

## NATAL AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Natal--Causes of increase of the native population--Happy condition of the Natal Zulus--Polygamy--Its results on population--The impossibility of eradicating it--Relations between a Zulu and his wives--Connection between polygamy and native law--Missionary work amongst the Zulus--Its failure--Reasons of its failure--Early days of Natal--Growth of the native question--Coming struggle between white and black over the land question--Difficulty of civilising the Zulu--Natal as a black settlement--The constitution of Natal--Request for responsible government--Its refusal--The request renewed and granted--Terms and reason of Lord Kimberley's offer--Infatuation of responsible government party in Natal--Systematic abuse of colonists in England--Colonial speculators--Grievances against the Imperial Government--Sir Henry Bulwer--Uncertain future of Natal--Its available force--Exterior dangers--The defence question shirked by the "party of progress"--The confederation question--The difficulty of obtaining desirable immigrants--The only real key to the Natal native question--Folly of accepting self-government till it is solved.

Natal has an area of about 18,000 square miles, and its present population is, roughly, 25,000 whites and 400,000 natives of the Zulu race. When, in 1843, it first became a British colony, the number of natives living within its borders was very small, and they were for the most part wanderers, fragmentary remnants of the tribes that Chaka had destroyed. I shall probably be under, rather than over the mark, if I

say, that the Zulu population of the colony has multiplied itself by ten during the last thirty years. Two causes have combined to bring about this extraordinary increase; firstly, wholesale immigration from the surrounding territories; and secondly, the practice of polygamy.

This immigration has been due to a great want of foresight, or want of knowledge, on the part of the Home authorities, who have allowed it to go on without check or hindrance till it has, in conjunction with its twin evil polygamy, produced the state of affairs it is my object to describe. Ever since its first establishment as a colony Natal has been turned into a city of refuge for the native inhabitants of Zululand, the

Transvaal, Swaziland, and elsewhere. If news came to a Zulu chief that his king purposed to eat him up, he at once fled across the Tugela with his wives and followers and settled in Natal. If the Boers or Swazis destroyed a tribe, the remnant found its way to Natal.

That country, indeed, is to the South African native a modern Isles of the Blest. Once across the border line, and, whatever his crime, he is in a position to defy his worst enemy, and can rest secure in the protection of the Home and local Governments, and of the enactments specially passed to protect him and his privileges. The Government allots him land, or if it does not he squats on private land: bringing with him his own peculiar and barbarous customs. In all the world I do not know a race more favoured by circumstances than the Natal Zulus. They live on the produce of the fields that their wives cultivate, or

rather scratch, doing little or no work, and having no occasion to do any. They are very rich, and their taxes are a mere trifle, fifteen shillings per annum for each hut. They bear no share of the curse that comes to all other men as a birthright; they need not labour. Protected by a powerful Government, they do not fear attack from without, or internal disorder. What all men desire, riches and women, are theirs in abundance, and even their children, the objects of so much expense and sore perplexity to civilised parents, are to them a source of wealth. Their needs are few; a straw hut, corn for food, and the bright sun. They are not even troubled with the thought of a future life, but, like the animals, live through their healthy, happy days, and at last, in extreme old age, meet a death which for them has no terrors, because it simply means extinction. When compared to that of civilised races, or even of their own brethren in the interior, their lot is indeed a happy one.

But the stream of immigration, continuous though it has been, would not by itself have sufficed to bring up the native population to its present enormous total, without the assistance of the polygamous customs of the immigrants.

I believe that inquirers have ascertained, that, as a general rule, the practice of polygamy has not the effect of bringing about an abnormal growth of population. However this may be elsewhere, in Natal, owing in great measure to the healthy customs of the Zulu race,[\*] the rate of increase is unprecedented. Many writers and other authorities consider

