CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSVAAL UNDER BRITISH RULE

Reception of the annexation--Major Clarke and the Volunteers--Effect of the annexation on credit and commerce--Hoisting of the Union Jack--Ratification of the annexation by Parliament--Messrs. Kruger and Jorissen's mission to England--Agitation against the annexation in the Cape Colony--Sir T. Shepstone's tour--Causes of the growth of discontent among the Boers--Return of Messrs. Jorissen and Kruger--The Government dispenses with their services--Despatch of a second deputation to England--Outbreak of war with Secocoeni--Major Clarke, R.A.--The Gunn of Gunn plot--Mission of Captain Paterson and Mr. Sergeaunt to Matabeleland--Its melancholy termination--The Isandhlwana disaster--Departure of Sir T. Shepstone for England--Another Boer meeting--The Pretoria Horse--Advance of the Boers on Pretoria--Arrival of Sir B. Frere at Pretoria and dispersion of the Boers--Arrival of Sir Garnet Wolseley--His proclamation--The Secocoeni expedition--Proceedings of the Boers--Mr. Pretorius--Mr. Gladstone's Mid-Lothian speeches, their effect--Sir G. Wolseley's speech at Pretoria, its good results--Influx of Englishmen and cessation of agitation--Financial position of the country after three years of British rule--Letter of the Boer leaders to Mr. Courtney.

The news of the Annexation was received all over the country with a sigh of relief, and in many parts of it with great rejoicings. At the Gold

Fields, for instance, special thanksgiving services were held, and "God save the Queen" was sung in church. Nowhere was there the slightest disturbance, but, on the contrary, addresses of congratulation and thanks literally poured in by every mail, many of them signed by Boers who have since been conspicuous for their bitter opposition to English rule. At first, there was some doubt as to what would be the course taken under the circumstances by the volunteers enlisted by the late Republic. Major Clarke, R.A., was sent to convey the news, and to take command of them, unaccompanied save by his Kafir servant. On arrival at the principal fort, he at once ordered the Republican flag to be hauled down and the Union Jack run up, and his orders were promptly obeyed. A few days afterwards some members of the force thought better of it, and having made up their minds to kill him, came to the tent where he was sitting to carry out their purpose. On learning their kind intentions, Major Clarke fixed his eye-glass in his eye, and, after steadily glaring at them through it for some time, said, "You are all drunk, go back to your tents." The volunteers, quite overcome by his coolness and the fixity of his gaze, at once slipped off, and there was no further trouble. About three weeks after the Annexation, the 1-13th Regiment arrived at Pretoria, having been very well received all along the road by the Boers, who came from miles round to hear the band play. Its entry into Pretoria was quite a sight; the whole population turned out to meet it; indeed the feeling of rejoicing and relief was so profound that when the band began to play "God save the Queen" some of the women burst into tears.

Meanwhile the effect of the Annexation on the country was perfectly magical. Credit and commerce were at once restored; the railway bonds that were down to nothing in Holland rose with one bound to par, and the value of landed property nearly doubled. Indeed it would have been possible for any one, knowing what was going to happen, to have realised large sums of money by buying land in the beginning of 1877, and selling it shortly after the Annexation.

On the 24th May, being Her Majesty's birthday, all the native chiefs who were anywhere within reach, were summoned to attend the first formal hoisting of the English flag. The day was a general festival, and the ceremony was attended by a large number of Boers and natives in addition to all the English. At mid-day, amidst the cheers of the crowd, the salute of artillery, and the strains of "God save the Queen," the Union Jack was run up a lofty flagstaff, and the Transvaal was formally announced to be British soil. The flag was hoisted by Colonel Brooke, R.E., and the present writer. Speaking for myself, I may say that it was one of the proudest moments of my life. Could I have foreseen that I should live to see that same flag, then hoisted with so much joyous ceremony, within a few years shamefully and dishonourably hauled down and buried,[*] I think it would have been the most miserable.

[*] The English flag was during the signing of the Convention at Pretoria formally buried by a large crowd of Englishmen and loyal natives.

The Annexation was as well received in England as it was in the Transvaal. Lord Carnarvon wrote to Sir T. Shepstone to convey "the Queen's entire approval of your conduct since you received Her Majesty's commission, with a renewal of my own thanks on behalf of the Government for the admirable prudence and discretion with which you have discharged a great and unwonted responsibility." It was also accepted by Parliament with very few dissentient voices, since it was not till afterwards, when the subject became useful as an electioneering howl, that the Liberal party, headed by our "powerful popular minister," discovered the deep iniquity that had been perpetrated in South Africa. So satisfied were the Transvaal Boers with the change that Messrs. Kruger, Jorissen, and Bok, who formed the deputation to proceed to England and present President Burgers' formal protest against the Annexation, found great difficulty in raising one-half of the necessary expenses--something under one thousand pounds--towards the cost of the undertaking. The thirst for independence cannot have been very great when all the wealthy burghers in the Transvaal put together would not subscribe a thousand pounds towards retaining it. Indeed, at this time the members of the deputation themselves seem to have looked upon their undertaking as being both doubtful and undesirable, since they informed Sir T. Shepstone that they were going to Europe to discharge an obligation which had been imposed upon them, and if the mission failed, they would have done their duty. Mr. Kruger said that if they did fail, he would be found to be as faithful a subject under the new form of government as he had been under the old; and Dr. Jorissen admitted with equal frankness that "the change was inevitable, and expressed his belief that the

cancellation of it would be calamitous."

