CHAPTER VI

THE RETROCESSION OF THE TRANSVAAL

The Queen's Speech--President Brand and Lord Kimberley--Sir Henry de Villiers--Sir George Colley's plan--Paul Kruger's offer--Sir George Colley's remonstrance--Complimentary telegrams--Effect of Majuba on the Boers and English Government--Collapse of the Government--Reasons of the Surrender--Professional sentimentalists--The Transvaal Independence Committee--Conclusion of the armistice--The preliminary peace--Reception of the news in Natal--Newcastle after the declaration of peace--Exodus of the loyal inhabitants of the Transvaal--The value of property in Pretoria--The Transvaal officials dismissed--The Royal Commission--Mode of trial of persons accused of atrocities--Decision of the Commission and its results--The severance of territory question--Arguments pro and con--Opinion of Sir E. Wood--Humility of the Commissioners and its cause--Their decision on the Keate award question--The Montsoia difficulty--The compensation and financial clauses of the report of the Commission--The duties of the British Resident--Sir E. Wood's dissent from the report of the Commission--Signing of the Convention--Burial of the Union Jack--The native side of the question--Interview between the Commissioners and the native chiefs--Their opinion of the surrender--Objections of the Boer Volksraad to the Convention--Mr. Gladstone temporises--The ratification--Its insolent tone--Mr. Hudson, the British Resident--The Boer festival--The results of the Convention--The larger issue of the matter--Its effect on the

Transvaal--Its moral aspects--Its effect on the native mind.

When Parliament met in January 1881, the Government announced, through
the mediumship of the Queen's Speech, that it was their intention to vindicate Her Majesty's authority in the Transvaal. I have already briefly described the somewhat unfortunate attempts to gain this end by force of arms: and I now propose to follow the course of the diplomatic negotiations entered into by the Ministry with the same object.

As soon as the hostilities in the Transvaal took a positive form, causing great dismay among the Home authorities, whose paths, as we all know, are the paths of peace--at any price; and whilst, in the first confusion of calamity, they knew not where to turn, President Brand stepped upon the scene in the character of "Our Mutual Friend," and, by the Government at any rate, was rapturously welcomed.

This gentleman has for many years been at the head of the Government of the Orange Free State, whose fortunes he had directed with considerable ability. He is a man of natural talent and kind-hearted disposition, and has the advancement of the Boer cause in South Africa much at heart. The rising in the Transvaal was an event that gave him a great and threefold opportunity: first, of interfering with the genuinely benevolent object of checking bloodshed; secondly, of advancing the Dutch cause throughout South Africa under the cloak of amiable neutrality, and striking a dangerous blow at British supremacy over the Dutch and British prestige

with the natives; and, thirdly, of putting the English Government under a lasting obligation to him. Of this opportunity he has availed himself to the utmost in each particular.

So soon as things began to look serious, Mr. Brand put himself into active telegraphic communication with the various British authorities with the view of preventing bloodshed by inducing the English Government to accede to the Boer demands. He was also earnest in his declarations that the Free State was not supporting the Transvaal; which, considering that it was practically the insurgent base of supplies, where they had retired their women, children, and cattle, and that it furnished them with a large number of volunteers, was perhaps straining the truth.

About this time also we find Lord Kimberley telegraphing to Mr. Brand that "if only the Transvaal Boers will desist from armed opposition to the Queen's authority," he thinks some arrangement might be made. This is the first indication made public of what was passing in the minds of Her Majesty's Government, on whom its radical supporters were now beginning to put the screw, to induce or threaten them into submitting to the Boer demands.

Again, on the 11th January, the President telegraphed to Lord Kimberley through the Orange Free State Consul in London, suggesting that Sir H. de Villiers, the Chief Justice at the Cape, should be appointed a Commissioner to go to the Transvaal to settle matters. Oddly enough, about the same time the same proposition emanated from the Dutch party

in the Cape Colony, headed by Mr. Hofmeyer, a coincidence that inclines one to the opinion that these friends of the Boers had some further reason for thus urging Sir Henry de Villiers' appointment as Commissioner beyond his apparent fitness for the post, of which his high reputation as a lawyer and in his private capacity was a sufficient guarantee.

The explanation is not hard to find, the fact being that, rightly or wrongly, Sir Henry de Villiers, who is himself of Dutch descent, is noted throughout South Africa for his sympathies with the Boer cause, and both President Brand and the Dutch party in the Cape shrewdly suspected, that, if the settling of differences were left to his discretion, the Boers and their interests would receive very gentle handling. The course of action adopted by him, when he became a member of the Royal Commission, went far to support this view, for it will be noticed in the Report of the Commissioners that in every single point he appears to have taken the Boer side of the contention. Indeed so blind was he to their faults, that he would not even admit that the horrible Potchefstroom murders and atrocities, which are condemned both by Sir H. Robinson and Sir Evelyn Wood in language as strong as the formal terms of a report will allow, were acts contrary to the rules of civilised warfare. If those acts had been perpetrated by Englishmen on Boers, or even on natives, I venture to think Sir Henry de Villiers would have looked at them in a very different light.

In the same telegram in which President Brand recommends the appointment

of Sir Henry de Villiers, he states that the allegations made by the Triumvirate in the proclamation in which they accused Sir Owen Lanyon of committing various atrocities, deserve to be investigated, as they maintain that the collision was commenced by the authorities. Nobody knew better than Mr. Brand that any English official would be quite incapable of the conduct ascribed to Sir Owen Lanyon, whilst, even if the collision had been commenced by the authorities, which as it happened it was not, they would under the circumstances have been amply justified in so commencing it. This remark by President Brand in his telegram was merely an attempt to throw an air of probability over a series of slanderous falsehoods.

Messages of this nature continued to pour along the wires from day to day, but the tone of those from the Colonial Office grew gradually humbler; thus we find Lord Kimberley telegraphing on the 8th February, that if the Boers would desist from armed opposition all reasonable guarantees would be given as to their treatment after submission, and that a scheme would be framed for the "permanent friendly settlement of difficulties." It will be seen that the Government had already begun to water the meaning of their declaration that they would vindicate Her Majesty's authority. No doubt Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Courtney, and their followers, had given another turn to the Radical screw.

It is, however, clear that at this time no idea of the real aims of the

Government had entered into the mind of Sir George Colley, since on the 7th February he telegraphed home a plan which he proposed to adopt on entering the Transvaal, which included a suggestion that he should grant a complete amnesty only to those Boers who would sign a declaration of loyalty.

In answer to this he was ordered to do nothing of the sort, but to promise protection to everybody and refer everything home.

Then came the battle of Ingogo, which checked for the time the flow of telegrams, or rather varied their nature, for those despatched during the next few days deal with the question of reinforcements. On the 13th February, however, negotiations were reopened by Paul Kruger, one of the Triumvirate, who offered, if all the troops were ordered to withdraw from the Transvaal to give them a free passage through the Nek, to disperse the Boers and to consent to the appointment of a Commission.

The offer was jumped at by Lord Kimberley, who, without making reference to the question of withdrawing the soldiers, offered, if only the Boers would disperse, to appoint a Commission with extensive powers to develop the "permanent friendly settlement" scheme. The telegram ends thus: "Add, that if this proposal is accepted, you now are authorised to agree to suspension of hostilities on our part." This message was sent to General Wood, because the Boers had stopped the communications with Colley. On the 19th, Sir George Colley replies in these words, which show his astonishment at the policy adopted by the Home Government, and

which, in the opinion of most people, redound to his credit--

"Latter part of your telegram to Wood not understood. There can be no hostilities if no resistance is made, but am I to leave Lang's Nek in Natal territory in Boer occupation, and our garrisons isolated and short of provisions, or occupy former and relieve latter?" Lord Kimberley hastens to reply that the garrisons must be left free to provision themselves, "but we do not mean that you should march to the relief of garrisons or occupy Lang's Nek, if an arrangement proceeds."

It will be seen that the definition of what vindication of Her Majesty's authority consisted grew broader and broader; it now included the right of the Boers to continue to occupy their positions in the Colony of Natal.

Meanwhile the daily fire of complimentary messages was being kept up between President Brand and Lord Kimberley, who alternatively gave "sincere thanks to Lord Kimberley" and "fully appreciated the friendly spirit" of President Brand, till on the 21st February the latter telegraphs through Colley: "Hope of amicable settlement by negotiation, but this will be greatly facilitated if somebody on spot and friendly disposed to both, could by personal communication with both endeavour to smooth difficulties. Offers his services to Her Majesty's Government, and Kruger and Pretorius and Joubert are willing." Needless to say his services were accepted.

Presently, however, on 27th February, Sir George Colley made his last move, and took possession of Majuba. His defeat and death had the effect of causing another temporary check in the peace negotiations, whilst Sir Frederick Roberts with ample reinforcements was despatched to Natal. It had the further effect of increasing the haughtiness of the Boer leaders, and infusing a corresponding spirit of pliability or generosity into the negotiations of Her Majesty's Government.

Thus on 2d March, the Boers, through President Brand and Sir Evelyn Wood, inform the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that they are willing to negotiate, but decline to submit or cease opposition. Sir Evelyn Wood, who evidently did not at all like the line of policy adopted by the Government, telegraphed that he thought the best thing to do would be for him to engage the Boers, and disperse them vi et armis, without any guarantees, "considering the disasters we have sustained," and that he should, "if absolutely necessary," be empowered to promise life and property to the leaders, but that they should be banished from the country. In answer to this telegram, Lord Kimberley informs him that Her Majesty's Government will amnesty everybody except those who have committed acts contrary to the rules of civilised warfare, and that they will agree to anything, and appoint a Commission to carry out the details, and "be ready for friendly communications with any persons appointed by the Boers."

Thus was Her Majesty's authority finally re-established in the Transvaal.

It was not a very grand climax, nor the kind of arrangement to which Englishmen are accustomed, but perhaps, considering the circumstances, and the well-known predilections of those who made the settlement, it was as much as could be expected.

The action of the Government must not be considered, as though they were unfettered in their judgment; it can never be supposed that they acted as they did, because they thought such action right or even wise, for that would be to set them down as men of a very low order of intelligence, which they certainly are not.

It is clear that no set of sensible men, who had after much consideration given their decision that under all the circumstances, the Transvaal must remain British territory, and who, on a revolt subsequently breaking out in that territory, had declared that Her Majesty's rule must be upheld, would have, putting aside all other circumstances, deliberately stultified themselves by almost unconditionally, and of their own free will, abandoning the country, and all Her Majesty's subjects living in it. That would be to pay a poor tribute to their understanding, since it is clear that if reasons existed for retaining the Transvaal before the war, as they were satisfied there did, those reasons would exist with still greater force after a war had been undertaken and three crushing defeats sustained, which if left unavenged must, as they knew, have a most disastrous effect on our prestige throughout the South African continent.

I prefer to believe that the Government was coerced into acting as it did by Radical pressure, both from outside, and from its immediate supporters in the House, and that it had to choose between making an unconventional surrender in the Transvaal and losing the support of a very powerful party. Under these circumstances it, being Liberal in politics, naturally followed its instincts, and chose surrender.

If such a policy was bad in itself, and necessarily mischievous in its consequences, so much the worse for those who suffered by it; it was clear that the Government could not be expected to lose votes in order to forward the true interests of countries so far off as the South African Colonies, which had had the misfortune to be made a party question of, and must take the consequences.

There is no doubt that the interest brought to bear on the Government was very considerable, for not only had they to deal with their own supporters, and with the shadowy caucus that was ready to let the lash of its displeasure descend even on the august person of Mr. Gladstone, should he show signs of letting slip so rich an opportunity for the vindication of the holiest principles of advanced Radicalism, but also with the hydra-headed crowd of visionaries and professional sentimentalists who swarm in this country, and who are always ready to take up any cause, from that of Jumbo, or of a murderer, to that of oppressed peoples, such as the Bulgarians, or the Transvaal Boers.

These gentlemen, burning with zeal, and filled with that confidence which proverbially results from the hasty assimilation of imperfect and erroneous information, found in the Transvaal question a great opportunity of making a noise: and--as in a disturbed farmyard the bray of the domestic donkey, ringing loud and clear among the utterances of more intelligent animals, overwhelms and extinguishes them--so, and with like effect, amongst the confused sound of various English opinions about the Boer rising, rose the trumpet-note of the Transvaal Independence Committee and its supporters.

As we have seen, they did not sound in vain.

On the 6th of March an armistice with the Boers had been entered into by Sir Evelyn Wood, which was several times prolonged, up to the 21st March, when Sir Evelyn Wood concluded a preliminary peace with the Boer leaders, which, under certain conditions, guaranteed the restoration of the country within six months, and left all other points to be decided by a Royal Commission.

The news of this peace was at first received in the Colony in the silence of astonishment. Personally, I remember, I would not believe that it was true. It seemed to us, who had been witnesses of what had passed, and knew what it all meant, something so utterly incredible that we thought there must be a mistake.

If there had been any one redeeming circumstance about it, if the

English arms had gained a single decisive victory, it might have been so, but it was hard for Englishmen, just at first, to understand that not only had the Transvaal been to all appearance wrested from them by force of arms, but that they were henceforth to be subject, as they well knew would be the case, to the coarse insults of victorious Boers, and the sarcasms of keener-witted Kafirs.

People in England seem to fancy that when men go to the Colonies they lose all sense of pride in their country, and think of nothing but their own advantage. I do not think that this is the case, indeed, I believe that, individual for individual, there exists a greater sense of loyalty, and a deeper pride in their nationality, and in the proud name of England, among Colonists, than among Englishmen proper. Certainly the humiliation of the Transvaal surrender was more keenly felt in South Africa than it was at home; but, perhaps, the impossibility of imposing upon people in that country with the farrago of nonsense about blood-guiltiness and national morality, which was made such adroit use of at home, may have made the difference.

I know that personally I would not have believed it possible that I could feel any public event so keenly as I did this; indeed, I quickly made up my mind that if the peace was confirmed, the neighbourhood of the Transvaal would be no fit or comfortable residence for an Englishman, and that I would, at any cost, leave the country,--which I accordingly did.

Newcastle was a curious sight the night after the peace was declared, every hotel and bar was crowded with refugees, who were trying to relieve their feelings, by cursing the name of Gladstone, with a vigour, originality, and earnestness, that I have never heard equalled; and declaring in ironical terms how proud they were to be citizens of England--a country that always kept its word. Then they set to work with many demonstrations of contempt to burn the effigy of the Right Honourable Gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government, an example, by the way, that was followed throughout South Africa.

Even Sir Evelyn Wood, who is very popular in the Colony, was hissed as he walked through the town, and great surprise was expressed that a soldier who came out expressly to fight the Boers, should consent to become the medium of communication in such a dirty business. And, indeed, there was some excuse for all this bitterness, for the news meant ruin to very many.

But if people in Natal and at the Cape received the news with astonishment, how shall I describe its effect upon the unfortunate loyal

inhabitants in the Transvaal, on whom it burst like a thunderbolt?

They did not say much however, and indeed, there was nothing to be said, they simply began to pack up such things as they could carry with them, and to leave the country, which they well knew would henceforth be utterly untenable for Englishmen or English sympathisers. In a few weeks

they came pouring down through Newcastle by hundreds; it was the most melancholy exodus that can be imagined. There were people of all classes, officials, gentlefolk, work-people, and loyal Boers, but they had a connecting link; they had all been loyal, and they were all ruined.

Most of these people had gone to the Transvaal since it became a British Colony, and invested all they had in it, and now their capital was lost and their labour rendered abortive; indeed, many of them whom one had known as well to do in the Transvaal, came down to Natal hardly knowing how they would feed their families next week.

It must be understood that so soon as the Queen's sovereignty was withdrawn the value of landed and house property in the Transvaal went down to nothing, and has remained there ever since. Thus a fair-sized house in Pretoria brought in a rental varying from ten to twenty pounds a month during British occupation, but after the declaration of peace, owners of houses were glad to get people to live in them to keep them from falling into ruin. Those who owned land or had invested money in businesses suffered in the same way; their property remains, neither profitable or saleable, and they themselves are precluded by their nationality from living on it, the art of "Boycotting" not being peculiar to Ireland.

