listen to this, to confiscate everything moveable or unmoveable, and also to burn their houses. Get into direct communication with the Standerton men, and destroy the railway line between Heidelberg and Standerton, and especially derail and hold up trains. In this manner we will obtain a large quantity of food."[242]

And, while the peaceably inclined burghers were prevented from surrendering by the fear of these penalties, the courage of the commandos was maintained by the spread of false information. Among these same papers found at Roos Senekal is a telegram despatched on November 2nd, 1900, to General Viljoen, containing a number of encouraging statements bearing upon the political and military situation, of which the three following may be taken as characteristic:

"October, 1900. A Congress of Delegates of the Powers was held at Parijs [Paris], whereby England asked for an extension of six months to carry on the war. This was refused by the powers on the proposal of Holland and Austria.

"France is ready to land troops in England on the 1st November.

"Cape Colonial troops to the number of 2,500 have been sent back by General Roberts, having quarrelled with the regulars. Their arms were taken away and burnt. This last is official news received by General Fourie."[243]

ivilised warfare".

It was in order to counteract the effects of this system of terrorism and deceit, that the endeavour was made to inform the mass of the Boers still in arms of the actual state of affairs, both in respect of the hopelessness of foreign intervention and the real intentions of the British Government, through the agency of the Burgher Peace Committee. The treatment accorded to these peace emissaries is justifiable, possibly, by a strict interpretation of the laws of war; but it fixes inevitably the responsibility for the needless sufferings of the Boer people in the guerilla war, upon Ex-President Steyn, Schalk Burger, Louis Botha, Christian de Wet, and the other Boer leaders. On January 10th, 1901, of three agents of the Peace Committee taken prisoners to De Wet's laager near Lindley, one—a British subject—was flogged and then shot, and two, who were burghers, were flogged.[244] And on February 12th Meyer de Kock, the Secretary of the Committee, was shot.[245]

But the efforts of the Peace Committee were not altogether thrown away. The terrible deaths of these men, true martyrs of the Boer cause, evoked more than one notable protest against the insensate determination of Ex-President Steyn and De Wet.

> "Dear Brother, ... From what I hear you are so angry with me," wrote General Piet de Wet to his brother Christian, "that you have decided to kill me should you find me. May God not allow it that you should have the opportunity to shed more innocent blood. Enough has been shed already.... I beseech you, let us think over the matter coolly for a moment, and see whether our cause is really so pure and righteous that we can rely on God's help."[246]

And Mr. H. A. Du Plessis, the predikant at Lindley in the Orange River Colony, addressed an "open letter" to the clergy of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape Colony.

"It is not civilised warfare any more on the part of the burghers. They have become desperate, and as fanatics do things in conflict with a Christian spirit and civilisation.... About a fortnight ago, G. Müller, one of my deacons and brother of the late minister of Burghersdorp, was brutally ill-used. He had to strip, and received twenty-five lashes with a stirrup leather—he is not the only one—because he took letters from a member of the Peace Committee to certain heads

of the burgher force, in which they were strongly advised to give in. At the same time Andries Wessels and J. Morgendael were taken prisoners. They left Kroonstad at their own request, and with the sanction of the military authorities, in order to have an interview with the leaders of the burgher force. Morgendael was mortally wounded by Commandant Froneman without a hearing, and at the instigation of General C. de Wet. He died afterwards.... In such a shameful, in fact, inhuman, manner were these men treated; and for what reason? Simply because they had tried to save their country and people....

"The burghers are kept totally in the dark by their leaders as to what the real state of affairs is. Because I wish to save them from certain ruin I make this appeal to you....

"If [the burghers] knew what the true state of affairs was, a large portion would long ago have come in and delivered up their arms....

"Therefore, I implore you, stand still for a few moments and think of the true interests of the Afrikander nation, and see if you will not alter your opinion, and quench the fire of war instead of feeding the flame....[247]

These letters, which were published in *The Cape Times*, formed part of an attempt made by the Burgher Peace Committee, "to induce some of the leading men in the colony, who are known to sympathise with the Boers, to tell the men still in the field that the hope of any assistance from here is a delusion." But, in thus reporting this new endeavour to Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Milner adds that he is not, himself, "very sanguine" of its success.

of the Bond.

There was only too good ground for this opinion. The Afrikander nationalists of the Cape hated England no less than did the republican nationalists, though they feared her more. The policy which the Bond had adopted after the occupation of the Republics by the British forces was perfectly definite. Its object was to avert the final disaster of the war by securing the maintenance of the Republics as independent centres of Afrikander nationalism. In order to do this the Bond resolved to keep the Cape Colony in a state of smouldering rebellion, to encourage the continued resistance of the Boer commandos, and to render all the material assistance to the guerilla leaders and their forces that could be afforded without exposing the Cape Dutch to the penalties of treason. It may be doubted, however, whether the Bond leaders, in view of the resolute

attitude of the loyalist population and their consistent and unfaltering support of Lord Milner, would have embarked upon this policy, unless they had calculated upon the co-operation of the Liberal Opposition in England. As it was, their expectations in this respect had been amply fulfilled, and the policy itself, as we have seen, had been admirably carried into effect.

The second invasion of the Cape Colony began, as we have noticed, with the incursion of the Boers after the Worcester Congress. On December 16th, 1900, Kruitzinger, with seven hundred, and Hertzog with twelve hundred men, crossed the Orange River; and by February 11th, 1901, De Wet, who had been "headed back" in December, had succeeded in eluding the British columns and entered the Colony.[248] At this moment success seemed to be within measurable distance both to the Bond and to De Wet. The point of view of the astute Afrikander statesmen is different from that of the guerilla leader; but each party is equally hopeful of the ultimate victory of the nationalist cause. Of the attitude of the Bond in this month of February, 1901, Mr. Kipling writes from Capetown:

> "Some of the extremists of the Bond are for committing themselves now, fully, to the Dutch cause, De Wet and all; but some of the others are hunting for some sort of side-path that will give them a chance of keeping on the ground-level of the gallows, within hail of a seat in the next Parliament. If De Wet wins—he is assumed to be in command of several thousands, all lusting for real battle, and sure of a welcome among many more thousands alight with the same desire—the Bond may, of course, come out flat-footedly on his side. Just at present the apricots are not quite ripe enough. But the Bond has unshaken faith in the Opposition, whose every word and action are quoted here, and lead to more deaths on the veld. *It is assumed that His Majesty's Opposition will save the Bond, and South Africa for the Bond, if only the commandos make the war expensive.*"[249]

t in the colony.

If this account of the attitude of the Bond stood alone, its value would be merely that of an *ex parte* statement by a competent observer on the spot. But it does not stand alone. The accident of the capture of the Boer official papers at Roos Senekal, to which we have referred before, has provided us with a record of the thoughts which were in De Wet's mind at the time when Mr. Kipling's words were written. In a report dated "On the Veld, February 14th, 1901," Commandant-General Botha is informed that "De Wet's last news is that the

Cape Colony has risen to a man, and has already taken up arms. They refused to give up to the British Government. Many more are only waiting operations on part of De Wet to join him; and General De Wet concludes this report with the words: 'It is certain that the ways of the Lord are hidden from us, and that, after all, it seems that the day of a united South Africa is not far off.'"

The writer of this despatch is the "Acting Chief-Commandant" of the Orange Free State; and to his report of De Wet's success in the Cape Colony, he now adds an account of what is happening on the other side of the Orange River:

> "The burghers in the Orange Free State are hopeful, and expecting a happy ending. The grudge against the Britisher has now taken deep root, and the women and girls are encouraging the burghers to stick up to the bitter end. So that our cause now rests in the union of the burghers, and, with God's help, we will accomplish our end.... The enemy's plan is to starve us out, but he will never do it, now we have an outlet from the Cape Colony, even if we have to use force."[250]

De Wet was chased out of the Colony by the British columns on February 28th, but smaller commandos under Kruitzinger, Fouché, Scheepers, and Malan remained behind. Apart from their mobility, and the persistent manner in which they clung to rugged and mountainous districts, the ability of these Boer raiders to keep the field against the Imperial troops must be attributed to the sympathy and material assistance which they received from the colonial Dutch. The actual number of recruits which they secured was small; but, in Lord Kitchener's words —

> "the friendly feelings of a considerable portion of the rural population assured to them at all times not only an ample food supply, but also timely information of the movements of our pursuing columns—two points which told heavily in their favour."[251]

of Cape rebellion.

In view of the enormous area of the sparsely populated and difficult country throughout which their movements were thus facilitated, it is not surprising that these roaming commandos were never completely suppressed. Of the 21,256 men who surrendered after Vereeniging, 3,635 were Boers and rebels, who had been, up to that time, at large in the Cape Colony.[252] The importance of the contribution which the disloyal majority of the Cape Dutch were enabled, in this

manner, to make to the power of resistance exhibited by the Boers in the guerilla war has scarcely been sufficiently appreciated. As it was, a large body of Imperial troops, which would otherwise have been available for completing the conquest of the new colonies, were kept employed, not merely in guarding the all-important railway lines, but from time to time in arduous, costly, and exhausting military operations in the Cape Colony.[253]

The value of this contribution was quite well understood by the Afrikander nationalists of the Cape. In Mr. Kipling's vigorous English, "north and south they were working for a common object—the manufacture of pro-Boers in England by doubling the income-tax." And it is in the extension of the area of the war by the establishment of the Boer commandos in the Cape Colony that we must find the one valid military consideration which underlay the failure of the peace negotiations between Lord Kitchener and General Louis Botha (February-April, 1901), and the final rejection of the British terms of surrender by the Boer leaders in June. The point is made perfectly plain in the official notice signed by Schalk Burger, as Acting President of the South African Republic, and Steyn, as President of the Orange Free State, which was issued to the burghers on June 20th, 1901. After reciting that the British terms had been referred to "State President Krüger and the deputation in Europe," and that President Krüger's reply had been considered by a conference of the Governments of both Republics, at which Chief-Commandant C. De Wet, Commandant-General L. Botha, and Assistant-Commandant J. H. De la Rey had presented a full report, the document continues:

> "And considering the good progress in our cause in the colonies, where our brothers oppose the cruel injustice done to the Republics more and more in depriving them of their independence, considering further the invaluable personal and material sacrifices they [the Colonial Dutch] have made for our cause, which would all be worthless and vain with a peace whereby the independence of the Republics is given up ... [it is resolved] that no peace will be made ... by which our independence and national existence, or the interests of our colonial brothers, shall be the price paid, and that the war will be vigorously prosecuted."[254]

nder statesmanship.

It is impossible to withhold a tribute of admiration from the Afrikander nationalist leaders. The qualities of statesmanship that enabled a Cavour or a

Bismarck to make a nation were theirs. From the apparent hopelessness of the position created by Lord Roberts's swift and overwhelming victories, they had brought round their affairs to the point at which they now stood. The task which confronted the Imperial troops was no longer to disarm the inhabitants of the Republics, but to disarm and subdue practically the entire Dutch population of South Africa. And to the military difficulties inherent in the accomplishment of such a task in such a country, they had added the opposition of political forces operating both in England and South Africa with scarcely less embarrassing effects. Had it been merely an affair of the island people and the island statesmen, the Bond might still have won. The courage and endurance of the Imperial troops alone would not have saved South Africa. The army was the instrument of the people, and it was for the people to make use of this instrument, or to withdraw it, as they chose. But the over-sea British claimed a voice in the settlement; and the Bond had no friends among them. The "younger nations" and the "man" at Capetown saved South Africa for the Empire.

Before we proceed to consider the broad features of the military operations by which the disarmament of the Dutch was at length accomplished, a reference must be made to the account of the general situation in South Africa addressed by Lord Milner to Mr. Chamberlain from Capetown on February 6th, 1901. Among all the notable documents which he furnished to his official chief, none affords more convincing evidence of cool judgment, mastery of South African conditions, and sureness of statecraft than this. It is a letter, and not a despatch, and as such it contains some personal details which would not have found a place in more formal communications.

Milner's survey.

Two reasons, Lord Milner writes, have prevented him from sending for a long time past any general review of South African affairs. "I am occupied," he says, "every day that passes from morning till night by business, all of which is urgent, and the amount and variety of which you are doubtless able to judge from the communications on a great variety of subjects which are constantly passing between us." And in addition to this, he has always hoped that "some definite point would be reached, at which it might be possible to sum up that chapter of our history which contained the war, and to forecast the work of administrative construction which must succeed it." Now, however, it is useless to wait longer for a "clear and clean-cut" situation. Although he has not "the slightest doubt of the ultimate result," he foresees that the work which still lies before the Imperial

troops will be "slower, more difficult, more harassing, and more expensive than was at one time anticipated."

> "It is no use denying that the last half-year has been one of retrogression. Seven months ago this Colony was perfectly quiet, at least as far as the Orange River. The southern half of the Orange River Colony was rapidly settling down, and even a considerable portion of the Transvaal, notably the south-western districts, seemed to have definitely accepted British authority, and to rejoice at the opportunity of a return to orderly government and the pursuits of peace. To-day the scene is completely altered."

The "increased losses to the country," due to the prolongation of the struggle and to the guerilla methods adopted by the Boer leaders, are obvious.

> "The fact that the enemy are now broken up into a great number of small forces, raiding in every direction, and that our troops are similarly broken up in pursuit of them, makes the area of actual fighting, and consequently of destruction, much wider than it would be in the case of a conflict between equal numbers operating in large masses. Moreover, the fight is now mainly over supplies. The Boers live entirely on the country through which they pass, not only taking all the food they can lay hands upon on the farms—grain, forage, horses, cattle, etc., but looting the small village stores for clothes, boots, coffee, sugar, etc., of all of which they are in great need. Our forces, on their side, are compelled to denude the country of everything moveable, in order to frustrate these tactics of the enemy. No doubt a considerable amount of the stock taken by us is not wholly lost, but simply removed to the refugee camps, which are now being established at many points along the railway lines. But even under these circumstances the loss is great, through animals dying on the route, or failing to find sufficient grass to live upon when collected in large numbers at the camps. Indeed, the loss of crops and stock is a far more serious matter than the destruction of farm buildings, of which so much has been heard."

And to this loss incidental to the campaign there has been added recently "destruction of a wholly wanton and malicious character." This is the injury done to the mining plant in the outlying districts of the Rand by the Boer raiders, a destruction for which there is no possible excuse.

"It has no reason or justification in connection with military operations, but is pure vandalism, and outside the scope of civilised warfare.... Directly or indirectly, all South Africa, including the agricultural population, owes its prosperity to the mines, and, of course, especially to the mines of the Transvaal. To money made in mining it is indebted for such progress, even in agriculture, as it has recently made, and the same source will have to be relied upon for the recuperation of agriculture after the ravages of war.

"Fortunately the damage done to the mines has not been large, relatively to the vast total amount of the fixed capital sunk in them. The mining area is excessively difficult to guard against purely predatory attacks having no military purpose, because it is, so to speak, 'all length and no breadth'—one long thin line, stretching across the country from east to west for many miles. Still, garrisoned as Johannesburg now is, it is only possible successfully to attack a few points in it. Of the raids hitherto made, and they have been fairly numerous, only one has resulted in any serious damage. In that instance the injury done to the single mine attacked amounted to £200,000, and it is estimated that the mine is put out of working for two years. This mine is only one out of a hundred, and is not by any means one of the most important. These facts may afford some indication of the ruin which might have been inflicted, not only on the Transvaal and all South Africa, but on many European interests, if that general destruction of mine works which was contemplated just before our occupation of Johannesburg had been carried out. However serious in some respects may have been the military consequences of our rapid advance to Johannesburg, South Africa owes more than is commonly recognised to that brilliant dash forward, by which the vast mining apparatus, the foundation of all her wealth, was saved from the ruin threatening it."

al destruction.

As the result of the last six or seven months of destructive warfare, "a longer period of recuperation will be required than was originally anticipated." At the same time, Lord Milner points out that, with Kimberley and the Rand, the "main engines of prosperity," virtually undamaged, the economic consequences of the war, "though grave, do not appear by any means appalling."

> "The country population will need a good deal of help, first to preserve it from starvation, and then, probably, to supply it with a certain amount of capital to make a fresh start. And the great industry of the country will need

some little time before it is able to render any assistance. But, in a young country with great recuperative powers, it will not take many years before the economic ravages of the war are effaced."

He then turns to consider the "moral effect" of the recrudescence of the war, which is, in his opinion, more serious than the mere material destruction of the last six months. In the middle of 1900 the feeling in the Orange River Colony and the western districts of the Transvaal was "undoubtedly pacific."

"The inhabitants were sick of the war. They were greatly astonished, after all that had been dinned into them, by the fair and generous treatment they received on our first occupation, and it would have taken very little to make them acquiesce readily in the new régime. At that time, too, the feeling in the Colony was better than I have ever known it."

lescence of the war.

If it had been possible to screen those portions of the conquered territories which were fast settling down to peaceful pursuits from the incursions of the enemy still in the field, the worst results of the guerilla war might have been avoided. But the "vast extent of the country, and the necessity of concentrating our forces for the long advance, first to Pretoria and then to Komati Poort," made this impossible. The Boer leaders raided the country already occupied, but now left exposed; and, encouraged by the small successes thus easily obtained, the commandos reappeared first in the south-east of the Orange River Colony, then in the south-west of the Transvaal, and finally in every portion of the conquered territory.

Those among the burgher population who desired to submit to British rule now found themselves in a position of great difficulty.

"Instead of being made prisoners of war, they had been allowed to remain on their farms on taking the oath of neutrality, and many of them were really anxious to keep it. But they had not the strength of mind, nor, from want of education, a sufficient appreciation of the sacredness of the obligation which they had undertaken, to resist the pressure of their old companions in arms when these reappeared among them appealing to their patriotism and to their fears. In a few weeks or months the very men whom we had spared and treated with exceptional leniency were up in arms again, justifying their breach of faith in many cases by the extraordinary argument that we had not preserved them from

the temptation to commit it.

"The general rising at the back of our advanced forces naturally led to the return of a number of our troops, and to a straggling conflict not yet concluded, in which the conduct of our own troops, naturally enough, was not characterised by the same leniency to the enemy which marked our original conquest. We did not, indeed, treat the men who had broken parole with the same severity with which I believe any other nation would have treated them. Entitled as we were by the universally recognised rules of war to shoot the men who, having once been prisoners in our hands and having been released on a distinct pledge to abstain from further part in the war, had once more taken up arms against us, we never in a single instance availed ourselves of that right. But as our columns swept through the revolted country, meeting on every hand with hostility, and even with treachery, on the part of the people whom we had spared, no doubt in some cases the innocent suffered with the guilty. Men who had actually kept faith with us were, in some instances, made prisoners of war, or saw their property destroyed, simply because it was impossible to distinguish between them and the greater number who had broken faith. This, no doubt, resulted in further accessions to the ranks of the enemy. And this tendency was augmented by the evacuation, necessary for military reasons, of a number of places, such as Fauresmith, Jagersfontein, and Smithfield, which we had held for months, and in which we had actually established a reasonably satisfactory civil administration. Latterly, something has been done to check the general demoralisation, and to afford places of refuge for those willing to submit, by establishing camps along the railway lines to which burghers may take themselves, their families, and their stock for protection. No doubt this is a very inadequate substitute for the effectual defence of whole districts. Consequently the camps are mostly tenanted by women and children whose male relatives are, in many cases, in the field against us. But, as far as it goes, it is a good measure, and there can be no doubt that, whenever we succeed in striking a decisive blow at any of the numerous commandos roaming about the country, a good many of their less willing members will find their way to one or other of these camps in order to avoid further fighting."

As the guerilla warfare thus swept back over the new colonies, the Dutch in the Cape Colony, who at one time, about the middle of the preceding year (1900), had seemed disposed to acquiesce in the union of all South Africa under the British flag, became once more restless and embittered.

ival of mendacity.

> "Every act of harshness, however necessary, on the part of our troops, was exaggerated and made the most of, though what principally inflamed the minds of the people were alleged instances of needless cruelty which never occurred. Never in my life have I read of, much less experienced, such a carnival of mendacity as that which accompanied the pro-Boer agitation in this Colony at the end of last year. And these libels still continue to make themselves felt. It is true that excitement has subsided somewhat during the last two months, partly because some of the worst inventions about the conduct of the British troops have been exposed and utterly discredited, and partly because the general introduction of martial law has tended greatly to check seditious writing and speaking. But even now the general feeling in most of the country districts is very bad, and the commandos which invaded the Colony in December and have been roaming about ever since, while they have not gained many adherents among the colonial farmers, have nevertheless enjoyed the very substantial aid which the sympathy of the majority of the inhabitants was able to give them, in supporting themselves, obtaining fresh supplies of food and horses, and evading the forces sent in pursuit of them."

Of the general attitude of the Cape Dutch at this time Lord Milner writes with the lenient judgment of complete understanding:

"I am satisfied by experience that the majority of those Dutch inhabitants of the Colony who sympathise with the Republics, however little they may be able to resist giving active expression to that sympathy when the enemy actually appear amongst them, do not desire to see their own districts invaded or to find themselves personally placed in the awkward dilemma of choosing between high treason and an unfriendly attitude to the men of their own race from beyond the border. There are extremists who would like to see the whole of the Cape Colony overrun. But the bulk of the farmers, especially the substantial ones, are not of this mind. They submit readily enough even to stringent regulations having for their object the prevention of the spread of invasion. And not a few of them are, perhaps, secretly glad that the prohibition of seditious speaking and writing, of political meetings, and of the free movement of political firebrands through the country enables them to keep quiet, without actually themselves taking a strong line against the propaganda, and, to do them justice, they behave reasonably well under the pass and other regulations necessary for that purpose, as long as care is

taken not to make these regulations too irksome to them in the conduct of their business, or in their daily lives.

"That there has been an invasion at all is no doubt due to the weakness of some of the Dutch colonists in tolerating, or supporting, the violent propaganda, which could not but lead the enemy to believe that they had only to come into the Colony in order to meet with general active support. But this was a miscalculation on the part of the enemy, though a very pardonable one. They knew the vehemence of the agitation in their favour as shown by the speeches in Parliament, the series of public meetings culminating in the Worcester Congress, the writings of the Dutch Press, the very general wearing of the republican colours, the singing of the Volkslied, and so forth, and they regarded these demonstrations as meaning more than they actually did. Three things were forgotten. Firstly, that a great proportion of the Afrikanders in the Colony who really meant business had slipped away and joined the republican ranks long ago. Secondly, that the abortive rebellion of a year ago had left the people of the border districts disinclined to repeat the experiment of a revolt. Thirdly, that owing to the precautionary measures of the Government the amount of arms and ammunition in the hands of the country population throughout the greater part of the Colony is not now anything like as large as it usually is, and far smaller than it was a year ago."

population in arms.

In these circumstances the object to be aimed at is to screen off as much of the country as possible from raids. But the Cape Colony is considerably larger in area than France and the United Kingdom put together; it has "an immense length of frontier that can be crossed anywhere," and "exceedingly primitive means of communication." The exclusion of mobile guerilla bands from across the frontier is, therefore, "something of an impossibility." There is one method, and one only, by which "the game of the invaders can be frustrated." It is to provide each district with the means of defending itself. And so a local defence force has been formed in all districts, with the exception of those—happily the least important in the Colony—in which the population is extremely small and the loyalists are very few.

"In the other districts, the response on the part of the British population to the general call to arms recently made by the Ministry has been better than the most sanguine expected. It was always admitted, by their friends and foes alike, that

the bulk of the Afrikander population would never take up arms on the side of the British Government in this quarrel, even for local defence. The appeal was, therefore, virtually directed to the British population, mostly townspeople, and to a small, but no doubt very strong and courageous, minority of the Afrikanders who have always been loyalists. These classes had been already immensely drawn on by the Cape police, the regular volunteer corps, and the numerous irregular mounted corps which had been called into existence because of the war. There must have been twelve thousand Cape Colonists under arms before the recent appeal, and, as things are now going, we shall get as many more under that appeal—a truly remarkable achievement under a purely voluntary system. The fact that, if the war continues for a few months longer, so large a number of the South African British will be under arms (for, it must be remembered, in addition to the Cape colonists we have about one thousand Rhodesians, and, I should say, at least ten thousand Uitlanders) is one that cannot be left out of account in considering either the present imbroglio or the settlement after peace is restored.

"It is, indeed, calculated to exercise a most important and, I believe, beneficial influence upon the South African politics of the future. Among the principal causes of the trouble of the past and present was the contempt felt by the Afrikander countryman, used to riding and shooting, and generally in possession of a good rifle and plenty of cartridges, for other white men less habituated to arms than he was himself. That feeling can hardly survive the experience of the past twelve months, and especially of the last six weeks. The splendid fighting of the despised Johannesburgers of the Imperial Light Horse, and of the other South African Colonial Corps, has become a matter of history, and the present *levée en masse* of the British people, including the townsmen, of this Colony, is proof positive that when the necessity is really felt they are equal to the best in courage and public spirit. In this respect the events of the past few months, unfortunate as they have been in many ways, have undoubtedly their brighter side. The mutual respect of the two principal white races is the first condition of a healthy political life in the South Africa of the future. It is possible that if the extreme strain of the most recent developments of the war had never been felt throughout Cape Colony, the British inhabitants would never have had the opportunity of showing that they were inferior to none in their willingness to bear all the burdens of citizenship, including that of personal service."

nber the loyalists.

And Lord Milner urges that in the future England should not forget that there are loyalists in South Africa as well as Boers; and that the loyalists are Dutch as well as British.

"The important part now played, even from the purely military point of view, by the South African loyalists ought, as it seems to me, to have a good effect not only in South Africa but in England. The inherent vice, if I may say so, of almost all public discussion of our South African difficulties is the tendency to concentrate attention too exclusively on the Boers. Say what we will, the controversy always seems to relapse into the old ruts—it is the British Government on the one hand and the Boers on the other. The question how a particular policy will affect not merely our enemies, but our now equally numerous friends, seems seldom to be adequately considered. And yet it would seem that justice and policy alike should lead us to be as eager to consider the feelings and interests, and to retain the loyalty, of those who are fighting on our side, as to disarm the present enmity and win the future confidence of those who are fighting against us. And this principle would seem all the easier to adhere to because there is really nothing which the great body of the South African loyalists desire which it is not for the honour and advantage of the mother country to insist upon.

"Of vindictiveness, or desire to oppress the Afrikanders, there is, except in hasty utterances inevitable in the heat of the conflict, which have no permanent significance, or in tirades which are wholly devoid of influence, no sign whatever. The attitude of almost all leading and representative men, and the general trend of public feeling among the loyalists, even in the intensity of the struggle, is dead against anything like racial exclusiveness or domination. If this were not so it would be impossible for a section of pure-bred Afrikanders, small no doubt in numbers but weighty in character and position, to take the strong line which they do in opposition to the views of the majority of their own people, based as these are, and as they know them to be, upon a misconception of our policy and intentions. These men are among the most devoted adherents to the Imperial cause, and would regard with more disfavour and alarm than any one the failure of the British nation to carry out its avowed policy in the most complete manner. They are absolutely convinced that the unquestioned establishment of British supremacy, and the creation of one political system from Capetown to the Zambesi, is, after all that has happened, the only salvation for men of their own race, as well as for others."

Country, One Flag."

And, in conclusion, he writes of the "predominant, indeed the almost unanimous, feeling of those South Africans who sympathise with the Imperial Government," that—

> "they are sick to death of the war, which has brought ruin to many of them, and imposed considerable sacrifices on almost all. But they would rather see the war continue for an indefinite time than run the risk of any compromise which would leave even the remotest chance of the recurrence of so terrible a scourge in the future. They are prepared to fight and suffer on in order to make South Africa, indisputably and for ever, one country under one flag, with one system of government, and that system the British, which they believe to ensure the highest possible degree of justice and freedom to men of all races."