polygamy as an institution, to be at once wicked and disgusting. As to its morality, it is a point upon which it is difficult to express any opinion, nor, indeed, does the question enter into the scope of what I have to say; but it must be remembered that in the case of the Zulu his whole law and existence is mixed up with the institution, and that it is necessary to him to repair the gaps made in his ranks by war. Violent anti-polygamists in this country always make a strong point of the cruelty it is supposed to involve to the women, and talk about the "violation of their holiest feelings." As a matter of fact, sad as it may appear, the Zulu women are much attached to the custom, nor would they, as a general rule, consent to marry a man who only purposed taking one wife. There are various reasons for this: for instance, the first wife is a person of importance, and takes precedence of all the others, a fact as much appreciated by the Zulu woman as by the London lady. Again, the more wives there are, the more wealth it brings into the family, since in the ordinary course of nature more wives mean more female children, who, when they come to a marriageable age, mean in their turn at least ten cows each (the Government price for a wife). The amount thus obtained is placed to the credit of the estate of the mother of the girl married, and for this reason all Zulu women are extremely anxious to have children, especially female children. Finally, the liking of Zulu women for the custom is bred in them. It has been going on for countless generations, and it is probable that it will go on for so long as the race endures. Nations do not change such habits unless the change is forced on them, with the alternative of extermination.

[\*] As soon as a Zulu woman is discovered to be pregnant, her husband ceases to cohabit with her, nor does he live with her again until the child is weaned, eighteen months, and sometimes two years, after its birth.

Polygamy will never be eradicated by moral persuasion, because, even if a native could be brought to think it wrong, which is in itself impossible, its abolition would affect his interests irredeemably. A Zulu's wives are also his servants; they plough his land and husband his grain, in addition to bearing his children. Had he but one wife most of her time would be taken up with the latter occupation, and then the mealie-planting and gathering would necessarily fall to the lot of the husband, a state of affairs he would never consent to. Again, if monogamy were established, girls would lose their value, and a great source of wealth would be destroyed. It must, however, be understood that Zulu girls are not exactly sold; the cows received by the parents are by a legal fiction supposed to be a gift presented, not a price paid. Should the wife subsequently run away, they are, I believe, returnable.

On these subjects, as is not to be wondered at when so many interests are concerned, the Zulu law is a little intricate. The cleverest counsel in the Temple could not give an opinion on such a case as the following:--

A. has four wives and children by Nos. 1 and 3. On his death his

brother, B., a rich man, takes over his wives and property, and has children by each of the four women. He has also children by other wives. On his death, in extreme old age, how should the property be divided amongst the descendants of the various marriages?

It is clear that if such a case as this is to be dealt with at all it must be under native law, and this is one of the great dangers of polygamy. Once rooted in a state it necessitates a double system of laws, since civilised law is quite unable to cope with the cases daily arising from its practice. It is sometimes argued that the law employed is a matter of indifference, provided that substantial justice is done, according to the ideas of people concerned, and this is doubtless very true if it is accepted as a fact that the Zulu population of Natal is always to remain in its present condition of barbarism. To continue to administer their law is to give it the sanction of the white man's authority, and every day that it is so administered makes it more impossible to do away with it. I say "more impossible" advisedly, because I believe its abrogation is already impossible. There is no satisfactory way out of the difficulty, because it has its roots in, and draws its existence from, the principle of polygamy, which I believe will last while the people last.

Some rely on the Missionary to effect this stupendous change, and turn a polygamous people into monogamists. But it is a well-known fact that the missionaries produce no more permanent effect on the Zulu mind than a child does on the granite rock which he chips at with a chisel. How many

real Christians are there in Zululand and Natal, and of that select and saintly band how many practise monogamy? But very few, and among those few there is a large proportion of bad characters, men who have adopted Christianity as a last resource. I mean no disrespect to the missionaries, many of whom are good men, doing their best under the most unpromising conditions, though some are simply traders and political agitators. But the fact remains the same. Christianity makes no appreciable progress amongst the Zulu natives, whilst, on the other hand, no one having any experience in the country will, if he can avoid it, have a so-called Christian Kafir in his house, because the term is but too frequently synonymous with that of drunkard and thief. I do not wish it to be understood that it is the fact of his Christianity that so degrades the Zulu, because I do not think it has anything to do with it. It is only that the novice, standing on the threshold of civilisation, as a rule finds the vices of the white man more congenial than his virtues.