Nor were they the only sufferers, the officials, many of whom had taken to the Government service as a permanent profession, in which they

expected to pass their lives, were suddenly dismissed, mostly with a small gratuity, which would about suffice to pay their debts, and told to find their living as best they could. It was indeed a case of vae victis,--woe to the conquered loyalists.[*]

[*] The following extract is clipped from a recent issue of the "Transvaal Advertiser." It describes the present condition of Pretoria:--

"The streets grown over with rank vegetation, the water-furrows uncleaned and unattended, emitting offensive and unhealthy stenches, the houses showing evident signs of dilapidation and decay, the side paths, in many places, dangerous to pedestrians; in fact, everything the eye can rest upon indicates the downfall which has overtaken this once prosperous city. The visitor can, if he be so minded, betake himself to the outskirts and suburbs, where he will perceive the same sad evidences of neglect, public grounds unattended, roads uncared for, mills and other public works crumbling into ruin. These palpable signs of decay most strongly impress him. A blight seems to have come over this lately fair and prosperous town. Rapidly it is becoming a 'deserted village,' a 'city of the dead.'"

The Commission appointed by Her Majesty's Government consisted of Sir Hercules Robinson, Sir Henry de Villiers, and Sir Evelyn Wood, President

Brand being also present in his capacity of friend of both parties, and to their discretion were left the settlement of all outstanding questions. Amongst these, were the mode of trial of those persons who had been guilty of acts contrary to the rules of civilised warfare, the question of severance of territory from the Transvaal on the Eastern boundary, the settlement of the boundary in the Keate-Award districts, the compensation for losses sustained during the war, the functions of the British Resident, and other matters. Their place of meeting was at Newcastle in Natal, and from thence they proceeded to Pretoria.

The first question of importance that came before the Commission was the mode of trial to be adopted in the cases of those persons accused of acts contrary to the usages of civilised warfare, such as murder. The Attorney-General for the Transvaal strongly advised that a special Tribunal should be constituted to try these cases, principally because "after a civil war in which all the inhabitants of a country, with very few exceptions, have taken part, a jury of fair and impartial men, truly unbiassed, will be very difficult to get together." It is satisfactory to know that the Commissioners gave this somewhat obvious fact "their grave consideration," which, according to their Report, resulted in their determining to let the cases go before the ordinary court, and be tried by a jury, because in referring them to a specially constituted court which would have done equal justice without fear or favour, "the British Government would have made for itself, among the Dutch population of South Africa, a name for vindictive oppression, which no generosity in other affairs could efface."

There is more in this determination of the Commissioners, or rather of the majority of them--for Sir E. Wood, to his credit be it said, refused to agree in their decision--than meets the eye, the fact of the matter being that it was privately well known to them, that, though the Boer leaders might be willing to allow a few of the murderers to undergo the form of a trial, neither they nor the Boers themselves, meant to permit the farce to go any further. Had the men been tried by a special tribunal they would in all probability have been condemned to death, and then would have come the awkward question of carrying out the sentence on individuals whose deeds were looked on, if not with general approval, at any rate without aversion by the great mass of their countrymen. In short, it would probably have become necessary either to reprieve them or to fight the Boers again, since it was very certain that they would not have allowed them to be hung. Therefore the majority of the Commissioners, finding themselves face to face with a dead wall, determined to slip round it instead of boldly climbing it, by referring the cases to the Transvaal High Court, cheerfully confident of what the result must be.

After all, the matter was, much cry about little wool, for of all the crimes committed by the Boers--a list of some of which will be found in the Appendix to this book--in only three cases were a proportion of the perpetrators produced and put through the form of trial. Those three were, the dastardly murder of Captain Elliot, who was shot by his Boer escort while crossing the Vaal river on parole; the murder of a man

named Malcolm, who was kicked to death in his own house by Boers, who afterwards put a bullet through his head to make the job "look better;" and the murder of a doctor named Barber, who was shot by his escort on the border of the Free State. A few of the men concerned in the first two of these crimes were tried in Pretoria: and it was currently reported at that time, that in order to make their acquittal certain our Attorney-General received instructions not to exercise his right of challenging jurors on behalf of the Crown. Whether or not this is true I am not prepared to say, but I believe it is a fact that he did not exercise that right, though the counsel of the prisoners availed themselves of it freely, with the result that in Elliot's case, the jury was composed of eight Boers and one German, nine being the full South African jury. The necessary result followed; in both cases the prisoners were acquitted in the teeth of the evidence. Barber's murderers were tried in the Free State, and were, as might be expected, acquitted.

Thus it will be seen that of all the perpetrators of murder and other crimes during the course of the war not one was brought to justice.

The offence for which their victims died was, in nearly every case, that they had served, were serving, or were loyal to Her Majesty the Queen. In no single case has England exacted retribution for the murder of her servants and citizens; but nobody can read through the long list of these dastardly slaughters without feeling that they will not go unavenged. The innocent blood that has been shed on behalf of this country, and the tears of children and widows now appeal to a higher

tribunal than that of Mr. Gladstone's Government, and assuredly they will not appeal in vain.

The next point of importance dealt with by the Commission was the question whether or no any territory should be severed from the Transvaal, and kept under English rule for the benefit of the native inhabitants. Lord Kimberley, acting under pressure put upon him by members of the Aborigines Protection Society, instructed the Commission to consider the advisability of severing the districts of Lydenburg and Zoutpansberg, and also a strip of territory bordering on Zululand and Swazieland from the Transvaal, so as to place the inhabitants of the first two districts out of danger of maltreatment by the Boers, and to interpose a buffer between Zulus, and Swazies, and Boer aggression, and vice versa.

The Boer leaders had, it must be remembered, acquiesced in the principle of such a separation in the preliminary peace signed by Sir Evelyn Wood and themselves. The majority of the Commission, however (Sir Evelyn Wood dissenting), finally decided against the retention of either of these districts, a decision which I think was a wise one, though I arrive at that conclusion on very different grounds to those adopted by the majority of the Commission.

Personally, I cannot see that it is the duty of England to play policeman to the whole world. To have retained these native districts would have been to make ourselves responsible for their good government,

and to have guaranteed them against Boer encroachment, which I do not think that we were called upon to do. It is surely not incumbent upon us, having given up the Transvaal to the Boers, to undertake the management of the most troublesome part of it, the Zulu border. Besides, bad as the abandonment of the Transvaal is, I think that if it was to be done at all, it was best to do it thoroughly, since to have kept some natives under our protection, and to have handed over the rest to the tender mercies of the Boers, would only be to render our injustice more obvious, whilst weakening the power of the natives themselves to combine in self-defence; since those under our protection would naturally have little sympathy with their more unfortunate brethren--their interests and circumstances being different.

The Commission do not seem to have considered the question from these points of view, but putting them on one side, there are many other considerations connected with it, which are ably summed up in their Report. Amongst these is the danger of disturbances commenced between Zulus or Swazies and Boers, spreading into Natal, and the probability of the fomenting of disturbances amongst the Zulus by Boers. The great argument for the retention of some territory, if only as a symbol that the English had not been driven out of the country, is, however, set forth in the forty-sixth paragraph of the Report, which runs as follows:--"The moral considerations that determine the actions of civilised Governments are not easily understood by barbarians, in whose eyes successful force is alone the sign of superiority, and it appeared possible that the surrender by the British Crown of one of its

possessions to those who had been in arms against it, might be looked upon by the natives in no other way than as a token of the defeat and decay of the British Power, and that thus a serious shock might be given to British authority in South Africa, and the capacity of Great Britain to govern and direct the vast native population within and without her South African dominions--a capacity resting largely on the renown of her name--might be dangerously impaired."

These words coming from so unexpected a source do not, though couched in such mild language, hide the startling importance of the question discussed. On the contrary, they accurately and with double weight convey the sense and gist of the most damning argument against the policy of the retrocession of the Transvaal in its entirety; and proceeding from their own carefully chosen commissioners, can hardly have been pleasant reading to Lord Kimberley and his colleagues.

The majority of the Commission then proceeds to set forth the arguments advanced by the Boers against the retention of any territory, which appear to have been chiefly of a sentimental character, since we are informed that "the people, it seemed certain, would not have valued the restoration of a mutilated country. Sentiment in a great measure had led them to insurrection, and the force of such it was impossible to disregard." Sir E. Wood in his dissent, states, that he cannot even agree with the premises of his colleagues' argument, since he is convinced that it was not sentiment that had led to the outbreak, but a "general and rooted aversion to taxation." If he had added, and a hatred

not only of English rule, but of all rule, he would have stated the complete cause of the Transvaal rebellion. In the next paragraph of the Report, however, we find the real cause of the pliability of the Commission in the matter, which is the same that influenced them in their decision about the mode of trial of the murderers and other questions:--they feared that the people would appeal to arms if they decided against their wishes.

Discreditable and disgraceful as it may seem, nobody can read this Report without plainly seeing that the Commissioners were, in treating with the Boers on these points, in the position of ambassadors from a beaten people getting the best terms they could. Of course, they well knew that this was not the case, but whatever the Boer leaders may have said, the Boers themselves did not know this, or even pretend to look at the matter in any other light. When we asked for the country back, said they, we did not get it; after we had three times defeated the English we did get it; the logical conclusion from the facts being that we got it because we defeated the English. This was their tone, and it is not therefore surprising that whenever the Commission threatened to decide anything against them, they, with a smile, let it know that if it did, they would be under the painful necessity of re-occupying Lang's Nek. It was never necessary to repeat the threat, since the majority of the Commission would thereupon speedily find a way to meet the views of the Boer representatives.

Sir Evelyn Wood, in his dissent, thus correctly sums up the matter:--"To

contend that the Royal Commission ought not to decide contrary to the wishes of the Boers, because such decision might not be accepted, is to deny to the Commission the very power of decision that it was agreed should be left in its hands." Exactly so. But it is evident that the Commission knew its place, and so far from attempting to exercise any "power of decision," it was quite content with such concessions as it could obtain by means of bargaining. Thus, as an additional reason against the retention of any territory, it is urged that if this territory was retained "the majority of your Commissioners . . . would have found themselves in no favourable position for obtaining the concurrence of the Boer leaders as to other matters." In fact, Her Majesty's Commission appointed, or supposed to be appointed, to do Her Majesty's will and pleasure, shook in its shoes before men who had lately been rebels in arms against Her authority, and humbly submitted itself to their dicta.

The majority of the Commission went on to express their opinion, that by giving away about the retention of territory they would be able to obtain better terms for the natives generally, and larger powers for the British Resident. But, as Sir Evelyn Wood points out in his Report, they did nothing of the sort, the terms of the agreement about the Resident and other native matters being all consequent on and included in the first agreement of peace. Besides, they seem to have overlooked the fact that such concessions as they did obtain are only on paper, and practically worthless, whilst all bona fide advantages remained with the Boers.

The decision of the Commissioners in the question of the Keate Award, which next came under their consideration, appears to have been a judicious one, being founded on the very careful Report of Colonel Moysey, R.E., who had been for many months collecting information on the spot. The Keate Award Territory is a region lying to the south-west of the Transvaal, and was, like many other districts in that country, originally in the possession of natives, of the Baralong and Batlapin tribes. Individual Boers having, however, more suo taken possession of tracts of land in the district, difficulties speedily arose between their Government and the native chiefs, and in 1871 Mr. Keate, Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, was by mutual consent called in to arbitrate on the matter. His decision was entirely in favour of the natives, and was accordingly promptly and characteristically repudiated by the Boer Volksraad. From that time till the rebellion the question remained unsettled, and was indeed a very thorny one to deal with. The Commission, acting on the principle in medio tutissimus ibis, drew a line through the midst of the disputed territory, or, in other words, set aside Mr. Keate's award and interpreted the dispute in favour of the Boers.

This decision was accepted by all parties at the time, but it has not resulted in the maintenance of peace. The principal Chief, Montsoia, is an old ally and staunch friend of the English, a fact which the Boers were not able to forget or forgive, and they appear to have stirred up rival Chiefs to attack him, and to have allowed volunteers from

the Transvaal to assist them. Montsoia has also enlisted some white volunteers, and several fights have taken place, in which the loss of life has been considerable. Whether or no the Transvaal Government is directly concerned it is impossible to say, but from the fact that cannon are said to have been used against Montsoia it would appear that it is, since private individuals do not, as a rule, own Armstrong guns.[*]

[*] I beg to refer any reader interested in this matter to the letter of "Transvaal" to the "Standard," which I have republished in the Appendix to this book.

Amongst the questions remaining for the consideration of the Commissioners was that of what compensation should be given for losses during the war. Of course, the great bulk of the losses sustained were of an indirect nature, resulting from the necessary and enormous depreciation in the value of land and other property, consequent on the retrocession. Into this matter the Home Government declined to enter, thereby saving its pocket at the price of its honour, since it was upon English guarantees that the country would remain a British possession, that the majority of the unfortunate loyals invested their money in it. It was, however, agreed by the Commission (Sir H. de Villiers dissenting) that the Boers should be liable for compensation in cases where loss had been sustained through commandeering seizure, confiscation, destruction, or damage of property. The sums awarded under

these heads have already amounted to about 110,000 pounds, which sum has
been defrayed by the Imperial Government, the Boer authorities stating
that they were not in a position to pay it.

In connection with this matter, I will pass to the Financial clauses of
the Report. When the country was annexed, the public debt amounted
to 301,727 pounds. Under British rule this debt was liquidated to
the extent of 150,000 pounds, but the total was brought up by a
Parliamentary grant, a loan from the Standard Bank, and sundries to
390,404 pounds, which represented the public debt of the Transvaal on
the 31st December 1880. This was further increased by moneys advanced by
the Standard Bank and English Exchequer during the war, and till the
8th August 1881, during which time the country yielded no revenue, to
457,393 pounds. To this must be added an estimated sum of 200,000 pounds
for compensation charges, pension allowances, &c., and a further sum of
383,000 pounds, the cost of the successful expedition against Secocoeni,
that of the unsuccessful one being left out of account, bringing up the
total public debt to over a million, of which about 800,000 pounds is
owing to this country.

This sum, with the characteristic liberality that distinguished them in
their dealings with the Boers, but which was not so marked where loyals
were concerned, the Commissioners (Sir Evelyn Wood dissenting) reduced
by a stroke of the pen to 265,000 pounds, thus entirely remitting an

approximate sum of 500,000 pounds, or 600,000 pounds. To the sum of 265,000 pounds still owing, must be added say another 150,000 pounds for sums lately advanced to pay the compensation claims, bringing up the actual amount now owing to England to something under half a million, of which I say with confidence she will never see a single 10,000 pounds. As this contingency was not contemplated, or if contemplated, not alluded to by the Royal Commission, provision was made for a sinking fund, by means of which the debt, which is a second charge on the revenues of the States, is to be extinguished in twenty-five years.

It is a strange instance of the proverbial irony of fate, that whilst the representatives of the Imperial Government were thus showering gifts of hundreds of thousands of pounds upon men who had spurned the benefits of Her Majesty's rule, made war upon her forces, and murdered her subjects, no such consideration was extended to those who had remained loyal to her throne. Their claims for compensation were passed by unheeded; and looking from the windows of the room in which they sat in Newcastle, the members of the Commission might have seen them flocking down from a country that could no longer be their home; those that were rich among them made poor, and those that were poor reduced to destitution.

The only other point which it will be necessary for me to touch on in connection with this Report is the duties of the British Resident and his relations to the natives. He was to be invested as representative of

the Suzerain with functions for securing the execution of the terms of peace as regards: (1.) The control of the foreign relations of the State; (2.) The control of the frontier affairs of the State; and (3.) The protection of the interests of the natives in the State.

As regards the first of these points, it was arranged that the interests of subjects of the Transvaal should be left in the hands of Her Majesty's representatives abroad. Since Boers are, of all people in the world, the most stay-at-home, our ambassadors and consuls are not likely to be troubled much on their account. With reference to the second point, the Commission made stipulations that would be admirable if there were any probability of their being acted up to. The Resident is to report any encroachment on native territory by Boers to the High Commissioner, and when the Resident and the Boer Government differ, the decision of the Suzerain is to be final. This is a charming way of settling difficulties, but the Commission forgets to specify how the Suzerain's decision is to be enforced. After what has happened, it can hardly have relied on awe of the name of England to bring about the desired obedience!

But besides thus using his beneficent authority to prevent subjects of the Transvaal from trespassing on their neighbour's land, the Resident is to exercise a general supervision over the interests of all the natives in the country. Considering that they number about a million, and are scattered over a territory larger than France, one would think that this duty alone would have taken up the time of any ordinary

man; and, indeed, Sir Evelyn Wood was in favour of the appointment of sub-residents to assist him. The majority of the Commission refused, however, to listen to any such suggestion--believing, they said, "that the least possible interference with the independent Government of the State would be the wisest." Quite so, but I suppose it never occurred to them to ask the natives what their views of the matter were! The Resident was also to be a member of a Native Location Committee, which was at some future time, to provide land for natives to live on.