In this luminous review of what Lord Milner terms "if by no means the most critical, possibly the most puzzling" state of affairs since the outbreak of the war, it will be observed that he puts the time required by South Africa to recover from the economic ravages of the war at "not many years." In point of fact, two and a half years after the surrender of Vereeniging nothing remained but the scattered graveyards upon the veld, the empty tins still tinkling upon the wire fences by the railways, and an occasional blockhouse, to remind the traveller of the devastating struggle from which the country had so recently emerged. This estimate of the period of recuperation affords a measure of the magnitude of Lord Milner's achievement in the three concluding years of his administration. For the rest, we look in vain for any trace of bitterness, or even of partisanship, in his frank and penetrating analysis. It is the survey of a man who is completely master of the situation; who is absolutely convinced of the justice of the British cause; who has no illusions and no fears.

g the enemy.

With the circumstances in which the burghers were induced by their leaders to continue, or renew, their resistance to the Imperial troops before us, both the long duration of the guerilla war, and the methods by which it was finally brought to a close, become easily intelligible. At the same time it must not be forgotten that, from a purely military point of view, the relapse of the conquered territories into war was due to the insufficiency of British troops. By the end of

April, 1900, as we have noticed before, all the reserves of the regular army had been exhausted; and, in addition to this, at the end of twelve months' service a considerable proportion of the Home and over-sea auxiliaries left South Africa to return to civil life. Had there been a sufficient number of trained soldiers to occupy effectively the Boer Republics, the war would not have swept back through them and over their borders into the Colony. Even so, the actual number of British troops in South Africa under Lord Roberts's command would have sufficed to subjugate the Boers, had the British military authorities employed the severe methods of warfare to which any other belligerent would have had recourse under the like conditions—methods of merciful severity which were employed, in fact, by the Union forces in the civil war in America.[255] But, by the irony of fate, the humane methods of the British, in the absence of a practically unlimited supply of trained troops, made the revival of hostilities possible on the part of the Boers, and thereby created the necessity for the employment of those more rigorous, but, by comparison, still humane and generous methods, in respect of which the charge of inhumanity was brought against Great Britain by the friends of the Boers in England and on the continent of Europe. No one will maintain that it is a part of the duty of a belligerent to support the non-combatant population of the enemy. Yet this duty was voluntarily assumed throughout the war by the British military authorities, who, from the occupation of Bloemfontein onwards, fed the non-combatant Boer population as well as they fed their own troops.

Kitchener's task.

An incident that happened after the occupation of Pretoria exhibits the remarkable generosity of the British attitude. At a time when, owing to the Boer attacks upon the railway, the utmost difficulty was experienced in getting supplies from the thousand-miles'-distant base at the coast, Lord Roberts was compelled to send away a part of the civilian population to General Botha, and they were removed by the Boer Commandant-General to Barberton. That is to say, while the British, on the one hand, were giving part of the supplies on which the existence of their troops depended, to the non-combatant population of the enemy, the enemy, on the other hand, was doing his utmost to destroy the single line of railway which alone stood between the British Army and starvation. When, therefore, Lord Kitchener succeeded to the command of the British forces in South Africa (November 29th, 1900), he found the task of disarmament complicated by two factors. There was the desire of the Home Government that the war should be conducted upon the humane lines hitherto adopted, and there

was also the fact that the Imperial troops were not numerous enough to occupy effectively the whole territory of the Republics, or, in other words, to do the one thing of all others necessary to make this humane conduct of the war consistent with military success. It was impossible, with the troops at his disposal, for Lord Kitchener to hold the enormous territory of the conquered Republics. It was impossible, perhaps, to support a larger force in a country so poorly provided with food supplies and means of communication. An alternative plan had to be found. This plan was to remove the horses, cattle, and food supplies from the areas which he was unable to occupy, and to transport the non-combatant inhabitants to places where they could be both fed and protected. And, when this had been done—or, more correctly, while it was in process of being done—he had to capture the small, mobile bodies of burghers operating over the whole of the unprotected area of the late Republics and the Cape Colony, and to collect gradually the fighting Boers, captured or surrendered, into the colonial or over-sea prisoners' camps.

Certain districts, of which those surrounding the towns of Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, and Johannesburg were the more important, had from the first been effectively occupied and securely held. All the troops at Lord Kitchener's disposal, that were not absorbed in the work of garrisoning these districts and maintaining the lines of communication, were organised into mobile columns, which were distributed among General Officers respectively attached to a particular area. In a despatch of July 8th, 1901, Lord Kitchener was able to report that, as the result of the recent work of these mobile columns, the Boers, although "still able, in case of emergency, to concentrate a considerable number of men," were, in his opinion, "unable to undertake any large scheme of operations." Apart from the heavy drain from prisoners captured and deaths in the field, the loss of their ox-waggons had seriously affected their mobility and supply arrangements.

> "Divided up into small parties of three to four hundred men," he writes, "they are scattered all over the country without plans and without hope, and on the approach of our troops they disperse, to reassemble in the same neighbourhood when our men pass on. In this way they continue an obstinate resistance without retaining anything, or defending the smallest portion of this vast country."

He estimates that there are not more than 13,500[256] Boers in the field in the Transvaal, the Orange River Colony, and the Cape Colony. But he adds that—

"with long lines of railway to hold, every yard of which has to be defended, both to secure our own civil and military supplies, and, what is more important, to prevent the enemy from obtaining necessaries from the capture of our trains, the employment of large numbers of troops continues to be a necessity.... The Boer party who declared war have quitted the field, and are now urging those whom they deserted to continue a useless struggle by giving lying assurances to the ignorant burghers of outside assistance, and by raising absurdly deceitful hopes that Great Britain has not sufficient endurance to see the matter through."[257]

But it had become evident that some more systematic effort was required for the capture of the commandos, unless the slow task of wearing down the Boer resistance was to be almost indefinitely protracted; and this same month of July, 1901, witnessed the extension of the blockhouse lines, which proved the turning-point in the guerilla war. The origin of Lord Kitchener's system of blockhouse defence is described by him in his despatch of August 8th, 1901.

ockhouse system.

"Experience had shown," he writes, "that the line of defensible posts, extending across the Orange River Colony, from Jacobsdal to Ladybrand, constituted a considerable obstacle to the free movement of the enemies' roving bands, and that the gradual completion of chains of blockhouses placed at intervals of a mile, sometimes less, along the Transvaal and Orange River Colony railways, had obtained for our traffic a comparative security which it had not previously enjoyed."[258]

In July, therefore, Lord Kitchener made arrangements for the construction of three additional lines of blockhouses. The first ran from Aliwal North westward, following the course of the Orange River, to Bethulie, and was continued thence alongside the railway through Stormberg, Rosmead, Naauwpoort, and De Aar, northward to Kimberley. The second commenced at Frederickstad and ran northward by the source of the Mooi River to Breed's Nek in the Magaliesberg, from which point it was connected with the British garrison at Commando Nek, and thus screened the western side of the Pretoria and Johannesburg area. The third, running from Eerste Fabriken in the north, by Springs and Heidelberg, southward to the Vaal River, protected the same district from attack upon the east. These new blockhouse lines, Lord Kitchener wrote, promised to be of much assistance in the future. Not only did they protect the British communications,

and render inter-communication between the different portions of the Boer forces difficult, but, in the absence of frontiers, natural or artificial, they served as barriers against which the British mobile columns were able to drive bands of the enemy and force them to surrender. Indeed, the blockhouse lines proved the chief instrument of success; for with the gradual extension of the system, the area of active hostilities was confined in an increasing degree to the vast half-deserted regions through which the commandos roamed, and the British columns swept at intervals in pursuit of them.

A month later, August 8th, Lord Kitchener reported a further step in advance. He had formed "some specially mobile columns for independent and rapid action in different parts of the country, generally at some distance from the operations of other troops." The commanders of these new mobile columns had a free hand in respect of their movements, since they were guided by the special intelligence, which they themselves collected, and not solely by information from headquarters. The effect produced by the development of the blockhouse system, combined with the greater freedom of initiative allowed to the new mobile columns, became apparent in the increasing number of Boers captured or voluntarily surrendering themselves in the month of August, when altogether more than two thousand of the enemy were accounted for.[259] On the 7th of this month the delayed[260] proclamation was issued, and a date—September 15th—was fixed as the limit within which the guerilla leaders might, by voluntarily surrendering, avoid certain penalties which were duly set out. In order to counteract the effect of this action on the part of the British Government, General Botha stimulated his followers to increased military enterprise.

> "But," says Lord Kitchener, "though there has been no general surrender, the device to which the Commandant-General resorted for turning the thoughts of his burghers in another direction has probably cost him and his cause [a heavier loss] than a simple pursuance of the usual evasive tactics would have even entailed."

captures of Boers.

The precise extent of this loss is shown in the returns for September, which record captures and surrenders almost as numerous as those of the preceding month.

> "It cannot be expected," Lord Kitchener adds, "even under the most favourable conditions, that in the presence of the ever-diminishing numbers

opposing us in the field, these figures can be maintained, but I feel confident that so long as any resistance is continued, no exertion will be spared either by officers or men of this force to carry out the task they still have before them."[261]

ilway lines secured.

In another month a position had been reached in which it was possible for the work of administrative reconstruction—interrupted a year ago by the development of the guerilla warfare—to be resumed. At this date (November, 1901), the resistance of the Dutch population had been weakened by the loss of 53,000 fighting Boers, of whom 42,000 were in British custody, while the rest had been killed, wounded, or otherwise put out of action. In the Transvaal 14,700 square miles, and in the Orange River Colony 17,000 square miles of territory had been enclosed by blockhouse lines. A square formed roughly by lines running respectively from Klerksdorp to Zeerust on the west, from Zeerust to Middelburg on the north, from Middelburg to Standerton on the east, and from Standerton to Klerksdorp on the south, enclosing Pretoria and the Rand, was the protected area of the Transvaal. The whole of the Orange River Colony south of the blockhouse line, Kimberley-Winberg-Bloemfontein-Ladybrand, was also a protected area; and the Cape Colony, south of the main railway lines, was similarly screened off. But an application of what may be termed "the railway-cutting test" yields, perhaps, the most eloquent testimony both to the magnitude of the original task undertaken by the Imperial troops, and to the degree of success which had been obtained. In October, 1900, the railway lines, upon which the British troops depended for supplies of food and ammunition, were cut thirty-two times, or more than once a day. The number of times in which they were cut in the succeeding November was thirty; in December twenty-one; in January, 1901, sixteen; in February, as the result of De Wet's invasion of the Cape Colony, they were cut thirty times; in March eighteen; in April eighteen; in May twelve; in June eight; in July four; in August four; in September twice; and in October not at all. Still more significant of the approach of peace was the fact that now, for the first time, the British population was allowed to return to Johannesburg in any considerable numbers.[262]

It remains to consider two questions which cannot be omitted from any account; however brief, of the manner in which the disarmament of the Dutch in South Africa was effected. The first of these is the charge of inhumanity brought against the Imperial military authorities in respect of the deportation of the Boer

non-combatants to the Burgher Camps; and the second is the actual effect produced upon the burghers in the field by the public denunciations of the war by members of the Liberal Opposition in England.

urgher camps.

In charging the British Government and Lord Kitchener with inhumanity in the conduct of the war, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman and other friends of the Boer cause relied in the main upon the circumstance that a certain proportion of the Boer population was removed compulsorily from districts which the British troops were unable to occupy effectively, and upon the further fact that the Burgher Camps exhibited an unusually high rate of mortality. The necessity for the removal of this non-combatant population will scarcely be disputed in view of the methods adopted by the Boer leaders to compel the burghers to continue their resistance to the Imperial troops, and the fact that nearly every house in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, inhabited by the Dutch, served as an intelligence office, a recruiting depôt, and a base of supplies for the roving commandos. Nor will it be denied that the responsibility for the unnecessary suffering incurred by the Boer people in the guerilla war rests upon those of the Boer leaders who formed and enforced the decision to continue the struggle, and not upon the British Government. The alleged "inhumanity," therefore, of the Imperial military authorities consists in the circumstance that, instead of leaving these helpless non-combatants to be supported by the Boer leaders, they removed them to places of security, where they were fed, housed, and generally maintained, in as little discomfort as circumstances permitted. If the lesser suffering of the Burgher Camps was the only alternative to greater suffering, and possibly starvation, on the veld, the Boers had only their own leaders to thank for the position in which they found themselves. The death-rate of the Burgher Camps was exceptionally high as compared with that of any ordinary European community. But the population of the camps was no less exceptional. It consisted of women and children, with a small proportion of adult males; and of all these the majority had come to the camps as refugees, insufficiently clothed, weakened by exposure and often by starvation. Obviously the death-rate of such a refugee community would be much higher, under the most favourable conditions, than that of an ordinary European town; and, in order to find a valid point of comparison, we must seek statistics provided by similar collections of refugees, brought together under the like exceptional circumstances. We are unable to find any such parallel case, for the sufficient reason that history records no other example of a nation at war which, at the risk of impairing the

efficiency of its own forces in the field, has endeavoured, not merely to feed and clothe, but to house, nurse, and even educate the non-combatant population of its enemy.

tion of the death-rate.

What we do know, however, is that, of the total deaths in these camps of refuge, the great majority were those of infants and children. This is a circumstance which in itself goes far to make the excess of the camp death-rate apparent rather than real; since, in the first place, the Boer mothers, owing to their insanitary habits and ignorance,[263] are not accustomed to bring more than one out of every two children to maturity; and in the second, the rate of infant mortality is abnormally high, as compared with that of a given community as a whole, even in the most highly developed countries. The highest monthly death-rate was that of October, 1901, when, out of a population of 112,109 in all camps, there were 3,205 deaths, or 344 per thousand per annum.[264] But of these deaths, 500 only (in round numbers) were those of adults, and 2,700 were those of children. That is to say, in this worst month we have in the refugee camps an adult death-rate of (roughly) 50 per thousand, as compared with a European death-rate varying from 16.7 in Norway to 33.2 in Hungary,[265] and a children's death-rate of 300 per thousand, as compared with the 208 per thousand of the contemporary rate of infant mortality in thirty-three great towns of the United Kingdom, or in Birkenhead alone of 362 per thousand. And from this time forward the death-rate of the refugee camps was rapidly reduced. The reason for this reduction is significant. By the development of the blockhouse lines the British military authorities had been enabled to protect their supplies from the attacks of the guerilla leaders. In other words, Lord Kitchener was now able to defend the Boer non-combatants against the efforts made by their own leaders to deprive them of food and other necessaries of life. And ultimately the mortality in the Burgher Camps was reduced to a point "much below the normal rates under ordinary local circumstances."[266]

The charge of prolonging the war by public declarations of sympathy with the enemy[267] was definitely formulated against certain members of the Liberal Opposition and the Irish Nationalist party by Lord St. Aldwyn (Sir Michael Hicks Beach), at Oldham on October 10th, 1901.

ne war was prolonged.

"The real cause of the prolongation of this war has been something which,

on my word, I believe could never have been seen in any other country in the world. It has been the speeches in Parliament of British members of the House of Commons, doing everything they could against their country and in favour of her enemies. It has been articles in certain journals taking absolutely the same lines—I am not talking of mere attacks on his Majesty's Government, or even calumnies of individual ministers, that is part of the ordinary machinery of political warfare, and one of the advantages of an absolutely free Press. No, what I am talking of is the prominence given to the opinions and sentiments of men who were called Pro-Boers, as if they represented the feelings of a large section of their fellow-countrymen. The invention of lies, like the alleged quarrel between Lord Kitchener and the War Office, was intended to damage this country in the conduct of the war, as was also the wicked charges made against the humanity of our generals and our soldiers in the Concentration Camps and in the field, the attempts, such as I saw only the other day in one of these papers, to prove that in those gallant contests at Fort Itala[268] and on the borders of Natal our soldiers had not repulsed their enemies, but were themselves the defeated party. We here do not attach any importance to those things. We rate them at their true value because we know something about their authors—but what do you think is thought of them when they go out to South Africa? What do the Boers and their leaders think when they read the newspapers written in England which are full of these things? The Boers have many faults, but they are a simple and patriotic people. They never can imagine that English newspapers would print these things, that English members of Parliament would speak them, taking always the side of their country's enemies, unless these things were true. They are deceived. They greedily swallow all this as representing the opinion of a great section of the public in this country, and those who have said these things and those who have circulated them are the parties who are guilty before God of prolonging this war. There are the Irish Nationalists. Let me read to you words which I heard with the greatest pain in the last session of Parliament from the leader of the Irish Nationalists, a man of consummate eloquence and perfect self-control. What did Mr. John Redmond say? He prayed God that the resistance of the Boers might be strengthened, and that South Africa might take vengeance for its wrongs by separating itself from the Empire which had deluged it with blood, and become a free and independent nation. We in England pass over words of that sort, though I believe they would not have been uttered with impunity by a member of the Legislative Assembly of any other country in the world."

bell-Bannerman's reply.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's reply to the charge brought against him by Lord St. Aldwyn, and subsequently by Lord Salisbury,[269] is contained in the words following, which were spoken by him at Plymouth, on November 19th:

> "Now I declare, ladies and gentlemen, for myself, that from first to last I have never uttered one syllable that could be twisted by any ingenuity into encouragement by the Boers. No, I have never even expressed ordinary pity for, or sympathy with them, because I did not wish to run the risk of being misunderstood. What I have done, and what I hope I shall continue to do, is to denounce the stupidity of the way in which the Government were dealing with the Boers."

There is only one method by which the amazing effrontery of this denial can be sufficiently exhibited. It is to place underneath it quotations from speeches delivered by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman himself at Stirling on October 25th, by Mr. Thomas Shaw, M.P., at Galashiels on October 14th, and by Mr. E. Robertson, M.P., at Dundee on October 16th, as printed in the "Official Organ of the Orange Free State Government," dated September 21st, 1901, a copy of which was found in a Boer laager on the veld. The extracts selected are these:

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman:

> "The whole country in the two belligerent States, outside the mining towns, is a howling wilderness. The farms are burned, the country is wasted. The flocks and herds are either butchered or driven off; the mills are destroyed, furniture and instruments of agriculture smashed. These things are what I have termed methods of barbarism. I adhere to the phrase. I cannot improve upon it. If these are not the methods of barbarism, what methods did barbarism employ?... My belief is that the mass of the British people ... do not desire to see a brave people subjugated or annihilated."

Mr. Thomas Shaw, M.P.:

> "The war was unnecessary, and therefore unjust.... He wished he could agree that we were fighting in a just cause, that we had always fought according to acknowledged civilised methods; but as an honest man he could not do so."

Mr. Edmund Robertson, M.P.:

> "The victory of the Government (at the last General Election) had been the main cause of the prolongation of the war. If they had been defeated their successors would have been men with a free hand, and the Boers themselves might have been ready to make concessions, which they would not make, and had not made, to those whom they believed to be their enemies and persecutors. If the Empire was to be saved, the Government must be destroyed."[270]

Can any human being of ordinary intelligence believe that these passages, containing denunciations of the war, were circulated by Ex-President Steyn for any other purpose than that of encouraging the burghers to continue their resistance to the Imperial troops?

And to this evidence may be added the protest made by "An Old Berliner" in *The Times* of November 27th, 1901:

ods of barbarism".

> "What I want to impress upon your readers is the much more serious and, indeed, incalculable mischief done by the public utterances of responsible politicians, and, to take the most pernicious example of all, by the reckless language of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. The words he uttered about England's methods of barbarism have been used ever since as the watchwords of England's detractors throughout the length and breadth of Germany."[271][Back to Contents]

CHAPTER XI

PREPARING FOR PEACE

We have already noticed that arrangements were made in October, 1900, under which the High Commissionership was to be separated from the Governorship of the Cape Colony in order that Lord Milner might be free to undertake the work of administrative reconstruction in the new colonies. In

pursuance of this decision of the Home Government, Lord Milner became Administrator of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony upon the departure of Lord Roberts (November 29th, 1900); but circumstances did not permit him to resign the governorship of the Cape Colony and remove to the Transvaal until three months later. The new Governor of the Cape Colony was Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, who was himself succeeded, as Governor of Natal, by Sir Henry E. McCallum; and at the same time (March 1st, 1901), Sir H. (then Major) Goold-Adams was appointed Deputy-Administrator of the Orange River Colony, where he took over the duties hitherto discharged by General Pretyman as Military Governor.

in the Transvaal.

Lord Milner left Capetown to assume the administration of the new colonies on February 28th, 1901. The incidents of his journey northwards are illustrative alike of the state of South Africa at this time, and of the varied responsibilities of the High Commissioner. After three months of continuous and successful conflict with the forces of rebellion in the south, he was suddenly confronted with a situation in the north even more pregnant with the possibilities of disaster. This was the day on which Commandant-General Louis Botha entered the British lines at Middelburg to treat for peace with General Lord Kitchener; and many counsels of precaution sped northwards upon the wires as the High Commissioner's train crossed the plains and wound slowly up through the mountain passes that led to the higher levels of the Karroo plateau. March 1st, which was spent in the train, was the most idle day that Lord Milner had passed for many months. The respite was of short duration. At midnight, directly after the train had left De Aar junction, a long telegram from Lord Kitchener, giving the substance of his interview with Botha, caught the High Commissioner. But if peace was in the air in the north, war held the field in the south. From De Aar to Bloemfontein the railway line was astir with British troops, concentrating or dispersing, in pursuit of De Wet. At Bloemfontein station Lord Milner was met (March 2nd) by Lord Kitchener, and the nature of the reply to be given to Botha was discussed between them. On the next morning Lord Milner's saloon car was attached to the Commander-in-Chief's train, and a long telegram was drafted and despatched to London.[272] The position which Lord Milner took up on this occasion, and afterwards at the final negotiations of Vereeniging, was that which he had himself condensed in the two words "never again." He was anxious for peace; no man more than he; but a peace upon terms that would leave South Africa with the remotest prospect of a return to the abnormal political conditions

which had made the war inevitable, he regarded as a disaster to be avoided at all costs. This telegram despatched, the train left Bloemfontein, and, in spite of more than one sign of the proximity of the Boer raiders, it reached Pretoria without delay at 9 a.m. on March 4th. The next ten days Lord Milner remained at the capital of the Transvaal, in constant communication with the Home Government on the subject of the peace negotiations[273] with the Boers, which ultimately proved abortive; but on the 9th he went over to Johannesburg for the day to see the house which was being prepared for his occupation. On the 15th he left Pretoria finally for Johannesburg. He was received at the station by a guard of honour furnished by the Rand Rifles, and, thus escorted, drove to Sunnyside, a pleasant house in what is now the suburb of Parktown, commanding an unbroken view over the veld to the Magaliesberg range beyond Pretoria; and here he continued to reside until he left South Africa on April 2nd, 1905.

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LORD MILNER AT SUNNYSIDE.

s in the Cape colony.

From this time forward (March 15th, 1901), Lord Milner's administrative activity is primarily concerned with the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Owing, however, to the continued resistance of the Boers and the extension of the area of hostilities by the second invasion of the Cape Colony, the administrative development of the new colonies was confined within the narrowest limits, until six months of strenuous military operations had enabled Lord Kitchener to render the protected areas and the railways virtually secure against the raids of the Boer commandos. Four out of these six months were occupied by Lord Milner's second visit to England (May-August, 1901). But before we approach this episode, and thereby resume the main current of the narrative, it is necessary to trace the course of events in the Cape Colony. With the government of the Colony once more in the hands of the British party, Lord Milner had been relieved of the acute and constant anxieties that marked his official relationship to the Afrikander Ministry. On the vital question of the necessity of establishing British authority upon terms that would make any repetition of the war impossible, Sir Gordon Sprigg and his ministers were absolutely at one with Lord Milner and the Home Government. Whatever differences of opinion arose subsequently between the Cape ministers and the Imperial authorities were differences not of principle but of detail. For the most part they were such as would have manifested themselves in any circumstances in a country where the civil government was compelled, by the exigencies of war, to surrender some of its powers to the military authority.

ond and peace.

By supporting the Treason Bill, Mr. Schreiner and Sir Richard Solomon had dissociated themselves from the Afrikander nationalists; and henceforward their influence was used unreservedly on the side of British supremacy.[274] On the other hand, Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer, as we have seen, had openly denounced the policy of the Imperial Government, and no less openly advocated the aims, and defended the methods, of the Afrikander Bond. The Bond's determination to do all in its power to secure the independence of the Boers, and thereby defeat the policy of the Imperial Government, was manifested by the

abrupt refusal of its leaders to associate themselves with the efforts of the Burgher Peace Committee. Mr. P. de Wet and the other peace delegates who had visited the Colony in the circumstances already mentioned, desired the Bond to co-operate with them by informing the republican leaders that they must expect no military assistance from the Afrikander party, and by formally advising them to end the war in the interests of the Afrikander population. The details of the incident, as recorded in the Blue-book,[275] show that Mr. Theron, the President of the Provincial Bestuur of the Bond and a member of the Legislative Assembly, was at first disposed to regard the proposal of the peace delegates with favour. But, after expressing himself to this effect at Wellington, on February 15th, 1901, he went to Capetown to consult the Bond leaders on the matter, and, as the result of this consultation, he wrote to Mr. de Wet, five days later, declining to meet the peace delegates again, or negotiate with them, on the ground that the "principles of the Afrikander Bond" would be prejudiced by his entering into official negotiations with the deputation, whose official status he was unable, after inquiry, to recognise. It is difficult not to connect this summary treatment of the peace delegates by the Bond with the fact that, just at this time, General C. de Wet was reporting to General Louis Botha that the "Cape Colony had risen to a man."[276] However this may be, the wholesale manner in which the Afrikander Bond had identified itself in the country districts with the Boer invaders is sufficiently displayed by a return published six months later, from which it appears that, out of a total of thirty-three men holding official positions in the Bond organisation in three districts in the Cape Colony, twenty-seven were accused of high treason, of whom twenty-four were convicted, two absconded, and one was acquitted.[277]

With the Bond in this mood, with certain districts practically maintaining the enemy and certain other districts constantly exposed to the incursions of the guerilla leaders, with a large proportion of the loyalist population fighting at the front, and a still larger number organised for local defence, and with the whole of the Colony, except the ports, under martial law, it was obviously impossible for the machinery of representative government to continue in its normal course.

ritish libels.

The registration of electors, which, under the provisions of the colonial law, was directed to take place not later than the last day of February, 1901, was postponed to a more convenient season. The existing register, while it contained the names of—it was estimated—ten thousand persons disfranchised, or about to

be disfranchised, for rebellion, and of some thousands of others then in arms against their sovereign, failed to include persons who had acquired the necessary qualifications since the date of the last registration (1899). Apart from the unsatisfactory condition of the voters' lists, there were other circumstances that made it undesirable as well as difficult not merely to hold the elections necessary to fill up the nine or ten vacant seats in the Legislative Assembly, but even to summon Parliament. Locomotion in many parts of the Colony was inconvenient, and sometimes dangerous. So large a proportion of the members of both chambers were absent in Europe, or engaged either in repelling the invaders or in repressing rebellion, that the remainder, if assembled, would present a mere simulacrum of the actual legislature of the Colony. Moreover, it was necessary that no fresh opportunities for promoting disaffection should be provided by discussions in Parliament or contested elections. The "carnival of mendacity" which, culminating in the Worcester Congress, was mainly responsible for the second invasion of the Colony, had been inaugurated by the inflammatory speeches delivered in the last session of Parliament by the Afrikander members during the debates on the Treason Bill. The spirit of malevolence displayed at this period by the anti-British Press, whether printed in Dutch or in English, may be inferred from the list of convictions reported on April 19th by Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson to the Colonial Office. Mr. Albert Cartwright, editor of *The South African News* (the reputed organ of Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer), was found guilty of a defamatory libel on Lord Kitchener, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment without hard labour. Mr. Advocate Malan, editor of *Ons Land* (the reputed organ of Mr. Hofmeyr), was found guilty of a defamatory libel on General French, and sentenced to a similar term of imprisonment. Mr. de Jong, editor of *The Worcester Advertiser*, and Mr. Vosloo, editor of *Het Oosten*, were both convicted of the same offence as Mr. Malan, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment without hard labour, while the former was further charged with a seditious libel attributing atrocities to the British troops, in respect of which he was convicted and sentenced to a fine of £100 or two months' imprisonment.[278]

The extension of martial law in January (1901) had made such excesses, whether on the platform or in the Press, no longer possible. But the Afrikander nationalists in the ports, and especially in Capetown, continued to render assistance to the guerilla leaders, both by providing intelligence of the plans of the British military authorities, and by forwarding supplies of arms and ammunition, until the time (October 9th) when these towns were placed, like the rest of the Colony, under martial law.