Whilst the Annexation was thus well received in the country immediately interested, a lively agitation was commenced in the Western Province of the Cape Colony, a thousand miles away, with a view of inducing the Home Government to repudiate Sir T. Shepstone's act. The reason of this movement was that the Cape Dutch party, caring little or nothing for the real interests of the Transvaal, did care a great deal about their scheme to turn all the white communities of South Africa into a great Dutch Republic, to which they thought the Annexation would be a deathblow. As I have said elsewhere, it must be borne in mind that the strings of the anti-annexation agitation have all along been pulled in the Western Province, whilst the Transvaal Boers have played the parts of puppets. The instruments used by the leaders of the movement in the Cape were, for the most part, the discontented and unprincipled Hollander element, a newspaper of an extremely abusive nature called the "Volkstem," and another in Natal known as the "Natal Witness," lately edited by the notorious Aylward, which has an almost equally unenviable reputation.

On the arrival of Messrs. Jorissen and Kruger in England, they were received with great civility by Lord Carnarvon, who was, however, careful to explain to them that the Annexation was irrevocable. In this decision they cheerfully acquiesced, assuring his lordship of their determination to do all they could to induce the Boers to accept the new state of things, and expressing their desire to be allowed to serve

under the new Government.

Whilst these gentlemen were thus satisfactorily arranging matters with Lord Carnarvon, Sir T. Shepstone was making a tour round the country which resembled a triumphal progress more than anything else. He was everywhere greeted with enthusiasm by all classes of the community, Boers, English, and natives, and numerous addresses were presented to him couched in the warmest language, not only by Englishmen but also by Boers.

It is very difficult to reconcile the enthusiasm of a great number of the inhabitants of the Transvaal for English rule, and the quite acquiescence of the remainder, at this time, with the decidedly antagonistic attitude assumed later on. It appears to me, however, that there are several reasons that go far towards accounting for it. The Transvaal, when we annexed it, was in the position of a man with a knife at his throat, who is suddenly rescued by some one stronger than he, on certain conditions which at the time he gladly accepts, but afterwards, when the danger is passed, wishes to repudiate. In the same way the inhabitants of the South African Republic, were in the time of need very thankful for our aid, but after a while, when the recollection of their difficulties had grown faint, when their debts had been paid and their enemies defeated, they began to think that they would like to get rid of us again, and start fresh on their own account, with a clean sheet. What fostered agitation more than anything else, however, was the perfect impunity in which it was allowed to be carried on. Had only a little

firmness and decision been shown in the first instance there would have been no further trouble. We might have been obliged to confiscate half-a-dozen farms, and perhaps imprison as many free burghers for a few months, and there it would have ended. Neither Boers or natives understand our namby-pamby way of playing at government; they put it down to fear. What they want, and what they expect, is to be governed with a just but a firm hand. Thus when the Boers found that they could agitate with impunity, they naturally enough continued to agitate. Anybody who knows them will understand that it was very pleasant to them to find themselves in possession of that delightful thing, a grievance, and, instead of stopping quietly at home on their farms, to feel obliged to proceed, full of importance and long words, to a distant meeting, there to spout and listen to the spouting of others. It is so much easier to talk politics than to sow mealies. Some attribute the discontent among the Boers to the postponement of the carrying out of the annexation proclamation promises with reference to the free institutions to be granted to the country, but in my opinion it had little or nothing to do with it. The Boers never understood the question of responsible government, and never wanted that institution; what they did want was to be free of all English control, and this they said twenty times in the most outspoken language. I think there is little doubt the causes I have indicated are the real sources of the agitation, though there must be added to them their detestation of our mode of dealing with natives, and of being forced to pay taxes regularly, and also the ceaseless agitation of the Cape wire-pullers, through their agents the Hollanders, and their organs in the press.

On the return of Messrs. Kruger and Jorissen to the Transvaal, the latter gentleman resumed his duties as Attorney-General, on which occasion, if I remember aright, I myself had the honour of administering to him the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty, that he afterwards kept so well. The former reported the proceedings of the deputation to a Boer meeting, when he took a very different tone to that in which he addressed Lord Carnarvon, announcing that if there existed a majority of the people in favour of independence, he still was Vice-President of the country.

Both these gentlemen remained for some time in the pay of the British Government, Mr. Jorissen as Attorney-General, and Mr. Kruger as member of the Executive Council. The Government, however, at length found it desirable to dispense with their services, though on different grounds. Mr. Jorissen had, like several other members of the Republican Government, been a clergyman, and was quite unfit to hold the post of Attorney-General in an important colony like the Transvaal, where legal questions were constantly arising requiring all the attention of a trained mind; and after he had on several occasions been publicly admonished from the bench, the Government retired him on liberal terms. Needless to say, his opposition to English rule then became very bitter. Mr. Kruger's appointment expired by law in November 1877, and the Government did not think it advisable to re-employ him. The terms of his letter of dismissal can be found on page 135 of Blue Book (c. 144), and involving as they do a serious charge of misrepresentation in

money matters, are not very creditable to him. After this event he also pursued the cause of independence with increased vigour.

During the last months of 1877 and the first part of 1878 agitation against British rule went on unchecked, and at last grew to alarming proportions, so much so that Sir T. Shepstone, on his return from the Zulu border in March 1878, where he had been for some months discussing the vexed and dangerous question of the boundary line with the Zulus, found it necessary to issue a stringent proclamation warning the agitators that their proceedings and meetings were illegal, and would be punished according to law. This document which was at the time vulgarly known as the "Hold-your-jaw" proclamation, not being followed by action, produced but little effect.

On the 4th April 1878 another Boer meeting was convened, at which it was decided to send a second deputation to England, to consist this time of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, with Mr. Bok as secretary. This deputation proved as abortive as the first, Sir M. Hicks Beach assuring it, in a letter dated 6th August 1878, that it is "impossible, for many reasons, ... that the Queen's sovereignty should now be withdrawn."