In perusing this Report it is easy to follow with more or less accuracy the individual bent of its framers. Sir Hercules Robinson figures throughout as a man who has got a disagreeable business to carry out, in obedience to instructions that admit of no trifling with, and who has set himself to do the best he can for his country, and those who suffer through his country's policy, whilst obeying those instructions. He has evidently choked down his feelings and opinions as an individual, and turned himself into an official machine, merely registering in detail the will of Lord Kimberley. With Sir Henry de Villiers the case is very different, one feels throughout that the task is to him a congenial one, and that the Boer cause has in him an excellent friend. Indeed, had he been an advocate of their cause instead of a member of the Commission, he could not have espoused their side on every occasion with greater zeal. According to him they were always in the right, and in them he could find no guile. Mr. Hofmeyer and President Brand exercised a wise discretion from their own point of view, when they urged his appointment as Special Commissioner. I now come to Sir Evelyn Wood, who was in the

position of an independent Englishman, neither prejudiced in favour of the Boers, or the reverse, and on whom, as a military man, Lord Kimberley would find it difficult to put the official screw. The results of his happy position are obvious in the paper attached to the end of the Report, and signed by him, in which he totally and entirely differs from the majority of the Commission on every point of importance. Most people will think that this very outspoke and forcible dissent deducts somewhat from the value of the Report, and throws a shadow of doubt on the wisdom of its provisions.

The formal document of agreement between Her Majesty's Government and the Boer leaders, commonly known as the Convention, was signed by both parties at Pretoria on the afternoon of the 3d August 1881, in the same room in which, nearly four years before, the Annexation Proclamation was signed by Sir T. Shepstone.

Whilst this business was being transacted in Government House, a curious ceremony was going on just outside, and within sight of the windows. This was the ceremonious burial of the Union Jack, which was followed to the grave by a crowd of about 2000 loyalists and native chiefs. On the outside of the coffin was written the word "Resurgam," and an eloquent oration was delivered over the grave. Such demonstrations are, no doubt, foolish enough, but they are not entirely without political significance.

But a more unpleasant duty awaited the Commissioners than that of

attaching their signatures to a document,--consisting of the necessity of conveying Her Majesty's decision as to the retrocession, to about a hundred native Chiefs, until now Her Majesty's subjects, who had been gathered together to hear it. It must be borne in mind that the natives had not been consulted as to the disposal of the country, although they outnumber the white people in the proportion of twenty to one, and that, beyond some worthless paper stipulations, nothing had been done for their interests.

Personally, I must plead guilty to what I know is by many, especially by those who are attached to the Boer cause, considered as folly if not worse, namely, a sufficient interest in the natives, and sympathy with their sufferings to bring me to the conclusion, that in acting thus we have inflicted a cruel injustice upon them. It seems to me, that as they were the original owners of the soil, they were entitled to some consideration in the question of its disposal, and consequently and incidentally, of their own. I am aware that it is generally considered that the white man has a right to the black man's possessions and land, and that it is his high and holy mission to exterminate the wretched native and take his place. But with this conclusion I venture to differ. So far as my own experience of natives has gone, I have found that in all the essential qualities of mind and body, they very much resemble white men, with the exception that they are, as a race, quicker-witted, more honest, and braver, than the ordinary run of white men. Of them might be aptly quoted the speech Shakespeare puts into Shylock's mouth: "Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses,

affections, passions?" In the same way I ask, Has a native no feelings or affections? does he not suffer when his parents are shot, or his children stolen, or when he is driven a wanderer from his home? Does he not know fear, feel pain, affection, hate and gratitude? Most certainly he does; and this being so, I cannot believe that the Almighty, who made both white and black, gave to the one race the right or mission of exterminating, or even of robbing or maltreating the other, and calling the process the advance of civilisation. It seems to me, that on only one condition, if at all, have we the right to take the black man's land; and that is, that we provide them with an equal and a just Government, and allow no maltreatment of them, either as individuals or tribes: but, on the contrary, do our best to elevate them, and wean them from savage customs. Otherwise, the practice is surely undefensible.

I am aware, however, that with the exception of a small class, these are sentiments which are not shared by the great majority of the public, either at home or abroad. Indeed, it can be plainly seen how little sympathy they command, from the fact that but scanty remonstrance was raised at the treatment meted out to our native subjects in the Transvaal, when they were, to the number of nearly a million, handed over from the peace, justice, and security, that on the whole characterise our rule, to a state of things, and possibilities of wrong and suffering which I will not try to describe.

To the chiefs thus assembled Sir Hercules Robinson, as President of the Royal Commission, read a statement, and then retired, refusing to allow

them to speak in answer. The statement informed the natives that "Her Majesty's Government, with that sense of justice which befits a great and powerful nation," had returned the country to the Boers, "whose representatives, Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, I now," said Sir Hercules, "have much pleasure in introducing to you." If reports are true, the native Chiefs had, many of them personally, and all of them by reputation, already the advantage of a very intimate acquaintance with all three of these gentlemen, so that an introduction was somewhat superfluous.

Sir Hercules went on to explain to them that locations would be allotted to them at some future time; that a British Resident would be appointed, whose especial charge they would be, but that they must bear in mind that he was not the ruler of the country, but the Government, "subject to Her Majesty's suzerain rights." Natives were, no doubt, expected to know by intuition what suzerain rights are. The statement then goes on to give them good advice as to the advantages of indulging in manual labour when asked to do so by the Boers, and generally to show them how bright and happy is the future that lies before them. Lest they should be too elated by such good tidings, they are, however, reminded that it will be necessary to retain the law relating to passes, which is, in the hands of a people like the Boers, about as unjust a regulation as a dominant race can invent for the oppression of a subject people, and had, in the old days of the Republic, been productive of much hardship. The statement winds up by assuring them that their "interests will never be forgotten or neglected by Her Majesty's Government." Having read the

document the Commission hastily withdrew, and after their withdrawal the Chiefs were "allowed" to state their opinions to the Secretary for Native Affairs.

In availing themselves of this permission, it is noticeable that no allusion was made to all the advantages they were to reap under the Convention, nor did they seem to attach much importance to the appointment of the British Resident. On the contrary, all their attention was given to the great fact that the country had been ceded to the Boers, and that they were no longer the Queen's subjects. We are told, in Mr. Shepstone's Report, that they "got very excited," and "asked whether it was thought that they had no feelings or hearts, that they were thus treated as a stick or piece of tobacco, which could be passed from hand to hand without question." Umgombarie, a Zoutpansberg Chief, said, "I am Umgombarie. I have fought with the Boers, and have many wounds, and they know that what I say is true. . . . I will never consent to place myself under their rule. I belong to the English Government. I am not a man who eats with both sides of his jaw at once; I only use one side. I am English, I have said." Silamba said, "I belong to the English. I will never return under the Boers. You see me, a man of my rank and position, is it right that such as I should be seized and laid on the ground and flogged, as has been done to me and other chiefs?"

Sinkanhla said: "We hear and yet do not hear, we cannot understand. We are troubling you, Chief, by talking in this way; we hear the Chiefs say

that the Queen took the country because the people of the country wished it, and again that the majority of the owners of the country did not wish their rule, and that therefore the country was given back. We should like to have the man pointed out from among us black people who objects to the rule of the Queen. We are the real owners of the country; we were here when the Boers came, and without asking leave, settled down and treated us in every way badly. The English Government then came and took the country; we have now had four years of rest and peaceful and just rule. We have been called here to-day, and are told that the country, our country, has been given to the Boers by the Queen. This is a thing which surprises us. Did the country, then, belong to the Boers? Did it not belong to our fathers and forefathers before us, long before the Boers came here? We have heard that the Boers' country is at the Cape. If the Queen wishes to give them their land, why does she not give them back the Cape?"

I have quoted this speech at length, because, although made by a despised native, it sets forth their case more powerfully and in happier language than I can do.

Umyethile said: "We have no heart for talking. I have returned to the country from Sechelis, where I had to fly from Boer oppression. Our hearts are black and heavy with grief to-day at the news told us, we are in agony, our intestines are twisting and writhing inside of us, just as you see a snake do when it is struck on the head. . . . We do not know what has become of us, but we feel dead; it may be that the Lord may

change the nature of the Boers, and that we will not be treated like dogs and beasts of burden as formerly, but we have no hope of such a change, and we leave you with heavy hearts and great apprehension as to the future." In his Report, Mr. Shepstone (the Secretary for Native Affairs) says: "One chief, Jan Sibilo, who has been, he informed me, personally threatened with death by the Boers after the English leave, could not restrain his feelings, but cried like a child."

I have nothing to add to these extracts, which are taken from many such statements. They are the very words of the persons most concerned, and will speak for themselves.

The Convention was signed on the 3d August 1881, and was to be formally ratified by a Volksraad or Parliament of the Burghers within three months of that date, in default of which it was to fall to the ground and become null and void.

Anybody who has followed the course of affairs with reference to the retrocession of the Transvaal, or who has even taken the trouble to read through this brief history, will probably come to the conclusion that, under all the circumstances, the Boers had got more than they could reasonably expect. Not so, however, the Boers themselves. On the 28th September the newly-elected Volksraad referred the Convention to a General Committee to report on, and on the 30th September the Report was presented. On the 3d October a telegram was despatched through the British Resident to "His Excellency W. E. Gladstone," in which the

Volksraad states that the Convention is not acceptable--

(1.) Because it is in conflict with the Sand River Treaty of 1852.

(2.) Because it violates the peace agreement entered into with Sir Evelyn Wood, in confidence of which the Boers laid down their arms.

The Volksraad consequently declared that modifications were desirable, and that certain articles must be altered.

To begin with, they declare that the "conduct of foreign relations does not appertain to the Suzerain, only supervision," and that the articles bearing on these points must consequently be modified. They next attack the native question, stating that "the Suzerain has not the right to interfere with our Legislature," and state that they cannot agree to Article 3, which gives the Suzerain a right of veto on Legislation connected with the natives, to Article 13, by virtue of which natives are to be allowed to acquire land, and to the last part of Article 26, by which it is provided that whites of alien race living in the Transvaal shall not be taxed in excess of the taxes imposed on Transvaal citizens.

They further declare that it is "infra dignitatem" for the President of the Transvaal to be a member of a Commission. This refers to the Native Location Commission, on which he is, in the terms of the Convention, to sit, together with the British Resident, and a third person jointly

appointed.

They next declare that the amount of the debt for which the Commission has made them liable should be modified. Considering that England had already made them a present of from 600,000 pounds to 800,000 pounds, this is a most barefaced demand. Finally, they state that "Articles 15, 16, 26, and 27, are superfluous, and only calculated to wound our sense of honour" (sic).

Article 15 enacts that no slavery or apprenticeship shall be tolerated.

Article 16 provides for religious toleration.

Article 26 provides for the free movement, trading, and residence of all persons, other than natives, conforming themselves to the laws of the Transvaal.

Article 27 gives to all the right of free access to the Courts of Justice.

Putting the "sense of honour" of the Transvaal Volksraad out of the question, past experience has but too plainly proved that these Articles are by no means superfluous.

In reply to this message, Sir Hercules Robinson telegraphs to the British Resident on the 21st October in the following words:--

"Having forwarded Volksraad Resolution of 15th to Earl of Kimberley, I am desired to instruct you in reply to repeat to the Triumvirate that Her Majesty's Government cannot entertain any proposals for a modification of the Convention until after it has been ratified, and the necessity for further concession proved by experience."

I wish to draw particular attention to the last part of this message, which is extremely typical of the line of policy adopted throughout in the Transvaal business. The English Government dared not make any further concession to the Boers, because they felt that they had already strained the temper of the country almost to breaking in the matter. On the other hand, they were afraid that if they did not do something, the Boers would tear up the Convention, and they would find themselves face to face with the old difficulty. Under these circumstances, they have fallen back upon their temporising and un-English policy, which leaves them a back-door to escape through, whatever turn things take. Should the Boers now suddenly turn round and declare, which is extremely probable, that they repudiate their debt to us, or that they are sick of the presence of a British Resident, the Government will be able to announce that "the necessity for further concession" has now been "proved by experience," and thus escape the difficulty. In short, this telegram has deprived the Convention of whatever finality it may have possessed, and made it, as a document, as worthless as it is as a practical settlement. That this is the view taken of it by the Boers themselves, is proved by the text of the Ratification which followed on

the receipt of this telegram.

The tone of this document throughout is, in my opinion, considering from whom it came, and against whom it is directed, very insolent. And it amply confirms what I have previously said, that the Boers looked upon themselves as a victorious people making terms with those they have conquered. The Ratification leads off thus: "The Volksraad is not satisfied with this Convention, and considers that the members of the Triumvirate performed a fervent act of love for the Fatherland when they upon their own responsibility signed such an unsatisfactory state document." This is damning with faint praise indeed. It then goes on to recite the various points of object, stating that the answers from the English Government proved that they were well founded. "The English Government," it says, "acknowledges indirectly by this answer (the telegram of 21st October, quoted above) that the difficulties raised by the Volksraad are neither fictitious nor unfounded, inasmuch as it desires from us the concession that we, the Volksraad, shall submit it to a practical test." It will be observed that English is here represented as begging the favour of a trial of her conditions from the Volksraad of the Transvaal Boers. The Ratification is in these words: "Therefore it is that the Raad here unanimously resolves not to go into further discussion of the Convention, and maintaining all objections to the Convention as made before the Royal Commission or stated in the Raad, and for the purpose of showing to everybody that the love of peace and unity inspires us, for the time and provisionally submitting the articles of the Convention to a practical test, hereby complying with

the request of the English Government contained in the telegram of the 13th October 1881, proceeds to ratify the Convention."

It would have been interesting to have seen how such a Ratification as this, which is no Ratification but an insult, would have been accepted by Lord Beaconsfield. I think that within twenty-four hours of its arrival in Downing Street, the Boer Volksraad would have received a startling answer. But Lord Beaconsfield is dead, and by his successor it was received with all due thankfulness and humility. His words, however, on this subject still remain to us, and even his great rival might have done well to listen to them. It was in the course of what was, I believe, the last speech he made in the House of Lords, that speaking about the Transvaal rising, he warned the Government that it was a very dangerous thing to make peace with rebellious subjects in arms against the authority of the Queen. The warning passed unheeded, and the peace was made in the way I have described.

As regards the Convention itself, it will be obvious to the reader that the Boers have not any intention of acting up to its provisions, mild as they are, if they can possibly avoid them, whilst, on the other hand, there is no force at hand to punish their disregard or breach. It is all very well to create a Resident with extensive powers; but how is he to enforce his decisions? What is he to do if his awards are laughed at and made a mockery of, as they are and will be? The position of Mr. Hudson at Pretoria is even worse than that of Mr. Osborn in Zululand. For instance, the Convention specifies in the first article that the

Transvaal is to be known as the Transvaal State. The Boer Government have, however, thought fit to adopt the name of "South African Republic" in all public documents. Mr. Hudson was accordingly directed to remonstrate, which he did in a feeble way; his remonstrance was politely acknowledged, but the country is still officially called the South African Republic, the Convention and Mr. Hudson's remonstrations notwithstanding. Mr. Hudson, however, appears to be better suited to the position than would have been the case had an Englishman, pure and simple, been appointed, since it is evident that things that would have struck the latter as insults to the Queen he represented, and his country generally, are not so understood by him. In fact, he admirably represents his official superiors in his capacity of swallowing rebuffs, and when smitten on one cheek delightedly offering the other.

Thus we find him attending a Boer meeting of thanksgiving for the success that had waited on their arms and the recognition of their independence, where most people will consider he was out of place. To this meeting, thus graced by his presence, an address was presented by a branch of the Africander Bond, a powerful institution, having for its object the total uprootal of English rule and English customs in South Africa, to which he must have listened with pleasure. In it he, in common with other members of the meeting, is informed that "you took up the sword and struck the Briton with such force" that "the Britons through fear revived that sense of justice to which they could not be brought by petitions," and that the "day will soon come that we shall enter with you on one arena for the entire independence of South

Africa," i.e., independence from English rule.