The Zulus are as difficult to convince of the truths of Christianity as were the Jews, whom they so much resemble in their customs. They have a natural disinclination to believe that which they cannot see, and, being constitutionally very clever and casuistical, are prepared to argue each individual point with an ability very trying to missionaries. It was one of these Zulus, known as the Intelligent Zulu, but in reality no more intelligent than his fellows, whose shrewd remarks first caused doubts to arise in the mind of Bishop Colenso, and through him in those of thousands of others.

Another difficulty in the way of the Missionary is, that he is obliged to insist on the putting away of surplus wives, and thus to place himself out of court at the outset. It is quite conceivable that in the opinion of wild and savage men, it is preferable to let the new teaching alone, rather than to adopt it at the cost of such a radical change in their domestic arrangements. As a case in point I may quote that of Hlubi, the Basutu appointed chief of one of the divisions of Zululand, by Sir G. Wolseley. Hlubi is at heart a Christian, and a good man, and anxious to be baptized. The missionaries, however, refuse to baptize him, because he has two wives. Hlubi therefore remains a heathen, saying, not unnaturally, that he feels it would be impossible for him to put away a woman with whom he has lived for so many years.

Whilst polygamy endures Christianity will advance with but small strides. It seems to me that we are beginning at the wrong end. We must civilise first and Christianise afterwards. As well try to sow corn among rocks and look to gather a full crop, as expect the words of Grace and Divine love to bear fruit in the hearts of a people whose forefathers have for countless generations been men of blood, whose prized traditions are one long story of slaughter, and who, if they are now at peace are, as it were, only gathering strength for a surer spring. First, the soil must be prepared before the seed is sown.

To do this there is but one way. Abolish native customs and laws, especially polygamy, and bring our Zulu subjects within the pale of our



own law. Deprive them of their troops of servants in the shape of wives, and thus force them to betake themselves to honest labour like the rest of mankind.

There is only one objection in the way of the realisation of this scheme, which would, doubtless, bring about, in the course of a generation, a much better state of things, and gather many thousand converts into the fold of the Church; and that is, the opportunity has, so far as Natal is concerned, been missed--the time has gone by when it could have been carried out. To young countries, as to young men, there come sometimes opportunities of controlling their future destinies which, if not seized at the moment, pass away for ever, or only to return after long and troubled years. Natal has had her chance, and it has gone away from her, though through no fault of her own. If, when the colony was first settled, the few natives who then lived there had been forced to conform to the usages of civilised life or to quit its borders; if refugees had been refused admission save on the same terms, it would not occupy the very serious position it does at the present moment.

To understand the situation into which Natal has drifted with reference to its native inhabitants, it is necessary to premise that that country has hitherto had practically no control over its own affairs, more especially as regards native legislation.

In its early days it was a happy, quiet place, a favoured clime, where

the traveller or settler could find good shooting, cheap labour, and cheap living. No enemy threatened its rest, and the natives were respectful and peaceful in their behaviour. But it was in those days that the native difficulty, that Upas tree that now overshadows and poisons the whole land, took root; for slowly, from all parts, all through that quiet time, by ones, by tens, by hundreds, refugees were flowing in, and asking and receiving land to settle on from the Government.

It is not, however, to be supposed that the local officials did not perceive the gathering danger, since it has again and again been pointed out to different Secretaries of State, and again and again been ignored by them, or put off for the consideration of their successors. Hand-to-mouth legislation has always been the characteristic of our rule in South Africa. On one occasion Sir Theophilus, then Mr. Shepstone, went so far as to offer to personally draw off a large portion of the native population, and settle them on some vacant territory bordering on the Cape Colony, but the suggestion was not acceded to, for fear lest the execution of the scheme should excite disturbances amongst the natives of the Cape. Thus year after year has passed away--plan after plan has been put aside,--and nothing has been done.

In the colony a great deal of abuse is poured out on the head of Sir T. Shepstone, to whom the present native situation is unjustly attributed by a certain party of politicians. Sir T. Shepstone was for very many years Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, but until he came to

England, shortly before the termination of his official career, he was personally unknown to the Colonial Office, and had no influence there. It was totally out of his power to control the policy of the Home Government with reference to the Natal natives; he could only take things as he found them, and make the best of such materials as came to his hand. As he could not keep the natives out of the colony or prevent polygamy, he did what he could towards making them loyal and contented subjects. How well he succeeded, and with what consummate tact and knowledge he must have exercised his authority, is shown by the fact that in all these years there has been but one native disturbance, namely that of Langalibalele, and by the further fact that the loyalty of the Natal Zulus stood the strain of the Zulu war. Also, there never has been, and probably never will be, another white man so universally beloved and revered by the natives throughout the length and breadth of South Africa.