Whilst the Government was thus hampered by internal disaffection, it had also many other difficulties on its hands. First, there was the Zulu boundary question, which was constantly developing new dangers to the country. Indeed, it was impossible to say what might happen in that direction from one week to another. Nor were its relations with

Secocoeni satisfactory. It will be remembered that just before the Annexation this chief had expressed his earnest wish to become a British subject, and even paid over part of the fine demanded from him by the Boer Government to the Civil Commissioner, Major Clarke. In March 1878, however, his conduct towards the Government underwent a sudden change, and he practically declared war. It afterwards appeared, from Secocoeni's own statement, that he was instigated to this step by a Boer, Abel Erasmus by name--the same man who was concerned in the atrocities in the first Secocoeni war--who constantly encouraged him to continue the struggle. I do not propose to minutely follow the course of this long war, which, commencing in the beginning of 1878, did not come to an end till after the Zulu war: when Sir Garnet Wolseley attacked Secocoeni's stronghold with a large force of troops, volunteers, and Swazi allies, and took it with great slaughter. The losses on our side were not very heavy, so far as white men were concerned, but the Swazies are reported to have lost 400 killed and 500 wounded.

The struggle was, during the long period preceding the final attack, carried on with great courage and ability by Major Clarke, R.A., C.M.G., whose force, at the best of times, only consisted of 200 volunteers and 100 Zulus. With this small body of men he contrived, however, to keep Secocoeni in check, and to take some important strongholds. It was marked also by some striking acts of individual bravery, of which one, performed by Major Clarke himself, whose reputation for cool courage and presence of mind in danger is unsurpassed in South Africa, is worthy of notice; and which, had public attention been more concentrated on the

Secocoeni war, would doubtless have won him the Victoria Cross. On one occasion, on visiting one of the outlying forts, he found that a party of hostile natives, who were coming down to the fort on the previous day with a flag of truce, had been accidentally fired upon, and had at once retreated. As his system in native warfare was always to try and inspire his enemy with perfect faith in the honour of Englishmen, and their contempt of all tricks and treachery even towards a foe, he was very angry at this occurrence, and at once, unarmed and unattended save by his native servant, rode up into the mountains to the kraal from which the white flag party had come on the previous day, and apologised to the Chief for what had happened. When I consider how very anxious Secocoeni's natives were to kill or capture Clarke, whom they held in great dread, and how terrible the end of so great a captain would in all probability have been had he taken alive by these masters of refined torture, I confess that I think this act of gentlemanly courage is one of the most astonishing things I ever heard of. When he rode up those hills he must have known that he was probably going to meet his death at the hands of justly incensed savages. When Secocoeni heard of what Major Clarke had done he was so pleased that he shortly afterwards released a volunteer whom he had taken prisoner, and who would otherwise, in all probability, have been tortured to death. I must add that Major Clarke himself never reported to or alluded to this incident, but an account of it can be found in a despatch written by Sir O. Lanyon to the Secretary of State, dated 2d February 1880.

Concurrently with, though entirely distinct from, the political

agitation that was being carried on among the Boers having for object the restoration of independence, a private agitation was set on foot by a few disaffected persons against Sir T. Shepstone, with the view of obtaining his removal from office in favour of a certain Colonel Weatherley. The details of this impudent plot are so interesting, and the plot itself so typical of the state of affairs with which Sir T. Shepstone had to deal, that I will give a short account of it.

After the Annexation had taken place, there were naturally enough a good many individuals who found themselves disappointed in the results so far as they personally were concerned; I mean that they did not get so much out of it as they expected. Among these was a gentleman called Colonel Weatherley, who had come to the Transvaal as manager of a gold-mining company, but getting tired of that had taken a prominent part in the Annexation, and who, being subsequently disappointed about an appointment, became a bitter enemy of the Administrator. I may say at once that Colonel Weatherley seems to me to have been throughout the dupe of the other conspirators.

The next personage was a good-looking desperado, who called himself Captain Gunn of Gunn, and who was locally somewhat irreverently known as the very Gunn of very Gunn. This gentleman, whose former career had been of a most remarkable order, was, on the annexation of the country, found in the public prison charged with having committed various offences, but on Colonel Weatherley's interesting himself strongly on his behalf, he

was eventually released without trial. On his release, he requested the Administrator to publish a Government notice declaring him innocent of the charges brought against him. This Sir T. Shepstone declined to do, and so, to use his own words, in a despatch to the High Commissioner on the subject, Captain Gunn of Gunn at once became "what in this country is called a patriot."

The third person concerned was a lawyer, who had got into trouble on the Diamond Fields, and who felt himself injured because the rules of the High Court did not allow him to practise as an advocate. The quartet was made up by Mr. Celliers, the editor of the patriotic organ, the "Volkstem," who, since he had lost the Government printing contract, found that no language could be too strong to apply to the personnel of the Government, more especially its head. Of course, there was a lady in it; what plot would be complete without? She was Mrs. Weatherley, now, I believe, Mrs. Gunn of Gunn. These gentlemen began operations by drawing up a long petition to Sir Bartle Frere as High Commissioner, setting forth a string of supposed grievances, and winding up with a request that the Administrator might be "promoted to some other sphere of political usefulness." This memorial was forwarded by the "committee," as they called themselves, to various parts of the country for signature, but without the slightest success, the fact of the matter being that it was not the Annexor but the Annexation that the Boers objected to.