In these circumstances Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson, acting on the advice of his ministers, prorogued the Cape Parliament from time to time, until the actual termination of hostilities made it possible for the inhabitants of the Colony to return to the normal conditions of their political life. As, however, the provision for the ordinary cost of administration made by the Colonial Parliament in its last session did not extend beyond June 30th, 1901, it became necessary to provide for the expenditure of the Colony after this date by the issue of Governor's warrants, under which the Treasurer-General was authorised to pay out funds in anticipation of legislative authority. This technically illegal procedure, by which the authority of the Governor was substituted temporarily for that of Parliament, was advised by the Cape ministers and sanctioned by Mr. Chamberlain. In this way provision was made for the financial needs of the Government; and when, after the war, the Cape Parliament was able to meet again, the necessary bills of indemnity, legalising these acts of the Governor and acts committed by the military authorities in the administration of martial law, were passed in due course.[279]

lown of government.

The only alternative course was the suspension, or abrogation, of the Cape constitution by the Home Government. In view of the appeal for the suspension of the constitution made to Mr. Chamberlain a year later, and refused by him—an appeal which was endorsed by the judgment both of Lord Milner and Mr. Cecil Rhodes, and supported by the majority of the loyalists of both nationalities—it is interesting to observe that petitions addressed to the Governor in June, 1901, reveal a considerable body of opinion in favour of the proposal at this date. These petitions came from the British inhabitants of the small towns in the Eastern Province, since, in the vigorous language of one of the petitioners, "it's those who live in small towns that feel the Bond's iron heel." And the same correspondent asserts that a great number of persons have been prevented from signing the petition, although they approve of it, by fear of the "Bond boycott," adding, "Some of the Bond members have already remarked, 'Now martial law is on we are not in it; but wait until it's removed, then it will be our turn.'"[280]

The collapse of the system of responsible government in the Cape Colony was complete. The truth upon which Lord Durham insisted in his famous Report on Canada, that responsible government is only possible where an effective majority of the inhabitants are British, was once more demonstrated. In the granting of supplies, the characteristic function of the lower chamber, the

authority of the Governor was now substituted for that of Parliament. The endeavour to check the rebellion by the agency of the civil courts had been already abandoned. The lenient penalties of the Treason Bill had produced a large increase of disaffection. On April 6th, 1901, a notice was issued by the Attorney-General warning the public that "any act of treason or rebellion and any crime of a political character" committed after the 12th instant would be brought no longer before the Special Tribunals, with their mitigated penalties created by the Act of 1900, but dealt with by the ordinary courts, and punishable by the severe penalties of the common law of the Colony. But this warning of the Attorney-General was superseded a fortnight later (April 22nd), by a notice, issued by Lord Kitchener and published by the Cape Government, under which it was declared that—

ilitary courts.

> "All subjects of His[281] Majesty and all persons residing in the Cape Colony who shall, in districts thereof in which martial law prevails, be actively in arms against His Majesty, or who shall directly invite others to take up arms against him, or who shall actively aid or assist the enemy or commit any overt act by which the safety of His Majesty's forces or subjects is endangered, shall immediately on arrest be tried by court martial, convened by my authority, and shall on conviction be liable to the severest penalties of the law."

The decision to deal with such cases by military courts was taken by Lord Kitchener, after consultation with Lord Milner, on the ground that the state of the midland and north-western districts was such that "only prompt and severe punishment could stop the spread of rebellion and prevent general anarchy."[282] The Cape Government, however, in assenting to the measure, stipulated that certain conditions should be laid down for the constitution and procedure of the military courts, sufficient to check the more obvious abuses to which such tribunals are liable. These conditions, as expressed in a minute of Sir James Innes, the Attorney-General, were embodied in a set of instructions issued by Lord Kitchener to his officers concurrently with the publication of the notice of April 22nd. Nor was this all. In view of the continued assistance known to be rendered to the Boer and rebel commandos by the Afrikander nationalists, martial law was extended, on October 9th, to the Cape ports; and on December 2nd the British Government announced that, as the result of the establishment of martial law at the South African ports, no persons would be allowed to land in

South Africa from January 1st, 1902, onwards without a permit, except under certain special circumstances.[283]

Ample evidence alike of the necessity of these measures, and of the *de facto* suspension of the constitution, is provided by a Minister's minute of September 12th, 1901. The immediate object of the minute is to advise the Governor that it is impossible, in the opinion of the Cape Ministry, to avoid the further prorogation of Parliament; and this, although the Constitution Ordinance requires the Cape Parliament to meet "once at least every year," and cannot, therefore, be complied with, unless Parliament is summoned "for the despatch of business on or before Saturday, 12th October." In support of this decision Sir Gordon Sprigg and his colleagues referred to the Military Intelligence Report for the current month, which showed that, south of the Orange River, there were a dozen or more commandos, with a total of from 1,800 to 2,000 men; while in the portion of the Colony north of the river there were "numerous commandos also roaming about." Then follows a startling revelation of the character of the men whom the Bond organisation had sent to Parliament:

ion of Cape parliament.

"One member of the House of Assembly," ministers write, "is undergoing a term of imprisonment for seditious libel, three members are awaiting their trial on the charge of high treason, two seats are practically vacant by reason of the absence of the members without leave during the whole of last session. Those two members are alleged to have welcomed the invaders of the Colony, and encouraged rebellion, and then fled to Holland, where they are now living. One seat is vacant by the resignation of the member, who has accepted an appointment in the Transvaal Colony. Another seat is vacant on account of the death of the member, another member is sending in his resignation owing to ill health, which compels him to reside in Europe. In all these cases the divisions concerned are either under martial law or in a state of disturbance, which makes new elections impracticable.

"Besides the cases enumerated there are members who have been deported from their homes on account of the seditious influences which the military authorities allege they were exercising, and others who are under military observation, with respect to whom their attendance in Parliament must be regarded as uncertain. Several members also are engaged in military operations, whose attendance could not, in the present condition of the country, be relied on.

There are also some members who would be unable to attend owing to the state of war and rebellion prevailing in the districts where they reside, whose personal presence is necessary for the protection of their families and property."

Such a legislature, they concluded, could not be regarded as "fairly representing the people." Moreover—

> "There is also the further consideration that the probability of good resulting from the meeting of Parliament now is but small, while the likelihood of evil consequences accruing from the publication of speeches of a character similar to many that were delivered last session is strong. The tendency of such speeches would be to encourage the spirit of rebellion which unhappily prevails in the Colony over a large area, and ministers regard it as an imperative duty to do everything in their power to subdue that rebellious spirit, and restore peace and good-will to the distracted country." [284]

The necessity for the more stringent action now taken by the Imperial authorities was, therefore, undoubted. But here again, in placing the ports, the centres of commercial life, under martial law, an endeavour was made to render the restraints of military rule as little onerous as possible. A Board, consisting of three persons nominated respectively by the Governor, the Prime Minister, and the General Commanding in the Cape Colony, was created for the consideration and, where necessary, the redress of all complaints or grievances arising out of martial law in the Colony, other than pecuniary claims against the Government. The fact that, on the whole, martial law was judiciously administered is indicated by the Report of the proceedings of this Board, presented on December 3rd by Mr. (now Sir Lewis) Mitchell, who, as Manager of the Standard Bank, had been appointed chairman by Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson. Out of 199 cases brought before the Board, Mr. Mitchell writes:

> "A fair number of substantial grievances have been redressed, but in a majority of instances the Board have held that complainants suffered through some misconduct of their own, or were deported, imprisoned, or otherwise punished on reasonable grounds of suspicion."[285]

sts defend the colony.

In all this Sir Gordon Sprigg loyally co-operated with the Imperial military authorities. His attitude, and that of the loyalist inhabitants of the Colony, may

be gathered from the speech which he delivered at Capetown on December 1st, 1901. In this striking and inspiring utterance we have the companion picture to that presented in the minute of September 12th. Throughout there runs a note of justifiable pride in the military efforts of the Cape Government, and in the sacrifices which these efforts have entailed upon the loyalist population. First there was the number of troops provided. The Cape Government had placed, he said, 18,000 men in the field against the invaders and rebels; they had a defensive force of 18,000 town guards, of whom 3,000 were natives; and, in addition, 7,000 natives were under arms in the Transkei for the defence of those territories. In respect of this force of 18,000 men in the field, Sir Gordon Sprigg pointed out that such a number of men, coming from a population of 500,000, was equivalent to a force of 1,450,000 men from the United Kingdom, with its population of over 40,000,000. He might have added that, since half of the 500,000 Europeans in the Cape Colony were "either actually in rebellion against the Crown or in positive sympathy with rebellion," the more correct equivalent force from the United Kingdom would have been 3,000,000 men. And as for the cost of maintenance, the colony provided three-fourths of the expenditure upon the 18,000 men in the field, while it wholly supported the town guards and other purely defensive forces. He then dwelt with satisfaction upon the fact that these local forces were now entirely controlled by the Cape Government, which had made itself responsible for the defence of no less than thirty-one districts of the Colony.

> "Months ago," he said, "we pressed strongly upon the Commander-in-Chief to hand over to us the colonial forces then under his direction. We thought that if we got them into our possession, not only defraying the cost of their maintenance, but taking charge of certain parts of the Colony, we could keep those districts clear of the enemy. We were continually putting that view before the Commander-in-Chief, and also before the High Commissioner, Lord Milner, but still the matter hung, and we had communications going backwards and forwards till at last the High Commissioner communicated with me, and he said, 'I think the only way to come to an understanding in this matter is, if we have a conference. If you could manage to meet Lord Kitchener and myself, I have great hopes we should be able to arrange what you desire.' I asked then if Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner could come to meet me half-way, but Lord Kitchener said it was not possible for him to leave Pretoria at that time, but he would be only too delighted if I could come up and meet him and Lord Milner upon the question. The result of that was that I went up with two of my colleagues. It

has been put about all over the country that we were ordered by Lord Kitchener to proceed to Pretoria, but, so far from that being the case, it was our suggestion that we should take over the command of certain portions of the country, and we went up to Pretoria to secure that object. And in that we were successful, and the result of it has been published very lately."[286]

l visit to England.

These events, revealing the slow and laborious progress of the Imperial troops in a South Africa rent by war from end to end, account sufficiently for the postponement of the work of active administrative reconstruction in the new colonies, to which Lord Milner owed the opportunity for his second visit to England. On April 3rd, 1901, he telegraphed a request that he might be allowed to return home at an early date, on leave, since he feared that, unless he had a short rest, he would approach the onerous duty of superintending the work of reconstruction with lessened efficiency. "I have now been continuously in harness," he said, "without a day's holiday, for more than two years ... and it is, undoubtedly, better for the public service, if I am to get such a rest at all, that I should take leave immediately while military operations still continue and the work of civil administration is necessarily curtailed, rather than when it will be possible to organise civil government in a more complete fashion, and when many important problems which are for the moment in abeyance will have to be dealt with." To this request Mr. Chamberlain replied that, although His Majesty's Government greatly regretted that it was necessary for Lord Milner to leave South Africa at present, they quite recognised that it was unavoidable that he should take the rest which the severe strain of the last two years had made imperative.[287] He was, therefore, to take leave as soon as he found it possible to do so.

ffairs in new colonies.

None the less the little that could be done to develop the inchoate machinery of administration which marked the transition from military to civil order in the new colonies, was done, and done well, before Lord Milner left Johannesburg. On May 4th, 1901, Sir H. Gould-Adams was able to report that the chief departments of the administration of the Orange River Colony had been transferred from military to civil officials, and reorganised on a permanent basis. In the Transvaal the departments of finance, law, mines, and that of the Secretary to the Administration, had been organised, and were gradually taking over an increasing volume of administrative work from the military officials. Even more

significant was the establishment by proclamation (May 8th), of a nominated Town Council for the management of the municipal affairs of Johannesburg, and the consequent abolition of the office of Military Governor, with the transfer of the departments hitherto controlled by him to a Government Commissioner and other officials of the civil administration. This step was rendered possible by the circumstance that a certain number of the principal residents, of whom twelve were nominated for service on the Council, had now returned to their homes. It marked the recommencement of the industrial life of the Rand, which had followed the permission, given by Lord Kitchener in April, for three mines to resume work. From this time forward the Uitlander refugees began to return; although, as we have seen,[288] it was not possible to allow the general mass of the inhabitants to leave the coast towns until the following November. And, in addition to this, Lord Milner had obtained statements of the views of the Cape and Natal Governments on the question of the settlement of the new colonies. Mr. Chamberlain had attached great importance to this interchange of opinions; rightly holding that, in determining the conditions and methods of the settlement of the conquered territories, the British South African colonies should be taken into the counsels of the Imperial Government. Lord Milner had, therefore, submitted to the colonial Governments the draft of the Letters Patent, under which the system of Crown Colony government was to be established in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, before they were issued.[289] As the result of these consultations the terms of surrender granted to the Boers at Vereeniging, and the consequent administrative arrangements arising out of them, embodied decisions based not merely on the judgment of the Imperial Government, but on what was virtually the unanimous opinion of the loyal population of South Africa. In this, as in the crisis of the negotiations before the war, the loyalists found in Lord Milner their "representative man."

in England.

Lord Milner—then Sir Alfred Milner—left Capetown on May 8th, and reached England on the 24th. On his arrival in London he was met at the station by Lord Salisbury and Mr. Chamberlain, and immediately conducted to the King, who was at that time still residing at Marlborough House. At the end of a long audience His Majesty announced his intention of raising him to the peerage, the first of many marks of royal favour, including his elevation to the Privy Council, which were shown to the High Commissioner during his stay in England. The warm demonstrations of popular regard with which he had been welcomed upon his arrival in London, were followed by a luncheon given on the

next day (Saturday, May 25th) in his honour by Mr. Chamberlain, his official chief. The speech elicited by this notable occasion is one in which a graceful humour is characteristically blended with deep emotion. Those who have had the good fortune to hear many of Lord Milner's speeches—speeches sometimes turning a page of history, sometimes mere incidents of official or administrative routine—know that they are all alike distinguished by the high quality of sincerity.[290] But this was an occasion upon which even adroitness of intellect and integrity of purpose might well have sought the shelter of conventional expressions. Lord Milner dispenses with any such protection. "In a rational world," he said, it would have seemed better to everybody that he, "with a big unfinished job awaiting him," and many of his fellow workmen unable to take the rest which they both deserved and needed, "should have arrived, and stayed, and returned in the quietest possible manner." But it was an age in which it "seemed impossible for many people to put a simple and natural interpretation on anything; and his arrival in this quiet manner would have been misconstrued to a degree, which would have been injurious to the public interests." If his "hard-begged holiday" could have been represented as a "veiled recall," then of course it was obvious that, having taken the proverbial hansom from Waterloo to his own chambers, this very harmless action would have been "trumpeted over two continents as evidence of his disgrace."

"It is hard, it is ludicrous," he continued, "that some of the busiest men in the world should be obliged to occupy their time, and that so many of my friends and well wishers should be put to inconvenience—and on a day, too, when it would be so nice to be in the country—merely in order to prove to persons with an ingrained habit of self-delusion that the British Government will not give up its agents in the face of the enemy, or that the people of this country will not allow themselves to be bored into abandoning what they have spent millions of treasure and so many precious lives to obtain. All I can say is, that if it was necessary (I apologise for it: I am sorry to be the centre of a commotion from which no man could be constitutionally more averse than myself), I can only thank you heartily for the kindness and the cordiality with which the thing has been done. I feel indeed that the praises which have been bestowed, the honours which have been heaped on me, are beyond my deserts. But the simplest thing to do under these circumstances is to try to deserve them in the future. In any case I am under endless obligations. It is difficult to say these things in the face of the persons principally concerned, but I feel bound to take this opportunity, especially in view of the remarks which have been made in certain quarters, to express my deep sense of gratitude for the manner in which His Majesty's

Government, and especially my immediate chief, have shown me great forbearance, and given me support most prompt at the moment when it was most needed, without which I should have been helpless indeed. And I have also to thank many friends, not a few of them here present, and some not present, for messages of encouragement, for kindly words of suggestion and advice received at critical moments, some of which have been of invaluable assistance to me, and have made an indelible impression on my heart. I am afraid, if I were to refer to all my benefactors, it would be like the bidding prayer—and you would all lose your trains.

dding prayer.

"But there is one hint I may take from the bidding prayer. Not only in this place, but at all times and in all places, I am specially bound to remember the devotion of the loyalists—the Dutch loyalists, if you please, and not only the British—the loyalists of South Africa. They responded to all my appeals to act, and, harder still, to wait. They never lost their cheery confidence in the darkest days of our misfortunes, they never faltered in their fidelity to a man of whose errors and failings they were necessarily more conscious than anybody else, but of whose honesty of purpose they were long ago, and once for all, convinced. If there is anything most gratifying to me on this memorable occasion it is the encouragement which I know the events of yesterday and of to-day will give to thousands of our South African fellow-countrymen, like minded with us, in the homes and in the camps of South Africa.

"Your Royal Highness,[291] Mr. Chamberlain, ladies, and gentlemen—I am sure you will not desire me to enter into any political questions to-day. More than that, I really have nothing to add to what I have already said and written, I fear with wearisome reiteration. It seems to me we are slowly progressing towards the predestined end; latterly it has appeared as if the pace was somewhat quickening, but I do not wish to make too much of that or to speak with any too great confidence. However long the road, it seems to me the only one to the object which we were bound to pursue, and which seems now fairly in sight. What has sustained me personally—if your kindness will allow me to make a personal reference—what has sustained me personally on the weary road is my absolute, unshakable conviction that it was the only one which we could travel.

"Peace we could have had by self-effacement. We could have had it easily and comfortably on those terms. But we could not have held our own by any other

methods than those which we have been obliged to adopt. I do not know whether I feel more inclined to laugh or to cry when I have to listen for the hundredth time to these dear delusions, this Utopian dogmatising that it only required a little more time, a little more patience, a little more tact, a little more meekness, a little more of all those gentle virtues of which I know I am so conspicuously devoid, in order to conciliate—to conciliate what? Panoplied hatred, insensate ambition, invincible ignorance. I fully believe that the time is coming—Heaven knows how we desire it to come quickly—when all the qualities of the most gentle and forbearing statesmanship which are possessed by any of our people will be called for, and ought to be applied, in South Africa. I do not say for a moment there is not great scope for them even to-day, but always provided they do not mar what is essential for success in the future—the conclusiveness of the final scenes of the present drama."

nan and Sauer mission.

As a declaration to the British world that Lord Milner "possessed the unabated confidence of his sovereign and of his fellow countrymen," Mr. Chamberlain's luncheon was amply justified. The protraction of the war was beginning to try the endurance of the nation. Mr. Sauer and Mr. Merriman were in England for the express purpose of discrediting Lord Milner, and behind these fierce political freelances was the astute brain of the Bond Master, Hofmeyr. They had been commissioned early in the year by the Afrikander nationalists to give effect to the resolutions of the Worcester Congress by co-operating with their friends in England in an agitation for the recall of the High Commissioner. It was said that these two ex-ministers of the Crown were authorised to offer an undertaking that the Bond would use its influence with ex-President Krüger and Mr. Fischer[292] to terminate the war, in exchange for the promise of "autonomy" for the Boers and a general armistice for the Cape rebels. However this may be, the delegates of the Worcester Congress made it their chief business to represent to the members of the Liberal party who favoured their cause, that the recall of Lord Milner would remove the chief obstacle to peace. This attempt never came within a measurable distance of success; but its failure was not due to any want of effort on the part of that section of the Liberal opposition which had been opposed to the annexation of the Republics, and now denounced the British Government and the Imperial troops for their "methods of barba

Liberals and Afrikanders.

The completeness with which Lord Courtney, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Lloyd-George, Lord Loreburn (Sir Robert Reid), Mr. Burns, and other prominent members of the Liberal party identified themselves with the policy and action of

the Afrikander Bond, is disclosed by the proceedings which marked the banquet given on June 5th in honour of Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer. Mr. Bryce, in a letter expressing his approbation of the object of the banquet and his regret at his inability to attend it, wrote: "Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer have not only distinguished public records, but did excellent service, for which the Government ought to have been grateful, in allaying passion and averting disturbances in Cape Colony."[293] Lord (then Mr.) Courtney, in proposing a vote of thanks to the guests of the evening, declared that the annexation of the Republics was "a wrong and a blunder"; adding that the Liberal policy would some day be "to temper annexation, if not to abrogate it." Both Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer revealed the aims of their mission with perfect frankness. The former, after alluding to Mr. Chamberlain's luncheon as a display of the "Imperial spirit of the servile senate who decreed ovations and triumphs to Caligula and Domitian, when they had received rebuffs from the ancestors both of ourselves and the heroic Dutch now struggling in South Africa," and characterising Lord Milner's High Commissionership as "a career of unmitigated and hopeless failure," proceeded to demand his immediate recall. To employ Lord Milner in the settlement of the new colonies, said Mr. Merriman, would be "a suicidal and ruinous policy. He was a violent partizan; his predictions never came true; the bursts of fustian and the frivolous utterances of his despatches showed an ill-balanced and ill-regulated mind, which was utterly unable to cope with the problem." While, as for the prospect of a British army ever conquering the South African Dutch, he reasserted the opinion which he held before the war —"Our friends they might be, but our subjects never."[294] Mr. Sauer, who "felt honoured by seeing such a gathering, and seeing in it a Gladstone[295] and a Leonard Courtney," was no less explicit:

> "I stand here," he said, "as a representative of the Dutch people, and declare that they never mean to be a subject race. If they cannot get their rights by justice they will get them by other means.... I am glad to go back and tell my own people how many there are in this country who appreciate their devotion to an ideal, and are prepared to befriend them in the hour of trial."[296]

A fortnight later a meeting of those who sympathised with the Boer cause was held in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place. The spirit of this notorious gathering, presided over by Mr. Labouchere, M.P., and attended by Mr. Merriman. Mr. Sauer, Mr. Lloyd-George, M.P., and other Radical members of Parliament, is sufficiently revealed by certain characteristic incidents which marked the

proceedings. The agents of the meeting wore the Transvaal colours; a member of the audience who uncovered at the mention of King Edward was ejected; the Union Jack was hissed and hooted; and, while a printed form was handed round inviting the signatures of persons prepared to pay eight and-a-half guineas for a tour in Holland and the privilege of seeing ex-President Krüger, the name of the British sovereign was received by the audience with marks of evident disapprobation.

ion for Milner's recall.

The agitation for Lord Milner's recall was continued throughout the year. It was accompanied by a repetition, in England and on the continent of Europe, of the shameless calumnies upon the Imperial troops, which had marked the "carnival of mendacity" that led to the second invasion of Cape Colony. The injurious effect produced upon the Boers in the field by the support thus given by public men in England to the "continued resistance" policy of the Afrikander nationalists, has been already noticed, and it is unnecessary, therefore, to say more on this aspect of the subject. The attempt to discredit Lord Milner culminated in the declaration made by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, then recognised as the official leader of the Liberal party, at Plymouth, on November 19th, 1901, that, unless the British Government changed its methods, "the whole of the Dutch population in our colonies, as well as in the two territories, would in all probability be permanently and violently alienated from us" when the war was ended. "I am ready to speak out to-night," he continued, "and to say what I have never yet said, that for my part I despair of this peril being conjured away so long as the present Colonial Secretary is in Downing Street and the present High Commissioner is at Pretoria." When the full report of this speech had reached the Cape, the Vigilance Committee, a body representing the loyalists of both nationalities, met[297] under the presidency of Sir Gordon Sprigg, and resolved:

> "That this committee views with the utmost disapproval the statement of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman at Plymouth, to the effect that no satisfactory settlement would be arrived at in South Africa so long as Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner retained their present offices, and, on the contrary, emphatically affirms that the retention in office of those statesmen is regarded by the South African loyalists as affording the best security for a settlement which will be permanent, just, and consistent with the honour of the empire and the best interests of South Africa, and, further, affirms that

> the whole tone of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's speech is most pernicious, and prejudicial to Imperial interests in South Africa, and shows him to be entirely out of sympathy with loyalist opinion in South Africa."

With this prompt and uncompromising rejoinder we may take leave of an attempt to remove a great and devoted servant of the empire, which is as discreditable to the intelligence as it is to the patriotism of those prominent members of the Liberal party who thus lent their co-operation to the Afrikander nationalists. In South Africa the issue was simple. While Boer and rebel combined in their efforts to rid themselves of the man who had thwarted their ambitions, the loyalists closed their ranks and stood firm in his support. It is to the far-off Homeland that we have to turn for the spectacle of a nation in which gratitude to the man who upheld the flag gave place to sympathy for the enemy and the rebel; in which patriotism itself yielded to a greed of place wrapped up by sophistry in such decent terms as "humanity," "Liberal principles," and "conciliation."

es of the new colonies.

In the meantime Lord Milner had returned to Johannesburg. His "hard-begged" holiday had proved a change of occupation rather than a respite from work. Before he left England (August 10th), he had made known to the Home Government the actual condition of the infant administrations of the new colonies, and obtained a provision for their immediate wants. The Letters Patent constituting him Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony had been passed under the Great Seal; and these and other instruments creating a system of Crown Colony Government, with Executive and Legislative Councils in both colonies, had been sent to him in readiness for use "whenever it might be thought expedient to bring them into operation."[298] And on August 6th the House of Commons had voted £6,500,000 as a grant in aid of the revenues of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Of this sum £1,000,000 was required for the purchase of fresh rolling-stock for the Imperial Military Railways, still placed under the direction of Sir Percy (then Colonel) Girouard, and £500,000 was assigned to "relief and re-settlement," an item which included the purchase of land and other arrangements for the establishment of suitable British settlers on farms in both colonies. The debate on the vote afforded a significant exhibition of the spirit of mingled pessimism and distrust in which the Liberal Opposition approached every aspect of the South African question. The idea of the Transvaal ever being able to repay this

grant-in-aid out of the "hypothetical" development loan appeared ridiculous to Sir William Harcourt. "Why," asked the Liberal ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, "was not the money required for the South African Constabulary put forward in a supplementary military vote, instead of being proposed in this form and, under the grant-in-aid, subject to future repayment by the Transvaal, in which nobody believed?"[299]

This temporary financial assistance was of the utmost importance. Just as in the Cape Colony Lord Milner had seen that the Boers and Afrikander nationalists were to be beaten at their own game of renewed invasion by enabling the loyalist population to defend the Colony, so in the new colonies he proposed to beat the guerilla leaders at their game of wanton and mischievous resistance by building up a new prosperity faster than they could destroy the old. The conditions under which he worked, and the state in which he found South Africa when he began to engage actively in the work of reconstruction, he has himself described. In a despatch, written from the "High Commissioner's Office, Johannesburg," on November 15th, 1901, not only has Lord Milner placed on record the actual position of affairs in the new colonies at this time, but he has sketched with masterly precision the nature of the economic and administrative problems that awaited solution. The progress towards pacification won by the mobile columns and the blockhouse system, the dominant influence of the railways as the agency of transport, the condition of the Concentration Camps, and the degree in which our responsibility for the non-combatant and surrendered Boers limited our capacity to restore our own people to their homes, the economic exhaustion of the country, the threatened danger of the scarcity of native labour, and the processes and problems of repatriation—all these subjects are touched as by a master of statecraft.

ved situation.