But Sir T. Shepstone's influence for good will pass away, as all purely personal influence must, and meanwhile, what is the situation? On the one hand, there is a very slowly increasing, scattered, and mixed population of about 25,000 whites, capable, at the outside, of putting a force of 4000 men in the field. On the other, there is a warlike native population, united by the ties of race and common interests, numbering at the present moment between 400,000 and 500,000, and increasing by leaps and bounds: capable of putting quite 80,000 warriors into the field, and possessing, besides, numerous strongholds called locations. At present these two rival populations live side by side in peace and

amity, though at heart neither loves the other. The two races are so totally distinct that it is quite impossible for them to have much community of feeling; they can never mingle; their ideas are different, their objects are different, and in Natal their very law is different.

Kafirs respect and like individual Englishmen, but I doubt whether they are particularly fond of us as a race, though they much prefer us to any other white men, and are devoted to our rule, so long as it is necessary to them. The average white man, on the other hand, detests the Kafir, and looks on him as a lazy good-for-nothing, who ought to work for him and will not work for him, whilst he is quite incapable of appreciating his many good points. It is an odd trait about Zulus that only gentlemen, in the true sense of the word, can win their regard, or get anything out of them.

It is obvious that, sooner or later, these two races must come into contact, the question being how long the present calm will last. To this question I will venture to suggest an answer,--I believe the right one. It will last until the native gets so cramped for room that he has no place left to settle on, except the white man's lands. The white man will then try to turn him off, whereupon the native will fall back on the primary resource of killing him, and possessing himself of the land by force. This plan, simultaneously carried out on a large scale, would place the colony at the mercy of its native inhabitants.

Nor is the time so very far distant when Englishmen and Zulus will stand face to face over this land question. In the early days of the colony,

locations were established in the mountainous districts, because they were comparatively worthless, and the natives were settled in them by tribes. Of what goes on in these locations very little is known, except that they are crowded, and that the inhabitants are as entirely wedded to their savage customs as their forefathers were before them. As there is no more room in the locations, many thousands of Kafirs have settled upon private lands, sometimes with and sometimes without the leave of the owners. But, for many reasons, this is a state of affairs that cannot go on for ever. In a few years, the private lands will be filled up, as well as the locations, and what then?

Zulus are a people who require a very large quantity of land, since they possess great numbers of cattle which must have grazing room. Also their cultivation being of the most primitive order, and consisting as it does of picking out the very richest patches of land, and cropping them till they are exhausted, all ordinary land being rejected as too much trouble to work, the possession, or the right of usor, of several hundred acres is necessary to the support of a single family. Nor, if we may judge from precedent, and its well-marked characteristics, is it to be supposed that this race will at the pinch suit itself to circumstances, take up less land, and work harder. Zulus would rather fight to the last than discard a cherished and an ancient custom. Savages they are, and savages they will remain, and in the struggle between them and civilisation it is possible that they may be conquered, but I do not believe that they will be converted. The Zulu Kafir is incompatible with civilisation.

It will be seen, from what I have said, that Natal might more properly be called a Black settlement than an English colony. Looking at it from the former point of view, it is a very interesting experiment. For the first time probably since their race came into existence, Zulu natives have got a chance given them of increasing and multiplying without being periodically decimated by the accidents of war, whilst at the same time enjoying the protection of a strong and a just government. It remains to be seen what use they will make of their opportunity. That they will avail themselves of it for the purposes of civilising themselves I do not believe; but it seems to me possible that they will learn from the white man the advantages of combination, and aim at developing themselves into a powerful and united black nation.

It is in the face of this state of things that Lord Kimberley now proposes to grant responsible government to the white inhabitants of Natal, should they be willing to accept it, providing that it is to carry with it the responsibility of ruling the natives, and further, of defending the colony from the attacks of its neighbours, whether white or coloured.