At this stage in the proceedings Colonel Weatherley went to try and

forward the good cause with Sir Bartle Frere at the Cape. His letters to Mrs. Weatherley from thence, afterwards put into Court in the celebrated divorce case, contained many interesting accounts of his attempts in that direction. I do not think, however, that he was cognisant of what was being concocted by his allies in Pretoria, but being a very vain, weak man, was easily deceived by them. With all his faults he was a gentleman. As soon as he was gone a second petition was drawn up by the "committee," showing "the advisability of immediately suspending our present Administrator, and temporarily appointing and recommending for Her Majesty's royal and favourable consideration an English gentleman of high integrity and honour, in whom the country at large has respect and confidence."

The English gentleman of high integrity and honour of course proves to be Colonel Weatherley, whose appointment is, further on, "respectfully but earnestly requested," since he had "thoroughly gained the affections, confidence, and respect of Boers, English, and other Europeans in this country." But whilst it is comparatively easy to write petitions, there is sometimes a difficulty in getting people to sign them, as proved to be the case with reference to the documents under consideration. When the "committee" and the employes in the office of the "Volkstem" had affixed their valuable signatures it was found to be impossible to induce anybody else to follow their example. Now, a petition with some half dozen signatures attached would not, it was obvious, carry much weight with the Imperial Government, and no more could be obtained.

But really great minds rise superior to such difficulties, and so did the "committee," or some of them, or one of them. If they could not get genuine signatures to their petitions, they could at any rate manufacture them. This great idea once hit out, so vigorously was it prosecuted that they, or some of them, or one of them, produced in a very little while no less than 3883 signatures, of which sixteen were proved to be genuine, five were doubtful, and all the rest fictitious. But the gentleman, whoever he was, who was the working partner in the scheme--and I may state, by way of parenthesis, that when Gunn of Gunn was subsequently arrested, petitions in process of signature were found under the mattress of his bed--calculated without his host. He either did not know, or had forgotten, that on receipt of such documents by a superior officer, they are at once sent to the officer accused to report upon. This course was followed in the present case, and the petitions were discovered to be gross impostures. The ingenuity exercised by their author or authors was really very remarkable, for it must be remembered that not one of the signatures was forged; they were all invented, and had, of course, to be written in a great variety of hands. The plan generally pursued was to put down the names of people living in the country, with slight variations. Thus "De Villiers" became "De Williers," and "Van Zyl" "Van Zul." I remember that my own name appeared on one of the petitions with some slight alteration. Some of the names were evidently meant to be facetious. Thus there was a "Jan Verneuker," which means "John the Cheat."

Of the persons directly or indirectly concerned in this rascally plot, the unfortunate Colonel Weatherly subsequently apologised to Sir T. Shepstone for his share in the agitation, and shortly afterwards died fighting bravely on Kambula. Captain Gunn of Gunn and Mrs. Weatherley, after having given rise to the most remarkable divorce case I ever heard,--it took fourteen days to try--were, on the death of Colonel Weatherley, united in the bonds of holy matrimony, and are, I believe, still in Pretoria. The lawyer vanished I know not where, whilst Mr. Celliers still continues to edit that admirably conducted journal the "Volkstem;" nor, if I may judge from the report of a speech made by him recently at a Boer festival, which, by the way, was graced by the presence of our representative, Mr. Hudson, the British Resident: has his right hand forgotten its cunning, or rather his tongue lost the use of those peculiar and recherche epithets that used to adorn the columns of the "Volkstem." I see that he, on this occasion, denounced the English element as being "poisonous and dangerous" to a State, and stated, amidst loud cheers, that "he despised" it. Mr. Cellier's lines have fallen in pleasant places; in any other country he would long ago have fallen a victim to the stern laws of libel. I recommend him to the notice of enterprising Irish newspapers. Such is the freshness and vigour of his style that I am confident he would make the fortune of any Hibernian journal.

Some little time after the Gunn of Gunn frauds a very sad incident happened in connection with the Government of the Transvaal. Shortly after the Annexation, the Home Government sent out Mr. Sergeaunt,

C.M.G., one of the Crown Agents for the Colonies, to report on the financial condition of the country. He was accompanied, in an unofficial capacity, amongst other gentlemen, by Captain Patterson and his son, Mr. J Sergeaunt; and when he returned to England, these two gentlemen remained behind to go on a shooting expedition. About this time Sir Bartle Frere was anxious to send a friendly mission to Lo Bengula, king of the Matabele, a branch of the Zulu tribe, living up towards the Zambesi. This chief had been making himself unpleasant by causing traders to be robbed, and it was thought desirable to establish friendly relations with him, so it was suggested to Captain Patterson and Mr. Sergeaunt that they should combine business with pleasure, and go on a mission to Lo Bengula, an offer which they accepted, and shortly afterwards started for Matabeleland with an interpreter and a few servants. They reached their destination in safety; and having concluded their business with the king, started on a visit to the Zambesi Falls on foot, leaving the interpreter with the wagon. The falls were about twelve days' walk from the king's kraal, and they were accompanied thither by young Mr. Thomas, the son of the local missionary, two Kafir servants, and twenty native bearers supplied by Lo Bengula. The next thing that was heard of them was that they had all died through drinking poisoned water, full details of the manner of their deaths being sent down by Lo Bengula.

In the first shock and confusion of such news it was not very closely examined, at any rate by the friends of the dead men, but, on reflection, there were several things about it that appeared strange.

For instance, it was well known that Captain Patterson had a habit, for which indeed, we had often laughed at him, of, however thirsty he might be, always having his water boiled when he was travelling, in order to destroy impurities: and it seemed odd, that he should on this one occasion, have neglected the precaution. Also, it was curious that the majority of Lo Bengula's bearers appeared to have escaped, whereas all the others were, without exception, killed; nor even in that district is it usual to find water so bad that it will kill with the rapidity it had been supposed to do in this case, unless indeed it had been designedly poisoned. These doubts of the poisoning-by-water-story resolved themselves into certainty when the waggon returned in charge of the interpreter, when, by putting two and two together, we were able to piece out the real history of the diabolical murder of our poor friends with considerable accuracy, a story which shows what bloodthirsty wickedness a savage is capable of when he fancies his interests are threatened.