"Without being unduly optimistic," he writes, "it is impossible not to be struck by two great changes for the better in [the military situation] since the time when I first took up my residence in the Transvaal—just eight months ago. These are the now almost absolute safety and uninterrupted working of the railways and the complete pacification of certain central districts. As regards the railways, I cannot illustrate the contrast better than by my own experiences. In the end of last year and the earlier months of this I had occasion to make several journeys between Capetown and Johannesburg or Pretoria, and between Johannesburg and Bloemfontein. Though most careful preparations were made and every precaution taken, I was frequently 'hung up' on these journeys because the line had been blown up—not, I think, with any reference to my movements, but in the ordinary course of affairs. Small bodies of the enemy were always hovering about, and a state of extreme vigilance, not to say anxiety, was observable almost everywhere along the line. Since my return from England I have again traversed the country from East London to Bloemfontein and Johannesburg, and from Johannesburg to Durban and back, to say nothing of constant journeys between this place and Pretoria. On no single occasion has there been the slightest hitch or the least cause for alarm. The trains have been absolutely up to time, and very good time. They could not have been more regular in the most peaceful country. This personal experience, in itself unimportant, is typical of a general improvement. I may add, in confirmation of it, that during the last two months the mail train from Capetown to the north has only been late on one or two occasions, and then it was a matter of hours. Six months ago it was quite a common event for it to arrive a day, or a couple of days, late. I need not enlarge on the far-reaching importance of the improvement which these instances illustrate. Not only have the derailments, often accompanied by deplorable loss of life, which were at one time so common, almost entirely ceased, but, owing to more regular running, and especially the resumption of night running, the carrying capacity of the railways has greatly increased. Indeed, it is the inadequacy of the lines themselves to meet the enormous and ever-increasing extra requirements resulting from the war, and the shortness of rolling-stock, not any interference from the enemy, which causes us whatever difficulties—and they are still considerable—we now labour under in the matter of transport. When the large amount of additional rolling-stock ordered for the Imperial Military Railways last summer is received—and the first instalment will arrive very shortly—there will be a further great and progressive improvement in the conveyance of supplies and materials for the troops, the civil population of the towns, and the concentration camps.

rea of war.

"The advance made in clearing the country is equally marked. Six months ago the enemy were everywhere, outside the principal towns. It is true they held nothing, but they raided wherever they pleased, and, though mostly in small bodies, which made little or no attempt at resistance when seriously pressed, they almost invariably returned to their old haunts when the pressure was over. It looked as though the process might go on indefinitely. I had every opportunity of watching it, for during the first two months of my residence here it was in full swing in the immediate neighbourhood. There were half a dozen Boer strong-holds, or rather trysting-places, quite close to Pretoria and Johannesburg, and the country round was quite useless to us for any purpose but that of marching through it, while the enemy seemed to find no difficulty in subsisting there....

"To-day a large and important district of the Transvaal is now firmly held by us. But it must not be supposed that all the rest is held, or even roamed over, by the enemy. Wide districts of both the new colonies are virtually derelict, except, in some cases, for the native population. This is especially true of the northern part of the Transvaal, which has always been a native district, and where, excepting in Pietersburg and some other positions held by our troops, the natives are now almost the only inhabitants. Indeed, nothing is more characteristic of the latest stage of the war than the contraction of Boer resistance within certain wide but fairly well-defined districts, separated from one another by considerable spaces. Instead of ranging indifferently over the whole of the two late Republics, the enemy show an increasing tendency to confine themselves to certain neighbourhoods, which have always been their chief, though till recently by no means their exclusive, centres of strength.... From time to time the commandos try to break out of these districts and to extend the scene of operations. But the failure of the latest of these raids—Botha's bold attempt to invade Natal—shows the disadvantages under which the Boers now labour in attempting to undertake distant expeditions.

"The contraction of the theatre of war is doubtless due to the increased difficulty which the enemy have in obtaining horses and supplies, but, above all, to the great reduction in their numbers.... To wear out the resistance of the Boers still in the field—not more than one-eighth, I think, of the total number of burghers who have, first and last, been engaged in the war[300]—may take a considerable time yet, and will almost certainly involve further losses. I will not attempt to forecast either the time or the cost. What seems evident is that the

concentration of the Boers, and the substitution of several fairly well-defined small campaigns for that sort of running fight all over the country which preceded them, is on the whole an advantage to us, and tends to bring the end of the struggle within a more measurable distance. Our great object, it seems to me, should be to keep the Boers within the areas of their main strength, even if such concentration makes the commandos individually more dangerous and involves more desperate fighting, and meanwhile to push on with might and main the settlement of those parts of the country out of which they have been driven. No doubt this is a difficult, and must be a gradual, process. The full extent of the difficulty will appear from the sequel. But it is the point to which the main efforts, of the civil authorities at any rate, should be continually directed.

Rand.

"If the latest phase of the military situation is maintained, *i.e.*, if we are able to prevent the Boers from breaking back into the cleared areas, or from injuring the railway lines, I can see no reason why the work of settlement should not proceed at a greatly quickened pace in the immediate future. The most urgent point is to bring back the exiled Uitlanders to the Rand, always provided that they are able to find employment when they arrive there. But the basis of any general revival of industrial and commercial activity on the Rand is the resumption of mining operations. So far it has only been found possible to proceed very slowly in this respect. The full capacity of the Rand is about 6,000 stamps. The first step was taken in April last, when the Commander-in-Chief agreed to allow the Chamber of Mines to open three mines with 50 stamps each. Up till now permission has been granted for the working of 600 stamps, but only 450 have actually been started. This is slow work, but even this beginning, modest as it is, has made an immense difference in the aspect of Johannesburg since first I came here in March last.

"The number of people allowed to return from time to time, for other than mining employments, is in proportion to the number of stamps re-started. This, no doubt, is a wise principle, for business generally can only expand *pari passu* with the resumption of mining. Up to the present something like 10,000 people have been allowed to come up, the vast majority of them being refugees, though there is a small new element of civil servants and civilians in the employ of the military. Assuming that from 8,000 to 9,000 are refugees, this would represent about one-sixth of the total number of well-accredited Uitlanders registered in the books of the 'Central Registration Committee.'

"The best that can be said on the thorny subject of the return of the refugees, is that latterly the rate of return has been steadily increasing. Last month the military authorities allowed us to grant 400 ordinary permits (this number is over and above permits given to officials or persons specially required for particular services to the Army or the Government). This month the number has been raised to 800. I need hardly say that the selection of 800 people out of something like fifty times that number is an onerous and ungrateful task. South Africa simply rings with complaints as to favouritism in the distribution of permits. As a matter of fact, whatever mistakes have been made, there has been no favouritism. I do not mean to say that a certain number of people—not a large number—have not slipped through or been smuggled up under false pretences. But the great bulk of the permits have been allotted by the Central Registration Committee, a large, capable, and most representative body of the citizens of this town and neighbourhood. And they have been allotted on well-defined principles, and with great impartiality.... I am satisfied that no body of officials, even if our officials were not already over-worked in other directions, could have done the business so well.

sport.

"There can, I think, be little doubt that the present rate of return can be maintained, and I am not without hope that it may in a short time be considerably increased. But this depends entirely, for the reasons already given, on the question whether the resumption of mining operations can be quickened. The obstacles to such a quickening are two-fold: first, want of native labour; secondly, want of trucks to bring up not only the increased supplies which a larger population necessitates, but also, and this is even a more serious matter, to bring up the material required for their work. The latter, I need hardly say, is a very heavy item, not only in the case of the mines, but in the case of all those other industries, building, for instance, which only need a chance in order to burst into extreme activity in this place. For the Rand requires just now an increase of everything—dwelling-houses, offices, roads, sewers, lighting, water-supply, etc., etc. Capital would be readily forthcoming for every kind of construction, and many skilled workmen are waiting at the coast. But it is no use bringing up workmen to live in the dearest place in the world unless they have the materials to work with. The most necessary materials, however, are bulky, and the carrying capacity of the railways, greatly improved as it is, gives no promise of an early importation of quantities of bulky material, if the other and more urgent demands upon our means of transport are to be satisfied.

"As regards native labour for the mines, the greater development of which is a condition of all other industrial development, the difficulty is that, while natives can be found in abundance to do surface work, the number of those who are willing to go underground is limited. There are only certain tribes among whom underground workers can be found in any great numbers, and these reside mostly in Portuguese territory. As you are aware, difficulties have arisen about the introduction of Portuguese natives, and the matter is at present the subject of negotiations between the Governor-General of Mozambique and myself. Having regard to the friendly attitude of the Governor-General, I have every hope that this difficulty may soon be overcome. But even then we shall not be able to count on any great immediate influx of labourers from Portuguese territory....

ɔn camps.

"The delay in obtaining native labour would be more serious if it were not for the existence of that other and still greater obstacle to the rapid revival of industry here which I have already dwelt on, namely, the difficulty of transport. And this latter difficulty is immensely aggravated at the present time by the constantly increasing requirements of the concentration camps. Not only has the number of people in these camps increased, with overwhelming rapidity, to an extent never contemplated when they were first started, but the extreme state of destitution in which many of the people arrived, and the deplorable amount of sickness which has all along existed among them, create a demand for a great deal more than mere primary necessities, such as food and shelter, if the condition of the camps is to be anything like what we should wish to see it. The amount of mortality in these camps, especially amongst very young children, as you are well aware, has been deplorable. I do not, indeed, agree with those who think—or assert—that the mortality among the Boers would have been less, if thousands of women and children had been allowed to live on isolated farms in a devastated country, or to roam about on the trail of the commandos. Indeed, I feel confident that it would have been far greater. The best proof of this is the deplorable state of starvation and sickness in which great numbers of people arrived at the camps, and which rendered them easy victims to the attack of epidemic diseases. At the same time it is evident that the ravages of disease would have been less if our means of transport had allowed us to provide them on their first arrival, not only with tents, rations, and necessary medicines (all of which were, as a matter of fact, supplied with great promptitude), but with the hundred and one appliances and comforts which are so essential for the recovery of the weakly and the sick, and the prevention of the spread of disease. I do not

mean to say that it was only want of material, due to the insuperable difficulties of transport (especially at the time when the camps were first started, and when railways were subject to continual interruptions) from which the camps suffered. Equally serious was the want of personnel; of the necessary number of doctors, nurses, matrons, superintendents, etc., who were simply not to be found in South Africa, severely taxed as it had already been to find men and women of sufficient training and experience to look after the other victims of the war. Still, the want of material has been a serious item; and it is evidently a want which, as the carrying capacity of the railways increases, we must do our best to supply. The Ladies' Commission, of whose devoted labours in visiting and inspecting the camps it is impossible to speak too highly (they have been of inestimable service to the Government), have handed in a considerable list of requirements, which have been, and are being, supplied as fast as possible. But evidently these requirements enter into competition, and most serious competition, with the supply of food and materials necessary for the revival even of our central industry, not to say of industrial and agricultural activity elsewhere in the new colonies, of which, under the circumstances, it is, for the moment, unfortunately impossible to think.

"To decide between the competing demands upon the still very limited amount of truckage available for civil purposes, after the paramount requirements of the army have been satisfied, is indeed a most difficult and delicate task. Whether we have done all for the best, it is not for me to say. That any amount of conscientious thought and labour has been devoted, on all hands, to grappling with the problem, I can confidently assert. And I am equally confident that whatever has been done, and whatever may yet be done, the amount of hardship must have been and must still be very great. It would be amusing, if amusement were possible in the presence of so much sadness and suffering, to put side by side the absolutely contradictory criticisms, all equally vehement, to which our action is subjected. On the one hand is the outcry against the cruelty and heartlessness manifested in not making better provision for the people in the concentration camps: on the other, the equally loud outcry against our injustice in leaving the British refugees in idleness and poverty at the coast, in order to keep the people in the concentration camps supplied with every luxury and comfort. I have even frequently heard the expression that we are 'spoiling' the people in the Boer camps. We are, alas, not in a position to spoil anybody, however much we might desire to do so....

"The pressing questions connected with the return of the refugees and the

maintenance of the Boers at present in the concentration camps are, it is evident, only the first of a series of problems of the most complicated character, which have to be solved before the country can resume its normal life....

oblems.

"Even if the war were to come to an end to-morrow, it would not be possible to let the people in the concentration camps go back at once to their former homes. They would only starve there. The country is, for the most part, a desert, and, before it can be generally re-occupied, a great deal will have to be done in the way of re-stocking, provision of seed, and also probably, in the absence of draught animals, for the importation of steam ploughs.

"Then there are the arrangements to be made for the return of the prisoners of war. Evidently these will have to wait till the whole of the British refugees are brought back. The latter not only have the strongest claim, but they will be immediately wanted when order is restored, and will have, as soon as the railway can bring up the necessary material, abundance of work, whereas it may take some time before the country is fit to receive the prisoners. Nevertheless, though the return of the prisoners may still be far distant, there are certain measures which have to be taken even now, in order that we may be able to deal with the matter when the time comes.

"Altogether, the number and complexity of the tasks, embraced under the general term 're-settlement,' which are either already upon us or will come upon us as the country gradually quiets down, are sufficient to daunt the most stout-hearted. And yet the tone of hopefulness among the British population who have so far returned to the new colonies is very marked, especially in the Transvaal. It is not incompatible with many grievances, and with much grumbling at the Administration. But that was only to be expected, and is of very small importance as long as people are prepared to tackle the big work of reconstruction in front of them in a vigorous and sanguine spirit. Nor is this hopefulness, in my opinion, at all ill-founded, however gloomy may be the immediate outlook.

"Terrible as have been the ravages of war and the destruction of agricultural capital, a destruction which is now pretty well complete, the great fact remains that the Transvaal possesses an amount of mineral wealth, virtually unaffected by the war, which will ensure the prosperity of South Africa for the next fifty years; and other resources, both industrial and agricultural, which, properly

developed, should make it a rich country, humanly speaking, for ever. Economically, all that is required is that a very small proportion of the superabundant but exhaustible riches of the mines should be devoted to developing the vast permanent sources of wealth which the country possesses, and which will maintain a European population twenty times as large as the present, when all the gold has been dug out. No doubt it is not economic measures alone which will ensure that result. A social change is also necessary, viz., the introduction of fresh blood, of a body of enterprising European settlers, especially on the land, to reinforce the Boer population, who have been far too few, and far too easy-going, to do even the remotest justice to the vast natural capabilities of the soil, on which, for the most part, they have done little more than squat. But then the introduction of the right type of agricultural settlers, though it will not come about of itself, would not seem to be a task beyond the powers of statesmanship to grapple with.

ent report.

"This despatch has dealt so largely with questions of immediate urgency, that I have left myself no time to refer to the work which is being quietly done in both the new colonies to build up the framework of the new Administration. I can hardly claim for myself that I have been able to give to that work anything more than the most general supervision, as my time is more than fully occupied in dealing with matters of present urgency. But, thanks to the great energy displayed by the principal officers of the Administration—by Major Goold-Adams and Mr. Wilson at Bloemfontein, by Mr. Fiddes, Sir Richard Solomon, and Mr. Duncan, at Pretoria, and by Sir Godfrey Lagden and Mr. Wybergh here—a really surprising amount of ground has been covered. Despite all the difficulties and discouragements of the present time, the machinery of the Government is getting rapidly into working order, and, as soon as normal conditions are restored, the new colonies will find themselves provided with an Administration capable of dealing with the needs of a great and progressive community, and with efficient and trustworthy courts of law. A number of fundamental laws are being worked out, and will shortly be submitted for your approval. In the Orange River Colony they do not involve any great change of system, but, in the Transvaal, some most important reforms are at once necessary, while an immense amount of useless rubbish, which encumbered the Statute Book and made it the despair of jurists, has already been repealed."[301]

In spite of the disturbed condition of the country, two independent inquiries,

each of which was concerned with matters of cardinal importance to the future of South Africa, were concluded before the second year of the war had run its course. From the report addressed to Mr. Chamberlain by the Land Settlement Commission, of which Mr. Arnold-Forster was chairman, and from that presented to Lord Milner by Sir William (then Mr.) Willcocks[302] on Irrigation in South Africa, there emerged three significant conclusions. Racial fusion, or the ultimate solution of the nationality difficulty, was to be found in the establishment of British settlers upon the land, living side by side with the Dutch farmers and identified with them by common pursuits and interests; the possibility alike of the successful introduction of these settlers and of the development of the hitherto neglected agricultural resources of South Africa depended upon the enlargement and improvement of the cultivable area by irrigation; and the only existing source of wealth capable of providing the material agencies for the realisation of these objects was the Witwatersrand gold industry. British agricultural settlers for the political, irrigation for the physical regeneration of South Africa—this was the essence of these two Reports.

> "We desire to express our firm conviction," wrote the Land Settlement Commissioners,[303] "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 in South Africa maintained and its influence for good extended, but one opinion upon 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."

igation report.

Apart from its mineral development, Sir William Willcocks points out,[304] South Africa has remained "strangely stationary. Fifty years ago it was a pastoral country importing cereals and 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." West of the great Drakenberg range it is an arid, or semi-arid, region. The reason is not so much that the rainfall is deficient, as that the rain comes at the wrong time, and is wasted. What is wanted is water-storage, with irrigation works to spread the water upon the land

when it is needed by the farmer. Nothing short of the agency of the State will serve to bring about this physical revolution; for bad legislation must be annulled, and a great intercolonial system of water-husbandry, comparable to those of India and Egypt, must be created. Hitherto agriculture, in spite of the latent possibilities of the country, has scarcely been "attempted"; for, with the exception of the extreme south-western corner of the Cape Colony, the "conquered territory" of the Orange River Colony, and the high veld of the Transvaal, the agricultural development of South Africa "depends entirely on irrigation."

But, great as was the claim of agriculture, the claim of the gold industry was at once more immediate and more imperative.

> "Valuable as water may be for agricultural purposes," Sir William Willcocks wrote, "it is a thousand times more valuable for gold-washing at the Rand mines."

And again:

> "The prosperity and well-being of every interest, not only in the Transvaal, but in South Africa generally, will depend on the prosperity of the Rand, certainly for the next fifty years. Though my life has been spent in the execution of irrigation projects and the furtherance of agricultural prosperity, I feel that, under the special conditions prevailing in South Africa, the suggestion of any course other than the obvious one of first putting the Rand mines on a sound footing as far as their water supply is concerned, would have constituted me a bigot. Ten acres of irrigable land in the Mooi or Klip river valleys, with Johannesburg in the full tide of prosperity, will yield as good a rent as forty acres with Johannesburg in decay."

And the prosperity of the mines is not only essential in the present: it is to be the instrument for the development of the permanent resources of the Transvaal:

mic importance of Rand.

> "The mineral wealth of the Transvaal is extra-ordinarily great, but it is exhaustible, some say within a space of fifty years, others within a space of one hundred years. It would be a disaster indeed for the country if none of this wealth were devoted to the development of its agriculture. Agricultural development is slow, but it is permanent, and knows of no exhaustion. If the

> companies working the gold, coal, and diamond mines were by decree compelled to devote a percentage of their gains to the execution of irrigation works on lines laid down by the Government, they would assist in the permanent development of the country and would be investing in works which, though slow to give a remuneration, would, at any rate, be absolutely permanent. It would thus happen, that when the mineral wealth of the country had disappeared, its agricultural wealth would have been put on such a solid basis that the country would not have to fall from the height of prosperity to the depth of poverty."

These were conclusions of so fundamental a nature that no statesman could afford to overlook them; and, in point of fact, Lord Milner kept them steadily in sight from first to last in all that he did for the administrative and economic reconstruction of the new colonies.

Another effort of the civil administration which was carried on successfully during the war was the teaching of the Boer children in the refugee camps. The narrative of the circumstances in which the camp schools were first organised, of the manner in which teachers came forward from all parts of the empire to offer their services, and of the complete success which attended their efforts, was told three years later by Mr. E. B. Sargant, the Education Adviser to the Administration. The report in which the story appears not only affords a record unique in the annals of educational effort, but adds a pleasing and significant page to what is otherwise a gloomy chapter of the war.[305] Mr. Sargant was invited by Lord Milner to organise the work of educational reconstruction in the new colonies in the autumn of 1900. He was then travelling in Canada, in the course of a journey through the empire undertaken for the purpose of investigating the methods and conditions of education in the several British colonies; and he reached Capetown on November 6th, 1900. At that time the headquarters of the new Transvaal Administration had not been established in Pretoria; but in the Orange River Colony certain schools along the railway line and elsewhere had been opened under the military Government. From observations made in December in the two new colonies, Mr. Sargant had begun to fear that the work of educational reorganisation would have to be indefinitely postponed, when a visit to the Boer prisoners' camp at Seapoint, Capetown, gave him the idea from which the whole system of the camp schools was subsequently evolved. Here he found that a school for boys and young men had been provided by the prisoners themselves, but that it was destitute of books and of almost all the necessary appliances. Mr. Sargant's appeal on behalf of this

school met with a ready response from the Cape Government. What could be done here, he thought, could be done elsewhere. The nearest refugee camp to Capetown was at Norval's Pont, on the borders of the Orange River Colony; and it was here that Mr. Sargant determined to make his first experiment.

of the camp schools.

"Having provided myself," Mr. Sargant says, "with several boxes of school books, I left Capetown on the last day of January and took up my quarters in the camp already named. The Military Commandant threw himself heartily into the experiment, although at that time the provision of food and shelter for each new influx of refugees was a matter of great difficulty. Fortunately Norval's Pont, being nearer the base of supplies than the other camps, had a few marquees to spare. In two of these I opened the first camp school, remaining for a fortnight as its headmaster. The rest of the teachers were found in the camp itself. It was apparent from the first that the school would be a success. The children flocked to it, and the mothers who brought them were well content with the arrangement that the religious instruction should be given in Dutch and other lessons in English. Here, as in several other camps which were visited later, I found that a school, taught through the medium of Dutch, had already been opened by some of the more serious-minded of the people. In this case, an offer was made to me by the Commandant to suppress this school and to send the children to my marquees. This I refused, and in less than two months I had the gratification of knowing that teachers and children had come voluntarily to the Government school, and that the tents in which they had been taught formed one of a row of six which were needed to accommodate the rapidly increasing number of scholars."[306]

ea teachers.

After this initial success Mr. Sargant made arrangements, first from Bloemfontein, and afterwards from Pretoria, for the establishment of such schools in all the refugee camps; and by the end of May, 1901, there were 4,000 children in the camp schools, as against 3,500 in the town schools of the two colonies. In the following month it became evident that the local supply of teachers would be insufficient to meet the demands of the rapidly increasing schools; and Lord Milner devoted much of his time during his leave of absence to making arrangements for the introduction of a number of well-trained teachers from England, and subsequently from the over-sea colonies. Before these

welcome reinforcements could arrive, however, the number of children in the camp schools, apart from the Government schools in the towns, had risen to 17,500, and the supply of South African teachers was exhausted. "In many cases," says Mr. Sargant, "the services of young men and women who had passed the sixth, fifth, and even fourth standard were utilised temporarily." With the new year, 1902, drafts of carefully chosen and well-qualified teachers from England began to arrive. Both the Board of Education for England and Wales and the Scotch Education Department took up the work of selection and appointment, and the co-operation of the Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Governments was obtained.[307] From this time forward the system of the camp schools was steadily extended; and on May 31st, 1902, the date of the Vereeniging surrender, when the attendance reached its highest point, more than 17,000 Boer children were being thus educated in the Transvaal camps, and more than 12,000 in those of the Orange River Colony.[308]

istrative progress, 1901.

Apart from this unique and significant effort, the reports furnished by the various departmental heads to Lord Milner in December afford striking and sufficient evidence of the progress of the civil administration in both the new colonies during the year 1901. In the Orange River Colony the sphere of operations of the departments existing at the time when Sir H. Gould-Adams was appointed Deputy-administrator (March, 1901), had been increased, and new departments were being organised. A statement issued by the financial adviser on August 29th showed that for the period March 13th, 1900 (the occupation of Bloemfontein) to June 30th, 1901, the "real" revenue and expenditure of the colony were respectively £301,800 8*s.* and £217,974 18*s.*; an excess of revenue over expenditure of £83,825 10*s.* And during the half-year July 1st-December 31st the revenue collected was about one-third in excess of the actual civil expenditure.[309] The progress in education was remarkable. At the end of February, 1902, there were 13,384 children on the roll of the Government schools, camp and town,[310] or nearly 5,000 more than the greatest number at school at any one time under the Republic, and the reorganisation of both higher and technical instruction had been taken in hand. A system of local self-government had been commenced by the establishment of Boards of Health at Bloemfontein and in all districts in the protected area, while in the capital itself the Town Council was again at work. The Agricultural Department formed on July 1st, 1901, had taken over a large number of sheep and cattle from the military authorities, and a commencement of tree-planting under an experienced

forester had been made. The Land Board was created in October, with two branches concerned respectively with Settlement and Repatriation. The Settlement branch was occupied especially in procuring land suitable for agricultural purposes, and its efforts were so successful that by the end of April, 1902, 150 British settlers had been placed on farms. The Repatriation branch was engaged in collecting information as to the whereabouts of the absentee Boer landowners and their families, and the condition of their lands and houses; in investigating the possibility of importing fresh stock, and in collecting vehicles, implements, seed-corn, and the other necessaries which would be required to enable the Boer population, when repatriated, to resume their normal pursuits. Also temporary courts, pending the re-opening of the ordinary civil courts, had been established.

In the Transvaal the work was on a larger scale. Five departments, those of the Secretary to the Administration (afterwards Colonial Secretary), the Legal Adviser (afterwards Attorney-General), the Controller of the Treasury (afterwards Treasurer), the Mining Commissioner and of the Commissioner for Native Affairs, were already organised. The progress achieved by the heads of these departments in the Transvaal, and by Sir H. Gould-Adams and Mr. Wilson in the Orange River Colony, formed collectively a record the merit of which was acknowledged by "an expression of the high appreciation of His Majesty's Government of the services which they had rendered in circumstances of exceptional difficulty."[311]

It is difficult to present an account of the work already done in the Transvaal in a form at once brief and representative. The report of Mr. Fiddes, the Secretary to the Administration,[312] recorded the progress made in education, public works, and district administration. Since July twenty-four new schools, of which seven were camp schools, eight fee-paying schools, and nine free town schools, had been opened, and 169 teachers were employed in the town schools, and 173 in the camp schools, opened by the Administration. The public buildings, including the hospitals and asylums at Johannesburg and Pretoria, the post offices and the seventeen prisons administered by the department, were being maintained and, where necessary, restored. In Johannesburg, as we have seen, a Town Council had been established, but Pretoria was still administered by a Military Governor, who controlled a temporary Town Board and the police. The Administration, however, was empowered by proclamation No. 28 of 1901 to appoint Boards of Health in places where no municipality existed, and it was expected that Pretoria would be endowed, before long, with the same municipal

privileges as Johannesburg.

ative reforms.

The volume of work handled in the Legal Adviser's office formed a remarkable testimony to the energy and capacity of Sir Richard Solomon. Resident magistrates' courts had been established in twelve districts; temporary courts were being held in Pretoria and Johannesburg; the offices of the Registrar of Deeds and of the Orphan Master, and the Patent Office, were reorganised; and an ordinance creating a Supreme Court, consisting of a Chief Justice and five Puisne Judges, was drafted ready to be brought into operation so soon as circumstances permitted. The chaotic Statute Book of the late Republic had been overhauled. A large number of laws, some obsolete, some impliedly repealed, but still appearing on the Statute Book, and others unsuited to the new *régime*, had been repealed by proclamation; and at the same time many ordinances dealing with matters of fundamental importance had been prepared for submission to the future Legislative Council at the first opportunity.

The report of Mr. Duncan, the Controller of the Treasury, showed that the revenue actually being collected, mainly from the customs, the Post Office, mining and trading licences, and native passes, would provide for the ordinary expenditure of the civil administration. And, in point of fact, when the accounts were made up at the end of the first financial year of the new colonies (July 1st, 1901-June 30th, 1902) it was found that the Orange River Colony had a balance in hand of £231,000, while in the Transvaal the expenditure on civil administration[313] had been covered by the revenue, which had assumed already the respectable figure of £1,393,000.