On the following day the Government gave a dinner, to which all those who had done good service during the late hostilities were invited, the British Resident being apparently the only Englishman asked. Amongst the other celebrities present I notice the name of Buskes. This man, who is an educated Hollander, was the moving spirit of the Potchefstroom atrocities; indeed, so dark is his reputation that the Royal Commission refused to transact business with him, or to admit him into their presence. Mr. Hudson was not so particular. And now comes the most extraordinary part of the episode. At the dinner it was necessary that the health of Her Majesty as Suzerain should be proposed, and with studied insolence this was done last of all the leading political toasts, and immediately after that of the Triumvirate. Notwithstanding this fact, and that the toast was couched by Mr. Joubert, who stated that "he would not attempt to explain what a Suzerain was," in what appear to be semi-ironical terms, we find that Mr. Hudson "begged to tender his thanks to the Honourable Mr. Joubert for the kind way in which he proposed the toast."

It may please Mr. Hudson to see the name of the Queen thus metaphorically dragged in triumph at the chariot wheels of the Triumvirate, but it is satisfactory to know that the spectacle is not appreciated in England: since, on a question in the House of Lords, by the Earl of Carnarvon, who characterised it as a deliberate insult, Lord Kimberley replied that the British Resident had been instructed that

in future he was not to attend public demonstrations unless he had previously informed himself that the name of Her Majesty would be treated with proper respect. Let us hope that this official reprimand will have its effect, and that Mr. Hudson will learn therefrom that there is such a thing as trop de zele--even in a good cause.

The Convention is now a thing of the past, the appropriate rewards have been lavishly distributed to its framers, and President Brand has at last prevailed upon the Volksraad of the Orange Free State to allow him to become a Knight Grand Cross of Saint Michael and Saint George,--the same prize looked forward to by our most distinguished public servants at the close of the devotion of their life to the service of their country. But its results are yet to come--though it would be difficult to forecast the details of their development. One thing, however, is clear: the signing of that document signalised an entirely new departure in South African affairs, and brought us within a measurable distance of the abandonment, for the present at any rate, of the supremacy of English rule in South Africa.

This is the larger issue of the matter, and it is already bearing fruit. Emboldened by their success in the Transvaal, the Dutch party at the Cape are demanding, and the demand is to be granted, that the Dutch tongue be admitted pari passu with English, as the official language in the Law Courts and the House of Assembly. When a country thus consents to use a foreign tongue equally with its own, it is a sure sign that those who speak it are rising to power. But "the Party"

looks higher than this, and openly aims at throwing off English rule altogether, and declaring South Africa a great Dutch republic. The course of events is favourable to their aspiration. Responsible Government is to be granted to Natal, which country not being strong enough to stand alone in the face of the many dangers that surround her, will be driven into the arms of the Dutch party to save herself from destruction. It will be useless for her to look for help from England, and any feelings of repugnance she may feel to Boer rule will soon be choked by necessity, and a mutual interest. It is, however, possible that some unforeseen event, such as the advent to power of a strong Conservative Ministry, may check the tide that now sets so strongly in favour of Dutch supremacy.

It seems to me, however, to be a question worthy of the consideration of those who at present direct the destinies of the Empire, whether it would not be wise, as they have gone so far, to go a little further and favour a scheme for the total abandonment of South Africa, retaining only Table Bay. If they do not, it is now quite within the bounds of sober possibility that they may one day have to face a fresh Transvaal rebellion, only on a ten times larger scale, and might find it difficult to retain even Table Bay. If, on the other hand, they do, I believe that all the White States in South Africa will confederate of their own free-will, under the pressure of the necessity for common action, and the Dutch element being preponderant, at once set to work to exterminate the natives on general principles, in much the same way, and from much the same motives that a cook exterminates black beetles, because she

thinks them ugly, and to clear the kitchen.

I need hardly say that such a policy is not one that commands my sympathy, but Her Majesty's Government having put their hand to the plough, it is worth their while to consider it. It would at any rate be in perfect accordance with their declared sentiments, and command an enthusiastic support from their followers.

As regards the smaller and more immediate issue of the retrocession, namely, its effect on the Transvaal itself, it cannot be other than evil. The act is, I believe, quite without precedent in our history, and it is difficult to see, looking at it from those high grounds of national morality assumed by the Government, what greater arguments can be advanced in its favour, than could be found to support the abandonment of,--let us say,--Ireland. Indeed a certain parallel undoubtedly exists between the circumstances of the two countries. Ireland was, like the Transvaal, annexed, though a long time ago, and has continually agitated for its freedom. The Irish hate us, so did the Boers. In Ireland, Englishmen are being shot, and England is running the awful risk of bloodguiltiness, as it did in the Transvaal. In Ireland, smouldering revolution is being fanned into flame by Mr. Gladstone's speeches and acts, as it was in the Transvaal. In Ireland, as in the Transvaal, there exists a strong loyal class that receives insults instead of support from the Government, and whose property, as was the case there, is taken from them without compensation, to be flung as a sop to stop the mouths of the Queen's enemies. And so I might go on,

finding many such similarities of circumstances, but my parallel, like most parallels, must break down at last. Thus--it mattered little to England whether or no she let the Transvaal go, but to let Ireland go would be more than even Mr. Gladstone dare attempt.

Somehow, if you follow these things far enough, you always come to vulgar first principles. The difference between the case of the Transvaal and that of Ireland is a difference not of justice but of cause, for both causes are equally unjust or just according as they are viewed, but of mere common expediency. Judging from the elevated standpoint of the national morality theory however, which, as we know, soars above such truisms as the foolish statement that force is a remedy, or that if you wish to retain your prestige you must not allow defeats to pass unavenged, I cannot see why, if it was righteous to abandon the Transvaal, it would not be equally righteous to abandon Ireland!

As for the Transvaal, that country is not to be congratulated on its success, for it has destroyed all its hopes of permanent peace, has ruined its trade and credit, and has driven away the most useful and productive class in the community. The Boers, elated by their success in arms, will be little likely to settle down to peaceable occupations, and still less likely to pay their taxes, which, indeed, I hear they are already refusing to do. They have learnt how easily even a powerful Government can be upset, and the lesson is not likely to be forgotten, for want of repetition to their own weak one.

Already the Transvaal Government hardly knows which way to turn for funds, and is, perhaps fortunately for itself, quite unable to borrow, through want of credit.

As regards the native question, I agree with Mr. H. Shepstone, who, in his Report on this subject, says that he does not believe that the natives will inaugurate any action against the Boers, so long as the latter do not try to collect taxes, or otherwise interfere with them. But if the Boer Government is to continue to exist, it will be bound to raise taxes from the natives, since it cannot collect much from its white subjects. The first general attempt of the sort will be the signal for active resistance on the part of the natives, whom, if they act without concert, the Boers will be able to crush in detail, though with considerable loss. If, on the other hand, they should have happened, during the last few years, to have learnt the advantages of combination, as is quite possible, perhaps they will crush the Boers.

The only thing that is at present certain about the matter is that there will be bloodshed, and that before long. For instance, the Montsoia difficulty in the Keate Award has in it the possibilities of a serious war, and there are plenty such difficulties ready to spring into life within and without the Transvaal.

In all human probability it will take but a small lapse of time for the Transvaal to find itself in the identical position from which we

relieved it by the Annexation.

What course events will then take it is impossible to say. It may be found desirable to re-annex the country, though, in my opinion, that would be, after all that has passed, an unfortunate step; its inhabitants may be cut up piecemeal by a combined movement of native tribes, as they would have been, had they not been rescued by the English Government in 1877, or it is possible that the Orange Free State may consent to take the Transvaal under its wing: who can say? There is only one thing that our recently abandoned possession can count on for certain, and that is trouble, both from its white subjects, and the natives, who hate the Boers with a bitter and a well-earned hatred.

The whole question, can, so far as its moral aspect is concerned, be summed up in a few words.

Whether or no the Annexation was a necessity at the moment of its execution,--which I certainly maintain it was--it received the unreserved sanction of the Home Authorities, and the relations of Sovereign and subject, with all the many and mutual obligations involved in that connection, were established between the Queen of England and every individual of the motley population of the Transvaal. Nor was this change an empty form, for, to the largest proportion of that population, this transfer of allegiance brought with it a priceless and a vital boon. To them it meant--freedom and justice--for where, on any portion of this globe over which the British ensign floats, does the law even

wink at cruelty or wrong?

A few years passed away, and a small number of the Queen's subjects in the Transvaal rose in rebellion against Her authority, and inflicted some reverses on Her arms. Thereupon, in spite of the reiterated pledges given to the contrary--partly under stress of defeat, and partly in obedience to the pressure of "advanced views"--the country was abandoned, and the vast majority who had remained faithful to the Crown, was handed to the cruel despotism of the minority who had rebelled against it.

Such an act of treachery to those to whom we were bound with double chains--by the strong ties of a common citizenship, and by those claims to England's protection from violence and wrong which have hitherto been wont to command it, even where there was no duty to fulfil, and no authority to vindicate--stands--I believe--without parallel on our records, and marks a new departure in our history.

I cannot end these pages without expressing my admiration of the extremely able way in which the Boers managed their revolt, when once they felt that, having undertaken the thing, it was a question of life and death with them. It shows that they have good stuff in them somewhere, which, under the firm but just rule of Her Majesty, might have been much developed, and it makes it the more sad that they should have been led to throw off that rule, and have been allowed to do so by an English Government.

In conclusion, there is one point that I must touch on, and that is the effect of the retrocession on the native mind, which I can only describe as most disastrous. The danger alluded to in the Report of the Royal Commission has been most amply realised, and the prevailing belief in the steadfastness of our policy, and the inviolability of our plighted word, which has hitherto been the great secret of our hold on the Kafirs, has been rudely shaken. The motives that influenced, or are said to have influenced, the Government in their act, are naturally quite unintelligible to savages, however clever, who do believe that force is a remedy, and who have seen the inhabitants of a country ruled by England, defeat English soldiers and take possession of it, whilst those who remained loyal to England were driven out of it. It will not be wonderful if some of them, say the natives of Natal, deduce therefrom conclusions unfavourable to loyalty, and evince a desire to try the same experiment.

It is, however, unprofitable to speculate on the future, which must be left to unfold itself.

The curtain is, so far as this country is concerned, down for the moment on the South African stage; when it rises again, there is but too much reason to fear that it will reveal a state of confusion, which, unless it is more wisely and consistently dealt with in the future than it has been in the past, may develop into chaos.

APPENDIX

I

THE POTCHEFSTROOM ATROCITIES, &C.

There were more murders and acts of cruelty committed during the war at Potchefstroom, where the behaviour of the Boers was throughout both deceitful and savage, than at any other place.

When the fighting commenced a number of ladies and children, the wives and children of English residents, took refuge in the fort. Shortly after it had been invested they applied to be allowed to return to their homes in the town till the war was over. The request was refused by the Boer commander, who said that as they had gone there, they might stop and "perish" there. One poor lady, the wife of a gentleman well known in the Transvaal, was badly wounded by having the point of a stake, which had been cut in two by a bullet, driven into her side. She was at the time in a state of pregnancy, and died some days afterwards in great agony. Her little sister was shot through the throat, and several other women and children suffered from bullet wounds, and fever arising from

their being obliged to live for months exposed to rain and heat, with insufficient food.

The moving spirit of all the Potchefstroom atrocities was a cruel wretch of the name of Buskes, a well-educated man, who, as an advocate of the High Court, had taken the oath of allegiance to the Queen.

One deponent swears that he saw this Buskes wearing Captain Fall's diamond ring, which he had taken from Sergeant Ritchie, to whom it was handed to be sent to England, and also that he had possessed himself of the carriages and other goods belonging to prisoners taken by the Boers.[*] Another deponent (whose name is omitted in the Blue Book for precautionary reasons) swears, "That on the next night the patrol again came to my house accompanied by one Buskes, who was secretary of the Boer Committee, and again asked where my wife and daughter were. I replied, in bed; and Buskes then said, 'I must see for myself.' I refused to allow him, and he forced me, with a loaded gun held to my breast, to open the curtains of the bed, when he pulled the bedclothes half off my wife, and altogether off my daughter. I then told him if I had a gun I would shoot him. He placed a loaded gun at my breast, when my wife sprang out of bed and got between us."

[*] Buskes was afterwards forced to deliver up the ring.

I remember hearing at the time that this Buskes (who is a good musician) took one of his victims, who was on the way to execution, into the

chapel and played the "Dead March in Saul," or some such piece, over him on the organ.

After the capture of the Court House a good many Englishmen fell into the hands of the Boers. Most of these were sentenced to hard labour and deprivation of "civil rights." The sentence was enforced by making them work in the trenches under a heavy fire from the fort. One poor fellow, F. W. Finlay by name, got his head blown off by a shell from his own friends in the fort, and several loyal Kafirs suffered the same fate. After these events the remaining prisoners refused to return to the trenches till they had been "tamed" by being thrashed with the butt end of guns, and by threats of receiving twenty-five lashes each.

But their fate, bad as it was, was not so awful as that suffered by Dr. Woite and J. Van der Linden.

Dr. Woite had attended the Boer meeting which was held before the outbreak, and written a letter from thence to Major Clarke, in which he had described the talk of the Boers as silly bluster. He was not a paid spy. This letter was, unfortunately for him, found in Major Clarke's pocket-book, and because of it he was put through a form of trial, taken out and shot dead, all on the same day. He left a wife and large family, who afterwards found their way to Natal in a destitute condition.

The case of Van der Linden is somewhat similar. He was one of Raaf's Volunteers, and as such had taken the oath of allegiance to the Queen.

In the execution of his duty he made a report to his commanding officer about the Boer meeting, and which afterwards fell into the hands of the Boers. On this he was put through the form of trial, and, though in the service of the Queen, was found guilty of treason and condemned to death. One of his judges, a little less stony-hearted than the rest, pointed out that "when the prisoner committed the crime martial law had not yet been proclaimed, nor the State," but it availed him nothing. He was taken out and shot.

A Kafir named Carolus was also put through the form of trial and shot, for no crime at all that I can discover.

Ten unarmed Kafir drivers, who had been sent away from the fort, were shot down in cold blood by a party of Boers. Several witnesses depose to having seen their remains lying together close to Potchefstroom.

Various other Kafirs were shot. None of the perpetrators of these crimes were brought to justice. The Royal Commission comments on these acts as follows:--

"In regard to the deaths of Woite, Van de Linden, and Carolus, the Boer leaders do not deny the fact that those men had been executed, but sought to justify it. The majority of your Commissioners felt bound to record their opinion that the taking of the lives of these men was an act contrary to the rules of civilised warfare. Sir H. de Villiers was of opinion that the executions in these cases, having been ordered by

properly constituted Court Martial of the Boers' forces after due trial, did not fall under the cognisance of your Commissioners.

"Upon the case of William Finlay the majority of your Commissioners felt bound to record the opinion that the sacrifice of Finlay's life, through forced labour under fire in the trenches, was an act contrary to the rules of civilised warfare. Sir H. de Villiers did not feel justified by the facts of the case in joining in this expression of opinion (sic). As to the case of the Kafir Andries, your Commissioners decided that, although the shooting of this man appeared to them, from the information laid before them, to be not in accordance with the rules of civilised warfare, under all the circumstances of the case, it was not desirable to insist upon a prosecution.

"The majority of your Commissioners, although feeling it a duty to record emphatically their disapproval of the acts that resulted in the deaths of Woite, Van der Linden, Finlay, and Carolus, yet found it impossible to bring to justice the persons guilty of these acts."

It will be observed that Sir H. de Villiers does not express any disapproval, emphatic or otherwise, of these wicked murders.

But Potchefstroom did not enjoy a monopoly of murder.

In December 1880, Captain Elliot, who was a survivor from the Bronker Spruit massacre, and Captain Lambart, who had been taken prisoner by the

Boers whilst bringing remounts from the Free State, were released from Heidelberg on parole on condition that they left the country. An escort of two men brought them to a drift of the Vaal river, where they refused to cross, because they could not get their cart through, the river being in flood. The escort then returned to Heidelberg and reported that the officers would not cross. A civil note was then sent back to Captains Elliot and Lambart, signed by P. J. Joubert, telling them "to pass the Vaal river immediately by the road that will be shown to you." What secret orders, if any, were sent with this letter has never transpired; but I decline to believe that, either in this or in Barber's case, the Boer escort took upon themselves the responsibility of murdering their prisoners, without authority of some kind for the deed.