It appeared that, when Captain Patterson first interviewed Lo Bengula, he was not at all well received by him. I must, by way of explanation, state that there exists a Pretender to his throne, Kruman by name, who, as far as I can make out, is the real heir to the kingdom. This man had, for some cause or other, fled the country, and for a time acted as gardener to Sir T. Shepstone in Natal. At the date of Messrs. Patterson and Sergeaunt's mission to Matabeleland he was living, I believe, in the Transvaal. Captain Patterson, on finding himself so ill received by the king, and not being sufficiently acquainted with the character of savage

chiefs, most unfortunately, either by accident or design, dropped some hint in the course of conversation about this Kruman. From that moment, Lo Bengula's conduct towards the mission entirely changed, and, dropping his former tone, he became profusely civil; and from that moment, too, he doubtless determined to kill them, probably fearing that they might forward some scheme to oust him and place Kruman, on whose claim a large
portion of his people looked favourably, on the throne.

When their business was done, and Captain Patterson told the king that they were anxious, before returning, to visit the Zambesi Falls, he readily fell in with their wish, but, in the first instance, refused permission to young Thomas, the son of the missionary, to accompany them, only allowing him to do so on the urgent representation of Captain Patterson. The reason for this was, no doubt, that he had kindly feelings towards the lad, and did not wish to include him in the slaughter.

Captain Patterson was a man of extremely methodical habits, and, amongst other things, was in the habit of making notes of all that he did. His note-book had been taken off his body, and sent down to Pretoria with the other things. In it we found entries of his preparations for the trip, including the number and names of the bearers provided by Lo Bengula. We also found the chronicle of the first three days' journey, and that of the morning of the fourth day, but there the record stopped. The last entry was probably made a few minutes before he was killed; and

it is to be observed that there was no entry of the party having been for several days without water, as stated by the messengers, and then finding the poisoned water.

This evidence by itself would not have amounted to much, but now comes the curious part of the story, showing the truth of the old adage, "Murder will out." It appears that when the waggon was coming down to Pretoria in charge of the interpreter, it was outspanned one day outside the borders of Lo Bengula's country, when some Kafirs--Bechuanas, I think--came up, asked for some tobacco, and fell into conversation with the driver, remarking that he had come up with a full waggon, and now he went down with an empty one. The driver replied by lamenting the death by poisoned water of his masters, whereupon one of the Kafirs told him the following story:--He said that a brother of his was out hunting, a little while back, in the desert for ostriches, with a party of other Kafirs, when hearing shots fired some way off, they made for the spot, thinking that white men were out shooting, and that they would be able to beg meat. On reaching the spot, which was by a pool of water, they saw the bodies of three white men lying on the ground, and also those of a Hottentot and a Kafir, surrounded by an armed party of Kafirs. They at once asked the Kafirs what they had been doing killing the white men, and were told to be still, for it was by "order of the king." They then learned the whole story. It appeared that the white men had made a mid-day halt by the water, when one of the bearers, who had gone to the edge of the pool, suddenly shouted to them to come and look at a great snake in the water. Captain Patterson ran up, and, as he leaned over the

edge, was instantly killed by a blow with an axe; the others were then shot and assegaied. The Kafir further described the clothes that his brother had seen on the bodies, and also some articles that had been given to his party by the murderers, that left little doubt as to the veracity of his story. And so ended the mission to Matabeleland.

No public notice was taken of the matter, for the obvious reason that it was impossible to get at Lo Bengula to punish him; nor would it have been easy to come by legal evidence to disprove the ingenious story of the poisoned water, since anybody trying to reach the spot of the massacre would probably fall a victim to some similar accident before he got back again. It is devoutly to be hoped that the punishment he deserves will sooner or later overtake the author of this devilish and wholesale murder.

The beginning of 1879 was signalised by the commencement of operations in Zululand and by the news of the terrible disaster at Isandhlwana, which fell on Pretoria like a thunderclap. It was not, however, any surprise to those who were acquainted with Zulu tactics and with the plan of attack adopted by the English commanders. In fact, I know that one solemn warning of what would certainly happen to him, if he persisted in his plan of advance, was addressed to Lord Chelmsford, through the officer in command at Pretoria, by a gentlemen whose position and long experience of the Zulus and their mode of attack should have carried some weight. If it ever reached him, he took, to the best of my recollection, no notice of it whatever.

But though some such disaster was daily expected by a few, the majority of both soldiers and civilians never dreamed of anything of the sort, the general idea being that the conquest of Cetywayo was a very easy undertaking: and the shock produced by the news of Isandhlwana was proportionally great, especially as it reached Pretoria in a much exaggerated form. I shall never forget the appearance of the town that morning; business was entirely suspended, and the streets were filled with knots of men talking, with scared faces, as well they might: for there was scarcely anybody but had lost a friend, and many thought that their sons or brothers were among the dead on that bloody field. Among others, Sir T. Shepstone lost one son, and thought for some time that he had lost three.

Shortly after this event Sir T. Shepstone went to England to confer with the Secretary of State on various matters connected with the Transvaal, carrying with him the affection and respect of all who knew him, not excepting the majority of the malcontent Boers. He was succeeded by Colonel, now Sir Owen Lanyon, who was appointed to administer the Government during the absence of Sir T. Shepstone.