The Departments of Mines and Native Affairs had been reorganised, and the work done by Mr. Wybergh and Sir Godfrey Lagden respectively in these departments, in co-operation with Sir Richard Solomon, had produced the administrative reforms immediately required to regulate the employment of native labourers in the mines. By proclamations amending or repealing existing laws and making fresh provisions where necessary the native had been protected against oppression and robbery at the hands of unscrupulous labour-agents, and the liquor traffic, the chief cause of his insubordination and incapacity, had been effectively repressed. Considerations of public security made the maintenance of the "pass" system necessary, but modifications were introduced into the working of the system sufficient to protect the educated native from unnecessary

humiliation and the native labourer from excessive punishment. In addition to this departmental work two commissions had been appointed by Lord Milner to investigate two matters of direct and immediate concern to the gold industry. The first of these, over which Sir Richard Solomon presided, was engaged in reviewing the existing gold laws, with a view to the introduction of new legislation embodying such modifications as the best local experience and the financial interests of the colony might require. The second was employed in formulating measures necessary to provide both the mines and the community of the Rand with a water-supply that would be at once permanent and economic.

hannesburg police.

There remain certain special features of the administrative reconstruction accomplished in 1901 that merit attention, as showing the degree in which Lord Milner kept in view the fundamental necessities of the situation revealed by the Land Settlement and Irrigation Reports to which reference has been made above. As part of the work of the Law Department, the Johannesburg Municipal Police had been organised and placed under the control of Mr. Showers, the late head of the Calcutta Police.

> "This fine body," Lord Milner wrote, "consists mainly of picked men from the Army Reserve, including many old soldiers of the Guards, and others who have fought in the war. The men are dressed like London policemen, but carry rifles. This odd-looking equipment is characteristic of the double nature of their duties. On the one hand they do the work of ordinary town police, and exhibit in that characteristic the same efficiency and civility as their London prototypes. On the other hand, they have played an important part in assisting the military and the Rand Rifles in the defence of the long line, fifty miles in extent of towns and mining villages which constitute the Rand district. Latterly, since the enemy have been quite driven out of this part of the country, the military portion of their duties is diminishing in importance, though the danger of small raids on outlying portions of the Rand by parties coming from a distance is not yet wholly removed. On the other hand, with the return of the civil population, their work as police proper is greatly on the increase. In their struggle with the illicit liquor dealers, one of the most difficult of their duties, they have so far met with a great measure of success."[314]

African constabulary.

Just as here, in the case of the Johannesburg police, so in the formation of the South African Constabulary and in the reorganisation of the railways, Lord Milner had determined that no opportunity of adding to the permanent British population of the two colonies should be lost. The South African Constabulary was formed in October, 1900, by General Baden-Powell, mainly on the lines of the Canadian North-West police, for the protection of the settled population in the new colonies. Since July, 1901, however, when it had been called out for military service, this force, at the time some 9,000 strong, had been employed as part of the army under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief, although its organisation, finance, and internal discipline were dealt with by the High Commissioner. The men recruited for the Constabulary were of British birth, and every endeavour was made in the selection of recruits to secure persons who were adapted by pursuits and character to become permanent and useful colonists. It is interesting to note that a body of 500 burgher police, consisting of former burghers of the Orange Free State, and placed under the colonel commanding the Orange Colony division, had been associated with the Constabulary during the time that they were thus serving with the troops. Nor is it necessary to point out that the military experience, the knowledge of the country, and acquaintance with the life of the veld which the Constabulary gained at this period, largely contributed to the efficiency which they displayed afterwards in the discharge of their regular duties.

But of all the reconstructive work accomplished in this year of continuous and harassing warfare, the reorganisation of the railways was perhaps the most essential and the most successful in its immediate results. Although the railways of the two new colonies remained entirely under the control of the military authorities, their future importance to the civil administration was so great that, as Lord Milner wrote,[315] "questions affecting their organisation and development naturally claimed his constant attention." And this all the more, since Sir Percy Girouard, the Director of Military Railways, had been chosen by the Home Government to undertake the management of the joint railway system of the two colonies so soon as it was handed over to the civil authorities. The work accomplished included the repair of the damage inflicted by the enemy, the increase and improvement of the rolling-stock, the reorganisation of the staff of European employees, and the construction of new lines required for the industrial development of the country. Apart from 102 engines and 984 trucks, the Boers had destroyed many pumping-stations and station buildings, 385 spans of bridges and culverts, and 25 miles of line. These injuries to the "plant" of the railways were repaired "in an absolutely permanent manner," and orders had

been placed in August for 60 engines and 1,200 trucks over and above those required to replace the rolling-stock destroyed by the enemy.[316] As the staff employed in the time of the Republics had been "actively engaged on the side of the enemy, and were animated by an exceedingly anti-British spirit,"[317] they had to be almost entirely replaced.

ınisation of railways.

> "But," Lord Milner continues, "the many difficulties incidental to the organisation of a large new staff, unaccustomed to work with one another, are being successfully overcome, and business is carried on with a smoothness which gives no indication of the internal revolution so recently effected. The new railway staff comprises some 4,000 men of British race, including 1,500 Reservists or Irregulars who had fought in the war, and who, with other newcomers, form a permanent addition to the British population of South Africa."

Thanks to the blockhouse system, supplemented where necessary by armoured trains, the mail trains from the ports to Johannesburg were running almost as rapidly and as safely as in time of peace. But the demands of the military traffic were so enormous that opportunities for ordinary traffic were still rigorously restricted.

> "Military requirements in food supplies, remounts and munitions of war," Lord Milner wrote, "represented 29,000 tons weekly from the ports; while the movements of men and horses to and fro over the [then] huge theatre of war were as constant as they were sudden."

None the less the civil traffic was increasing. While in August only 684 refugees had returned, in November the number had risen to 2,623; and while in August the tonnage of civil supplies forwarded to Bloemfontein and the Transvaal was 4,612, in November it was 8,522. This result, moreover, had been obtained with the old rolling-stock, and a much more rapid progress was anticipated in the future, since the additional rolling-stock had already begun to arrive. And in anticipation of this increased rate of progress, the Commander-in-Chief had

> "now seen his way to allow the mines to start 400 fresh stamps per month, as against an average of under 100 in previous months, and had also consented to the grant of 1,600 permits a month (representing about 4,000

persons) for return to the Transvaal."

In addition to the repair and reorganisation of the lines running to the coast, the Transvaal collieries had been re-opened and the coal traffic had been resumed. Not only had progress been made in stocking the mines with coal, timber, and machinery, preparatory to the full resumption of working activity, but the large unemployed native population found in Johannesburg at the time of Lord Milner's arrival had been utilised for the construction of a new and much-needed coal line, which ran for thirteen miles along the Rand.

> "This short line," Lord Milner wrote, "would have no less than thirty to forty miles of sidings leading from it to every important mine, and securing direct delivery of about 1,000,000 tons of coal per annum, as well as of a large tonnage of general stores."

›pment by railways.

And then follows a statement of the part to be played by railway construction in the policy of material development, which was pursued with such determination by Lord Milner after the restoration of peace.

> "It seems almost superfluous to argue the case for further railway development in South Africa, and especially in the new colonies. The richest agricultural districts of both colonies are far removed from markets. The through lines to the coast from the great centres of industry will be choked with traffic. Both to stimulate agriculture and to facilitate the operations of commerce, additional lines and relief lines will be urgently required. Moreover, if the construction of the most necessary of these is undertaken as fast as the districts through which they pass are pacified, employment will be provided for large numbers of persons who would otherwise be idle and dependent on Government for relief, as well as for many newcomers, who will be a valuable addition to the population of the country. If there is one enterprise which is certain to be thoroughly popular with the old population, it is this. The one thing which the Boers will thoroughly appreciate will be railways bringing their richest land into touch with the best markets. And the British population will be equally in favour of such a course."[318]

Thus, six months before Vereeniging, and less than three months after Lord Milner's return from England, the "big unfinished job" was well in hand.[Back to Contents]

CHAPTER XII

THE SURRENDER OF VEREENIGING

ld industry re-started.

With the beginning of the year 1902, the question of the ultimate submission of the Boers had become a matter of months, or even weeks. The guerilla leaders had been beaten at their own game. In spite of the extension of the area of the war, the terrorising of the peaceably inclined burghers, the co-operation of the Afrikander nationalists, and the encouragement derived from Boer sympathisers in England, the most important districts of the Transvaal and half of the Orange River Colony were being restored to the pursuits of peace. The great industry of South Africa was re-established, and agriculture was not only resumed but even developing upon more enlightened principles within the protected areas of the two colonies; while in the Orange River Colony 150 new British settlers had been planted upon farms before the terms of the Vereeniging surrender were signed. The story of this steady progress is told by the mere items in the monthly records furnished by Lord Milner to the Home Government. The gold industry of the Rand recommenced in May, 1901, when, with permission to set 150 stamps at work, 7,439 oz. of gold were won. Up to November, when, as we have seen, the military situation for the first time permitted any considerable body of refugees to return, progress was slow; but in this month the output amounted to 32,000 oz. in round numbers. In December the number of stamps working had risen to 953, and the output to 52,897 oz. Henceforward the advance was rapid and sustained. In the remaining five months of the war (January to May, 1902), the number of stamps at work rose to 2,095, the monthly output to 138,600 oz., of the value of £600,000, and 30,000 additional British refugees had been brought back to their homes on the Rand, in view of the increasing certainty of employment afforded by the expanding gold industry. Thus, before the surrender of the Boer forces in the field, half of the British population had been restored to the Transvaal, and the gold industry had been so far re-established that its production had reached one-third of the highest annual rate attained before the war broke out. Nor must it be forgotten that during these last months the conditions of the refugee camps were being steadily improved, until, as already noted, the death-rate was ultimately reduced below the normal.

The Home Government had been unprepared for the military struggle

precipitated by the ultimatum; Lord Milner was determined that, so far as his efforts could avail, it should not be unprepared for the economic conflict for which peace would be the signal. In a despatch of January 25th, 1902, he urged once more upon Mr. Chamberlain the importance of settling British colonists upon the land, and pressed for a "decision on the main issues" raised by this question.

ettlement.

"This subject has for long occupied my attention," he wrote, "and, in a tentative way, a good deal has been done. But we have reached a point where little more progress can be made without a decision on the main issues. The question is, whether British colonisation is to be undertaken on a large and effective scale, under Government control and with Government assistance, or to be left to take care of itself, with whatever little help and sympathy an Administration, devoid of any general plan, and with no special funds devoted to the particular purpose, can give it.... The principal consideration is the necessity of avoiding a sharp contrast and antagonism in the character and sentiments of the population between the country districts and the towns. If we do nothing, we shall be confronted, sooner or later, with an industrial urban population, rapidly increasing, and almost wholly British in sentiment, and, on the other hand, a rural population, wholly Dutch, agriculturally unprogressive. It is not possible to contemplate such a state of affairs without grave misgivings. We shall have to reinstate the bulk of our prisoners upon their farms, and provide them with the means of starting life anew, but unless we at the same time introduce some new element we may be simply laying up the material for further trouble. The land will remain as neglected, the attitude of the rural population as unprogressive, and as much out of sympathy with British ideas as ever.... To satisfy these demands, it is clear that no small and makeshift scheme will suffice. Land settlement must be undertaken on a large scale; otherwise, however useful, it will be *politically* unimportant.

"The time is fast approaching when it will be absolutely necessary to raise loans for both new colonies to meet expenses arising immediately out of the war. I wish to place on record my profound conviction that unless, in raising these loans, we provide a substantial sum for the purchase of land and the settlement thereon of farmers of British race, an opportunity will be lost which will never recur, and the neglect of which will have the most prejudicial effect on the future peace and prosperity of South Africa. I do not, indeed, ask that these first loans should include a sum as large as may ultimately be required if land settlement is to assume the proportions which I contemplate. But, if our first considerable undertakings in this line are proving themselves successful, I foresee no difficulty in obtaining more money later on, should we require it. What I do fear is a check now, when we ought to be in a position to seize every possible opportunity of getting hold of land suitable to our purpose, and of retaining in the country such men as we want to put on it. If we lose the next year or two we lose the game, and without that power of acting promptly, which a ready

command of money alone can give, we shall begin to throw away opportunities from this moment at which I am writing onwards.

"What I want to put plainly to His Majesty's Government are these two questions: (1) Are we to be allowed to go on purchasing good land, by voluntary agreement wherever possible, but compulsorily, if necessary? And, assuming this question to be answered in the affirmative, (2) what amount shall we be able to dispose of for this purpose in the immediate future?"[319]

It had been arranged during Lord Milner's last visit to England that the large expenditure inevitably arising out of the economic reconstruction and future development of the new colonies, should be provided by a loan secured upon their assets and revenues. The purposes for which this immediate outlay was especially required were the acquisition of the existing railways and the construction of new lines, land settlement, the repatriation of the Boers, and the compensation of loyalists for war losses both in the new colonies and in the Cape and Natal. Lord Milner now proposed that the Home Government should decide to appropriate, out of the funds to be thus raised, a sum of £3,000,000 to land settlement, and that of this sum £2,000,000 should be spent in the Transvaal and £1,000,000 in the Orange Colony. The "development" loan, as it was called, was not issued until after Mr. Chamberlain's visit to South Africa in the (South African) summer of 1902-3; but Lord Milner's proposal was approved in principle, and he was enabled to employ the limited resources at his disposal in the purchase of blocks of land suitable for the purposes of agriculture in both colonies.

Apart from the progress thus achieved in this matter of supreme importance, as Lord Milner deemed it, to the future of South Africa, the preparation of the administrative machinery, the *matériel* of transport, and the supplies of all kinds required for the repatriation of the Boers, was pushed forward with increasing activity. At the same time certain other administrative questions were brought by him to the consideration of the Home Government during these months (January to May, 1902), with the result that the ink was scarcely dry upon the Treaty of Surrender before he was able to ask for, and obtain, decisions upon them.

eve of peace.

The telegrams which passed between Lord Milner and the Colonial Office on these matters, during the weeks immediately preceding and following the Vereeniging surrender, are significant. Beside the clear thrust of Lord Milner's

calculated energy, Mr. Chamberlain's efforts to keep pace with the needs of the situation sink into comparative inertia. On April 18th Lord Milner telegraphs the particulars of the 10 per cent. tax which he proposes to levy on the net produce of the mining industry. The rate is high—twice as high as the gold tax under the Republic—and will yield an annual revenue of £500,000 or £600,000 on a basis of the present normal production of the mines; but he believes that it will be "accepted without serious opposition, if it is imposed while the industry is rapidly advancing." And he expresses the hope that the explanation which he has furnished will be "sufficient to show the principles" of the tax, and that he may publicly announce the decision on this matter of such general economic importance at once. Mr. Chamberlain, however, requires further information; and we find Lord Milner telegraphing on June 2nd: "I trust you will now agree to the tax on the profits of gold mines; I am anxious to publish the Proclamation in next Friday's *Gazette*." And to this Mr. Chamberlain replies on June 4th, "I agree to the imposition of a 10 per cent. tax on the profits of gold mines." On June 2nd, that is, two days after the terms of surrender have been signed at Pretoria, Lord Milner sends a "most urgent" telegram on the immediate financial position:

> "The departments are still very busy with the estimates of the new colonies and Constabulary. They are rather late this year, but that was quite unavoidable. The result promises to be good. We can pay for all normal expenditure and the 6,000 South African Constabulary out of revenue. But, as you know, there is nothing provided for the various extraordinary items which have been hitherto financed out of the £500,000 grant for relief and re-settlement. In all my estimates I have relied on a loan for this. As I understand, the loan is deferred. As the £500,000 is nearly exhausted, and it would be disastrous if land settlement, which latter is at last making good progress, were stopped, especially at this juncture, I would ask for immediate authority to spend another £500,000 on these purposes. This is independent of the amounts which will be required under the last clause of the Terms of Surrender, about which I will address you immediately. I earnestly hope that there may be no delay in acceding to this request. The work to be got through in the immediate future is so enormous that, unless we can get the fundamental questions of finance settled promptly, a breakdown is inevitable. It would be a great relief to my mind to feel that services already started and working well were provided for at least for some months ahead, before I plunge into the new and heavy job of restoring the Boer population, which will require all my attention in the immediate future."[320]

Mr. Chamberlain's reply comes on June 18th:

> "You may incur expenditure up to £500,000 more for relief and re-settlement, pending the issue of the loan."

On June 10th Lord Milner telegraphs an outline scheme for repatriating the Boers. "As time presses," he concludes, "I am going ahead on these lines; but I am anxious to know that they have your general approval." The reply, dated June 18th, is: "The proposals are approved generally. Send by post a report on the details of the arrangement and the persons appointed." At the same time Lord Milner has been pressing for a decision on the question of land settlement. He has sent a despatch on May 9th containing full particulars of the terms upon which it is proposed to offer and to suitable applicants; and he now telegraphs, on June 20th:

ital to make a start".

> "If you could agree generally to the terms in my despatch, I would immediately deal with some of the most pressing cases on those lines. The terms may be improved upon later; meanwhile it is vital to make a start."

There is land available, and there are men available—over-sea colonists, and yeomen with a knowledge of agriculture, who have fought in the war, and have, therefore, a first claim to be considered. But these desirable settlers cannot afford to wait in a country like South Africa, where the cost of living is abnormally high, without a definite prospect of employment.

> "Unless something is done at once," he says, "there will be bitter complaint. [The Transvaal] Government is already being severely, though unjustly, criticised for the delay."

This is answered by Mr. Chamberlain's telegram of July 7th, in which he "concurs generally" in Lord Milner's proposals, and leaves him "full discretion to deal with the details of the scheme, which it is not possible to criticise effectively" in London.

In a telegram of June 21st we get the announcement of the formal initiation of Crown Colony government:

> "I have this day read and published the Letters Patent," Lord Milner says,

"constituting the Government of the Transvaal, and my Commission; and I have taken the prescribed oath."

And on July 3rd he suggests that an announcement should be made at once of the intention of the Home Government to enlarge the Legislative Councils of both colonies by the admission of a non-official element:

sts and the settlement.

"I felt at one time that in the case of the Transvaal this would be unworkable," he adds, "but my present opinion is strongly to the effect that we should seize the opportunity of the present improved feeling between the Dutch and British in the new colonies to commence co-operation between them in the conduct of public business."

To this proposal Mr. Chamberlain gives his approval in a brief telegram of July 7th.[321]

Bare and jejune as are these telegrams, they tell us something of the spirit of relentless vigour by which Lord Milner drove the cumbrous wheels of Downing Street into quicker revolutions at the shifting of the scenes from war to peace. Within six weeks of the surrender of Vereeniging he was fully engaged in what he afterwards called "the tremendous effort, wise or unwise in various particulars, made after the war, not only to repair its ravages, but also to re-start the new colonies on a far higher plane of civilisation than they had ever previously attained."[322] The story of this "tremendous effort," with its economic problems and its political agitations, must be reserved for a separate volume. It only remains, therefore, to relate the part which Lord Milner played in determining the conditions under which the republican Dutch were incorporated into the system of British South Africa.

Before we approach the actual circumstances which accompanied the surrender of the Boer forces in the field, it is necessary to recall the exchange of views on the subject of the settlement of the new colonies which took place between the Imperial authorities and the Governments of the Cape and Natal in the early months of the preceding year (1901). In these communications—the origin of which has been mentioned previously[323]—the significance attached by loyalist opinion in South Africa to certain questions, necessarily left undetermined in Mr. Chamberlain's pronouncements of the general policy of the British Government, was fully disclosed. The Cape ministers, while recognising

that full representative self-government should be conferred at an early date, unhesitatingly affirmed the necessity of maintaining a system of Crown Colony government until "such time as it was certain that representative institutions could be established, due regard being had to the paramount necessity of maintaining and strengthening British supremacy in the colonies in question." And as, in their opinion, "this consummation would be ultimately assured and materially strengthened by a large influx of immigrants favourably disposed to British rule," they expressed the hope that "no time would be lost after the conclusion of the war in putting into effect a large scheme of land settlement." More than this, with the object-lesson of the actual breakdown of representative government in their own Colony before their eyes, they added a recommendation that this British immigration should not be confined to the new colonies, but that a portion of the funds to be provided by the Imperial Government for this purpose should be allocated to the Cape Colony.

nguage question.

In the minute furnished by the Natal Ministry the question of the settlement of the new colonies was discussed in greater detail, and in particular attention was drawn to the opportunities for the promotion of a federal union of British South Africa, which the establishment of British government in the former Republics would afford. The settlement of the new colonies, in their opinion, should be so treated as to become a preliminary stage in the creation of a federal administration which "should be accomplished, if possible, before intercolonial jealousies and animosities should have had time to crystallise and become formidable." The Natal ministers, therefore, insisted upon the importance of measures calculated to secure the predominance of the English language in the new colonies. In support of this recommendation they pointed out that the preservation of the "Taal" is purely a matter of sentiment. The Boer vernacular, so called, "has neither a literature nor a grammar"; it is distinct from "the Dutch language used in public offices and official documents." No one acquainted with the conditions of Boer life will dispute the truth of this contention. The Boer child, if he is to receive an education sufficient to qualify him for the public services, or for a professional or commercial career, must in any case learn a second language; and since to learn the Dutch of Holland is no less difficult—probably more difficult—to him than to learn English, the desire to have Dutch taught in schools in preference to English becomes a matter of political sentiment, and not of practical convenience. On the other hand, the strongest reasons exist for making English the common language of both races. Apart

from its superiority to Dutch as the literary vehicle of the Anglo-Saxon world and the language of commerce, the predominance of the English language is a matter which vitally affects the success of British policy in South Africa.

> "The general good of the new colonies and of South Africa generally," the Natal ministers wrote, "requires the predominance of the English language. The language question has done more, probably, than anything else to separate the races and to provoke racial animosity."

They, therefore, recommend that—

> "English should be the official and predominant language in the higher courts, and in the public service—combined with such concessions in favour of Dutch as justice, convenience, and circumstances may require. Dutch interpreters should be attached to all courts and to the principal public offices, and their services should be available free of charge, in civil as well as in criminal cases. English should be the medium of instruction in all secondary schools, and in all standards in primary schools situated in English districts, and in the higher standards in all other primary schools. Dutch should be the medium of instruction meanwhile in the lower forms in the Dutch districts, and it should be taught in all schools where there is a reasonable demand for it."[324]

On the question of disarmament they wrote:

> "In order to secure complete pacification, disarmament is necessary. Re-armament should not be allowed until both the new colonies are considered fit for self-government, and even then the carrying of arms and the issuing of ammunition should be contingent on the taking of the oath of allegiance."

tive question.

On the subject of the treatment of the natives in the new colonies, the remarks of the Natal ministers are weighty and pertinent.

"For a long while," they wrote, "the natives cannot be given political rights. The grant of such rights would have the effect of alienating the sympathy of English and Dutch alike, and would materially prejudice the good government of the new colonies, and be provocative of racial bitterness. In the meantime the natives should be taught habits of steady industry.

"Officers appointed over the natives should be acquainted with their language and customs.

"The assumption in England that colonists are unjust and brutal to the natives has worked great harm, and both Dutch and English have suffered from its influence.

"A native policy out of sympathy with colonial views is likely, owing to the past history of South Africa, to arouse so strong a feeling that even the just rights of natives would be disregarded. It is essential, in the interests of the natives themselves, generally, that the Home Government should work in accord with colonial sentiments as a whole, and the great influence of a colonial minister in sympathy with colonists will secure far more reforms than will any attempt to over-rule local feeling."[325]

As one of certain immediately practicable steps in the direction of South African unity, the Natal Ministry advocated "reciprocity" in the learned professions and the Civil Services of the several colonies. To effect this purpose they recommended that uniform tests of professional qualifications should be adopted throughout South Africa, and that public officers should be allowed to proceed from the civil service of one colony to that of another, their separate periods of service counting as continuous "for pension and other purposes." They also put forward a claim for the incorporation of certain districts of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony into Natal. The justice of this claim, in so far as it referred to a portion of Zululand wrongfully annexed by the Transvaal Boers, was recognised by the Imperial Government, and the district in question was transferred to Natal on the termination of the war.

As High Commissioner, Lord Milner was bound to prevent the grant of any terms to the Boers inconsistent with the future maintenance of British supremacy in South Africa, now re-established at so great a cost. As the representative man of the British in South Africa, he was no less bound to see that the terms of surrender contained no concessions to the separatist aspirations of the Boer people calculated to form an obstacle to the future administrative union of the South African colonies. With this two-fold responsibility laid upon him, it is not surprising that his view both of what might be conceded safely to the Boer leaders, and of how it might be conceded, was somewhat different from that of the Commander-in-Chief. That the Boers themselves were conscious of being likely to get more favourable terms from Lord Kitchener than from the High

Commissioner, is apparent from the anxiety which they displayed to deal exclusively with the former. In this object, however, they were entirely unsuccessful, since the Home Government indicated from the first their desire that Lord Milner should be present at the meetings for negotiation; and in the end the terms of surrender were drafted by him with the assistance of Sir Richard Solomon, the legal adviser to the Transvaal Administration.

ace negotiations.

The actual circumstances in which the Vereeniging negotiations originated were these. Early in the year 1902, when, as we have seen, the ultimate success of the military operations directed by Lord Kitchener was assured, the Netherlands Government communicated their readiness to mediate between the British Government and the Governments of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, with a view to the termination of hostilities. To this offer the British Government replied that, while they were sincerely desirous of terminating the war, the only persons whom they could recognise as competent to negotiate for peace were the leaders of the Boer forces in the field. Lord Kitchener was directed, however, to forward a copy of the correspondence between the British and Netherlands Governments to the Boer leaders. In acknowledging this communication Mr. Schalk Burger, as acting President of the South African Republic, informed Lord Kitchener that he was prepared to treat for peace, but that before doing so he wished to see President Steyn. He, therefore, asked for a safe-conduct through the British lines and back to effect this purpose. On March 13th, 1902, the Home Government authorised Lord Kitchener to grant this request, if "he and Lord Milner agreed in thinking it desirable." As the result of the consultation between Schalk Burger and Steyn, a conference of the Free State and Transvaal leaders was held at Klerksdorp, at which it was decided, on April 10th, to request the British Commander-in-Chief to receive representatives of the Boers personally, "time and place to be appointed by him, in order to lay before him direct peace proposals." The approval of the Home Government having been obtained, President Steyn, Mr. Schalk Burger, and Generals Botha, De Wet, and De la Rey met Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner on April 12th, at Pretoria. The proposals which the Boer representatives then put forward were wholly inadmissible. Nevertheless, Lord Kitchener telegraphed them to London with the remark:

> "I have assured [the Boer representatives] that His Majesty's Government will not accept any proposals which would maintain the independence of the

Republics, as this would do, and that they must expect a refusal."

ndence refused.

On the day following the British Government replied that they could not

> "entertain any proposals which were based upon the former independence of the Republics, which had been formally annexed to the British Crown."

Upon learning this reply President Steyn and his colleagues took up the position that they were not competent to surrender the independence of their country, since only the "people," meaning thereby the burghers still in the field, could do this. They asked, therefore, for an armistice to enable them to consult the burghers. This request was refused on the ground that no basis of agreement had, as yet, been reached. The Boer representatives then asked that the British Government should state the "terms which they were prepared to grant, subsequent to a relinquishment of independence"; while they on their side undertook to refer these terms to the people, "without any expression of approval or disapproval." In answer to this proposal Lord Kitchener was authorised to refer the Boer representatives to the offer made by him to General Botha at Middelburg twelve months before.

"We have received," telegraphed the Secretary for War on April 16th, "with considerable surprise the message from the Boer leaders contained in your telegram of 14th April.

"The meeting was arranged at their request, and they must have been aware of our repeated declarations that we could not entertain any proposals based on the renewed independence of the two South African States. We were, therefore, entitled to assume that the Boer representatives had relinquished the idea of independence, and would propose terms of surrender for the forces still in the field.

"They now state that they are constitutionally incompetent to discuss terms which do not include a restoration of independence, but request us to inform them what conditions would be granted if, after submitting the matter to their followers, they were to relinquish the demand for independence.

"This does not seem to us to be a satisfactory method of proceeding, or one best adapted to secure, at the earliest moment, a cessation of the hostilities which

have involved the loss of so much life and treasure.

"We are, however, as we have been from the first, anxious to spare the effusion of further blood, and to hasten the restoration of peace and prosperity to the countries afflicted by the war; and you and Lord Milner are therefore authorised to refer the Boer leaders to the offer made by you to General Botha more than twelve months ago,[326] and to inform them that, although the subsequent great reduction in the strength of the forces opposed to us, and the additional sacrifice thrown upon us by the refusal of that offer would justify us in imposing far more onerous terms, we are still prepared, in the hope of a permanent peace and reconciliation, to accept a general surrender on the lines of that offer, but with such modifications in detail as may be agreed upon mutually.