The men despatched from Heidelberg with the letter found Lambert and Elliot wandering about and trying to find the way to Standerton. They presented the letter, and took them towards a drift in the Vaal. Shortly before they got there the prisoners noticed that their escort had been reinforced. It would be interesting to know, if these extra men were not sent to assist in the murder, how and why they turned up as they did and joined themselves to the escort. The prisoners were taken to an old and disused drift of the Vaal river and told to cross. It was now dark, and the river was much swollen with rain; in fact, impassable for the cart and horses. Captains Elliot and Lambart begged to be allowed to outspan till the next morning, but were told that they must cross, which they accordingly attempted to do. A few yards from the bank the cart stuck on a rock, and whilst in this position the Boer escort poured a volley into

it. Poor Elliot was instantly killed, one bullet fracturing his skull, another passing through the back, a third shattering the right thigh, and a fourth breaking the left wrist. The cart was also riddled, but, strange to say, Captain Lambert was untouched, and succeeded in swimming
to the further bank, the Boers firing at him whenever the flashes of lightning revealed his whereabouts. After sticking some time in the mud of the bank he managed to effect his escape, and next day reached the house of an Englishman called Groom, living in the Free State, and from thence made his way to Natal.

Two of the murderers were put through a form of trial, after the conclusion of peace, and acquitted.

The case of the murder of Dr. Barber is of a somewhat similar character to that of Elliot, except that there is in this case a curious piece of indirect evidence that seems to connect the murder directly with Piet Joubert, one of the Triumvirate.

In the month of February 1881, two Englishmen came to the Boer laager at Lang's Nek to offer their services as doctors. Their names were Dr. Barber, who was well known to the Boers, and his assistant, Mr. Walter Dyas, and they came, not from Natal, but the Orange Free State. On arrival at the Boer camp they were at first well received, but after a little while seized, searched, and tied up all night to a disselboom (pole of a waggon). Next morning they were told to mount their horses,

and started from the camp escorted by two men who were to take them over the Free State line.

When they reached the Free State line the Boers told them to get off their horses, which they were ordered to bring back to the camp. They did so, bade good-day to their escort, and started to walk on towards their destination. When they had gone about forty yards Dyas heard the report of a rifle, and Barber called out, "My God, I am shot!" and fell dead.

Dyas went down on his hands and knees and saw one of the escort deliberately aim at him. He then jumped up, and ran dodging from right to left, trying to avoid the bullet. Presently the man fired, and he felt himself struck through the thigh. He fell with his face to the men, and saw his would-be assassin put a fresh cartridge into his rifle and aim at him. Turning his face to the ground he awaited his death, but the bullet whizzed past his head. He then saw the men take the horses and go away, thinking they had finished him. After waiting a while he managed to get up, and struggled to a house not far off, where he was kindly treated and remained till he recovered.

Some time after this occurrence a Hottentot, named Allan Smith, made a statement at Newcastle, from which it appears that he had been taken prisoner by the Boers and made to work for them. One night he saw Barber and Dyas tied to the disselboom, and overheard the following, which I will give in his own words:--

"I went to a fire where some Boers were sitting; among them was a low-sized man, moderately stout, with a dark-brown full beard, apparently about thirty-five years of age. I do not know his name. He was telling his comrades that he had brought an order from Piet Joubert to Viljoen, to take the two prisoners to the Free State line and shoot them there. He said, in the course of conversation, 'Piet Joubert het gevraacht waarom was de mensche neet dood geschiet toen hulle bijde eerste laager gekom het.' ('Piet Joubert asked why were the men not shot when they came to the first laager.') They then saw me at the fire, and one of them said, 'You must not talk before that fellow; he understands what you say, and will tell everybody.'

"Next morning Viljoen told me to go away, and gave me a pass into the Free State. He said (in Dutch), 'you must not drive for any Englishmen again. If we catch you doing so we will shoot you, and if you do not go away quick, and we catch you hanging about when we bring the two men to the line, we will shoot you too.'"

Dyas, who escaped, made an affidavit with reference to this statement in which he says, "I have read the foregoing affidavit of Allan Smith, and I say that the person described in the third paragraph thereof as bringing orders from Piet Joubert to Viljoen, corresponds with one of the Boers who took Dr. Barber and myself to the Free State, and to the best of my belief he is the man who shot Dr. Barber."

The actual murderers were put on their trial in the Free State, and, of course, acquitted. In his examination at the trial, Allan Smith says, "It was a young man who said that Joubert had given orders that Barber had to be shot. . . . It was not at night, but in the morning early, when the young man spoke about Piet Joubert's order."

Most people will gather, from what I have quoted, that there exists a certain connection between the dastardly murder of Dr. Barber (and the attempted murder of Mr. Dyas), and Piet Joubert, one of that "able" Triumvirate of which Mr. Gladstone speaks so highly.

I shall only allude to one more murder, though more are reported to have occurred, amongst them--that of Mr. Malcolm, who was kicked to death by Boers,--and that is Mr. Green's.

Mr. Green was an English gold-digger, and was travelling along the main road to his home at Spitzcop. The road passed close by the military camp at Lydenburg, into which he was called. On coming out he went to a Boer patrol with a flag of truce, and whilst talking to them was shot dead. The Rev. J. Thorne, the English clergyman at Lydenburg, describes this murder in an affidavit in the following words:--

"That I was the clergyman who got together a party of Englishmen and brought down the body of Mr. Green who was murdered by the Boers and buried it. I have ascertained the circumstances of the murder, which were as follows:--Mr. Green was on his way to the gold-fields. As he was

passing the fort, he was called in by the officers, and sent out again with a message to the Boer commandant. Immediately on leaving the camp, he went to the Boer guard opposite with a flag of truce in his hand; while parleying with the Boers, who proposed to make a prisoner of him, he was shot through the head."

No prosecution was instituted in this case. Mr. Green left a wife and children in a destitute condition.

II

PLEDGES GIVEN BY MR. GLADSTONE'S GOVERNMENT AS TO THE RETENTION OF THE TRANSVAAL AS A BRITISH COLONY

The following extracts from the speeches, despatches, and telegrams of members of the present Government, with reference to the proposed retrocession of the Transvaal, are not without interest:--

During the month of May 1880, Lord Kimberley despatched a telegram to Sir Bartle Frere, in which the following words occur: "Under no circumstances can the Queen's authority in the Transvaal be relinquished."

In a despatch dated 20th May, and addressed to Sir Bartle Frere, Lord Kimberley says, "That the sovereignty of the Queen in the Transvaal could not be relinquished."

In a speech in the House of Lords on the 24th May 1880, Lord Kimberley said:--

"There was a still stronger reason than that for not receding; it was impossible to say what calamities such a step as receding might not cause. We had, at the cost of much blood and treasure, restored peace, and the effect of our now reversing our policy would be to leave the province in a state of anarchy, and possibly to cause an internecine war. For such a risk he could not make himself responsible. The number of the natives in the Transvaal was estimated at about 800,000, and that of the whites less than 50,0000. Difficulties with the Zulus and frontier tribes would again arise, and, looking as they must to South Africa as a whole, the Government, after a careful consideration of the question, came to the conclusion that we could not relinquish the Transvaal. Nothing could be more unfortunate than uncertainty in respect to such a matter."

On the 8th June 1880, Mr. Gladstone, in reply to a Boer memorial, wrote as follows:--

"It is undoubtedly a matter for much regret that it should, since the Annexation, have appeared that so large a number of the population of

Dutch origin in the Transvaal are opposed to the annexation of that territory, but it is impossible now to consider that question as if it were presented for the first time. We have to do with a state of things which has existed for a considerable period, during which obligations have been contracted, especially, though not exclusively, towards the native population, which cannot be set aside. Looking to all the circumstances, both of the Transvaal and the rest of South Africa, and to the necessity of preventing a renewal of disorders, which might lead to disastrous consequences, not only to the Transvaal but to the whole of South Africa, our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish the Transvaal."

Her Majesty's Speech, delivered in Parliament on the 6th January 1881, contains the following words: "A rising in the Transvaal has recently imposed upon me the duty of vindicating my authority."

These extracts are rather curious reading in face of the policy adopted by the Government, after our troops had been defeated.

III

THE CASE OF INDABEZIMBI

This is a case which came under my own notice. The complainant is now

a tenant of my own. When Indabezimbi appeared before Mr. Cochrane and myself, his appearance fully bore out his description of the assault made upon him. We did everything in our power to help him to recover his son and his property, but without effect. The matter was fully reported to Sir Hercules Robinson and Sir E. Wood, and a question was asked on the subject in the House of Commons. I append Mr. Courtney's answer. This case, which is perfectly authentic, will prove instructive reading, as showing the treatment the Kafir must expect at the hands of the Boer, now that he is no longer protected by us. It must be remembered that the vast majority of such incidents are never heard of. The Kafirs suffer, and are still. The assault and robbery of Indabezimbi took place in Natal territory.

Statement of Indabezimbi

"I used to work on Mr. Robson's son's place, and on his death I went to Meyer's (in the Utrecht district of the Transvaal) about a year ago. I took all my property with me. There lived on the farm old Isaac Meyer, Solomon Meyer, who died during the war, young Isaac Meyer, Jan Meyer, Martinus Meyer, also a man called Cornelius, a 'bijwooner,' who loved in Solomon's place after he died.

"According to custom, I sent my son to work for old Isaac Meyer, as I lived on his place. When the war began all the Meyer family moved further into the Transvaal, my son going with them as herd. I went up

to Klip River with them as driver, where the river forms the boundary between the Free State and Transvaal. I returned at once, leaving my son with the Meyers. He was a small boy about twelve years of age. At the termination of the war the Meyers sent for me to drive them down. I met them a day's journey this side of Klip River. I asked them where my son was. Old Isaac Meyer told me he had sent him to look for horses; he did not return; and another boy was sent who brought the horses. The horses were found close by. No one went to look for my son. I asked old Isaac Meyer for leave to go and offer a reward amongst the Kafirs for my son. He refused, saying I must drive him home, and then he would give me a pass to come back and look for him. On our arrival at the farm I and my wife again applied to old Isaac Meyer to be allowed to go and see about my son. He refused, saying I must first shear the sheep. I replied that he well knew that I could not shear sheep. I said, 'How can I work when my heart is sore for my son?' Meyer said again that I must wait awhile as the rivers were full. I said how could that matter, seeing that both in coming and going with the waggons we crossed no rivers? As he refused me a pass, I started without one to seek my son. On arrival at Mavovo's kraal I met my brother, who told me that I must go no further, or the Boers would shoot me. Having no pass I returned. On my return my wives told me that the Meyers had come every morning to look for me with guns to shoot me, telling them that 'it was now no longer the days for sjamboking (flogging with hide whips) the natives, but the days for shooting them.' On hearing this I collected my goods, and by morning had everything on the Natal side of the Buffalo River--on Natal ground. About mid-day Martinus Meyer overtook us by Degaza's kraal and asked

me what I was doing on the Natal side of the river. I told him I was leaving for Natal, because I found it altogether too hot for me in the Transvaal. He said that if I came back he would make everything comfortable. I refused. He then attacked me with a knobkerrie, and would have killed me had not one of my wives, seeing that I was badly hurt, knocked him down with a piece of iron. Martinus then mounted his horse and galloped off. I then got on my horse and fled. My wives hid themselves. In the afternoon there came to the waggon Jan Meyer, Martinus Meyer, young Isaac Meyer, and the man called Cornelius. They hunted all about for us with the object of shooting us, as they told Degaza's Kafirs. My wives then saw them inspan the waggon and take everything away. I had a waggon, twelve oxen, four cows, and a mare, also a box containing two hundred pounds in gold, a telescope, clothes, and other things. My wives found the box broken on the ground and all the contents gone. Forty sacks of grain belonging to me were also taken. I was robbed of everything I had, with the exception of the horse I escaped on. The waggon was one I hired from my brother (a relation); the oxen were my own brother's. Eighty pounds of the money I got from the Standard Bank in Newcastle for oxen sold to the owner of the store on the Ingagane Drift. The rest I had accumulated in fees from doctoring. I am a doctor amongst my own people. I come now to ask you to allow me to settle on your land as a refugee.

"(Signed) Indabezimbi, his X mark.

"This statement was made by Indabezimbi at Hilldrop, Newcastle, Natal,

on the Seventeenth of August, Eighteen hundred and eighty-one, in the presence of the undersigned witnesses.

"(Signed) H. Rider Haggard.
A. H. D. Cochrane.
J. H. Gay Roberts.

"N.B.--The outrage of which Indabezimbi has here given an account occurred within a week of the present date, August 17th, 1881."

Statement of the woman Nongena, Wife of Indabezimbi

"My master's name is Isaac Meyer; he lives in the Transvaal, south of Utrecht. We have lived on the farm about a year. On the farm lived also Jan Meyer, Martinus Meyer, and young Isaac Meyer, sons of old Isaac Meyer. There was also another man on the farm, whose name I do not know. When the waggon went up with the Meyers' family to the centre of the Transvaal, when the late war broke out, my husband drove old Isaac Meyer's waggon, and my son Ungazaan also went to drive on stock. After my husband had driven the waggon to its destination in the Transvaal he returned to the kraal, leaving his son Ungazaan with the Meyers. After the war was over my husband was sent for by the Meyers to drive back the waggons. On arrival of the Meyers at the farm I found my husband had returned, but my son was left behind. I asked my master where my son was; my master replied, 'He did not know, he had sent to boy to bring up

horses, but he had not brought them.' Another boy was sent who brought the horses. He said he had not seen the boy Ungazaan since he left to look for the horses, as they had left the place the morning after the boy was missing. My husband asked for a pass to go back and look for the boy; Meyer refused, and my husband went without one to look for Ungazaan, my son. He returned without the boy, owing, he said, to the want of a pass. My husband dared not go into the country without a pass. During my husband's absence, the three sons of old Isaac Meyer, namely, Martinus, Jan, and Isaac, came every morning to search for my husband, saying, 'We will kill him, he leaves our work to go without our leave for look for the boy.' They came once with sjamboks, but afterwards with guns, saying they would kill him if they found him. On hearing this my husband said, 'We cannot then stay here longer.' He then went at once and borrowed a waggon and twelve oxen, and during the night we packed the waggon three times, and took three loads across the Buffalo River to Degaza's kraal, which is on Natal ground, forty sacks of grain, 200 pounds in a box, with clothes and other things, also mats and skins, and four head of cattle and a horse. All these things were at Degaza's kraal before sunrise the next morning. The Induna Kabane, at the magistrate's office at Newcastle, knows of the money, and from whence it came. All the money is our money.

"About mid-day on the day after the night we moved, Martinus came on horseback to us at Degaza's kraal, and I saw him beating my husband with a kerrie; he hit him also in the mouth with his fist. He hit my husband on the head with a kerrie; he beat my husband on the foot when he was

trying to creep away in a hut, and would have killed him had not one of his wives named Camgagaan hit Martinus on the head with a piece of iron. Martinus, on recovery, rode away; my husband also fled on a horse.

"I with the other wives fled, and hid ourselves close by in the grass and stones. Presently we saw from our own hiding-place three white men, armed with guns, seeking for us. Their names were Martinus Meyer, Jan Meyer, and Isaac Meyer, all three sons of old Isaac Meyer. They sought us in vain. From our hiding-place we heard the waggon driven away; and later, when we went back to Degaza's kraal, they told us that the Meyers had inspanned the waggon, and had returned with it to the Transvaal side of the Buffalo River. The names of those who saw the Boers go away with the waggon are Gangtovo, Capaches, Nomatonga, Nomamane, and others. The Boers took away on the waggon that night all the last load we had brought over from the Transvaal, together with all our clothes; and some of the sacks first brought over were loaded up, all our cattle were taken, and our box was broken, and the 200 pounds taken away. We found the pieces of the box on the ground when we came from our hiding-place. We then fled. The people at Degaza's kraal told us that the Boers had said that they would return, and take away that which they were forced to leave behind when they took the first load. We have since heard from Degaza that the Boers came back again and took what remained of our property at Degaza's kraal. Degaza saw the Boers take the things himself.

"This is all I know of the facts. The assaults and robbery took place,

as near as I can say, about fourteen days ago."

(Signed) Nongena, her X mark.

Gagaoola, also wife of Indabezimbi, states:--"I have heard all that Nongena has told you. Her words are true; I was present when the assault and robbery took place."

(Signed) Gagaoola, her X mark.