By the Boers, however, the news of our disaster was received with great and unconcealed rejoicing, or at least by the irreconcilable portion of that people. England's necessity was their opportunity, and one of which they certainly meant to avail themselves. Accordingly, notices were sent out summoning the burghers of the Transvaal to attend a mass meeting on

the 18th March, at a place about thirty miles from Pretoria. Emissaries were also sent to native chiefs, to excite them to follow Cetywayo's example, and massacre all the English within reach, of whom a man called Solomon Prinsloo was one of the most active. The natives, however, notwithstanding the threats used towards them, one and all declined the invitation.

It must not be supposed that all the Boers who attended these meetings did so of their own free will; on the contrary, a very large number came under compulsion, since they found that the English authorities were powerless to give them protection. The recalcitrants were threatened with all sorts of pains and penalties if they did not attend, a favourite menace being that they should be made "biltong" of when the country was given back (i.e., be cut into strips and hung in the sun to dry). Few, luckily for themselves, were brave enough to tempt fortune by refusing to come, but those who did, have had to leave the country since the war. Whatever were the means employed, the result was an armed meeting of about 3000 Boers, who evidently meant mischief.

Just about this time a corps had been raised in Pretoria, composed, for the most part, of gentlemen, and known as the Pretoria Horse; for the purpose of proceeding to the Zulu border, where cavalry, especially cavalry acquainted with the country, was earnestly needed. In the emergency of the times officials were allowed to join this corps, a permission of which I availed myself, and was elected one of the lieutenants.[*] The corps was not, after all, allowed to go to Zululand

on account of the threatening aspect adopted by the Boers, against whom it was retained for service. In my capacity as an officer of the corps I was sent out with a small body of picked men, all good riders and light weights, to keep up a constant communication between the Boer camp and the Administrator, and found the work both interesting and exciting. My head-quarters were at an inn about twenty-five miles from Pretoria, to which our agents in the meeting used to come every evening and report how matters were proceeding, whereupon, if the road was clear, I despatched a letter to head-quarters; or, if I feared that the messengers would be caught en route by Boer patrols and searched, I substituted different coloured ribbons according to what I wished to convey. There was a relief hidden in the trees or rocks every six miles, all day and most of the night, whose business it was to take the despatch or ribbon and gallop on with it to the next station, in which way we used to get the despatches into town in about an hour and a quarter.

[*] It is customary in South African volunteer forces to allow the members to elect their own officers, provided the men elected are such as the Government approves. This is done, so that the corps may not afterwards be able to declare that they have no confidence in their officers in action, or to grumble at their treatment by them.

On one or two occasions the Boers came to the inn and threatened to shoot us, but as our orders were to do nothing unless our lives were

actually in danger, we took no notice. The officer who came out to relieve me had not, however, been there more than a day or two before he and all his troopers, were hunted back into Pretoria by a large mob of armed Boers whom they only escaped by very hard riding.

Meanwhile the Boers were by degrees drawing nearer and nearer to the town, till at last they pitched their laagers within six miles, and practically besieged it. All business was stopped, the houses were loopholed and fortified, and advantageous positions were occupied by the military and the various volunteer corps. The building, normally in the occupation of the Government mules, fell to the lot of the Pretoria Horse, and, though it was undoubtedly a post of honour, I honestly declare that I have no wish to sleep for another month in a mule stable that has not been cleaned out for several years. However, by sinking a well, and erecting bastions and a staging for sharp-shooters, we converted it into an excellent fortress, though it would not have been of much use against artillery. Our patrols used to be out all night, since we chiefly feared a night attack, and generally every preparation was made to resist the onset that was hourly expected, and I believe that it was that state of preparedness that alone prevented it.

Whilst this meeting was going on, and when matters had come to a point that seemed to render war inevitable, Sir B. Frere arrived at Pretoria and had several interviews with the Boer leaders, at which they persisted in demanding their independence, and nothing short of it. After a great deal of talk the meeting finally broke up without any

actual appeal to arms, though it had, during its continuance, assumed many of the rights of government, such as stopping post-carts and individuals, and sending armed patrols about the country. The principal reason of its break-up was that the Zulu war was now drawing to a close, and the leaders saw that there would soon be plenty of troops available to suppress any attempt at revolt, but they also saw to what lengths they could go with impunity. They had for a period of nearly two months been allowed to throw the whole country into confusion, to openly violate the laws, and to intimidate and threaten Her Majesty's loyal subjects with war and death. The lesson was not lost on them; but they postponed action till a more favourable opportunity offered.

Sir Bartle Frere before his departure took an opportunity at a public dinner given him at Potchefstroom of assuring the loyal inhabitants of the country that the Transvaal would never be given back.

Meanwhile a new Pharaoh had arisen in Egypt, in the shape of Sir G. Wolseley, and on the 29th June 1879 we find him communicating the fact to Sir O. Lanyon in very plain language, telling him that he disapproved of his course of action with regard to Secocoeni, and that "in future you will please take orders only from me."

As soon as Sir Garnet had completed his arrangements for the pacification of Zululand, he proceeded to Pretoria, and having caused himself to be sworn in as Governor, set vigorously to work. I must say that in his dealings with the Transvaal he showed great judgment and a

keen appreciation of what the country needed, namely, strong government; the fact of the matter being, I suppose, that being very popular with the Home authorities he felt that he could more or less command their support in what he did, a satisfaction not given to most governors, who never know but that they may be thrown overboard in emergency, in lighten the ship.

One of his first acts was to issue a proclamation, stating that "Whereas it appears that, notwithstanding repeated assurances of the contrary given by Her Majesty's representatives in this territory, uncertainty or misapprehension exists amongst some of Her Majesty's subjects as to the intention of Her Majesty's Government regarding the maintenance of British rule and sovereignty over the territory of the Transvaal: and whereas it is expedient that all grounds for such uncertainty or misapprehension should be removed once and for all beyond doubt or question: now therefore I do hereby proclaim and make known, in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, that it is the will and determination of Her Majesty's Government that this Transvaal territory shall be, and shall continue to be for ever, an integral portion of Her Majesty's dominions in South Africa."