"You are also authorised to discuss such modifications with them, and to submit the result for our approval.

"Communicate this to the High Commissioner."[327]

lting the Burghers.

Upon learning the contents of this telegram, the Boer representatives put forward the request that their "deputation" in Europe, Mr. Abraham Fischer, Mr. Cornelius Wessels, and Mr. Wolmarans,[328] might be allowed to return to South Africa to take part in the negotiations, and again asked for an armistice while the return of the deputation and the subsequent meetings of the burghers were taking place. Both these requests were refused on military grounds; but Lord Kitchener was willing to grant facilities to the Boer leaders to consult the burghers, and arrangements were made in the course of the next two days (April 17th-19th) for representatives of the Boer commandos in the field—exclusive of those in the Cape Colony—to be elected, and meet at Vereeniging, a small town on the Vaal near the border of the two colonies, on May 13th or 15th. During the month that followed, every possible assistance was rendered by the Commander-in-Chief to the Boer leaders with the object of enabling them to carry out these arrangements. Safe-conducts, under flags of truce, and passes for their officers and messengers, were freely granted; and the localities chosen for the commando assemblies, the places and dates of which had been notified to Lord Kitchener before the Boer representatives left Pretoria, were "scrupulously avoided" by the British troops. In spite, however, of the restrictions imposed upon the activity of the forces under his command, Lord Kitchener was able to report, on June 1st, that "good progress" had been made in the work of the campaign up to the actual

cessation of hostilities.[329]

The sixty Boer representatives—two for each commando—thus assembled at Vereeniging appointed, on May 18th, a special commission to treat for peace. The commissioners, who included Commandant-Generals Louis Botha and Christian De Wet, Generals Hertzog, De la Rey and Smuts, and President Steyn, Acting President Schalk Burger, and other civilians,[330] proceeded at once to Pretoria, where, on May 19th, they met Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner in conference, and put forward the following three proposals as a basis of negotiation:

rms drafted.

> "(1) We are prepared to surrender our independence as regards foreign relations. (2) We wish to retain self-government under British supervision. (3) We are prepared to surrender a part of our territory."

What then happened can be told in the words of Lord Kitchener's telegram to the Secretary for War:

> "Lord Milner and I refused to accept these terms as a basis for negotiation, as they differ essentially from the principles laid down by His Majesty's Government. After a long discussion, nothing was decided, and it was determined to meet in the afternoon. The Commission met again at 4 p.m., when Lord Milner proposed a form of document that might be submitted to the burghers for a 'Yes' or 'No' vote. There was a good deal of objection to this, but it was agreed finally that Lord Milner should meet Smuts and Hertzog with a view of drafting, as far as possible, an acceptable document on the Botha lines.[331] They will meet to-morrow for that purpose. Lord Milner stipulated for the assistance of Sir Richard Solomon in the preparation of the draft document."[332]

The "long discussion" of May 19th, to which Lord Kitchener refers, is to be found in the minutes of the conferences held at Pretoria between May 19th and 28th. It affords an exhibition of gross disingenuousness on the part of the Boer commissioners. Almost in the same breath they allege that their proposal is "not necessarily in contradiction to"[333] the Middelburg terms; admit that there is a "fundamental difference" between the two proposals, but ask that their own may be accepted, nevertheless, as the basis of negotiation;[334] and finally maintain that, as it is "nearly equivalent"[335] to the Middelburg terms, they need not

"insist so much" upon it.[336] To all this Lord Milner has but one answer: "It is impossible for us to take your proposal into consideration."

nt of Boer war debts.

On May 21st the document drafted by Lord Milner and Sir R. Solomon in consultation with Mr. Smuts (General and ex-State Attorney of the Transvaal) and Mr. Hertzog (General and late Judge of the Free State High Court) on the preceding day, was read at a plenary meeting of the negotiators. In the main the document was accepted with little demur; but a long discussion arose on the question of the degree in which the the British Government would recognise the debts incurred by military and civil officers of the late Republics in the course of the war. The Boers desired that all Government notes and all receipts given by their officers for goods, whether commandeered or not, should be recognised to be part of the liabilities of the Republican Governments for which the new Government was to become responsible. Lord Milner, on the other hand, expressed the opinion that such a demand was very unreasonable. The British Government would take over, with the assets of the Republican Governments, all liabilities existing at the time when the war broke out, but it could not be expected to pay for expenses actually incurred by the Boer leaders in carrying on a war against itself, which was, in its later stages, at any rate, utterly indefensible. The British people, he said—

> "would much prefer to pay a large sum at the conclusion of hostilities with the object of bettering the condition of the people who have been fighting against them, than to pay a much smaller sum to meet the costs incurred by the Republics during the war."

As, however, the principle of the recognition of these notes and receipts had been conceded in the Middelburg terms, he was willing, with Lord Kitchener's concurrence, to refer the matter to the Home Government, although he disapproved of the clause in question in the Middelburg terms.

This point was thus left to be settled by the Home Government, and the clause which they drafted to deal with it was that which ultimately became Article X. of the Terms of Surrender. That clause represented a compromise between the desire of the Boer leaders to have a definite sum allotted for the payment of debts contracted by them in the course of the war, and Lord Milner's desire to ignore these debts but to make a free grant for the relief of the Boer people. The British Government followed Lord Milner in making such a free grant—

£3,000,000—and in rejecting the claim of the Boer leaders that this sum should be devoted to the payment of the promissory notes and receipts issued by them but it nevertheless allowed such notes and receipts to be submitted "as evidence of war losses" to the commissioners who were to be appointed to distribute the £3,000,000 grant.

The minutes of these discussions reveal very clearly the difference in the respective attitudes of the High Commissioner and the Commander-in-Chief. Lord Kitchener was the humane and successful general, anxious to bring the miseries of the war to an end, and anxious, too, to close a campaign which, in spite of its difficult and arduous character, had afforded little or no opportunity of reaping military honours commensurate to the skill and endurance of the army or the sacrifices of the nation. Lord Milner was the far-sighted statesman, responsible for the future well-being of British South Africa, and, above all, the jealous trustee of the rights and interests of the empire. At this meeting, when the draft terms are being discussed before they are telegraphed to London, Lord Milner is exceedingly careful to point out to the Boer commissioners that the actual text of the document, as expressed in English, when once accepted, must be regarded as the sole record of the terms of surrender. After reading the proposed draft, he says: "If we come to an agreement, it will be the *English* document which will be wired to England, on which His Majesty's Government will decide, and which will be signed." To Mr. Smuts' suggestion that it is not necessary to place a "formal clause" in the draft agreement, if the British Government is prepared to meet the Boer commissioners in a particular matter, he replies:

> "As I look at the matter, the Government is making certain promises in this document, and I consider that all promises to which a reference may be made later should appear in it. Everything to which the Government is asked to bind itself should appear in this document, and nothing else. I do not object to clauses being added, but I wish to prevent any possible misunderstanding."

Milner's vigilance.

And again, in the course of the same meeting, we find him saying: "You must put in writing every point that strikes you, and let them be laid before His Majesty's Government." And, to prevent any possible misconstruction of Lord Kitchener's statement, "there is a pledge that the matter [the question of the

payment of receipts] will be properly considered," he says:

> "Yes, naturally, if we put anything down in writing. I am convinced that it is necessary to make it quite clear that this document must contain everything about which there is anything in the form of a pledge."

And before telegraphing the draft agreement to the Home Government he draws the attention of the commissioners in the most explicit language to the fact that the Middelburg proposal has been "completely annulled"; and that, therefore, if the draft agreement should be signed, there must be "no attempt to explain the document, or its terms, by anything in the Middelburg proposal."

The greatness of the debt owed by England and the empire to Lord Milner for the inflexible determination with which he penetrated, unmasked, and finally baffled the tortuous diplomacy of the Boer commissioners may be estimated from the fact that within three months of the signing of the Surrender Agreement at Pretoria, three out of their number asked the British Government to re-open the discussion and make, what Mr. Chamberlain rightly termed, "an entirely new agreement." As it was, Lord Milner's faultless precision during the whole progress of the negotiations at Pretoria provided the Home Government with a complete answer to the representatives of the Boer "delegates."

> "It would not be in accordance with my duty," wrote Mr. Chamberlain,[337] "to enter upon any discussion of proposals of this kind, some of which were rejected at the conferences at Pretoria; while others, which were not even mentioned on those occasions, would certainly not have been accepted at any time by His Majesty's Government."

val of Home Government.

At the close of the afternoon meeting (May 21st) the draft agreement was telegraphed to the Home Government. On the 27th Mr. Chamberlain informed Lord Milner by telegram that the Cabinet approved of the submission of this document with certain minor alterations, and with the new clause dealing with the grant of £3,000,000, to the Assembly at Vereeniging. Meanwhile the nature of the penalties to be inflicted upon the colonial rebels, a subject which had been discussed in private conversations between the Boer leaders and Lords Kitchener and Milner, but which was excluded from the "Terms of Surrender," had been settled by communications which had passed between Lord Milner and Mr. Chamberlain and the Governments of the Cape and Natal. The reason for this

course was that the Home Government and Lord Milner, while they objected on principle to the treatment of rebels being made part of the agreement with the surrendering enemy, were nevertheless quite willing that the latter should be informed of the clemency which it was, in any case, intended to show to the rebels. The Terms of Surrender, in the form given to them by the Home Government, and the statement of the treatment to be meted out to the rebels by their respective Governments, were communicated to the Boer commissioners on May 28th. At the same time they were distinctly told that His Majesty's Government was not prepared to listen to any suggestion of further modifications of the Terms, but that they must be submitted to the assembly for a "Yes" or "No" vote as an unalterable whole. The Boer commissioners left at 7 o'clock in the evening of the same day for Vereeniging, and on the day following the Terms of Surrender were submitted to the "Yes" or "No" vote of the burgher representatives. One other point had been raised and settled between Lord Milner and the Home Government. Under the Proclamation of August 7th, 1901, certain of the Boer leaders were liable to the penalties of confiscation and banishment. Lord Milner was of opinion, however, that in view of the general surrender this proclamation should be "tacitly dropped," although property already confiscated under its terms could not, of course, be restored; and in this view the Home Government concurred.

The text of the document submitted to the burgher representatives at Vereeniging on May 29th was as follows:

"*Draft Agreement as to the Terms of Surrender of the Boer Forces in the Field, approved by His Majesty's Government.*

"His Excellency General Lord Kitchener and his Excellency Lord Milner, on behalf of the British Government, and Messrs. M. T. Steyn, J. Brebner, General C. R. De Wet, General C. Olivier, and Judge J. B. M. Hertzog, acting as the Government of the Orange Free State, and Messrs. S. W. Burger, F. W. Reitz, Generals Louis Botha, J. H. Delarey, Lucas Meyer, Krogh, acting as the Government of the South African Republic, on behalf of their respective burghers desirous to terminate the present hostilities, agree on the following articles:

greement.

"1. The burgher forces in the field will forthwith lay down their arms, handing over all guns, rifles, and munitions of war in their possession or under their

control, and desist from any further resistance to the authority of His Majesty King Edward VII., whom they recognise as their lawful Sovereign. The manner and details of this surrender will be arranged between Lord Kitchener and Commandant-General Botha, Assistant Commandant-General Delarey, and Chief Commandant De Wet.

"2. All burghers in the field outside the limits of the Transvaal or Orange River Colony, and all prisoners of war at present outside South Africa who are burghers will, on duly declaring their acceptance of the position of subjects of His Majesty King Edward VII., be gradually brought back to their homes as soon as transport can be provided, and their means of subsistence ensured.

"3. The burghers so surrendering or so returning will not be deprived of their personal liberty or their property.

"4. No proceedings, civil or criminal, will be taken against any of the burghers surrendering or so returning for any acts in connection with the prosecution of the war. The benefit of this clause will not extend to certain acts, contrary to usages of war, which have been notified by the Commander-in-Chief to the Boer generals, and which shall be tried by court-martial immediately after the close of hostilities.

"5. The Dutch language will be taught in public schools in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony where the parents of the children desire it, and will be allowed in courts of law when necessary for the better and more effectual administration of justice.

"6. The possession of rifles will be allowed in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony to persons requiring them for their protection, on taking out a licence according to law.

"7. Military administration in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony will at the earliest possible date be succeeded by civil government, and, as soon as circumstances permit, representative institutions, leading up to self-government, will be introduced.

"8. The question of granting the franchise to the natives will not be decided until after the introduction of self-government.

"9. No special tax will be imposed on landed property in the Transvaal and

Orange River Colony to defray the expenses of the war.

"10. As soon as conditions permit, a Commission, on which the local inhabitants will be represented, will be appointed in each district of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, under the presidency of a magistrate or other official, for the purposes of assisting the restoration of the people to their homes, and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide themselves with food, shelter, and the necessary amount of seed, stock, implements, etc., indispensable to the resumption of their normal occupation.

"His Majesty's Government will place at the disposal of these Commissions a sum of £3,000,000 for the above purposes, and will allow all notes issued under Law 1 of 1900 of the South African Republic, and all receipts given by officers in the field of the late Republics, or under their orders, to be presented to a Judicial Commission, which will be appointed by the Government, and if such notes and receipts are found by this Commission to have been duly issued in return for valuable considerations, they will be received by the first-named Commissions as evidence of war losses suffered by the persons to whom they were originally given.

"In addition to the above-named free grant of £3,000,000, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to make advances on loan for the same purposes free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years with 3 per cent. interest. No foreigner or rebel will be entitled to the benefit of this clause."[338]

ment of rebels.

To this must be added the following statement as to the punishment of the colonial rebels, a copy of which was handed to the Boer commissioners on May 28th, after it (together with the Terms of Surrender) had been read to them by Lord Milner.

"His Majesty's Government must place it on record that the treatment of Cape and Natal colonists who have been in rebellion and who now surrender will, if they return to their colonies, be determined by the colonial Governments and in accordance with the laws of the colonies, and that any British subjects who have joined the enemy will be liable to trial under the law of that part of the British Empire to which they belong.

"His Majesty's Government are informed by the Cape Government that the following are their views as to the terms which should be granted to British subjects of Cape Colony who are now in the field, or who have surrendered, or have been captured since 12th April, 1901:

"With regard to the rank and file, they should all, upon surrender, after giving up their arms, sign a document before the resident magistrate of the district in which the surrender takes place acknowledging themselves guilty of high treason, and the punishment to be awarded to them, provided they shall not have been guilty of murder or other acts contrary to the usages of civilised warfare, should be that they shall not be entitled for life[339] to be registered as voters or to vote at any Parliamentary Divisional Council, or municipal election. With reference to justices of the peace and field-cornets of Cape Colony and all other persons holding an official position under the Government of Cape Colony or who may occupy the position of commandant of rebel or burgher forces, they shall be tried for high treason before the ordinary court of the country or such special court as may be hereafter constituted by law, the punishment for their offence to be left to the discretion of the court, with this proviso, that in no case shall the penalty of death be inflicted.

"The Natal Government are of opinion that rebels should be dealt with according to the law of the Colony."[340]

st debates.

With the departure of the Boer commissioners from Pretoria the final stage of the protracted negotiations had been reached, but it still required three days of discussion (May 29th-31st) before the assembly at Vereeniging could be brought to accept the inevitable. On the morning of the 29th the delegates assembled in the tent provided by the British military authorities, and a report of the proceedings of the peace conferences at Pretoria, drawn up by the Boer commissioners on the preceding evening, was read. Mr. Schalk Burger, as

Acting President of the South African Republic, then announced that the meeting was called upon to decide which of three possible courses should be taken—to continue the war, to accept the British terms, or to surrender unconditionally.[341] The rest of the morning sitting, and part of the afternoon sitting, were occupied by the delegates in questioning the commissioners as to the meaning of the various Articles in the Terms of Surrender. According to the understanding between the Boer commissioners and the British authorities, the Surrender Agreement should have been submitted forthwith to the delegates for acceptance or rejection. This course was actually proposed, but a resolution to that effect was immediately negatived on the ground that "the matter was too important to be treated with so much haste." The explanation of the delay is probably to be found in the circumstance that, although the Boer leaders had left Pretoria convinced, as a body, of both the desirability and the necessity of accepting the British

Accepting the inevitable.

each of them was anxious, individually, to avoid any action which would fix the responsibility of the surrender upon himself. They refrained, therefore, as long as possible from any decisive declaration, each one desiring that his neighbour should be the first to speak the final word. And so, instead of the question of submission being put to the vote immediately after the delegates had acquainted themselves with the actual meaning of the Surrender Agreement, two days were consumed in a long and protracted discussion, and the British terms were not accepted until the afternoon of Saturday, the 31st, the latest possible moment within the limit of time fixed by the British Commander-in-Chief. In this long debate Louis Botha consistently advocated submission; but De Wet spoke more than once in favour of continuing the war. One of the arguments used by the Free State Commander-in-Chief is instructive. "Remembering that the sympathy for us, which is to be found in England itself," he said, "may be regarded as being, for all practical purposes, a sort of indirect intervention, I maintain that this terrible struggle must be continued." The really decisive utterance seems to have come in the form of a long and eloquent speech delivered by Mr. Smuts, the substance of which lies in the fine sentence: "We must not sacrifice the Afrikander nation itself upon the altar of independence." From this moment the discussion increased in vehemence, until, in the words of the minutes, "after a time of heated dispute—for every man was preparing himself for the bitter end—they came to an agreement." Then a long resolution, drawn up by Hertzog and Smuts, and empowering the commissioners to sign the Surrender Agreement, was adopted by 54 to 6 votes.

After the vote on the British terms had been taken, a resolution constituting a

committee[342] to collect funds for the destitute Boers was passed; and the Peace Commissioners, having telegraphed the decision of the delegates to Lord Kitchener, hastened back by train to sign the Surrender Agreement at Pretoria.

Late in the afternoon of May 31st, Lord Milner, who had returned to Johannesburg on the 28th, and had been busily engaged on administrative matters while the discussion at Vereeniging was going on, was informed that Lord Kitchener wished to speak to him on the telephone. Then, along the wire, in the familiar voice of the Commander-in-Chief, came the welcome words: "It is peace." There was just time to pack up and catch the half-past six train, which brought the High Commissioner to Pretoria at a quarter past eight. Lord Milner and his staff, when at Pretoria, habitually stayed at the former British Agency, but this night he dined with Lord Kitchener; and here, at Lord Kitchener's house, the Boer commissioners appeared at about 10 o'clock, and just before eleven (May 31st) the Surrender Agreement was signed.[343]

sions of the Boer leaders.

The words used by the Boer leaders in the course of the debates at Vereeniging afford culminating and conclusive evidence of the hollowness of the two allegations upon which both the Boer sympathisers in England and the hostile critics of the British people abroad, based their denunciations of the policy and conduct of the war in South Africa. The war was unnecessary; it was a war of aggression forced upon the Boers by the British Government, said the enemies of England, and those Englishmen who, like Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, wrote and spoke as though they belonged to the enemy. Very different is the account of the origin of the war, which Acting President Schalk-Burger gave to the remnant of his fellow countrymen in this day of truth-telling.

> "Undoubtedly we began this war strong in the faith of God," he said; "but there were also one or two other things to rely upon. We had considerable confidence in our own weapons; we under-estimated the enemy; the fighting spirit had seized upon our people; and the thought of victory had banished that of the possibility of defeat."

And Mr. J. L. Meyer, a member of the Government of the Republic, and one of the few progressive Boers whose judgment had not been clouded by the fever of war passion, said: "In the past I was against the war; I wished that the five years' franchise should be granted;" and this "although the people had opposed" the measure. And Mr. Advocate Smuts, State-Attorney to the late South African

Republic, and then a general of the Boer forces in the field, said: "I am one of those who, as members of the Government of the South African Republic, provoked the war with England." This is evidence which we may believe, since in the circumstances in which these men met the Father of Lies himself would have found no occasion for departing from the truth.

ırgher camps.

No less conclusive is the admission, made with perfect frankness now that shifts and deceits and calumnies were no longer of any use, that the Boers, whatever they said, had proved by their acts that they regarded the burgher camps as havens of refuge, not "methods of barbarism"; and that it was Lord Kitchener's refusal to admit any more Boer non-combatants to the shelter of the British lines that brought the guerilla leaders to Pretoria to sue for peace. On May 29th General de Wet, in a last effort to induce the burghers to prolong the war, said:

> "I am asked what I mean to do with the women and children. That is a very difficult question to answer. We must have faith. I think also we might meet the emergency in this way—a part of the men should be told off to lay down their arms for the sake of the women, and then they could take the women with them to the English in the towns."

But Commandant-General Louis Botha doubted the possibility of any longer carrying this plan into effect.

> "When the war began," he said, on May 30th, "we had plenty of provisions, and a commando could remain for weeks in one spot without the local food running out. Our families, too, were then well provided for. But all this is now changed. One is only too thankful nowadays to know that our wives are under English protection. This question of our woman-folk is one of our greatest difficulties. What are we to do with them? One man answers that some of the burghers should surrender themselves to the English, and take the women with them. But most of the women now amongst us are the wives of men already prisoners. And how can we expect those not their own kith and kin to be willing to give up liberty for their sakes?"

And at the earlier meeting (May 16th) he said:

> "If this meeting decides upon war, it will have to make provision for our

wives and children, who will then be exposed to every kind of danger. Throughout this war the presence of the women has caused me anxiety and much distress. At first I managed to get them into the townships, but later on this became impossible, because the English refused to receive them. I then conceived the idea of getting a few of our burghers to surrender, and sending the women in with them. But this plan was not practicable, because most of the families were those of prisoners of war, and the men still on commando were not so closely related to these families as to be willing to sacrifice their freedom for them."

Equally illuminating is the testimony which General Botha bore to the efficiency of Lord Kitchener's system of blockhouses and protected areas.

ockhouse system.

"A year ago," he said on May 16th, "there were no blockhouses. We could cross and recross the country as we wished, and harass the enemy at every turn. But now things wear a very different aspect. We can pass the blockhouses by night indeed, but never by day. They are likely to prove the ruin of our commandos."

And again—

"There is a natural reason, a military reason, why [we have managed to hold out so long]. The fact that our commandos have been spread over so large a tract of country has compelled the British, up to the present time, to divide their forces. But things have changed now; we have had to abandon district after district, and must now operate on a far more limited territory. In other words, the British Army can at last concentrate its forces upon us."

To this may be added his admission (May 30th) of the impossibility of again attempting to raise a revolt in the Cape Colony.

"Commander-in-Chief de Wet ... had a large force, and the season of the year was auspicious for his attempt, and yet he failed. How then shall we succeed in winter, and with horses so weak that they can only go *op-een-stap*?"[344]

Elsewhere the minutes of the burgher meetings afford even more direct evidence of the fact that it was the desperate condition of the Boers, and not any

desire to make friends with a generous opponent, that led them to surrender. "To continue the war," says General Botha on May 30th, "must result, in the end, in our extermination."... The terms of the English Government "may not be very advantageous to us, but nevertheless they rescue us from an almost impossible position." And Acting-President Schalk-Burger: "I have no great opinion of the document which lies before us: to me it holds out no inducement to stop the war. If I feel compelled to treat for peace" ... it is because "by holding out I should dig the nation's grave.... Fell a tree, and it will sprout again; uproot it and there is an end of it. What has the nation done to deserve extinction?" De Wet himself and the majority of the Free State representatives advocated the continuation of the war at the Vereeniging meetings. But in the brief description of the final meeting which he gives in his book,[345] he writes:

> "There were sixty of us there, and each in turn must answer Yes or No. It was an ultimatum—this proposal of England. What were we to do? To continue the struggle meant extermination."

laim to independence.

Even more significant than these admissions is the spirit in which the question of submission is discussed. There is no recognition of the moral obliquity of the Boer oligarchy, or of the generosity of the British terms. Physical compulsion is the sole argument to which their minds are open. At the very moment when the sixty representatives agreed to accept the British terms, and thereby to acknowledge the sovereignty of the British Crown, they passed a resolution affirming their "well-founded" claim to "independence." History may well ask, On what was this claim based? Judged by the ethical standard,[346] the Boers had shown themselves utterly unworthy of the administrative autonomy conferred upon them by Great Britain. Judged by the laws of war,[347] they had been saved from the alternatives of physical annihilation or abject submission by the almost quixotic generosity of the enemy who fed and housed their non-combatant population. From a constitutional point of view, the presence of Article IV.[348] in the London Convention was in itself sufficient to refute the claim of the republic to be a "sovereign international state."

of surrender terms.

Obviously the quality of mercy was strained to the point of danger by the grant of terms to such a people. It will always remain a question whether it would not have been better policy, instead of negotiating at all, to wait for that

unconditional surrender of the Boers which, as the discussion at Vereeniging clearly shows, could only have been deferred for a very few months. But, granting that the course actually pursued was the right one, little fault can be found with the terms actually agreed to. No doubt they were generous, but they gave the British Government practically a free hand to shape the settlement of the country, and left it to them to decide at what time, and by what stages, to establish self-government in the new colonies. The two respects in which the Vereeniging terms seemed at first sight dangerously lenient were the undertaking to allow the Boers to possess rifles for their protection and the recognition of the Dutch language in the law courts and public schools. Yet both of these concessions are justified by considerations of practical convenience and sound policy. In respect of the first it must be remembered that in certain districts of the Transvaal the population is composed of a very small number of Europeans, almost exclusively Boers, living in isolated homesteads, together with a native population many times as numerous and still under the immediate authority of its tribal chiefs. The refusal to allow the Boers thus circumstanced to provide themselves with the only weapons sufficient to protect them against occasional Kafir outrages and depredations would have thrown a heavy responsibility upon the new administration, or involved it in an altogether disproportionate expenditure on European and native police. At the same time, in view of the smallness of the Boer population in such districts, the necessity for obtaining a licence (required under the clause in question) provided the Government with an efficient remedy against incipient disaffection. For under the licence system—a system generally adopted as a check upon the acquisition of arms by the natives in South Africa—the number of rifles possessed by the Boers in any particular district would be known to the Government; while, at the same time, the power to refuse or withdraw the privilege of possessing a rifle from any person believed to be disaffected to British rule would form an additional safeguard.

In respect of the second concession, there could be no question, of course, as to the desirability of hastening the general adoption of English as the common language of the Europeans of both races in South Africa. But any attempt to proscribe the Dutch language would have resulted in creating an obstinate desire to preserve it on the part of the Boers, coupled with a sense of injury; and would, therefore, have retarded rather than advanced the object in view. In these circumstances the decision to rely mainly upon the natural inclination of the more enlightened Boers to secure for their children the material advantages which a knowledge of English would bring them, was the right one. And the policy which this clause allowed the new administration to pursue may be

described as that of a modified "free trade in language"—that is to say, free trade up to, but not beyond, the point at which the toleration of Dutch would not impede the convenient and efficient discharge of the ordinary business of administration. It is doubtful, however, whether either of these concessions were justifiable except on the assumption that full self-government would not be granted to either of the new colonies until a British or loyalist majority was assured.

ıitiative secured.