These statements were made to us at Hilldrop, Newcastle, Natal, on the Twenty-second of August, Eighteen hundred and eighty-one.

A. H. D. Cochrane.

H. Rider Haggard.

(Signed) Ayah, her X mark,
Interpreter.

Indabezimbi

"Mr. Alderman Fowler asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether the British Resident at Pretoria had brought under the notice of the Transvaal Government the circumstances of an outrage

committed in August last, by a party of Boers, on the person and property of a Kafir named Indabezimbi, who was at that time residing in Natal; and whether any steps had been taken by the authorities of the Transvaal either to institute a judicial inquiry into the matter, or to surrender the offenders to the Government of Natal.

"Mr. Courtney.--On the 13th of October the British Resident reported that, according to promise, the Government has caused an investigation to be made at Utrecht, and informed him that the result was somewhat to invalidate the statement of Indabezimbi; but that the documents connected with the investigation at Utrecht would speedily be forwarded to him with a view to correspondence through him with the Natal Government. No further communication has been received. It must be observed that, in the absence of any extradition convention, a judicial inquiry in this case is practically impossible, the outrage, whatever it was, having been committed in Natal, and the offenders being in the Transvaal. Her Majesty's Government are taking active steps to re-establish a system of extradition, in pursuance of Article 29, of the Convention. The despatches on this subject will be given to Parliament when the correspondence is completed."

IV

A BOER ADVERTISEMENT

It may be interesting to Englishmen to know what treatment is meted out to such of their fellow-countrymen as have been bold enough, or forced by necessity, to remain in the Transvaal since the retrocession. The following is a translation of an advertisement recently published in the "Volkstem," a Transvaal paper, and is a fair sample of what "loyalists" have to expect.

"WARNING

"We, the undersigned Burghers of the Ward Aapies river, hereby warn all loyal persons who have registered themselves with the British Resident, that they are not to come into our houses, or into our farms, and still less to offer to shake hands. They can greet us at a distance on the road like Kafirs, and those who act contrary to this notice can expect the result."

Presumably "the result" that the Englishman who takes the liberty to offer to shake hands with a Boer can expect, is to be beaten or murdered. This notice is signed by the Justice of the Peace or "Veld Cornet" of the district. Anybody who knows the estimation in which a Kafir is held by the Boers will understand its peculiar insolence.

V

"TRANSVAAL'S" LETTER TO THE "STANDARD"

The following letter appeared in the issue of the "Standard" of the 31st May 1882, and is dated Pretoria, 27th April. It is signed "Transvaal," probably because the author, were he to put his name at the foot of so candid a document, would find himself in much the same position as that occupied at the present moment by an Irish landlord who has outraged the susceptibilities of the Land League. He would be rigorously "boycotted," and might, in the event of any disturbance, be made into a target. The Transvaal Boers are very sensitive to criticism, especially where their native policy is concerned. I take the liberty to reprint the letter here, partly because I feel sure that I will be forwarding the wishes of the writer by assisting to give publicity to his facts, and partly on account of the striking and recent confirmation it affords, on every point, to my remarks on the same subject:--

"Sir,--In calling your attention to what is going on on the south-western border of the Transvaal, I may possibly tell you of some things which you may already have heard of, for in the present isolated condition of the country, without telegraphs, and with a very imperfect postal system, added to the jealousy of the Boer Government in keeping their actions secret from the outside world, it is not only very difficult to get at the truth of what is happening, but the people in

one portion of the country are in many cases totally ignorant of what is going on in another. Nevertheless, I feel it incumbent on me to call the attention of the English people, through your widely circulating journal, to what has come under my observation with reference to the disgraceful native war which is, and has been, raging on the south-west border of this country.

"During the late Boer war, you may be aware of the fact that a very large number, if not all, of the natives, were strongly in favour of the English Government, and only awaited the signal from it to rush upon their old oppressors. But the natives, although forbidden by the English Government from joining with them against the Boers (it is hardly necessary to say that had it not been for this the war would have had a very different ending), nevertheless afforded an asylum and protection to the lives and property of refugee Englishmen and loyalists. Notable among these natives was a Chief named Montsiou, whose tribe is situated just outside the borders of the Transvaal to the south-west. This Chief and his people received numbers of refugees who fled to them for protection from the rapacity of the Boers, and watched over them and their property throughout the war. For this offence the Boers swore to be revenged on him, and hardly was the war finished when they commenced commandeering in the Potchefstroom district, under the pretence of protecting their borders, but with the ostensible purpose of inflicting chastisement on this loyal Chief; and, the better to effect their purpose, they allied themselves with a neighbouring Chief, who had some old grudge against him, and, by promises of assistance and hopes of

plunder, induced him to commence a war, under cover of which they could join, and thus effect the purpose they had in view.

"The Chiefs whom the Boers had instigated to harass Montsiou got the worst of it, and the action of the Boers, who were actively commandeering in the Potchefstroom (district?), under Commandant Cronge,
was brought to the notice of the Royal Commission through complaints made by loyal Boers, and resulted in an inquiry into the subject, which showed that his opponent was the aggressor, and was acting under the advice of and assistance from the Boers. The Royal Commission managed to patch matters up, but no sooner were their labours over, and the country fairly handed over to the Boers, than Moshete and Masouw, instigated by the Boers, commenced again harassing Montsiou, with the avowed purpose of bringing on a war, and so far succeeded as to oblige Montsiou to take up arms in self-defence.

"From that time forward the war has gone on increasing in dimensions, until other Chiefs have been drawn into it, and the Boer volunteers fighting against Montsiou and Monkoroane are almost equal in numbers to the natives. The Boers, while doing all they can to crush Montsiou on account of the protection he afforded loyalists during the late war against the English Government, are careful not to do it in an official way, because that might cause trouble with England, whereas, by aiding and assisting it privately, they could do quite as much without incurring responsibility. You may naturally ask how I know all this, and

what proofs I can advance in support of it. Some time after the Royal Commission had left the country, and the war had commenced again, Piet Joubert, who is Commandant-General, went down to the border with the object of putting an end to the war. This, I presume, he did for the sake of appearances, for it is well known that he entertains a strong hatred against those natives who in any way showed a partiality for British rule; and when it is remembered that Piet Joubert's journey did not result in a cessation of hostilities, but in an increase, and that ever since his journey the war has increased in area and in numbers, and that in no single instance has a Boer volunteer been prevented from crossing the border, or ammunition for use against Montsiou been stopped, the sincerity of his intentions may well be doubted.

"Then, again, officers in the Boer Jagers went about Pretoria endeavouring to obtain volunteers to fight against Montsiou, saying that they were to have some months' leave from the Government, and that subscriptions would be raised to assist those men who had no private means. This took place almost immediately after Piet Joubert's return from the border, and while he was in Pretoria, and the general opinion was that he was at the bottom of it; but as it became rather more public than was intended, the British Resident was obliged to take notice of it, and the result was that the Boers, though in general treating the British Resident with little consideration, thought it wisest to carry on their operations in a more private manner, more especially as their object could be attained quite as effectually in this way.

"While the Boers are assisting Moshete and Masouw by every means in their power, with the sole object of crushing Montsiou and Monkoroane, another loyal Chief, the Colonial Government, no doubt under instructions from home, are doing their best to prevent volunteers or ammunition reaching them, and have already rested men in Kimberley, who have been trying to raise volunteers to go to their assistance.

"The result of this is, that the loyal Chiefs are suffering under a double disadvantage; for while their enemies are receiving every assistance, they are blockaded on all sides, and, through the action of the English Government in preventing them obtaining assistance, are rapidly falling a prey to the Boers. Those only who know anything of the Boer method of warfare against natives will know what this means; and in spite of the Boer Government doing all they can to keep things secret, horrible tales of the cruelties perpetrated by them leak out occasionally.

"It seems to me a disgraceful thing, and a stain on the honour of England, that these loyal Chiefs and their tribes should be robbed, plundered, and shot down like dogs, simply because they afforded protection to the lives and property of Englishmen during the late war, and yet these things are going on and are being perpetrated on the border of England's Colonies. If England will not step in and insist on the Boers putting a stop to this murderous war, then in God's name let her not prevent these poor natives from obtaining ammunition and assistance to enable them to defend their country. They succoured our

countrymen, and if we cannot succour them, the least we can do is not to interfere to prevent them from protecting themselves!

"Of course, it suits the Boer Government to make out that they have nothing to do with the war, and cannot prevent Boer Volunteers from fighting these Chiefs; and so long as the English Government rests satisfied with these answers, so long will this disgraceful state of things go on. Let the English Government be firm, however, and insist on the Boers taking no part in this war, and it will cease--a sure proof that the Boer Government have the power to stop it if they have the will.

"Not only are the Boers wreaking vengeance upon Montsiou and Monkoroane,
but a friend of theirs, a Chief of the name of Kalafin, whose tribe is situated in the Zeerust district, Transvaal, has been robbed by them of everything he possessed. This Chief had English sympathies; and as he presumed to build a wall round his town he gave the Boers the excuse they wanted. He was ordered to take the wall down, which he did, at the same time proving that he only built it to prevent his cattle straying among the huts. He was then ordered to come to Pretoria, which he did accordingly. He was then ordered to pay a fine of three thousand cattle, which fine he paid. No sooner was this done than the Boers, bent on his ruin, raised the fine to ten thousand head. The poor Chief in vain pleaded his inability to pay. It was the old story of the wolf and the lamb. Because he couldn't pay, the Boers construed it into an act of

disobedience, and at once ordered their men to go in and take everything he possessed. This tribe is small and weak, which the Boers well knew. Eye-witnesses of what followed say it was a heartrending sight. The women, with children in their arms, pleaded in vain to the Boers to leave them something or they would starve, but the latter only jeered at them. What these poor people will do God only knows, for the Boers stripped them of every living thing they possessed, and with the proceeds of this robbery the Boer Government intend to replenish their coffers.

"The British Resident, Mr. Hudson, it is believed, shuts his eyes to many things. No doubt his is a difficult position to fill; and doubtless he is aware that, if he reports everything to the English Government, the Boers have it in their power to make his position anything but a pleasant one. In any case, the English portion of the community here, while admitting his good qualities socially, have little confidence in him officially.

"My object in writing this letter, however, is not so much to show what a disgraceful state the Government is in, as to try and awaken sympathy in the breasts of my countrymen for the cause of these loyal Chiefs. While the Government are writing despatches to the British Resident, these Chiefs and their people are being ruined past remedying."

VI

A VISIT TO THE CHIEF SECOCOENI[*]

[*] This paper was written just before the Annexation of the Transvaal in 1877.

Towards the end of March I had occasion to visit the Basuto chief Secocoeni, in his native stronghold beyond the Loolu Berg, a range to the north-east of Pretoria, about 250 miles away; and as this journey was typical of travelling in the wilds of South Africa, an account of it may prove interesting.

It is perhaps necessary to explain, for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with South African politics, that Secocoeni is the chieftain who has been at war with the late Transvaal Republic, who drove back its forces, capturing some 7000 head of cattle. It is from this raid that the present state of affairs has arisen; so that this obscure chief, with his 9000 warriors, has materially affected the future destinies of South Africa. Negotiations of peace had been set on foot, and it was in connection with these delicate matters that the journey was to be undertaken.

"Going to Secocoeni at this time of year! Ah!" said one gentleman. "Well, look here. I sent five natives through that country in this same month (March) last year; out of those five, three died of the fever, and

the other two just got through with their lives. I only tell you, you know, that you may take precautions. This is a bad fever year." However, fever or no fever, we had to go. As it was necessary to travel rapidly, we could only take four riding-horses, three for ourselves and the fourth for a Zulu named "Lankiboy," who also led a pack-horse, and carried an enormous "knob-kerry," or shillelagh, stuck in his button-hole, as though it were a wedding-bouquet.

Behind our saddles were fastened our saddle-bags, containing a change of clothing, and in front we strapped a rug and a mackintosh. Our commissariat consisted of four tins of potted ham, and our medicine-chest of some quinine, Cockle's pills, and a roll of sticking-plaster, which, with a revolver and a hunting-knife or two, completed our equipment.

We knew little of our route save that our destination lay due east, so due east we steered. After riding for about twenty miles, and crossing the Mahaliesburg range, that stretches away north for hundreds of miles, we came to a Boer's house, where we off-saddled to feed our horses. It must be understood that the Boers were the one certain difficulty, and one of the possible dangers, to be encountered on our road, for at no time are they are pleasant people to deal with, and just now they are remarkably unpleasant towards Englishmen.

For instance, at this first house, we managed to get some forage for our horses, before our scowling host found out who we were, but not a bit

could we get to eat. "Have you no bread, myn Heer?" "We have no bread to spare." "Have you any eggs?" "We have no eggs." "Can you let us have some milk?" "Susan, have you got any milk to give these carles (fellows)?" Finally, we succeeded in buying three cups of milk for a shilling, "as a favour," and that is all we got from sunrise to sunset.

Riding, on empty stomachs, for another sixty miles over the plains, we came to a Boer's house where we had to sleep. Just before we reached the door, I noticed what I have often seen since, some graves in a row, with heaps of stones piled over them. It appears that these people do not care about bring buried in consecrated ground, their only anxiety being to be put in a coffin, and they are generally laid to rest near to their doors. There is neither railing nor headstone, and no trees or flowers, those green emblematic garments with which civilised people try to hide the ugliness of death. I remember once seeing several graves within two or three yards of the public road, so that in a year or so the waggons will be rumbling over the heads of those who lie beneath.

When you ride up to a Boer's house, the etiquette is to wait until some member of the family asks you to off-saddle, and then you must go in and shake hands with every one, a most disagreeable custom. None of the women--who are very plain--rise to meet one, they just hold out their hands. This house was a fair specimen of the sort of habitation indulged in by the ordinary Boer. The main room was about eighteen feet square, with that kind of door which allows the upper half to open whilst the lower remains shut, such as is used in stables in England. The flooring

is made of cow-dung, into which peach stones are trodden at the threshold, in order to prevent its wearing away. The furniture consists of a deal table and some chairs, rather nearly made of strips of hide fastened to a wooden frame. There is no ceiling, but only beams, to which are fastened strips of "biltong," or game's flesh, dried in the sun. Out of this room open one or two more, in which the whole family sleep, without much attempt at privacy.

Sitting about the room were two or three young mothers, without stockings and nursing babies; in the corner, on a chair, made twice as large as any of the others, reposed the mother of the family, a woman of large size. The whole house was pervaded by a sickly odour, like that of a vault, whilst the grime and filth of it baffle description. And this was the place we had to eat and sleep in. However, there was no help for it; the only thing to do was to light one's pipe, and smoke. After an hour or so, supper was put upon the table, consisting of a bowl full of boiled bones, a small stack of mealie cobs, and, be it added, some good bread-and-butter. The eating arrangements of these people are certainly very trying. The other day we had to eat our dinner in a Boer's house, with a reeking ox-hide, just torn from the animal, lying on the floor beside us, together with portions of the poor beast's head whose flesh we were eating. However, on this occasion we were spared the ox-hide, and, being very hungry, managed to put up with the other discomforts. After a long grace our suppers were served out to us. I remember I got an enormous bone with but little flesh on it, which, if I may form an opinion from its great size and from a rapid anatomical survey, must

have been the tibia of an ox. A young Boer sat opposite to me--a wonderful fellow. He got through several mealie cobs (and large ones too) whilst I was eating half a one. His method was peculiar, and shows what practice can do. He shoved a mealie cob into his mouth, gave it a bite and a wrench, just like one of those patent American threshing machines, brought the cob out perfectly clear of grain, and took another. After the supper was over, we had another long grace ending with: "voor spijze en drunk de Heer ik dank" (for food and drink the Lord I thank).

After supper we went outside in order to escape the feet-washing ceremony (all in the same water) which this "simple pastoral people" are said to indulge in, and which they might expect the "uitlander" (stranger) to enter into with enthusiasm. When we came back, we found that the women--who, by-the-by, do not eat till the men have finished--had done their meal, and gone to bed, having first made us up a luxurious couch on the floor, consisting of a filthy feather-bed, and an equally filthy blanket. My heart misgave me when I looked at that bed. It may have been fancy, but once or twice I thought it moved. However, there was no choice, unless we chose to sit up all night; so in we got, looking for all the world like three big sun-burned dolls put to bed by some little girl. I, as the youngest, blew out the light, and then!--from every side they came. Up one's arms, up one's legs, down one's back they scampered, till life became a burden. Sleep was impossible; one could only lie awake and calculate the bites per minute, and the quantity of blood one would lose before daybreak. Cold as it

was, I would have turned out and slept in the veldt, only my rug was over my two companions as well as myself, so I could not take it. I have slept in a good many different places, and in very fairly uncomfortable places, but I never had such a night before.