Alas! Sir G. Wolseley's estimate of the value of a solemn pledge thus made in the name of Her Majesty, whose word has hitherto been held to be sacred, differed greatly to that of Mr. Gladstone and his Government.

Sir Garnet Wolseley's operations against Secocoeni proved eminently

successful, and were the best arranged bit of native warfare that I have yet heard of in South Africa. One blow was struck, and only one, but that was crushing. Of course the secret of his success lay in the fact that he had an abundance of force; but it was not ensured by that alone, good management being very requisite in an affair of the sort, especially where native allies have to be dealt with. The cost of the expedition, not counting other Secocoeni war expenditure, amounted to over 300,000 pounds, all of which is now lost to this country.

Another step in the right direction undertaken by Sir Garnet was the establishment of an Executive Council and also of a Legislative Council, for the establishment of which Letters Patent were sent from Downing Street in November 1880.

Meanwhile the Boers, paying no attention to the latter proclamation, for they guessed that it, like other proclamations in the Transvaal, would be a mere brutum fulmen, had assembled for another mass meeting, at which they went forward a step, and declared a Government which was to treat with the English authorities. They had now learnt that they could do what they liked with perfect impunity, provided they did not take the extreme course of massacring the English. They had yet to learn that they might even do that. At the termination of this meeting, a vote of thanks was passed to "Mr. Leonard Courtney of London, and other members of the British Parliament." It was wise of the Boer leaders to cultivate Mr. Courtney of London. As a result of this meeting, Pretorius, one of the principal leaders, and Bok, the secretary, were arrested on a

charge of treason, and underwent a preliminary examination; but as the Secretary of State, Sir M. Hicks Beach, looked rather timidly on the proceeding, and the local authorities were doubtful of securing a verdict, the prosecution was abandoned, and necessarily did more harm than good, being looked upon as another proof of the impotence of the Government.

Shortly afterwards, Sir G. Wolseley changed his tactics, and, instead of attempting to imprison Pretorius, offered him a seat on the Executive Council, with a salary attached. This was a much more sensible way of dealing with him, and he at once rose to the bait, stating his willingness to join the Government after a while, but that he could not publicly do so at the moment lest he should lose his influence with those who were to be brought round through him. It does not, however, appear that Mr. Pretorius ever did actually join the Executive, probably because he found public opinion too strong to allow him to do so.

In December 1879, a new light broke upon the Boers, for, in the previous month Mr. Gladstone had been delivering his noted attack on the policy of the Conservative Government. Those Mid-Lothian speeches did harm, it is said, in many parts of the world; but I venture to think that they have proved more mischievous in South Africa than anywhere else; at any rate, they have borne fruit sooner. It is not to be supposed that Mr. Gladstone really cared anything about the Transvaal or its independence when he was denouncing the hideous outrage that had been perpetrated by the Conservative Government in annexing it. On the contrary, as he

acquiesced in the Annexation at the time (when Lord Kimberley stated that it was evidently unavoidable), and declined to rescind it when he came into power, it is to be supposed that he really approved of it, or at the least looked on it as a necessary evil. However this may be, any stick will do to beat a dog with, and the Transvaal was a convenient point on which to attack the Government. He probably neither knew nor cared what effect his reckless words might have on ignorant Boers thousands of miles away; and yet, humanly speaking, many a man would have been alive and strong to-day, whose bones now whiten the African Veldt, had those words never been spoken. Then, for the first time, the Boers learnt that, if they played their cards properly and put on sufficient pressure, they would, in the event of the Liberal party coming to office, have little difficulty in coercing it as they wished.

There was a fair chance at the time of the utterance of the Mid-Lothian speeches that the agitation would, by degrees, die away; Sir G. Wolseley had succeeded in winning over Pretorius, and the Boers in general were sick of mass meetings. Indeed, a memorial was addressed to Sir G. Wolseley by a number of Boers in the Potchefstroom district, protesting against the maintenance of the movement against Her Majesty's rule, which, considering the great amount of intimidation exercised by the malcontents, may be looked upon as a favourable sign.

But when it slowly came to be understood among the Boers that a great English Minister had openly espoused their cause, and that he would perhaps soon be all-powerful, the moral gain to them was incalculable.

They could now go to the doubting ones and say,--we must be right about the matter, because, putting our own feelings out of the question, the great Gladstone says we are. We find the committee of the Boer malcontents, at their meeting in March 1880, reading a letter to Mr. Gladstone, "in which he was thanked for the great sympathy shown to their fate," and a hope expressed that, if he succeeded in getting power, he would not forget them. In fact, a charming unanimity prevailed between our great Minister and the Boer rebels, for their interests were the same, the overthrow of the Conservative Government. If, however, every leader of the Opposition were to intrigue, or countenance intrigues with those who are seeking to undermine the authority of Her Majesty, whether they be Boers or Irishmen, in order to help himself to power, the country might suffer in the long run.

But whatever feelings may have prompted Her Majesty's opposition, the Home Government, and their agent, Sir Garnet Wolseley, blew no uncertain blast, if we may judge from their words and actions. Thus we find Sir Garnet speaking as follows at a banquet given in his honour at Pretoria:--

"I am told that these men (the Boers) are told to keep on agitating in this way, for a change of Government in England may give them again the old order of things. Nothing can show greater ignorance of English politics than such an idea; I tell you that there is no Government, Whig or Tory, Liberal, Conservative, or Radical, who would dare under any circumstances to give back this country. They would not dare, because

the English people would not allow them. To give back the country, what would it mean? To give it back to external danger, to the danger of attack by hostile tribes on its frontier, and who, if the English Government were removed for one day, would make themselves felt the next. Not an official of Government paid for months; it would mean national bankruptcy. No taxes being paid, the same thing recurring again which had existed before would mean danger without, anarchy and civil war within, every possible misery; the strangulation of trade, and the destruction of property."