Natal has hitherto been ruled under a hybrid constitution, which, whilst allowing the Legislative Assembly of the colony to pass laws, &c., reserves all real authority to the Crown. There has, however, been for some years past a growing agitation amongst a proportion of its inhabitants, instituted with the object of inducing the Home Government

to concede practical independence to the colony, Her Majesty having on several occasions been petitioned on the subject by the Legislative Council. On the 13th February 1880, Sir G. Wolseley, who was at the time Governor of Natal, wrote what I can only call, a very intemperate despatch to the Secretary of State, commenting on the prayer for responsible government, which he strongly condemned. He also took the opportunity to make a series of somewhat vicious attacks on the colonists in general, whose object in asking for independence was, he implied, to bring the black man in relations of "appropriate servitude to his white superior." It would appear, however, from words used by him towards the end of his despatch, that the real reason of his violence was, that he feared, that one of the first acts of the Natal Parliament would be to put an end to his settlement in Zululand, which was and is the laughing-stock of the colony. He was probably right in this supposition. The various charges he brings against the colonists are admirably and conclusively refuted in a minute adopted by the Legislative Council of Natal, dated 20th December 1880.

In a despatch, dated 15th March 1881, Lord Kimberley refuses to accede to the request for the grant of Responsible Government.

On the 28th of December, the Legislative Council again petitioned the Crown on the subject, and forward to Lord Kimberley a report of a Select committee appointed to consider the matter, in which the following words occur:--

"Your committee hold that while the colony may well be held responsible for its defence from such aggression as may be caused by the acts or policy of a responsible government, it cannot justly be saddled with the obligation to meet acts of aggression from bordering territories that have arisen out of the circumstances or measures over which such government have had no control; although, as a matter of fact, the brunt of defence (must be borne?) in the first instance by the colonists. The Council, therefore, neither exercises, nor desires to exercise, any control over territories adjacent to or bordering on the colony; for the preservation of its own internal peace and order the colony is prepared to provide. The duty of protecting the colony from external foes, whether by sea or land, devolves on the Empire as a whole, otherwise to be a section of that Empire constitutes no real privilege."

To this report, somewhat to the surprise of the Natalians, Lord Kimberley returned, in a despatch addressed to Sir H. Bulwer, on the occasion of his departure to take up the Governorship of Natal, and dated 2d February 1882, a most favourable reply. In fact, he is so obliging as to far exceed the wishes of the Natalians, as expressed in the passage just quoted, and to tell them that Her Majesty's Government is not only ready to give them responsible government, but that it will expect them to defend their own frontiers, independently of any assistance from the Imperial Government. He further informs them that the Imperial troops will be withdrawn, and that the only responsibility Her Majesty's Government will retain with reference to the colony will be that of its defence against aggression by foreign powers.



This sudden change of face on the part of the Imperial Government, which had up till now flatly refused to grant any measure of self-government to Natal, may at first seem rather odd, but on examination it will be found to be quite in accordance with the recently developed South African policy of Mr. Gladstone's Government. There is little doubt that it is an article of faith among the Liberal party that the less the mother-country has to do with her colonies, and more especially her South African colonies, the better. A grand step was made in the direction of the abandonment of our South African Empire when we surrendered the Transvaal to the Boers, and it is clear that if our troops can be withdrawn from Natal and all responsibility for the safety of that colony put an end to, the triumph of self-effacement will be still more complete. But there is another and more immediate reason for Lord Kimberley's generous offer. He knows, no one better, that the policy pursued in South Africa, both as regards the Transvaal and Zululand, must produce its legitimate fruit--bloodshed--before very long. He, or rather his Government, is consequently anxious to cut the connection before anything of the sort occurs, when they will be able to attribute the trouble, whatever it is, to the ill-advised action of the Colonial Legislature.