But, whatever the ultimate result of the Terms of Vereeniging, their immediate effect was to leave the High Commissioner with complete freedom of initiative, but with a no less complete responsibility for the complex and difficult task of economic and administrative reconstruction which now awaited him. How this task—at once more congenial and more especially his own—was discharged is a matter that must be left for a second volume. In the meantime the conclusion of the Surrender Agreement is no unfitting stage at which to bring the review of the first period of Lord Milner's administration to a close.[Back to Contents]

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Footnote 1: The official returns showed that 456 farm-houses had been wholly, and 350 partially, destroyed; and that 60 waggons, 5,715 horses, 111,930 head of horned cattle, and 161,930 sheep had been carried off by the Kafirs. And this apart from the remuneration claimed by the settlers for services in the field, and commandeered cattle and supplies.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 2: Cloete. See note, p. 16.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 3: For the benefit of those who may desire to read the passages in which these opinions are expressed, I append the references. Cloete's opinion is to be found in his "Five Lectures on the Emigration of the Dutch Farmers," delivered before the Natal Society and published at Capetown in 1856. A reprint of this work was published by Mr. Murray in 1899. Sir John Robinson's opinion, which endorses the views of Mrs. Anna Elizabeth Steenekamp as expressed in *The Cape Monthly Magazine* for September, 1876, is to be found at pp. 46, 47 of his "A Lifetime in South Africa" (Smith, Elder, 1900).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 4: Cetewayo.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 5: Despatch of November 19th, 1858, to Sir E. B. Lytton.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 6: Sir E. B. Lytton.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 7: Chaka.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 8: The receipt of the despatch in which these valuable recommendations were made was not even acknowledged by the Colonial Office. Frere himself gives the outlines of his proposals in an article published in *The Nineteenth Century* for February, 1881.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 9: The Crown Colony—not the Protectorate—annexed by the Cape Colony in 1895.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 10: Rhodes's words were: "If we do not settle this [*i.e.* the question of Bechuanaland] ourselves, we shall see it taken up in the House of Commons on one side or the other, not from any real interest in the question, but simply

because of its consequences to those occupying the Ministerial benches. We want to get rid of Downing Street in this question, and to deal with it ourselves, as a self-governing colony."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 11: June, 1894.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 12: January 28th, 1895.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 13: It is worth noticing that even the presence of the German Marines at Delagoa Bay was counterbalanced—whether by chance or design—by the coincidence of the arrival of a British troopship with time-expired men from the Indian garrison, off Durban.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 14: Afternoon of Monday, December 30th.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 15: "John Bull & Co.," by "Max O'Rell," 1894.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 16: "This is our Afrikander character. The descendants of Hollanders, Germans and Frenchmen inter-married, and are only known at present by their surnames. They form the Afrikander nationality, and call themselves Afrikanders. The Afrikanders are no more Hollanders than Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Germans. They have their own language, own morals and customs; they are just as much a nation as any other."—*De Patriot*, in the course of an article headed "A Common but Dangerous Error"—the error in question being the assertion that "the Cape Colony is an English colony" (translated and reproduced in *The Cape Times*, September 3th, 1884).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 17: Quoted by Du Toit in *De Patriot*: translation from the English reprint of *De Transvaalse Oorlog*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 18: Then Judge, afterwards President of the Free State, and State-Secretary of the South African Republic in succession to Dr. Leyds.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 19: P. 64 *et seq.* of *The Origin of the Anglo-Boer War Revealed* (Hodder & Stoughton).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 20: Under the changed conditions of to-day the Boer population is organised in the Transvaal into *Het Volk*, and in the Orange River Colony into

the *Oranjie Unie*; both practically identical with the Bond in the Cape Colony. [Back to Main Text]

Footnote 21: Reprint of a pamphlet (found with the first leaf torn) containing an English translation of *De Transvaalse Oorlog*, p. 8.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 22: *De Transvaalse Oorlog*, pp. 7 and 8.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 23: *Cecil Rhodes: His Political Life and Speeches.* By Vindex; p. 533. Borckenhagen had just died.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 24: *Ons Land*, reputed to be controlled by Hofmeyr himself, and certainly the recognised organ of the Bond, published a pæan of triumph over the surrender of Dr. Jameson's troopers at Doornkop. "Afrikanderdom has awakened to a sense of earnestness which we have not observed since the heroic war of liberty in 1881. From the Limpopo, as far as Capetown, the second Majuba has given birth to a new inspiration and a new movement amongst our people in South Africa.... The flaccid and cowardly imperialism that had already begun to dilute and weaken our national blood, gradually turned aside before the new current that permeated our people.... Now or never the foundation of a wide-embracing nationalism must be laid.... The partition wall has disappeared ... never has the necessity for a policy of a colonial and republican union been greater; now the psychological moment has arrived; now our people have awakened all over South Africa; a new glow illumines our hearts; let us lay the foundation-stone of a real United South Africa on the soil of a pure and all-comprehensive national sentiment."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 25: 1896.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 26: Mr. Bodley, in his *Coronation of King Edward VII.*, remarks that of the seventy Balliol scholars elected during the mastership of Jowett (1870-1893) only three had at that time (1902) "attained eminence in any branch of public life." These three were Mr. H. H. Asquith, Dr. Charles Gore (then Bishop of Worcester), and Lord Milner.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 27: The incident is otherwise interesting as affording the first sign of that confidence of the British population in Lord Milner, which, steadily increasing as the final and inevitable struggle approached, earned for him at length the unfaltering support of British South Africa. After the Rand celebrations were over, he was informed that his advice had been put into effect

with "very considerable difficulty." The argument which had prevailed was this: "The new High Commissioner is a tested man of affairs; we all look to him to put British interests on a solid basis; and as we do this, let us obey him in a matter like this."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 28: Apart from the question of the validity of the preamble to the Pretoria Convention (1881), two Conventions—the London Convention (1884), and the Swaziland Convention (1894)—were in force between the South African Republic and Great Britain. The relations of the Imperial Government to the Free State were regulated by the Bloemfontein Convention (1854). This latter and the Sand River Convention (1852), were the Conventions of Grey's time. [Back to Main Text]

Footnote 29: These two men, now Colonel Sir Aubrey Woolls-Sampson and Major W. D. "Karri" Davies, had refused to sign the petition of appeal—an act of submission which President Krüger required of the Johannesburg Reformers, before he released them from Pretoria gaol. They did so on the ground that the Imperial Government had made itself responsible for their safety; since they and the other Reformers, with the town of Johannesburg, had laid down their arms on the faith of Lord Rosmead's declaration that he would obtain reasonable reforms from President Krüger for the Uitlanders.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 30: In the question of the Swaziland border, the affair of Bunu, and the continued and increasing ill-treatment of the Cape Boys, the Boer Government manifested its old spirit of aggression and duplicity. All these matters involved Lord Milner in anxious and wearisome negotiations, which, however, he contrived by mingled firmness and address to keep within the limits of friendly discussion.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 31: This short despatch has been given practically *in extenso*. It was not published in the Blue-books, but it was communicated to the Press some three months after it had been received.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 32: By August the South African garrison had been raised to the very moderate strength of rather more than 8,000 troops.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 33: Sir Gordon Sprigg's long service as a minister of the Crown fully entitled him to this honour; nor was his presence rendered any the less desirable by the fact that Sir Henry de Villiers, the Chief Justice, was also attending the Jubilee in England.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 34: The Schreiner Ministry.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 35: There appears to have been some question as to whether the terms of the President's undertaking bound him to introduce the proposed measure into the Volksraad in 1897, or in 1898. Chief Justice de Villiers held that the latter date was contemplated by the President. But the point is immaterial, since President Krüger denied in the Volksraad, after the dismissal of Mr. Kotzé, that he had ever given an undertaking at all to Chief Justice de Villiers or to anybody else.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 36: *Cape Times*, March 4th, 1898.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 37: Cd. 369.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 38: He was succeeded in the Colonial Secretaryship by Dr. Smartt, a former member of the Bond, but now a Progressive, and at the same time Sir Thomas Upington, who had resigned from ill-health, was succeeded by Mr. T. Lynedoch Graham, as Attorney-General.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 39: These were prisoners taken in the suppression of the revolt in Bechuanaland in 1897.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 40: The little group of six, of which Sir James Innes was the head—including Sir R. Solomon and four others—voted *with* the Ministry for the Redistribution Bill, but *against* it on the "no confidence" motion (with the exception of Sir James himself). Also one moderate Bondsman voted for "redistribution," but went against the Ministry on the "no confidence" motion. [Back to Main Text]

Footnote 41: Mr. Rhodes was opposed at Barkly West by a candidate financed from Pretoria.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 42: As translated in *South Africa*, October 15th, 1898.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 43: In a house of 79, 40 Afrikander and 39 Progressive members were returned. A very careful and reliable calculation showed that, of an aggregate of 82,304 votes polled, 44,403 were cast for Progressive, and 37,901 for Afrikander candidates. More than this, while no Progressive member was returned by a majority of less than 137, three Afrikanders won their seats by

respective majorities, of two, ten, and twenty. The Progressives, therefore, were entitled, on their aggregate vote, to a majority of six.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 44: Mr. Rhodes had obtained an interview with Lord Milner for the purpose of laying his views before him. But, it is said, the unwonted sternness of the Governor's expression at once convinced him of the hopelessness of his mission; and he withdrew without any attempt to argue his case. As Rhodes was a man of great personal magnetism, the incident is not without significance.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 45: Both sides were one short of their full strength, but a Progressive, Dr. (now Sir William) Berry, was chosen Speaker of the House.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 46: The second reading of the Navy Contribution Bill, giving effect to Sir Gordon Sprigg's pledge, was carried on December 2nd, 1898, without a division.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 47: The State-Secretaryship was offered first to Mr. Abraham Fischer, of the Free State, by whom it was declined (*Memoirs of Paul Krüger*, vol. ii., p. 297). The Cape Afrikanders desired the appointment of Mr. Smuts. [Back to Main Text]

Footnote 48: On May 7th, 1897, President Krüger had formally requested the Imperial Government to allow all questions at issue between the two Governments under the Convention to be submitted to the arbitration of the President of the Swiss Republic. To this proposal Mr. Chamberlain replied, on October 10th, that the relationship of Great Britain to the South African Republic being that of a suzerain Power, it would be impossible for the Imperial Government to permit the intervention of a foreign Power. On April 16th, 1898, in a despatch embodying the legal opinions of Mr. Farelly, President Krüger claims that the South African Republic is an independent State, and denies the existence of any "suzerainty" on the part of Great Britain. In forwarding this despatch Lord Milner made the apposite comment that the propriety of employing the term suzerainty to express the rights possessed by Great Britain is an "etymological question," and Mr. Chamberlain, replying on December 15th, accepts President Krüger's declaration that he is willing to abide by the articles of the Convention, reasserts the claim of suzerainty, declines to allow foreign arbitration, and demands the immediate fulfilment of Article IV. In a despatch of May 9th, 1899, Mr. Reitz asserts that the Republic is "a sovereign international

State"; and on June 13th Mr. Chamberlain replies that he has no intention of continuing the discussion.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 49: Owing to a slight affection of the eye.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 50: "On the Sunday night before Christmas, a British subject named Tom Jackson Edgar was shot dead in his own house by a Boer policeman. Edgar, who was a man of singularly fine physique, and both able and accustomed to take care of himself, was returning home at about midnight, when one of three men standing by, who, as it afterwards transpired, was both ill and intoxicated, made an offensive remark. Edgar resented it with a blow which dropped the other insensible to the ground. The man's friends called for the police, and Edgar, meanwhile, entered his own house a few yards off. There was no attempt at concealment or escape; Edgar was an old resident and perfectly well known. Four policemen came.... The fact, however, upon which all witnesses agree is that, as the police burst open the door, Constable Jones [there are scores of Boers unable to speak a word of English who, nevertheless, own very characteristic English, Scotch, and Irish names] fired at Edgar and dropped him dead in the arms of his wife, who was standing in the passage a foot or so behind him."—FITZPATRICK'S *The Transvaal from Within*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 51: For particulars of these events the reader is referred to *The Transvaal from Within*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 52: The petition, with its 21,684 signatures, reached Lord Milner through Sir W. (then Mr.) Greene, the British Agent at Pretoria, on March 27th. It was forwarded by the High Commissioner to England in the mail of March 29th. The same ship, the *Carisbrook Castle*, carried Dr. Leyds, who was returning to Europe after a visit to Pretoria. Sir W. Greene had returned to South Africa in the same ship with Lord Milner (February 14th), and had stayed at Government Cottage (Newlands) with him for some days, discussing Transvaal matters, before proceeding to Pretoria on February 19th.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 53: C. 9,345.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 54: C. 9,345. See forward, p. 155.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 55: See p. 125.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 56: *The Johannesburg Star*, April 1st, 1905.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 57: Proceedings of the Select Committee on British South Africa (Q. 4,385).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 58: For the position of Great Britain from the point of view of international law see some remarks in the note on page 580 (Chapter XII.).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 59: See pp. 61, 69, and 93.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 60: Mr. Merriman's expression. See his letter to Mr. Fischer at p. 161.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 61: Cd. 369.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 62: Letter of Te Water to Steyn. See forward, p. 162, where this letter is given.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 63: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 64: Then under the editorship of Mr. Massingham.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 65: C. 9,345.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 66: All these letters are in Cd. 369.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 67: Cd. 369.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 68: Mr. Hofmeyr.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 69: The original of this letter is now in the possession of Mr. E. B. Iwan Müller, by whom it was published in his work, *Lord Milner and South Africa*. The translation is that of the Department of Military Intelligence.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 70: 2nd. Lieut. Royal Horse Guards. Exactly one year after the last day of the Conference (June 5th), he (then A.D.C. to Lord Roberts and Duke of Westminster) ran up the British flag over the Raadzaal at Pretoria.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 71: Letter of May 27th (in Cd. 369).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 72: Lord Milner left Capetown by special train at 8.30 a.m. on

Monday, May 29th, and reached Bloemfontein punctually at 5 p.m. on Tuesday. Here he was met by President Steyn and various officials of the Free State; and an address of welcome was presented to him by the Mayor of Bloemfontein upon his arrival at the private house which had been provided for his accommodation during the Conference. At eleven o'clock on the following morning, Wednesday, the 31st, the High Commissioner went to the Presidency, where he was introduced by Mr. Steyn to President Krüger, Mr. Schalk Burger and Mr. Wolmarans. The first meeting of the Conference took place in the afternoon at 2.30, in the new offices of the Railway Department. In the evening a largely attended reception was given by President Steyn, at which Mr. Krüger was present for a short time and Lord Milner for about an hour. The Conference closed on the afternoon of Monday, June 5th, and Lord Milner then paid a farewell visit to President Steyn. The High Commissioner's special train left Bloemfontein on the following morning at 10.30, and reached Capetown at 6.45 on the evening of Wednesday, the 7th, where he was received by a large crowd, including three of the Cape Ministers and a number of Progressive Members of Parliament. President Steyn, who was present at the station on Tuesday morning to see the High Commissioner off, did everything possible for the comfort and convenience of his state guest during the week that he was in Bloemfontein. The proceedings of the Conference, with the High Commissioner's report upon them, are published in C. 9,404.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 73: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 74: Evidence before War Commission. Cd. 1,791.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 75: See p. 319 (note 2).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 76: Cd. 1,791.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 77: War Commission, Cd. 1,791.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 78: This was precisely the *rôle* played by Mafeking, only defensively, not offensively.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 79: Cd. 1,789 (War Commission).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 80: These were the figures of the D. M. I. "Military Notes" of June, 1898; in the revised "Military Notes" of June, 1899, the estimated total of the Boer force was considerably greater—some 50,000 exclusive of colonial rebels.

[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 81: All of these extracts will be found in Cd. 1,791.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 82: Cd. 1,789.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 83: Cd. 1,789.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 84: Three battalions, 6 guns, and a company of Royal Engineers were all the troops available for the defence of the Cape frontiers at this time (*i.e.* June).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 85: Most of these came by mail boats on July 18th and 25th. Col. Baden-Powell (who was entrusted with the important duty of organising a force for the defence of Southern Rhodesia, and subsequently of raising the mounted infantry corps which held Mafeking) arrived on the latter date.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 86: Expressing approval of the position Lord Milner had taken up at Bloemfontein. See p. 173.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 87: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 88: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 89: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 90: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 91: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 92: *E.g.* Mr. Balfour's statement in the House of Commons that the object of the despatch of the special service officers, and the small additions of engineers and artillery was "to complete the existing garrison." The purchase of transport, he said, had been long ago decided upon.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 93: Under State-Secretary of the Transvaal.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 94: Article on "The Mission of Messrs. Hofmeyr and Herholdt" in *Ons Land*, of July 11th, 1899, as reproduced in the *South African News* of the same date. This account of Mr. Hofmeyr's proceedings is presumed to have been published with his approval. C. 9,518.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 95: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 96: Then Mr. Conyngham Greene.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 97: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 98: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 99: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 100: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 101: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 102: On May 15th, 1899—*i.e.* a fortnight before the Bloemfontein Conference met—five persons alleged to be British subjects were arrested on a warrant, signed by Mr. Smuts as State-Attorney, on a charge of high treason. All of them, except one man—Nicholls, who was innocent—were agents of the secret service. The statement that the men were ex-British officers, and that one of them alleged that he was acting under direct instructions from the War Office, was disseminated through the Press by the Transvaal Government, with the object of discrediting (1) the South African League, and (2) the British Government, in the eyes of the civilised world. The whole of the alleged "conspiracy against the independence of the Republic," thanks to the endurance of Nicholls and the persistence of the Imperial authorities in South Africa, was shown to be the work of the Transvaal police, favoured by the negligence or political bad faith of certain Government officials. The prosecution was abandoned on July 25th. Mr. Duxbury, the counsel for the defence retained by the British Government, in reviewing the case and the proceedings, wrote (August 9th): "It seems abundantly clear, from all the facts which have come to light, that the whole of this disgraceful prosecution found its inception in the minds of Mr. Schutte, the Commissioner of Police, and Acting Chief Detective Beatty.... I must direct your attention to the very grave accusation contained in Thomas Dashwood Bundy's affidavit against Mr. Tjaart Krüger. This gentleman is the son of President Krüger, and is the Chief of the Secret Service department of this State." And of Mr. Smuts he writes: "I believe he was deceived by the detectives, and yet at the same time I fail to understand why, in a matter of such-magnitude, he allowed himself to sign warrants for the arrest of persons charged with such a serious crime as high treason on the strength of an affidavit signed by a detective, who, on the very day such affidavit was signed, had been

denounced by the Chief Justice from the Bench of the High Court as a perjurer." C. 9,521 (which contains a full record of the whole affair).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 103: The words are quoted by Mr. M. P. C. Walter, the editor, in a letter of protest published in the Transvaal *Leader* of July 7th, 1899. C. 9,521. [Back to Main Text]

Footnote 104: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 105: *The Settlement after the War*, p. 218.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 106: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 107: Secured by the Intelligence Department. The telegrams thus referred to, in this and the following chapter, have not been published in the Blue-Books. They were published, however, in *The Times History of the War*. Their authenticity is undoubted. Sir Gordon Sprigg had held a conversation with the Governor on the 13th.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 108: Mr. Fischer was still at Pretoria. C. 9, 415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 109: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 110: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 111: On July 31st, Cd. 369.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 112: C. 9,518.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 113: August 23rd, C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 114: C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 115: "The Uitlander Council is keenly disappointed at the *Times*' announcement that the seven years' franchise is acceptable to the Imperial Government. We fear few will accept the franchise on this condition, so the result is not likely to abate unrest and discontent, nor redress pressing grievances. Such a settlement would not even approximate to the conditions obtaining in the Orange Free State and the [British] colonies, and would fail to secure the recognition of the principle of racial equality. We earnestly implore you not to depart from the High Commissioner's five years' compromise, which

the Uitlanders accepted with great reluctance. The absolute necessity for a satisfactory settlement with an Imperial guarantee is emphasised by the insincerity and bad faith persistently shown during the Volksraad discussion of the Franchise Law."—C. 9,415.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 116: The English outward mail-boat arrived on Tuesday, and the homeward boat left on Wednesday.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 117: Sir W. Greene became a K.C.B. after the war had broken out. [Back to Main Text]

Footnote 118: C. 9,518.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 119: C. 9,518.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 120: C. 9,518.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 121: See p. 218 for this letter.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 122: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 123: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 124: Cd. 369.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 125: Secured by the Intelligence Department.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 126: It was known to the Intelligence Department that Krüger's secret agents had been in the Cape Colony for two years before the outbreak of war, and that they had distributed arms in certain districts of the Colony.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 127: Secured by the Intelligence Department.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 128: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 129: The expression "Ons wil nou Engelse schiet" was actually used. See Thomas's *Origin of the Anglo-Boer War Revealed*, p. 110.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 130: Secured by the Intelligence Department.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 131: Secured by the Intelligence Department.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 132: C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 133: Then Mr. Conyngham Greene. C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 134: C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 135: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 136: The despatch was presented to the British Agent, and telegraphed, through the High Commissioner, to the Home Government. Its diplomatic ambiguity was due to Mr. Fischer's influence.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 137: C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 138: C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 139: C. 9,530.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 140: The despatch of 2,000 additional troops to Natal had been sanctioned on August 2nd, in response to the earnest appeal of the Natal Government. Hence at this time there were (roughly) 12,000 Imperial troops in South Africa. It is noticeable that, although the despatch only reached Lord Milner on the morning of the 9th, the *Cape Argus* had contained a telegram, giving an account of the troops warned in India and England, on the evening of the 8th.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 141: C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 142: Cd. 43.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 143: C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 144: This despatch was received on September 8th. Cd. 43.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 145: C. 9,521.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 146: Received on September 6th. Cd. 44.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 147: Cd. 18.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 148: p. 251.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 149: Cd. 420. The Blue-book points out that in the original "a well-known nick-name" is used for Mr. S. J. du Toit.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 150: As reported by Reuter.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 151: Cd. 420.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 152: Published in *The Times*, September 30th, 1899.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 153: In *The Nineteenth Century* for that month.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 154: *The Times*, December 15th. Mr. Bryce was taking the chair at the last of a series of six lectures on "England in South Africa," given by the present writer in the great hall of the (then) Imperial Institute.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 155: *Cornhill Magazine*, July, 1900. "The South African Policy of Sir Bartle Frere." By W. Basil Worsfold.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 156: The reader is referred to p. 5 in Chap. I. for the racial characteristics of the South African Dutch, and to the note on p. 48 in Chap. II. for the political significance of the word "Afrikander," as stated by Mr. S. J. du Toit.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 157: See letters between Lord Milner and Mr. Schreiner in Cd. 43, p. 13.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 158: Psalm xxii. 12.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 159: *The Transvaal from Within*, p. 287.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 160: This document was among those secured by the Intelligence Department, and published in *The Times History of the War*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 161: See p. 77.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 162: In the House of Assembly, August 28th.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 163: One of the earliest measures of precaution which Lord Milner desired was a plan for the defence of Kimberley. But when, on June 12th, the people of Kimberley requested the Government of the Colony to take steps for the protection of their town, the reply which they received, through the Civil Commissioner, was this: "There is no reason whatever for apprehending that Kimberley is, or in any contemplated event will be, in danger of attack, and Mr. Schreiner is of opinion that your fears are groundless and your anticipations without foundation."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 164: September 24th, 1900.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 165: This was on October 11th, 1899—the day on which the ultimatum expired.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 166: Sir Gordon Sprigg—Mr. Schreiner's Ministry was replaced by a Progressive Ministry in June, 1900.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 167: With this may be compared the fact that in Natal the whole of the local forces were mobilised on September 29th for active service. The dates upon which further units of the Cape local forces were called out are as follows: Uitenhage Rifles and Komgha Mounted Rifles, November 10th; Cape Medical Staff Corps, November 16th; and Frontier Mounted Rifles, November 24th.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 168: The Kimberley and Mafeking Volunteers were called out at the last moment, but actually before the war broke out; but the safety of both these places was imperilled by the refusal, or delay, of the colonial Government to supply them with guns.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 169: Mr. Fischer. See forward, p. 291.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 170: Kimberley.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 171: *The Times*, February 27th, 1906.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 172: Mr. J. W. Sauer. The reference is (in Lord Milner's words) to Mr. Sauer's "well-meant but unsuccessful mission to Dordrecht, which was immediately followed by rebellion in that district." The facts, as fully disclosed a year later, are these. On November 23rd, 1899, Mr. Sauer held a meeting at Dordrecht to dissuade the Dutch subjects of the Crown in the Wodehouse

Division of the Colony from joining in the rebellion. As the result of this meeting a deputation was sent to the Commandant of the Boer invading-force, Olivier, who was at Barkly East, desiring him not to come to Dordrecht. On November 27th another meeting was held (also addressed by Mr. Sauer) and a second deputation of the inhabitants waited upon Olivier. The sequel is revealed in the telegram despatched the following day (November 28th) by the Boer Commandant to the Secretary, the War Commission, Bloemfontein: "... To-day already I received the second deputation from Dordrecht not to come to Dordrecht. This is asked officially, but privately they say that this is also a blind, and that we must come at once...." On December 2nd Olivier was received with open arms at Dordrecht. It was in a district where, in the Boer Commandant's words, "the Afrikanders were rejoicing, and joining the commandos was universal."—Cd. 420, p. 108 and p. 96; Cd. 43, p. 221; and Cd. 261, p. 126.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 173: C. 9,530.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 174: *Times* correspondent and editor of *The Times History of the War*. Mr. Amery arrived at the Cape in the second week of September, and was at Pretoria from September 24th to October 13th.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 175: Secured by Intelligence Department.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 176: C. 9,530.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 177: C. 9,530.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 178: C. 9,530.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 179: Cd. 43.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 180: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 181: C. 9,530.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 182: *Times History of the War in South Africa*, vol. i., p. 360. It must be remembered that in the Transvaal all telegrams had been strictly censored from the end of August.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 183: This chapter was in type some weeks before Vol. I. of the

Official History of the War was published. Where, however, the Official History amends or supplements figures, documents, etc., given in earlier official publications, the fact is mentioned in a foot-note.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 184: See p. 191.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 185: Cd. 1,789 (War Commission). The Official *History of the War in South Africa* gives the total on August 2nd as "not exceeding 9,940 men."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 186: Cd. 1,789. But the Official History gives the British total at the outbreak of war as 27,054 men (as against over 50,000 burghers); of whom 15,811 (including 2,781 local troops) were in Natal, 5,221 regulars and 4,574 local troops were in the Cape Colony, and 1,448 men, raised locally by Col. Baden-Powell, were in Mafeking and Southern Rhodesia.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 187: But the Admiralty were given details of the offensive force on September 20th. (*Official History.*)[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 188: Cd. 1,789, pp. 15-17.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 189: Nor was the Intelligence Department less urgent than Lord Milner. "In July of last year [1899], earlier warnings being disregarded, a formal communication was made for the consideration of the Cabinet, advising the despatch of a large force fully equipped, estimated to be sufficient to safeguard Natal and Cape Colony from the first onrush of the Boers."—Sir John Ardagh, in *The Balfourian Parliament*, 1900-1905. By Henry W. Lucy, p. 10. See also the evidence of the War Commission, and the "Military Notes" issued by the D. M. I. in June (1899).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 190: In a memorandum of November 20th (furnished to Gen. Forestier-Walker) Gen. Buller, on the eve of starting for Natal, gives as a first paragraph in his "appreciation of the situation" the following remark: "1. Ever since I have been here we have been like the man, who, with a long day's work before him, overslept himself and so was late for everything all day." (*Official History*, p. 209.)[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 191: Cd. 1,789.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 192: *Ibid*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 193: See returns cited by Lord Roberts in House of Lords, February 27th, 1906. The irregulars *raised* in South Africa were between 50,000 and 60,000, according to the *War Commission Report*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 194: November 15th, 1900. Johannesburg.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 195: November 15th, 1900. Johannesburg.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 196: February 6th, 1900. Capetown.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 197: Lord Roberts had asked Col. Baden-Powell how long he could hold out at Mafeking, and then promised that the relief of the town should be effected within the required period.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 198: One fighting British general stated that one of the first stage force was equal to five of the men supplied after the reserves had been used up in April, 1900.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 199: For the direct part played by the Liberal leaders in the production of this ignorance, see p. 256.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 200: *I.e.*, *less* troops for lines of communication. Lord Roberts's force was 36,000, the Army Corps was 47,000.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 201: Any reader desiring to learn the particulars of this struggle is referred to the pages of the writer's *The Valley of Light: Studies with Pen and Pencil in the Vaudois Valleys of Piedmont*. (Macmillan, 1899). It may be added that Napoleon manifested a keen interest in the military details of the engagements between the French and Savoyard troops and the Vaudois. As regards the number of combatants on the Boer side. Lord Kitchener puts the total (from first to last) at 95,000 (Cd. 1790, p. 13). The *Official History*, however, gives, as the result of an elaborate calculation, 87,365 (Vol. I. App. 4).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 202: Cd. 264 (Despatch of January 16th, 1900).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 203: Cd. 261.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 204: At the time of the Bechuanaland Expedition (1884-5), when the writer was in South Africa, "a controversy was seriously maintained between the two moderate Afrikander journals, the *Sud Africaan* and the *Volksblad*, on the question whether the Imperial Government had, or had not, the right to send troops through the Colony, without the consent of the Colonial Ministry. In commenting upon this question a correspondent wrote in the *Patriot*, the extreme organ of the Afrikanders: 'I believe the *Volksblad* is correct in maintaining that England has that right. But if England has the right to send *Rooibaatjes* (*i.e.* British soldiers) to kill my brethren in the Transvaal, then I have also the right to try and prevent the same. My brother is nearer than England. England can send troops, but whether they will all arrive safely in Stellaland—that stands to be seen.'"—*A History of South Africa*, by the writer. (Dent, 1900.)[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 205: Despatch dated "Government House, Bloemfontein, March 15th, 1900."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 206: Cd. 35.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 207: Mr. Reitz's work was translated into English by Mr. W. T. Stead.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 208: Cd. 109.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 209: The Unionist party was returned to power with a slightly decreased majority—130 as against 150. But this loss of seats was counterbalanced by the consideration that it is unusual for the same Government to be entrusted with a second period of office by a democratic electorate.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 210: A suburb of Capetown.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 211: Cd. 261.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 212: Mr. Morley has the doubtful merit of consistency. As recently as April 27th, 1906, he alluded to the South African War as "that delusive and guilty war," in an address to the Eighty Club. According to *The Times* report this

expression was received with cheers.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 213: It may perhaps be objected that some credit should have been allowed to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in view of the fact that a sum of £41,807,400 was voted in Committee of Supply in the House of Commons for military requirements, practically without discussion, within four and a half hours on June 19th, 1900. This objection is answered by the words used by the Duke of Devonshire on the same day: "I am afraid I must tell Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman that he is not likely to receive from us any recognition, either effusive or otherwise, of the patriotism of his party. It is quite true that, as he took credit to himself and his friends, they have not offered any opposition to our demands for supplies or to the military measures which it has been found necessary for the Government to take; but the reason for that prudent abstinence is not very far to seek. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and his friends knew very well that any factious opposition to the granting of these supplies would have brought down upon them the almost unanimous condemnation of the whole people; and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is much too shrewd and sensible a man to risk the danger of committing for his party an act of political suicide."—Address to Women's Liberal Unionist Association.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 214: June 26th, 1880, C. 2,655.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 215: See p. 349.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 216: Cd. 261.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 217: Cd. 261.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 218: Cd. 624. The memorandum also noted that the £1,000 was "paid at request of F. W. Reitz" (the State Secretary). In the Concessions Commission the following letter is published:

"GOVERNMENT OFFICES, PRETORIA.
7 April, 1899.