At the first grey dawn of morning the old "frau" came stumbling out of the bedroom, and sat down without ceremony in her big chair. Waiting till she thought that we had reached a sufficiently advanced stage in our toilette--and her idea of what that was must have been a strange one--she shouted out to her daughters that they could "com," and in they all came. Very glad were we when we had paid our bill, which was a heavy one, and were in the saddle once more, riding through the cold morning mist that lay in masses on all the ridges of the hills like snow on mountains.

It was needful to start early, for we had more than sixty miles to cover, and our ponies had done a good journey the day before. The work that one can get out of these ponies is marvellous. There was my pony, "Mettle," who had my eleven stone to carry, to say nothing of the saddle, heavy saddle-bags, and a roll of rugs, who came in at the end of his journey as fresh as paint. We cantered easily over the great high-veldt prairies, now and then passing clumps of trees, outposts of the bush-veldt. These enormous plains, notwithstanding their dreary vastness, have a wild beauty of their own. The grass is what is called sour grass, and has a peculiar blue tinge, but stock do not like it so well as the low-veldt grass, which is sweeter, and fattens them more

quickly, though it does not put them in such good fettle. The rock here is all white sandstone, and thinly overlaps an enormous bed of coal, cropping up from beneath the water-washed surface. At this time of year there are very few beasts or birds of any sort to be seen, though in the winter the veldt is one moving mass of "trek" or migratory game.

Our destination that day was Botsabelo, the most important mission-station, and one of the very few successful ones, in South-Eastern Africa. As we neared it, the country gradually broke into hills of peculiar and beautiful formation, which rendered the last two hours of our ride, in the dark, through an unknown country, rather a difficult job. However, we stumbled through streams, and over boulders, and about nine o'clock were lucky enough to come right upon the station, where we were most kindly received by Dr. Merensky. The station itself stands on the brow of a hill surrounded by gardens and orchards; beneath it lie slope and mountain, stream and valley, over which are dotted numbers of kraals, to say nothing of three or four substantial houses occupied by the assistant missionary and German artisans. Near Dr. Merensky's house stands the church, by far the best I have seen in the Transvaal, and there is also a store with some well-built workshops around it. All the neighbouring country belongs to the station, which is, in fact, like a small independent State, 40,000 acres in extent.
On a hill-top overshadowing the station, are placed the fortifications, consisting of thick walls running in a circle with upstanding towers, in which stand one or two cannon; but it all reminds one more of an old Norman keep, with its village clustered in its protecting shadow, than

of a modern mission establishment.

Dr. Merensky commenced his labours in Secocoeni's country, but was forced to fly from thence by night, with his wife and new-born baby, to escape being murdered by that Chief's orders, who, like most Kafir potentates, has an intense aversion to missionaries. Twelve years ago he established this station, and, gathering his scattered converts around him, defied Secocoeni to drive him thence. Twice that Chief has sent out a force to sweep him away, and murder his people, and twice they have come and looked, and, like false Sextus, turned back again. The Boers, too, have more than once threatened to destroy him, for it is unpleasant to them to have so intelligent a witness in their midst, but they have never dared to try. The place is really impregnable to Basutus and Boers; Zulus might carry it, with their grand steady rush, but it would be at a terrible sacrifice of life. In fact, Dr. Merensky has been forced, by the pressure of circumstances, to teach his men the use of a rifle, as well as the truths of Christianity; to trust in God, but also to "keep their powder dry." At a few minutes' notice he can turn out 200 well-armed natives, ready for offence or defence; and the existence of such a stronghold is of great advantage to the few English in the neighbourhood, for the Boers know well that should they attack them they might draw down the vengeance of Dr. Merensky's formidable body of Christian soldiers.

We only passed one night at Botsabelo, and next morning went on to Middelburg, or Nazareth, which is an hour's ride from the station. Here,

too, we met with a warm welcome from the handful of English residents, but we were eager to push on as rapidly as possible, for our kind friends told us that it would be impossible to proceed to Secocoeni's on horseback, because of the deadly nature of the country for horses. So we had to hire an ox-waggon, which they provisioned for us, and, much to our disgust (as we were pressed for time), were obliged to fall back on that dilatory method of travelling.

We decided that we would take the three oldest and least valuable horses with us, in order to proceed with them from Fort Weeber, which was our next point, to Secocoeni's town, whither waggons could not reach. Few English readers are aware that there is a mysterious disease among horses in South Africa, peculiar to the country, called "horse-sickness." During the autumn season it carries off thousands of horses annually, though some are good and others bad years--a bad fever year being generally a bad horse-sickness year also, and vice versa. A curious feature about it is, that as the veldt gets "tamed," that is, fed off by domesticated animals, the sickness gradually disappears. No cure has yet been discovered for it, and very few horses pull through--perhaps, five per cent. These are called "salted horses," and are very valuable; as, although they are not proof against the disease, they are not so liable to take it. A salted horse may be known by the peculiar looseness and roughness of his skin, and also by a certain unmistakable air of depression, as though he felt that the responsibilities of life pressed very heavily upon him. He is like a man who has dearly bought his experience; he can never forget the terrible

lesson taught in the buying.

On the fourth day from our start we left Middelburg, and, taking a north-east course from this outpost of civilisation, overtook the waggon, and camped, after a twenty miles' trek, just on the edge of the bush-veldt. We had two young Boers to drive our waggons--terrible louts. However, they understood how to drive a waggon, and whilst one of them drove, the other would sit for hours, with a vacant stare on his face, thinking. It is a solemn fact that, from the time we left Middelburg till the time we returned, neither of those fellows touched water, that is, to wash themselves. The only luxury in the shape of comforts of the toilette which they allowed themselves was a comb with a brass back, carefully tied to the roof of the waggon with two strips of ox-hide thick enough to have held a hundredweight of lead. I don't think they ever used it--it was too great a luxury for general use--but they would occasionally untie it and look at it. Our own outfit in the waggon was necessarily scanty, consisting of a few iron pots and plates, a kettle, some green blankets, a lantern, and an old anti-friction grease-can used for water, which gave it a fine flavour of waggon-wheels. We also had a "cartle," or wooden frame, across which were stretched strips of hide fitted into the waggon about two feet above the floor, and intended to sleep on; but the less said about that the better.

After we left the great high-veldt plains, over which the fresh breeze was sweeping, we dropped down into a beautiful bush-clad valley with mountains on either side. It was like making a sudden descent into the

tropics. Not a breath of wind stirred the trees, and the sun shone with a steady burning heat. Scarcely a sound broke the silence, save the murmur of the river we crossed and recrossed, the occasional pipe of a bird, and the melancholy cry, half sigh, half bark, of an old baboon, who was swinging himself along, indignant at our presence.

If the sights and sounds were beautiful, the sun was hot, and the road fearful, and we were indeed glad when we reached "Whitehead's Cobalt Mine," and were most kindly received by the gentlemen who superintend the works. The house used to belong to some Boer, who had deserted the place, but left behind him a beautiful orchard of orange and peach trees. The place is very feverish and unhealthy, and the white ants so troublesome that everything has to be stood in sardine tins full of ashes.

On our way from the house we went to see the cobalt mine, which is on a hillside a mile away. It has only been established about three years, and has existed hitherto under the greatest difficulties as regards labour, transport, machinery, danger from surrounding native tribes, &c.; but it has already, the proprietor informed me, reduced the price of cobalt--the blue dye used to colour such things as the willow-pattern plates--by one-half in the English market, bringing it down from somewhere about 140 pounds to 80 pounds a ton. We were very much astonished to see the amount of work which had been done, as we expected to find a pit such as the Kafirs work for copper, but instead of that there was a large slanting shaft quite a hundred yards long, to say

nothing of various openings out of it following branch leads of ore. There is also a vertical shaft one hundred feet deep, through which the ore comes up, and by which one can ascend and descend in a bucket. After we emerged from this awful hole, we went into another, a drive running straight into the mountain for more than three hundred feet, following a vein of black oxide of cobalt, which is much more valuable than the ore; and, though the vein is rarely more than a foot in thickness, pays very well. Leaving the mine, we rode on past some old Kafir copper-workings--circular pits--which must have been abandoned, to judge from their appearance, a hundred years ago, till we came to the banks of the great "Olifants'" or "Elephants'" river. This magnificent stream, though it is unnavigable owing to frequent rapids, has stretches miles long, down which a man-of-war could steam, and after its junction with the Elands' River it grows larger and larger till, pursuing a north-east course, it at length falls into the mighty Limpopo. It is a very majestic but somewhat sluggish stream, and its water is not very good. You cannot see the river till you are right upon it, owing to the great trees with which its steep banks are fringed, and in the early morning it is quite hidden from bank to bank by a dense mass of billows of white mist, indescribably strange to look upon.

But, beautiful as this country is, it is most unhealthy for man and beast. The close odour, the long creeping lines of mist, the rich rank vegetation, the steady heat of day and night, all say one word, "fever," and fever of the most virulent type. The traveller through this sort of country is conscious of a latent fear lest he should some day begin to

feel hot when he ought to be cold, and cold when he ought to be hot, and so be stricken down, to rise prematurely old, or perhaps to die, and be buried in a lonely grave covered with stones to keep off the jackals.
We were travelling in the very worst fever-month, March, when the summer vegetation is commencing to rot, and throw off its poisonous steam. What saved us here and afterwards, at Secocoeni's, was our temperate living, hard exercise, and plenty of quinine and tobacco-smoke.

All the country through which we were passing is good game-veldt, but we saw very little and killed nothing. This was chiefly owing to the fact that we did not dare go out of hearing of the waggon-wheels, for fear of getting lost in the bush, a thing very easily done. A few years back this veldt swarmed with big game, with elephants and giraffes, and they are even now occasionally seen. We managed now and again to get a glimpse of some of the beautiful "Impala" buck, or of a small lot of blue wilderbeestes vanishing between the trees, like a troop of wild horses. There are still plenty of lions about, but we did not hear any: whether it was that they had gone to the high-veldt after the cattle, or that they do not roar so much in summer, I do not know. Perhaps it is as well that we did not, for the roar of a lion is very generally followed by what the Dutch call a "skrech." After roaring once or twice to wake the cattle up, and make them generally uneasy, the lion stations himself about twenty yards to the windward of the waggon. The oxen get wind of him and promptly "skrech," that is, break their rims and run madly into the veldt. This is just what the lion wants, for now he can pick out a fat ox and quietly approach him from the other side till he is within

springing distance. He then jumps upon him, crushes his neck with one bite, and eats him at his leisure.

And so we trekked on through the sunrise, through the burning mid-day and glowing sunsets, steering by the sun and making our own road; now through tambouki grass higher than the oxen, and now through dense bush,
till at length, one day, we said good-bye to the Olifants' just where the Elands' River flows into it, and turned our faces eastward. This course soon brought us on to higher ground and away from the mimosa, which loves the low, hot valleys, into the region of the sugar bush, which thrives upon the hill-sides. This sugar bush is a very handsome and peculiar plant, with soft thick leaves, standing about twenty feet high. It bears a brush-like flower, each of which in the Cape Colony contains half a teaspoonful of delicious honey; but, curiously enough, though in other respects the tree is precisely similar, this is not the case in the Transvaal or Natal. At the proper season the Cape farmers go out with buckets and shake the flowers till they have collected sufficient honey to last them for the winter, a honey more fragrant than that made by bees.

After a long ride over the open, which must once have been thickly populated, to judge from the number of remains of kraals, we came at length to Fort Weeber. The fort is very badly situated in the hollow of a plain, and so surrounded by fine hills that it is entirely commanded. It consists of a single sod wall about two feet thick and five high,

capped with loose stones, whilst at two of the corners stand, on raised platforms, a six-pounder and a three-pounder Whitworth gun. Inside the wall are built rows of mud huts, which are occupied by the garrison, leaving an open square, in the midst of which is placed the magazine. We found the garrison in a wretched condition. They have not received any pay except Government "good-fors" (promissory notes, generally known as "good-for-nothings"), so they are in a state of abject poverty; whilst they are rendered harmless as regards offensive operations, by the death, from horse-sickness, of eighty-two of the ninety horses they owned. However, the officers and garrison gave us a very grand reception. As we rode up, they fired a salute of twelve guns, and then, after we had dismounted and been received by the officers, we were taken through a lane made by the garrison drawn up in a double line, and, just as we got to the middle, "bang" went the eighty rifles over our heads. Then an address was read (the volunteers are great people for addresses), but a more practical welcome soon followed in the shape of a good dinner.

Next morning we started, a party of seven, including the interpreter, to ride over the Loolu Berg to Secocoeni's, a distance of about thirty-eight miles.

For the first five miles we passed through the most curious granite formation, a succession of small hills entirely composed of rounded boulders of granite, weighing from five to 1000 tons, and looking exactly like piles of gigantic snow-balls hurled together by some mighty

hand. The granite formation prevails in all this part of the country, and individual boulders sometimes take very curious shapes; for instance, in the bush-veldt we passed a great column towering high above the trees, composed of six boulders getting smaller and smaller from the base up, and each accurately balanced on the one beneath it. Then we crossed the range of hills which overlooks the fort, and passing Secocoeni's old kraal where he used to live before he retreated to his fastnesses, we arrived at a great alluvial valley nine miles broad, on the other side of which rises the Loolu. It was on this plain that the only real fight between the volunteers and Secocoeni's men took place, when the former managed to get between the Basutus and the hills, and shot them down like game, killing over 200 men. Leaving the battle-field, where the skeletons still lie, a little to our right, we crossed the plain and came to the foot of the Loolu, all along the base of which stand neat villages inhabited by Secocoeni's people. Some of these villages have been burnt by the volunteers, and the remainder are entirely deserted, their inhabitants having built fresh huts among the rocks in almost inaccessible places. The appearance of these white huts peeping out all over the black rocks was very curious, and reminded one of the Swiss chalets.

By the stream that runs along past the villages we off-saddled, as both ourselves and our horses were nearly exhausted by the burning heat; but as there was not much time to lose, after a short rest we started off again, and rode on over a bed of magnetic iron lying on the ground in great lumps of almost pure metal, until we came to a stretch of what

looked remarkably like gold-bearing quartz, and then to a limestone formation. The whole country is evidently rich beyond measure in minerals. All this time we were passing through scenery inexpressibly wild and grand, and when we had arrived at the highest spot of the pass, it reached a climax of savage beauty. About forty miles in front of us towered up another magnificent range of blue-tinged mountains known as the Blue Berg, whilst all around us rose great bush-clad hills, opening away in every direction towards gorgeous-coloured valleys. The scene was so grand and solemn that I do not think it lies in the power of words to describe it.

Here we had to dismount to descend a most fearful precipitous path consisting of boulders piled together in the wildest confusion, from one to another of which we had to jump, driving the horses before us. Half-way down we off-saddled to rest ourselves, and as we did so we noticed that the gall was running from one of the horses' noses. We knew too well what was the matter, and so left him there to die during the night. This horse was by far the finest we had with us, and his owner used to boast that the poor beast had often carried him, a heavy man, from his house to Pretoria, a distance of nearly ninety miles, in one day. He was also a "salted" horse. It is a curious thing that the sickness generally kills the best horses first.

After a short rest we started on again, and at the end of another hour reached the bottom of the pass. From thence we rode along a gulley, that alternately narrowed and widened, till at length it brought us right on

to Secocoeni's beautiful, fever-stricken home.

All three of us had seen a good deal of scenery in different parts of the world, and one of the party was intimately acquainted with the finest spots in South Africa, but we were forced to admit that we had never seen anything half so lovely as Secocoeni's valley. We had seen grander views, indeed the scene from the top of the pass was grander, but never anything that so nearly approached perfection in detail. Beautiful it was, beautiful beyond measure, but it was the sort of beauty under whose veil are hidden fever and death. And so we pushed on, through the still hot eventide, till at length we came to the gates of the town, where we found "Makurupiji," Secocoeni's "mouth" or prime minister, who had evidently been informed of our coming by his spies waiting to receive us.[*]

[*] Makurupiji committed suicide after the town had been stormed, preferring death to imprisonment.