What is still more strange, however, is that the colonists, having regard to the position they occupy with reference to the Kafirs that surround them, to whom they bear the same relative proportion that the oases do in the desert, or the islands of an archipelago to the ocean

that washes their shores, should wish for such a dangerous boon as that of self-government, if indeed they really do wish it. When I lived in Natal, I often heard the subject discussed, and watched the Legislative Council pass its periodical resolutions about it, but I confess I always looked on the matter as being more or less of a farce. There exists, however, in Natal a knot of politicians who are doubtless desirous of the change, partly because they think that it would be really beneficial, and partly because they are possessed by a laudable ambition to fill the high positions of Prime Minister, Treasurer, &c., in the future Parliament. But these gentlemen for the most part live in towns, where they are comparatively safe should a native rising occur. I have not noticed the same enthusiasm for responsible government among those Natalians who live up country in the neighbourhood of the locations.

Still there does exist a considerable party who are in favour of the change, a party that has recently sprung into existence. Many things have occurred within the last few years to irritate and even exasperate people in Natal with the Imperial Government, and generally with the treatment that they have received at our hands. For instance, colonists are proverbially sensitive, and it is therefore rather hard that every newspaper correspondent or itinerant bookmaker who comes to their shores, should at once proceed to print endless letters and books abusing them without mercy. The fact of the matter is that these gentlemen come, and put up at the hotels and pot-shops, where they meet all the loafers and bad characters in the country, whom they take to be specimens of the best class of colonists, whom they describe accordingly

as the "riddlings of society." Into the quiet, respectable, and happy homes that really give the tone to the colony they do not enter.

It is also a favourite accusation to bring against the people of Natal that they make the South African wars in order to make money out of them. For instance, in a leading article of one of the principal English journals, it was stated not long ago, that the murmurs of the colonists at being forced to eat the bread of humiliation in the Transvaal matter, arose from no patriotic feeling, but from sorrow at the early termination of a war out of which they hoped to suck no small advantage. This statement is quite untrue.

No doubt a great deal of money has been made out of the wars by a few colonial speculators, some of it, maybe, dishonestly; but this is not an unusual occurrence in a foreign war. Was no money made dishonestly by English speculators and contractors in the Crimean War? Cannot Manchester boast manufacturers ready to supply our enemies,--for cash payments,--with guns to shoot us with, or any other material of war?

It is not to be supposed that because a few speculators made fortunes out of the Commissariat that the whole colony participated in the spoils of the various wars. On the contrary, the majority of its inhabitants have suffered very largely. Not only have they run considerable personal risk, but since, and owing to, the Zulu and Boer wars the cost of living has almost, if not quite doubled, which, needless to say, has not been the case with their incomes. It is therefore particularly cruel that

Natal should be gibbeted as the abode of scoundrels of the worst sort, men prepared to bring about bloodshed in order to profit by it. Sir Garnet Wolseley, however, found in this report of colonial dishonesty a convenient point of vantage from which to attack the colonists generally, and in his despatch about responsible government we may be sure he did not spare them. The Legislative Council thus comments on his remarks: "To colonists a war means the spreading among them of distress, alarm, and confusion, peril to life and property in outlying districts, the arrest of progress, and general disorganisation. . . . The Council regard with pain and indignation the uncalled-for and cruel stigma thus cast upon the colonists by Sir Garnet Wolseley."

At first sight these accusations may not appear to have much to do with the question of whether or no the colonists should accept responsible government, but in reality they have, inasmuch as they create a feeling of soreness that inclines the Natalians to get rid of Imperial interference and the attendant criticism at any price.

More substantial grievances against the English Government are the present condition of the native problem, which the colonists justly attribute to Imperial mismanagement, and that triumph of genius, Sir Garnet Wolseley's settlement in Zululand. They see these evils, which they know were preventable, growing more formidable day by day, and they imagine, or some of them do, that if they had free institutions it would still be in their power to stop that growth.

The whole question has now been referred to the colony, which is to elect a fresh Legislative Assembly on the issue of responsible government. The struggle between "the party of progress," i.e., the responsible government section, and the reactionists, or those who are prepared to dispense with "freedom," provided they can be sure of safety, is being carried on keenly, and at present it is doubtful which side will have a majority. I do not, however, believe that the majority of any Council returned will consent to accept Lord Kimberley's proposal as it stands; to walk into a parlour in which the spider is so very obvious, and to deliberately undertake the guardianship of all the Imperial interests in South-Eastern Africa. If they do, they will, in my opinion, deserve all they will get.[\*]

[\*] Since this chapter was written the Natal constituencies have, as I thought probable, declared against the acceptance of Lord Kimberley's offer in its present form, by returning a majority of anti-responsible Government men. It is, however, probable that the new Legislative Council will try to re-open negotiations on a different, or, at any rate, a modified basis.