TO VAN KRETSCHMAR VAN VEEN, ESQ.,
DIRECTOR OF THE N.Z.A. RY. CO.

HON'D. SIR,—With reference to a letter of his Excellency the Ambassador, dated 23 March last, with reference to Mr. Statham and the latter's request for an

assistance of £300 for furniture and such like, I have the honour to inform you confidentially that the Executive Council has resolved to grant this gentleman Statham an amount of £150. As, according to previous agreement, a yearly allowance is paid to Mr. Statham by your Company, I have the honour to request you kindly to pay out to the said Mr. Statham the sum granted him. His Excellency the Ambassador is likewise being informed of this decision of the Executive Council.—I have, etc.,

J. W. REITZ, *State Secretary*."
(Q. 608.)

Mr. Statham is understood to have been a frequent contributor to those Liberal journals which sympathised with the Boer cause. His allowance, however, had ceased before the war broke out.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 219: In his covering despatch, Cd. 261, p. 126. For the circumstances of Mr. Sauer's visit to Dordrecht on the occasion mentioned see note, p. 287.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 220: As reported in *The Cape Times*, Cd. 261.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 221: See p. 477.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 222: Cd. 261, despatch of June 6th, 1900.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 223: Cd. 264.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 224: Cd. 264.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 225: Cd. 264.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 226: *Cape Times*, August 23rd, 1900.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 227: June 14th; 1901 (Holborn Restaurant, and elsewhere later). "Whatever Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman may think or say, the German nation may think or say."—The *Vossische Zeitung*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 228: As translated in Blue-book, Cd. 547. Mr. de Jong, the editor of the paper, was prosecuted (and convicted) for the publication of this and another similar article (December 28th).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 229: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 230: It is scarcely necessary to point out that this prophecy of continued racial hatred has been completely falsified by events. The writer went out to South Africa a second time in January, 1904, when two years had not passed since the surrender of the Boers. The one thing, above all others, that struck him, and every other visitor from England, was the profound peace that reigned from end to end of the land.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 231: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 232: As stated in a *Central News* telegram, published in London on December 14th, 1900.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 233: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 234: See letter of Piet de Wet to his brother Christian, in Cd. 547, and correspondence between Steyn and Reitz (captured by British troops), in Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 235: "This war no longer makes a pretence of being a war of defence; it is a war for gold-fields, for territory, and for the suppression of two brave and noble peoples. This wicked war has lost us the moral leadership of mankind."—Mr. E. Robertson, M.P., June 5th, 1901.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 236: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 237: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 238: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 239: *Ibid.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 240: January 12th, 1901. Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 241: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 242: Cd. 663. See also the text of the circular issued on December 2nd, 1900, by Louis Botha, as Commandant-General of the Boer forces, to all military officers, landdrosts, etc., giving specific instructions for the punishment

of surrendered burghers who refused to join the commandos when called upon, and for the evasion of the neutrality oath.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 243: Cd. 663.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 244: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 245: Cd. 663. It was at this time that the utterly unjustifiable and brutal murder of the coloured man, Esau, took place in the invasion of the Calvinia district of the Cape Colony. His sole offence was his known loyalty to the British Government. "He was flogged on January 15th, 1901, and kept in gaol till February 5th, when he was flogged through the streets and shot outside the village by a Boer named Strydom, who stated that he acted according to orders." Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 246: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 247: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 248: Cd. 522.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 249: The italics are Mr. Kipling's. *The Science of Rebellion: a Tract for the Times*, by Rudyard Kipling.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 250: Cd. 663.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 251: Cd. 605.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 252: Cd. 988.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 253: "Cape Colony is a great disappointment to me ... no general rising can be expected in that quarter.... [But] the little contingent there has been of great help to us: they have kept 50,000 troops occupied, with which otherwise we should have had to reckon."—Gen. Christian de Wet at the Vereeniging Conference on May 16th, 1902. App. A. *The Three Years' War*, by Christian Rudolf de Wet (Constable, 1902). But see forward also, p. 485, for part played by British loyalists.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 254: Cd. 663.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 255: *E.g.* those employed by General Sherman in his march to the Sea, through Georgia, in the latter part of 1864.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 256: This estimate was very much too small: at the Vereeniging surrender, when many thousands more of Boers had been captured or killed 21,256 burghers and rebels laid down their arms. Cd. 988.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 257: Cd. 695.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 258: Cd. 820.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 259: There were 186 killed, 75 wounded, 1,384 prisoners, 529 voluntary surrenders; while 930 rifles, 90,958 rounds of ammunition, 1,332 waggons and carts, 13,570 horses, and 65,879 cattle were captured. Cd. 820.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 260: See p. 420.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 261: Cd. 820. The September returns were: 170 Boers killed in action, 114 wounded prisoners, 1,385 unwounded prisoners, and 1,393 surrenders.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 262: In August 648 refugees returned; in November the number had risen to 2,623.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 263: For the grotesque, repulsive, and even fatal remedies employed by the Boer women in the treatment of their children in sickness, the reader is referred to the medical reports on the condition of the refugee camps published in the Blue-book.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 264: The figures are those given by Miss Hobhouse, as based upon the official returns (*The Brunt of the War*, pp. 329-31).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 265: *I.e.* annual per 1,000 on a basis of 25 years (1874-98).[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 266: Cd. 1,163, p. 159. See also *ibid.*, p. 151, and p. 178. Lord Kitchener's reply to the official Boer complaint against the system of the Burgher Camps (made by Acting President Schalk Burger), is as follows:

"Numerous complaints were made to me in the early part of this year (1901),

by surrendered burghers, who stated that after they laid down their arms their families were ill-treated, and their stock and property confiscated by order of the Commandant-Generals of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. These acts appear to have been taken in consequence of the circular dated Roos Senekal, 6th November, 1900, in which the Commandant-General says: 'Do everything in your power to prevent the burghers laying down their arms. I will be compelled, if they do not listen to this, to confiscate everything movable or immovable, and also to burn their houses.'

"I took occasion, at my interview with Commandant-General Louis Botha (February 28th, 1901), to bring this matter before him, and I told him that if he continued such acts I should be forced to bring in all women and children, and as much property as possible, to protect them from the acts of his burghers. I further inquired if he would agree to spare the farms and families of neutral or surrendered burghers, in which case I expressed my willingness to leave undisturbed the farms and families of burghers who were on commando, provided they did not actively assist their relatives. The Commandant-General emphatically refused even to consider any such arrangement. He said: 'I am entitled by law to force every man to join, and if they do not do so to confiscate their property, and leave their families on the veld.' I asked him what course I could pursue to protect surrendered burghers and their families, and he then said, 'The only thing you can do, is to send them out of the country, as if I catch them they must suffer.' After this there was nothing more to be said, and as military operations do not permit of the protection of individuals, I had practically no choice but to continue my system of bringing inhabitants of certain areas into the protection of our lines. My decision was conveyed to the Commandant-General in my official letter, dated Pretoria, 16th April, 1901, from which the following is an extract:

"'As I informed your Honour at Middelburg, owing to the irregular manner in which you have conducted and continue to conduct hostilities, by forcing unwilling and peaceful inhabitants to join your Commandos, a proceeding totally unauthorised by the recognised customs of war, I have no other course open to me, and am forced to take the very unpleasant and repugnant steps of bringing in the women and children.

"'I have the greatest sympathy for the sufferings of these poor people, which I have done my best to alleviate, and it is a matter of surprise to me and to the whole civilised world, that your Honour considers yourself justified in still

causing so much suffering to the people of the Transvaal, by carrying on a hopeless and useless struggle.'

"From the foregoing, it will, I believe, be perfectly clear that the responsibility for the action complained of by Mr. Burger (the so-styled Acting State President of the Transvaal), rests rather with the Commandants-General of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, than with the Commander-in-Chief of the forces in South Africa....

"It is not the case that every area has been cleared of the families of burghers, although this might be inferred from the despatch under discussion. On the contrary, very large numbers of women and children are still out, either in Boer Camps or on their farms, and my Column Commanders have orders to leave them alone, unless it is clear that they must starve if they are left out upon the veld....

"Finally, I indignantly and entirely deny the accusations of rough and cruel treatment of women and children who were being brought in from their farms to the camp. Hardships may have been sometimes inseparable from the process, but the Boer women in our hands themselves bear the most eloquent testimony to the kindness and consideration shown to them by our soldiers on all such occasions."

With this statement it is interesting to compare Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's words at Bath, November 20th, 1901:

> "Is our hypocrisy so great that we actually flatter ourselves upon our great humanity, because we have saved from starvation those whose danger of starvation we have caused?... The hypocrisy of these excuses is almost more loathsome than the cruelty itself.... We have set ourselves to punish this country, to reduce it apparently to ruin, because it has ventured to make war against us."

Truly an extraordinary attitude for a future Prime Minister of England![Back to Main Text]

Footnote 267: What was even worse than such declarations of sympathy with the Boers was the manifestation of hostility against the loyalist population of South Africa. *E.g.* Sir William Harcourt (in a letter in *The Times* of December 17th, 1900), wrote: "I sometimes think that those bellicose gentlemen—

especially those who do not fight—must occasionally cast longing, lingering looks towards the times before they were subsidised (*sic*) by the authors of the Raid to bring about the position in which they now find themselves."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 268: September 26th, 1901. See Cd. 820 for report of this action. [Back to Main Text]

Footnote 269: Letter to Miss Milner, November 11th, 1901. See p. 416.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 270: The facts are stated in a letter published in *The Times* on March 10th, 1902.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 271: See also note, p. 399 (Extract from the *Vossische Zeitung*). The baseless and malevolent allegations of specific acts of inhumanity or outrage on the part of British soldiers, circulated by Boer sympathisers in England and on the continent of Europe, have been passed over in silence. For an exposure of these calumnies the reader is referred to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The War in South Africa* (Smith, Elder). A record of the manner in which they were repudiated by the Boer population in South Africa will be found in Cd. 1, 163, pp. 99, 106-111, 113-121. Among those who protested were German subjects, and Germans who had become British subjects, resident in South Africa. Perhaps the most significant of all these protests is the resolution passed unanimously by the members of the Natal House of Assembly, all standing: "That this House desires to repudiate the false charges of inhumanity brought against His Majesty's Army by a section of the inhabitants of the continent of Europe and certain disloyal subjects within the British Isles, and this House places on record its deliberate conviction that the war in South Africa has been prosecuted by His Majesty's Government and Army upon lines of humanity and consideration for the enemy unparalleled in the history of nations."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 272: This telegram is printed in Cd. 528.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 273: For the nature of these "Middelburg terms," see forward in note 2 on p. 568.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 274: Sir Richard Solomon was appointed legal adviser to the new Transvaal Administration.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 275: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 276: See p. 431.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 277: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 278: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 279: The action of Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson was not without precedent. See Cd. 903, pp. 57 and 67, and p. 123, *supra*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 280: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 281: Queen Victoria died January 22nd, 1901.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 282: Cd. 983.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 283: Cd. 903. These measures were taken upon Lord Milner's return to the Transvaal (September, 1901) after his visit to England. The scandal of the almost open co-operation of the Bond with the Boer leaders had become notorious, and this assistance was recognised as a contributory cause to the protraction of the guerilla war.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 284: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 285: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 286: Cd. 903. This was, in its essence, the proposal for the systematic and effective defence of the Colony, which Lord Milner had consistently advocated both before and during the war—with General Butler and the Home Government, with Lord Roberts at the time of the Forward Movement (see p. 353), and now at the eleventh hour with Lord Kitchener in support of the Cape Government.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 287: Cd. 547.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 288: See p. 459.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 289: The Letters Patent were not issued until August.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 290: It was, in its essence, the "high seriousness of absolute

sincerity" that Arnold, after Aristotle, makes the central attribute of poetic thought. In commenting upon a speech delivered at Germiston on March 15th, 1905, the Johannesburg *Star* wrote on the day following: "Did ever a High Commissioner for South Africa speak in this wise before? But beneath the light words and unstudied diction there is the weight and sureness of the 'inevitable' thought. A man who has pursued a single task for eight years with unremitting effort and unswerving devotion can afford to put his mind into his words. And in all that Lord Milner says there is an absolute sincerity, born of high integrity of purpose and an assurance of knowledge, that compels conviction. Or, rather, should we say, that makes the need of conviction as unnecessary as a lamp in daylight."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 291: The Duke of Cambridge.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 292: These two ex-officials, representing the respective Governments of the late Republics, were living in Holland at this time.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 293: It is only fair to assume that Mr. Bryce was not acquainted with the details of the Dordrecht and Hargrove affairs, to which reference has been made respectively at p. 287 and p. 375. And, still more that he was unaware of the utterly discreditable Basuto incident, with respect to which General Gordon's biographer writes: "The consequence was that Mr. Sauer deliberately resolved to destroy Gordon's reputation as a statesman, and to ensure the triumph of his own policy by an act of treachery which has never been surpassed."—*The Life of Gordon*, vol. ii., p. 83. (Fisher Unwin.)[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 294: Compare the different and infinitely more instructive treatment of the question of Dutch allegiance by Lord Milner in his Johannesburg speech, quoted at p. 145.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 295: *I.e.*, the Rev. Stephen Gladstone.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 296: Apart from those mentioned in the text, the following attended the Merriman and Sauer banquet: Mr. E. Robertson, M.P. (chairman), Lord Farrer, Mr. T. Shaw, M.P., Mr. Burt, M.P., Mr. Channing, M.P., Mr. John Ellis, M.P., Mr. H. J. Wilson, M.P., Sir Wilfred Lawson, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and others. And among those who sent letters of regret for their absence were the Marquis of Ripon, Lord Hobhouse, Dr. Spence Watson, Mr. Seale-Hayne, M.P., and Lord Loreburn.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 297: December 17th, 1901.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 298: They were read and published by Lord Milner on June 21st, 1902.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 299: It is scarcely necessary to say that the entire cost of the Constabulary has been borne by the new colonies; or that every penny of this grant-in-aid was paid back out of the development loan raised in 1902-3.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 300: An under-estimate. One-fourth, or one-fifth, would have been nearer the mark. See note, p. 454.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 301: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 302: Managing Director of the Daira Sania Company; of the Indian and Egyptian Irrigation Services.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 303: Cd. 626.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 304: Cd. 1,163.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 305: This Report was issued (June 14th, 1904) from the Education Adviser's Office, Johannesburg, on "The Development of Education in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony." It is one of the many contributions of permanent value to political and economic science that mark the second period of Lord Milner's Administration in South Africa. *E.g.*, in Appendix XXX. of this Report, the various solutions of the much-vexed question of religious instruction in State Schools, severally adopted by the self-governing colonies of the empire, are excellently presented in tabular form.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 306: Report on "The Development of Education in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 307: These imported teachers worked harmoniously with the South African teachers, whether of British or Dutch extraction; they filled the gap left by the Hollander teachers, who had returned to Europe after the outbreak of the war, and formed a valuable element in the permanent staff of the Education Departments of the new colonies. In 1903 there were 475 of these over-sea teachers at work in the two colonies, as against some 800 teachers appointed in

South Africa.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 308: Some idea of the significance of these figures may be gathered from the fact that the highest number of children on the rolls of the Government schools of the Orange Free State was 8,157 (in the year 1898). That is to say, the British Administration in the Orange River Colony was educating one-third more Boer children in the camp schools alone than the Free State Government had educated in time of peace. Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 309: Cd. 1,163, p. 145. The accounts were complicated by expenditure for, and refunds from, the military authorities.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 310: This is in the Orange River Colony alone. For the number of children in the *camp* schools of both colonies, as apart from the *town* schools, see above.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 311: Cd. 1,163.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 312: Dated December 12th, 1901.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 313: Excluding expenditure on the South African Constabulary and relief and re-settlement, and certain other charges. Cd. 1,163.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 314: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 315: December 14th, 1901. Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 316: The new rolling-stock was paid for out of the grant-in-aid voted in August, 1901. The first of the new lines constructed was that from Bloemfontein to Basutoland, opening up the rich agricultural land known as the "conquered territory" on the Basuto border in the Orange River Colony, where many of the new British settlers had been established.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 317: The completeness with which the Netherlands Railway Company had identified itself with the Government of the South African Republic is well expressed in the reply of Mr. Van Kretchmar, the General Manager of the N.Z.A.S.M., to a question put to him by the Transvaal Concessions Commissioners: "We considered that the interests of the Republic were our interests" (Q. 612). Many of these railway employees were, of course, imported Hollanders.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 318: Cd. 903.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 319: Cd. 1,163.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 320: Cd. 1,163.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 321: Cd. 1,163.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 322: At Johannesburg, March 31st, 1905. From *The Star* report.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 323: See p. 489.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 324: Cd. 1,163.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 325: Cd. 1,163.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 326: For these, the "Middelburg" or "Botha" terms, see above, p. 471, and forward; p. 568, note 2.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 327: Cd. 1,096.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 328: This deputation was despatched in March, 1900, to "win the sympathy of the nations," in De Wet's words.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 329: Cd. 986.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 330: A full list of the names is to be found in the Draft Terms of Surrender at p. 564.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 331: These were the "Middelburg terms" of a year ago. See note 2, p. 568.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 332: Cd. 1,096.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 333: Smuts.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 334: Hertzog.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 335: De Wet.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 336: Botha.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 337: Mr. Chamberlain to Generals Botha, De Wet, and De la Rey, August 28th, 1902. Cd. 1,284.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 338: Cd. 1,096. President Steyn was too ill to sign the Agreement, and De Wet signed first of the Free State representatives. He was declared President, in the place of Steyn, at Vereeniging on the 29th.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 339: This was reduced to a period of five years.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 340: Cd. 1,096. As compared with the Middelburg terms, the terms accepted at Vereeniging were slightly less favourable to the Boers in respect of permission to possess arms, and the use of the Dutch language; but the monetary assistance promised to the repatriated burghers was more generous. The free grant was raised from one million to three millions, and the advances on loan were offered for the first two years free of interest, and subsequently at only three per cent. The greater destruction of property consequent upon the prolongation of the war made this increased assistance necessary and reasonable. It is noticeable, however, that Lord Milner, alike in the Middelburg and Vereeniging negotiations, although he was opposed to any payment of the costs incurred by the Boer leaders in carrying on the war, was prepared to go even farther than the Home Government in the direction of a generous treatment of the Boers in all other matters that concerned their material prosperity.

One variation as between the Middelburg and Vereeniging terms is noticeable in view of the statement, made in the House of Commons by the present (1906) Under-Secretary for the Colonies (Mr. Winston Churchill), that the use of the word "natives" in clause viii. of the Terms of Surrender prevented the introduction of any legislation affecting the *status* of Asiatics and "coloured persons" in the new colonies prior to the establishment of self-government. This assertion was based upon the contention that the word "natives" is understood by the Boers to indicate the "native of any country other than those of the European inhabitants of South Africa." The actual text of the corresponding clause in the Middelburg terms (Lord Kitchener's despatch of March 20th, 1901, in Cd. 528) is as follows: "As regards the extension of the franchise to the Kafirs in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to give such franchise before representative government is granted to these colonies, and if then given it will be so limited as to secure the just

predominance of the white races. The legal position of coloured persons will, however, be similar to that which they hold in Cape Colony." Apart from the fact that the Boers were debarred by Lord Milner's specific statements either from going behind the English text of the Vereeniging Terms of Surrender, or from "explaining [the Vereeniging Terms] by anything in the Middelburg proposal," it is difficult to see how this Middelburg clause could have raised any presumption in the minds of the Boer commissioners that the English word "native" was intended to include not only the Kafirs (of which word it is a loose equivalent, since the dark-skinned native of the Bantu tribes, or the Kafir, has practically ousted the aboriginal yellow-skinned natives of South Africa—the Bushmen and Hottentots), but the "coloured people," or half-castes.

Lord Milner himself declared in the House of Lords (July 31st, 1906) with reference to Mr. Churchill's statement that the question had not been raised, to the best of his belief, by the Boer commissioners; and that in any case there was nothing in the Vereeniging Agreement to prevent the Crown Colony administration of the new colonies from legislating in respect of "coloured persons." [And *a fortiori* in respect of British Indians.] His words were: "The English text of the treaty says 'natives' and does not say 'coloured people.' I think that in the Dutch version the word 'naturellen' was used. I venture to say that nobody familiar with the common use of language in South Africa would hold either that 'natives' included coloured people, some of whom very much more resemble whites than natives, or that 'naturellen' included 'kleurlingen,' which is the universally accepted Dutch word in South Africa for coloured people."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 341: The minutes of the final meetings of the commando representatives—as also those of the earlier meetings of May 15th to 17th—have been published by General Christian de Wet in *The Three Years' War*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 342: Three of the members of this committee, Generals Botha, De Wet, and De la Rey, were instructed to proceed to Europe for the purposes of this appeal.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 343: The actual surrender of the arms in the possession of the burgher and rebel commandos was carried out with admirable promptitude. Three weeks after the agreement had been signed Lord Kitchener was able, in a final despatch from Capetown on June 23rd, to record his "high appreciation of the unflagging energy and unfailing tact" with which Generals Louis Botha, De

la Rey, and Christian de Wet had facilitated the work of the British commissioners appointed to receive the surrender of the burghers in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Nor were the Boer and rebel commandos in the Cape Colony less expeditious in surrendering to General French. In all 21,226 burghers and colonial rebels, of whom 11,166 were in the Transvaal, 6,455 in the Orange River Colony, and 3,635 in the Cape, laid down their arms. Lord Kitchener's last words (despatches of June 21st and 23rd), addressed respectively to the Colonial Governments and the Secretary of State for War, are noticeable and characteristic utterances. His message to the former was:

> "I find it difficult in the short space at my disposal to acknowledge the deep obligation of the Army in South Africa to the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Cape Colony, and Natal. I will only say here that no request of mine was ever refused by any of these Governments, and that their consideration and generosity were only equalled by the character and quality of the troops they sent to South Africa, or raised in that country."

And of the troops, which under his command had successfully accomplished a military task of unparalleled difficulty, he wrote:

> "The protracted struggle which has for so long caused suffering to South Africa has at length terminated, and I should fail to do justice to my own feelings if at this moment I neglected to bear testimony to the patience, tenacity, and heroism which has been displayed by all ranks of His Majesty's forces, Imperial and Colonial, during the whole course of the war. Nothing but the qualities of bravery and endurance in our troops could have overcome the difficulties of this campaign, or have finally enabled the empire to reap the fruits of all its sacrifices."[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 344: An onomatopœic expression for the step of a tired horse.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 345: *The Three Years' War.*[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 346: [The Transvaal Government]—"or rather the President and his advisers—committed the fatal mistake of trying to maintain a government which was at the same time undemocratic and incompetent.... An exclusive government may be pardoned if it is efficient; an inefficient government, if it rests upon the people. But a government which is both inefficient and exclusive incurs a weight

of odium under which it must ultimately sink; and this was the kind of government which the Transvaal attempted to maintain. They ought, therefore, to have either extended their franchise or reformed their administration" (Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa*, 2nd Ed., 1900). Mr. Bryce is not likely to have been unduly severe. "The political sin of the Transvaal against the Uitlander, therefore, was no mere matter of detail—of less or more—but was fundamental in its denial of elementary political right." And again: In the Transvaal "an armed minority holds the power, compels the majority to pay the taxes, denies it representation, and misgoverns it with the money extorted" (Captain Mahan, *The Merits of the Transvaal Dispute*, 1900 [included in *The Problem of Asia*]). To these, perhaps, I may be permitted to add the following words spoken by myself in 1894—more than a year before the Raid—and published in 1895 (*South Africa: a Study, etc.*):—"The Boer has still to justify his possession of these ample pastures, these rich and fertile valleys, and these stores of gold and of coal. If he can enlarge his mind, if he can reform existing abuses, if he can expand an archaic system of government and render it sufficiently elastic to meet the requirements of an enlarged population and important and increasing industries—well and good. If not, let the Boer beware; for he will place himself in conflict with the intelligence and the progress of South Africa. *Then* the Boer system will be condemned by a higher authority than the Colonial Office or the opinion of England; and from the high court of Nature—a court from which no appeal lies—the inexorable decree will go forth: 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'"[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 347: See admissions of the Boer Generals quoted *supra*.[Back to Main Text]

Footnote 348: "The South African Republic will conclude no treaty or engagement with any state or nation other than the Orange Free State, nor with any native tribe to the eastward or westward of the Republic, until the same has been approved by Her Majesty the Queen." Captain Mahan writes: "In refusing the Transvaal that independence in foreign relations which would enable other states to hold it directly accountable, Great Britain retained, in so far, responsibility that foreigners should be so treated as to give no just cause for reclamations.... Great Britain, by retaining the ultimate control of foreign relations, and by her well-defined purpose not to permit interference in the Transvaal by a foreign Power, was responsible for conditions of wrong to foreign citizens within its borders. She had surrendered the right to interfere, as suzerain, with internal affairs; but she had not relieved herself, as by a grant of full

independence and sovereignty she might have done, from responsibility for injury due to internal maladministration, any more than the United States was relieved of the responsibility to Italy [in the case of the Italian citizens lynched at New Orleans] by the state sovereignty of Louisiana" (*Ibid.*). And, says the same writer, *a fortiori* was Great Britain justified in interfering on behalf of her own subjects.[Back to Main Text]

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