It is very amusing to read this passage by the light of after events. On other occasions Sir Garnet Wolseley will probably not be quite so confident as to the future when it is to be controlled by a Radical Government.

This explicit and straightforward statement of Sir Garnet's produced a great effect on the loyal inhabitants of the Transvaal, which was heightened by the publication of the following telegram from the Secretary of State:--"You may fully confirm explicit statements made from the time to time as to inability of Her Majesty's Government to entertain any proposal for withdrawal of the Queen's sovereignty."

On the faith of these declarations many Englishmen migrated to the Transvaal and settled there, whilst those who were in the country now invested all their means, being confident that they would not lose their property through its being returned to the Boers. The excitement

produced by Mr. Gladstone's speeches began to quiet down and be forgotten for the time, arrear taxes were paid up by the malcontents, and generally the aspect of affairs was such, in Sir Garnet Wolseley's opinion, as justified him in writing, in April 1880, to the Secretary of State expressing his belief that the agitation was dying out.[*] Indeed, so sanguine was he on that point that he is reported to have advised the withdrawal of the cavalry regiment stationed in the territory, a piece of economy that was one of the immediate causes of the revolt.

The reader will remember the financial condition of the country at the time of the Annexation, which was one of utter bankruptcy. After three years of British rule, however, we find, notwithstanding the constant agitation that had been kept up, that the total revenue receipts for the first quarter of 1879 and 1880 amounted to 22,773 pounds, and 44,982 pounds respectively. That is to say, that, during the last year of British rule, the revenue of the country more than doubled itself, and amounted to about 160,000 pounds a-year, taking the quarterly returns at the low average of 40,000 pounds. It must, however, be remembered that this sum would have been very largely increased in subsequent years, most probably doubled. At any rate the revenue would have been amply sufficient to make the province one of the most prosperous in South Africa, and to have enabled it to shortly repay all debts due to the British Government, and further to provide for its own defence. Trade also, which in April 1877, was completely paralysed, had increased enormously. So early as the middle of 1879, the Committee of the Transvaal Chamber of Commerce pointed out, in a resolution adopted by

them, that the trade of the country had in two years, risen from almost nothing to the considerable sum of two millions sterling per annum, and that it was entirely in the hands of those favourable to British rule. They also pointed out that more than half the land tax was paid by Englishmen, or other Europeans adverse to Boer Government. Land, too, had risen greatly in value, of which I can give the following instance. About a year after the Annexation I, together with a friend, bought a little property on the outskirts of Pretoria, which, with a cottage we put up on it, cost some 300 pounds. Just before the rebellion we fortunately determined to sell it, and had no difficulty in getting 650 pounds for it. I do not believe that it would now fetch a fifty pound note.

[*] In Blue Book No. (C. 2866) of September 1881, which is descriptive of various events connected with the Boer rising, is published, as an appendix, a despatch from Sir Garnet Wolseley, dated October 1879. This despatch declares the writer's opinion that the Boer discontent is on the increase. Its publication thus--apropos des bottes--nearly two years after it was written, is rather an amusing incident. It certainly gives one the idea that Sir Garnet Wolseley, fearing that his reputation for infallibility might be attacked by scoffers for not having foreseen the Boer rebellion, and perhaps uneasily conscious of other despatches very different in tenor and subsequent in date: and, mindful of the withdrawal of the cavalry regiment by

his advice, had caused it to be tacked on to the Blue Book as a documentary "I told you so," and a proof that, whoever else was blinded, he foresaw. It contains, however, the following remarkable passage:--"Even were it not impossible, for many other reasons, to contemplate a withdrawal of our authority from the Transvaal, the position of insecurity in which we should leave this loyal and important section of the community (the English inhabitants), by exposing them to the certain retaliation of the Boers, would constitute, in my opinion, an insuperable obstacle to retrocession. Subjected to the same danger, moreover, would be those of the Boers, whose superior intelligence and courageous character has rendered them loyal to our Government."

As the Government took the trouble to publish the despatch, it is a pity that they did not think fit to pay more attention to its contents.

I cannot conclude this chapter better than by drawing attention to a charming specimen of the correspondence between the Boer leaders and their friend Mr. Courtney. The letter in question, which is dated 26th June, purports to be written by Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, but it is obvious that it owes its origin to some member or members of the Dutch party at the Cape, from whence, indeed, it is written. This is rendered evident both by its general style, and also by the use of such terms as "Satrap," and by references to Napoleon III. and Cayenne, about whom

Messrs. Kruger and Joubert know no more than they do of Peru and the Incas.

After alluding to former letters, the writers blow a blast of triumph over the downfall of the Conservative Government, and then make a savage attack on the reputation of Sir Bartle Frere. The "stubborn Satrap" is throughout described as a liar, and every bad motive imputed to him. Really, the fact that Mr. Courtney should encourage such epistles as this is enough to give colour to the boast made by some of the leading Boers, after the war, that they had been encouraged to rebel by a member of the British Government.

At the end of this letter, and on the same page of the Blue Book, is printed the telegram recalling Sir Bartle Frere, dated 1st August 1880. It really reads as though the second document was consequent to the first. One thing is very clear, the feelings of Her Majesty's new Government towards Sir Bartle Frere differed only in the method of their expression, from those set forth by the Boer leaders in their letter to Mr. Courtney, whilst their object, namely, to be rid of him, was undoubtedly identical with that of the Dutch party in South Africa.