The Natalians are fortunate at the present crisis in having, by dint of vigorous agitation against the appointment of Mr. Sendall, a gentleman selected by Lord Kimberley to govern them, obtained the reappointment of their former Governor, Sir Henry Bulwer. Sir Henry, during his first tenure of office, lost credit with the South African colonists

on account of his lukewarmness with reference to the Zulu war, but the course of events has gone far towards justifying his views. He is one of the most hard-working and careful Governors that Natal has ever had, and, perhaps, the most judicious. Of a temperate and a cautious mind, he may be more safely trusted to pilot a country so surrounded with difficulties and dangers as Natal is, than most men, and it is to be hoped that the application to the questions of the day, of the strong common sense that he possesses in such an eminent degree, may have a cooling effect on the hot heads and excited imaginations of the "party of progress."

In considering the pros and cons of the responsible government question, it must be steadily kept in sight that Natal is not likely to be a country with a peaceful future. To begin with, she has her native inhabitants to deal with. To-day they number, say 450,000, fifteen or twenty years hence they will number a million, or perhaps more. These men are no longer the docile overgrown children they were twenty years ago. The lessons of our performances in the Zulu and Boer wars, more especially the latter, have not been lost upon them, and they are beginning to think that the white man, instead of being the unconquerable demigod they thought him, is somewhat of a humbug. Pharaoh, we know, grew afraid of the Israelites; Natal, with a much weaker power at command than that of Pharaoh, has got to cope with a still more dangerous element, and one that cannot be induced to depart into the wilderness.

And after all what does the power of Natal amount to? Let us be liberal, and say six thousand men, it is the outside. In the event of a native rising, or any other serious war, I believe that of this number, at least two thousand would make themselves scarce. There exists in all colonies a floating element of individuals who have drifted there for the purpose of making money, but who have no real affection for the (temporary) country of their adoption. Their capital is, as a rule, small and easily realised, and the very last thing that they would think of doing, would be to engage in a deadly life or death struggle, on behalf of a land that they only look on as a milch cow, out of which their object is to draw as much as possible. On the contrary, they would promptly seek another cow, leaving the old one to the tender mercies of the butcher.

Their defection would leave some 4000 men to cope with the difficulty, whatever it was, of which number at least 1000 would be ineffective from age and various other causes, whilst of the remainder, quite 1000 would be obliged to remain where they were to protect women and children in outlying districts. This would leave a total effective force of 2000 men, or, deducting 500 for garrison purposes, of 1500 ready to take the field. But it would take some time to collect, arm, and equip even this number, and in the meanwhile, in the case of a sudden and preconcerted native rising, half the inhabitants of the colony would be murdered in detail.

But Natalians have got other dangers to fear besides those arising from

the presence of this vast mass of barbarism in their midst. After a period of anarchy a new king may possess himself of the throne of Zululand, and it is even possible that he might, under circumstances that will arise hereafter, lead his armies into Natal, and create a difficulty with which the 1500 available white men would find it difficult to cope. Or the Boers of the Orange Free State and Transvaal may get tired of paying customs dues at Durban, and march 5000 men down to take possession of the port! Perhaps Natal might provide herself with an effective force by enrolling an army of 10,000 or 20,000 Kafirs, but it seems to me that the proceeding would be both uncertain and expensive, and, should the army take it into its head to mutiny, very dangerous to boot.

It is a noticeable fact that those who so ardently advocate the acceptance of Lord Kimberley's offer, in all their speeches, addresses, and articles, almost entirely shirk this question of defence, which is, after all, the root of the matter. I have formed my estimate of the number of men forthcoming in time of danger, on the supposition that a burgher law was in force in Natal, that is, that every man remaining in the country should be obliged to take a part in its defence. But they do not even hint at a burgher law--in fact, they repudiate the idea, because they know that it would not be tolerated. The universal service system is not the Natalian's idea of happiness. They simply avoid the question, calling it the "defence bugbear," and assume that it will all be arranged in some unforeseen way.



The only suggestion that I have yet seen as regards the arrangements for the future defence of the colony should it become independent, is a somewhat ominous one, namely:--that Natal should enter into a close alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. But, as the advocates of "freedom" would soon find, the Orange Free State (for even if willing to help them, the Transvaal will for some years have enough to do with its own affairs) will not come forward for nothing. There would first have to be a few business formalities with reference to the customs dues collected in Durban, on goods passing through to the interior, which yield the bulk of the Natal revenue: and possibly, some concessions to Boer public opinion as regards the English mode of dealing with the Natal natives. I incline to the opinion that in relying on the assistance of the Boers in time of trouble the inhabitants of Natal would be leaning on a broken reed. They are more likely to find them in arms against them than fighting on their side.

The party of progress also talks much about the prospects of confederation with the Cape, if once they get responsible government. Most people, however, will think that the fact of their being independent, and therefore responsible for their own defence, will hardly prove an inducement to the Cape to offer to share those responsibilities. The only confederation possible to Natal as a self-governing community will be a Boer confederation, to which it may be admitted--on certain terms. Another cry is that the moment

responsible government is established immigrants will flow into the country, and thus restore the balance of races. I take the liberty to doubt the truth of this supposition. The intending emigrant from Europe does not, it is true, understand the ins and outs of the Natal native question, but he does now that it is a place where there are wars and rumours of wars, and where he might possibly be killed, and the result is that he wisely goes to some other colony, that has equal advantages to offer and no Kafirs. To suppose that the emigrant would go to Natal when he came to understand that it was an independent settlement of a few white men, living in the midst of a mass of warlike Kafirs, when Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, are all holding out their arms to him, is to suppose him a bigger fool than he is. At the best of times Natal is not likely to attract many desirable emigrants: under a responsible government I do not believe that it will attract any.

It seems to me, that there is only one condition of affairs under which it would be at all possible for the Natalians to assume the responsibilities of self-government with any safety, and that is when the great bulk of the native population has been removed back to whence it came--Zululand. Causes of a diametrically opposite nature to those that have been at work among the natives of Natal, have been in operation amongst their brethren in Zululand. In Natal, peace, polygamy, plenty and immigration have bred up an enormous native population. In Zululand, war, private slaughter by the king's order, and the severe restrictions put upon marriage, have kept down the increase of the race;

also an enormous number of individuals have fled from the one country into the other. I do not suppose that the population of Zululand amounts, at the present moment, to much more than half that of Natal.

In this state of affairs lies the only real key to the Natal native difficulty. Let Zululand be converted into a black colony under English control, and its present inhabitants be established in suitable locations; then let all the natives of Natal, with the exception of those who choose to become monogamists and be subject to civilised law, be moved into Zululand, and also established in locations. There would be plenty of room for them all. Of course there would be difficulties in the way of the realisation of this scheme, but I do not think that they would prove insuperable. It is probable, however, that it would require a show of force before the Natal natives would consent to budge. Indeed, it is absurd to suppose, that anything would induce them to leave peaceful Natal, and plunge into the seething cauldron of bloodshed, extortion, and political plots that we have cooked up in Zululand under the name of a settlement. Proper provisions must first be made for the government of the country, and security to life and property made certain. Till this is done, no natives in their senses will return to Zululand.

Till this is done, too, or till some other plan is discovered by means of which the native difficulty can be effectively dealt with, the Natalians will indeed be foolish if they discard the protection of England, and accept the fatal boon of self-government. If they do, their

future career may be brilliant; but I believe that it will be brief.

It is no answer to urge that at present the natives seem quite quiet, and that there is no indication of disturbance.

History tells us that before the destruction of doomed Pompeii, Vesuvius was very still; only day by day the dark cloud hanging over the mountain's summit grew denser and blacker. We know what happened to Pompeii.

I do not wish to suggest anything unpleasant, far from it; but sometimes, I cannot help thinking, that it is perhaps a matter worth the consideration of the Natalians, whether it might not be as well, instead of talking about responsible government: to improve upon the example of the inhabitants of Pompeii, and take to their ships before the volcano begins to work.

It seems to me that there is an ugly cloud gathering on the political horizon in Natal.

THE TRANSVAAL