Conducted by this grandee, we went on past the Chief's kraals, down to the town, whence flocked men, women, and children, to look on the white lords; all in a primitive state of dress, consisting of a strip of skin tied round the middle, and the women with their hair powdered with some preparation of iron, which gave it a metallic blue tinge.

At length we stopped just opposite a beautiful fortified kopje[*] perforated by secret caves where the ammunition of the tribe is hidden.

No stranger is allowed to enter these caves, or even to ascend the kopje, though they do not object to one's inspecting some of the other fortifications. Dismounting from our wearied horses, we passed through a cattle kraal and came into the presence of "Swasi," Secocoeni's uncle, a fat old fellow who was busily engaged in braying a skin. Nearly every male Basutu one meets, be he high or low, is braying a hide of some sort, either by rubbing or by masticating it. It is a curious sight to come across some twenty of these fellows, every one of them twisting or chewing away.

[*] Afterwards stormed in the attack on Secocoeni's town by Sir Garnet Wolseley.

Swasi was a sort of master of the household; his duty it was to receive strangers and see that they were properly looked after; so, after shaking hands with us furiously (he was a wonderful fellow to shake hands), he conducted us to our hut. It stood in a good-sized courtyard beautifully paved with a sort of concrete of limestone which looked very clean and white, and surrounded by a hedge of reeds and sticks tightly tied together, inside which ran a slightly raised bench, also made of limestone. The hut itself was neatly thatched, the thatch projecting several feet, so as to form a covering to a narrow verandah that ran all round it. Inside it was commodious, and ornamented after the Egyptian style with straight and spiral lines, painted on with some kind of red ochre, and floored with a polished substance. Certainly these huts are as much superior to those of the Zulus as those who dwell in them are

inferior to that fine race. What the Basutus gain in art and handiness they lose in manliness and gentlemanly feeling.

We had just laid ourselves down on the grass mats in the courtyard--for it was too hot to go into the hut--thoroughly exhausted with our day's work and the heat, when in came two men, each of them dragging a fine indigenous sheep. They were accompanied by Makurupiji, who brought us a message from Secocoeni to the effect that he, the Chief, sent to greet us, the great Chiefs; that he sent us also a morsel to eat, lest we should be hungry in his house. It was but a morsel--it should have been an ox, for great Chiefs should eat much meat--but he himself was pinched with hunger, his belt was drawn very tight by the Boers. He was poor, and so his gift was poor; still, he would see if to-morrow he could find a beast that had something besides the skin on its bones, that he might offer it to us. After this magniloquent address the poor animals were trundled out by the other gate to have their throats cut.

After getting some supper and taking our quinine, we turned in and slept that night in the best way that the heat would let us, rising next morning with the vain hope of getting a bathe. Of all the discomforts we experienced at Secocoeni's, the scarcity and badness of the water was the worst. Bad water, when you are in a hotbed of fever, is a terrible privation. And so we had to go unwashed, with the exception of having a little water poured over our hands out of gourds. We must have presented a curious sight at breakfast that morning. Before us knelt a sturdy Kafir, holding a stick in each hand, on which were respectively speared

a leg and a side of mutton, from which we cut off great hunks with our hunting-knives, and, taking them in our fingers, devoured them like beasts of prey. If we got a bit we did not like, our mode of dispensing of it was simple and effective. We threw it to one of the natives standing round us, among whom was the heir-apparent, who promptly gobbled it up.

Breakfast finished, a message came from Secocoeni asking for spirits to drink. But we were not to be taken in in this way, for we knew well that if we sent the Chief spirits we should get no business done that day, and we did not care to run the risk of fever by stopping longer than we could help; so we sent back a message to the effect that business must come first and spirits afterwards. The head men, who brought this message, said that they could perfectly understand our objection, as far as Secocoeni and ourselves were concerned, since we had to talk, but as they had only to sit still and listen there could be no possible objection to their having something to drink. This argument was ingenious, but we did not see the force of it, as our stock of spirits, which we had brought more for medicine than anything else, was very limited. Still, we were obliged to promise them a "tot" after the talking was over, in order to keep them civil.

Our message had the desired effect, for presently Secocoeni sent to say that it was now time to talk, and that his head men would lead us to him. So we started up, accompanied by "Makurupiji," "Swasi," and "Galook," the general of his forces, a fat fellow with a face exactly

like a pig. The sun beat down with such tremendous force that, though we had only three-quarters of a mile to walk, we felt quite tired by the time we reached the Chief's kraals. Passing through several cattle kraals, we came to a shed under which sat the heir-apparent dressed in a gorgeous blanket with his court around him. Leaving him, we entered an inner cattle kraal, where, in one corner, stood a large, roughly-built shed, under the shade of which squatted over a hundred of the head men of the tribe, gathered together by Secocoeni to "witness."[*]

[*] As each chief came up to the meeting-place he would pass before the enclosure where Secocoeni was sitting and salute him, by softly striking the hands together, and saying something that sounded like "Marema."

Opening out of this kraal was the chief's private enclosure, where stood his huts. As we drew near, Secocoeni, who had inspired such terror into the bold Burghers of the Republic, the chief of nine thousand warriors, the husband of sixty-four wives, the father of a hundred children, rose from the ox-hide on which he was seated, under the shade of a tree, and came to the gate to meet us. And a queer sight this potentate was as he stood there shaking hands through the gate. Of middle age, about forty-five years of age, rather fat, with a flat nose, and small, twinkling, black eyes, he presented an entirely hideous and semi-repulsive appearance. His dress consisted of a cotton blanket over which was thrown a tiger-skin kaross, and on his head was stuck an enormous old white felt hat, such as the Boers wear, and known as a

"wilderbeeste chaser."

After we had been duly introduced, he retreated to his ox-hide, and we went and squatted down among the head men. Secocoeni took no active part in the proceedings that followed; he sat in his enclosure and occasionally shouted out some instructions to Makurupiji, who was literally his "mouth," speaking for him and making use of the pronoun "I." During the four hours or so that we were there Secocoeni never stopped chewing an intoxicating green leaf, very much resembling that of the pomegranate, of which he occasionally sent us some.

After the business of the Commission had come to an end, and some of our party started on their homeward journey, we were detained by Secocoeni, who wished to see us privately. He sent for us to his private enclosure, and we sat down on his ox-hide with him and one or two head men. It was very curious to see this wily old savage shoving a handful of leaves into his mouth, and giving his head a shake, and then making some shrewd remark which went straight to the bottom of whatever question was in hand. At length we bade Secocoeni good-bye, having promised to deliver all his respectful messages to our chief, and, thoroughly wearied, arrived at our own hut. Tired as we were, we thought it would be better to start for the fort at once, rather than risk the fever for another night. So we made up our minds to a long moonlight ride, and, saddling up, got out of Secocoeni's town about 3.30 P.M., having looked our last upon this beautiful fever-trap, which only wants water scenery to make it absolutely perfect. Half-way up, we saw the poor horse we had left

sick the day before, lying dead, with dry foam all round his mouth, and half his skin taken off by some passing Basutu. A couple of hundred yards farther on we found another dying, left by the party who had started before us. It was in truth a valley of the shadow of death. Luckily our horses lasted us back to the fort, but one died there, and the other two are dead since.

Beautiful as was the scene by day, in the light of the full moon it was yet more surpassingly lovely. It was solemn, weird. Every valley became a mysterious deep, and every hill, stone, and tree shone with that cold pale lustre which the moon alone can throw. Silence reigned, the silence of the dead, broken only once or twice by the wild whistling challenge

of one of Secocoeni's warriors as he came bounding down the rocks, to see who we were that passed. The effect of the fires by the huts, perched among the rocks at the entrance to the pass, was very strange and beautiful, reminding one of the midnight fires of the Gnomes in the fairy tales.

And so we rode on, hour after hour, through the night, till we well-nigh fell asleep in our saddles, and at length, about two o'clock in the morning, we reached the waggons to find the young Boers fast asleep in our bed. We kicked them out, and, after swallowing some biscuits, tumbled in ourselves for the few hours' rest which we so sadly needed.

On the following morning, Thursday, two of the party bade farewell to

our hosts at the fort and started on one of the quickest possible treks, leaving our companion to proceed across country to the fort established by President Burgers, or "Porocororo," as the Basutus call him, at Steelport.

We returned to Middelburg by an entirely different route from that by which we came. Leaving the valley of the Olifants to our right, we trekked along the high-veldt, and thus avoided all the fever country. Roughly speaking, we had about 120 miles of country to get over to reach Middelburg, and we determined to do this in three days and two nights, so as to get in on the Saturday night, as we were much pressed for time. Now, according to English ideas, it is no great thing to travel 120 miles in three days; but it is six days' journey in an ox-waggon over bad country, and we were going to do it in half that time by doubling the speed.

Of course, to do this we had to trek night and day. For instance, on the first day we inspanned at 10.30 A.M. and trekked till within an hour of sundown; at sundown we inspanned, and with one outspan trekked till sunrise; outspanned for two hours, and on again, being seventeen and a half hours under the yoke out of the twenty-four, and covering fifty-five miles. Of course, one cannot do this sort of travelling for more than two or three days without killing the oxen; as it was, towards the end, as soon as the yokes were lifted off, the poor beasts dropped down as though they were shot, and most of them went lame. Another great disadvantage is that one suffers very much from want of sleep. The

jolting of the springless machine, as it lumbered over rocks a foot high and through deep spruits or streams, brought our heads down with such a fearful jar on the saddle-bags that we used for pillows, that all sleep was soon knocked out of them; or, even if we were lucky enough to be crossing a stretch of tolerably smooth ground, there was a swaying motion that rubbed one's face up and down till the skin was nearly worn through, polishing the saddle-bags to such an extent that we might almost have used them for looking-glasses as well as pillows.

At Secocoeni's kraal we had engaged two boys to carry our packs as far as the fort, who, on their arrival, were so well satisfied with the way in which we treated them that they requested to be allowed to proceed with us. These young barbarians, who went respectively by the names of "Nojoke" and "Scowl," as being the nearest approach in English to their Sisutu names, were the greatest possible source of amusement to us, with their curious ways.[*] I never saw such fellows to sleep; it is a positive fact that Nojoke used frequently to take his rest coiled up like a boa constrictor in a box at the end of the waggon, in which box stood three iron pots with their sharp legs sticking up. On those legs he peacefully slumbered when the waggon was going over ground that prohibited our even stopping in it. "Scowl" was not a nice boy to look at, for his naked back was simply cut to pieces and covered with huge weals, of which everybody, doubtless, thought we were the cause. On inquiring how he came to get such a tremendous thrashing, it turned out that these Basutus have a custom of sending young men of a certain age[+] out in couples, each armed with a good "sjambok" (a whip cut from

the hide of a sea-cow), to thrash one another till one gives in, and that it was in one of these encounters that the intelligent Scowl got so lacerated; but, as he remarked with a grin, "My back is nothing, the chiefs should see that of the other boy."

[*] Of these two lads, Nojoke subsequently turned out worthless, and went to the Diamond Fields, whilst Scowl became an excellent servant, until he took to wearing a black coat, and turned Christian, when he shortly afterwards developed into a drunkard and a thief.

[+] The age of puberty.

We spent one night at Middelburg, and next morning, bidding adieu to our kind English friends, started for Pretoria, taking care to end our first day's journey at a house where an Englishman lived, so as to ensure a clean shakedown. Here we discovered that the horse I was riding (the sole survivor of the five we had started with) had got the sickness, and so we had to leave him and hire another. This horse, by the by, recovered, which is the only instance of an animal's conquering the disease which has yet come under my observation. We hired the new horse from a Boer, who charged us exactly three times its proper price, and then preached us a sermon quite a quarter of an hour long on his hospitality, his kindness of heart, and his willingness to help strangers. I must tell you that, just as we were going to sleep the

night before, a stranger had come and asked for a shakedown, which was given to him in the same room. We had risen before daybreak, and my companion was expatiating to me, in clear and forcible language, on the hypocrisy and scoundrelism of this Boer, when suddenly a sleepy voice out of the darkness murmured thickly, "I say, stranger, guess you shouldn't lose your temper; guess that 'ere Boer is acting after the manner of human natur'." And then the owner of the voice turned over and went to sleep again.

We had over sixty miles to ride that day, and it must have been about eight o'clock at night, on the sixteenth day of our journey, when we reached Pretoria and rode straight up to our camp, where we were heartily greeted. I am sure that some of our friends must have felt a little disappointed at seeing us arrive healthy and fat, without a sign of fever, after all their melancholy predictions. It would not have been "human natur'" if they had not. When we got to the camp, I called out to Masooku, my Zulu servant, to come and take the horses. Next moment I heard a rush and a scuttle in the tent like the scrimmage in a rabbit-burrow when one puts in the ferrets, and Masooku shouted out in Zulu, "He has come back! by Chaka's head, I swear it! It is his voice, his own voice, that calls me; my father's, my chief's!"

And so ended one of the hardest and most interesting journeys imaginable--a journey in which the risk only added to the pleasure. Still, I should not care to make it again at the same time of year.

VII

A ZULU WAR-DANCE

In all that world-wide empire which the spirit of the English colonisation has conquered from out of the realms of the distant and unknown, and added year by year to the English dominions, it is doubtful whether there be any one spot of corresponding area, presenting so many large questions, social and political, as the colony of Natal. Wrested some thirty years ago from the patriarchal Boers, and peopled by a few scattered scores of adventurous emigrants, Natal has with hard toil gained for itself a precarious foothold hardly yet to be called an existence. Known chiefly to the outside world as the sudden birthplace of those tremendous polemical missiles which battered so fiercely, some few years ago, against the walls of the English Church, it is now attracting attention to the shape and proportion of that unsolved riddle of the future, the Native Question. In those former days of rude and hand-to-mouth legislation, when the certain evil of the day had to be met and dealt with before the possible evil of the morrow, the seeds of great political trouble were planted in the young colony, seeds whose fruit is fast ripening before our eyes.

When the strong aggressive hand of England has grasped some fresh portion of the earth's surface, there is yet a spirit of justice in

her heart and head which prompts the question, among the first of such demands, as to how best and most fairly to deal by the natives of the newly-acquired land. In earlier times, when steam was not, and telegraphs and special correspondents were equally unknown agencies for getting at the truth of things, this question was more easily answered across a width of dividing ocean or continent. Then distant action might be prompt and sharp on emergency, and no one would be the wiser. But of late years, owing to these results of civilisation, harsh measures have, by the mere pressure of public opinion, and without consideration of their necessity in the eyes of the colonists, been set aside as impracticable and inhuman. In the case of Natal, most of the early questions of possession and right were settled, sword in hand, by the pioneer Dutch, who, after a space of terrible warfare, drove back the Zulus over the Tugela, and finally took possession of the land. But they did not hold it long. The same hateful invading Englishman, with his new ideas and his higher forms of civilisation, who had caused them to quit the "Old Colony," the land of their birth, came and drove them, vi et armis, from the land of their adoption. And it was not long before these same English became lords of this red African soil, from the coast up to the Drakensberg. Still there were difficulties; for although the new-comers might be lords of the soil, there remained yet a remnant, and a very troublesome remnant, of its original and natural masters: shattered fragments of the Zulu power in Natal, men who had once swept over the country in the army of Chaka the Terrible, Chaka of the Short Spear, but who had remained behind in the fair new land, when Chaka's raids had been checked by the white man and his deadly weapons.

Remnants, too, of conquered aboriginal tribes, who had found even Chaka's rule easier than that of their own chieftains, swelled the amount to a total of some 100,000 souls.

One of the first acts of the English Government, when it took up the reins, was to allot to each of these constituent fragments a large portion of the land. This might perhaps have been short-sighted legislation, but it arose from the necessity of the moment. According to even the then received ideas of colonisation and its duties, it was hardly possible--danger apart--to drive all the natives over the frontier, so they were allowed to stay and share the rights and privileges of British subjects. But the evil did not stop there. Ere long some political refugees, defeated in battle, fled before the avenging hand of the conqueror, and craved place and protection from the Government of Natal. It was granted; and the principle once established, body after body of men poured in: for, in stepping over the boundary line, they left the regions of ruin and terrible death, and entered those of peace, security, and plenty.

Thus it is that the native population of Natal, fed from within and without, has in thirty years increased enormously in number. Secluded from the outside world in his location, the native has lived in peace and watched his cattle grow upon a thousand hills. His wealth has become great and his wives many. He no longer dreads swift "death by order of the king," or by word of the witch-doctor. No "impi," or native regiment, can now sweep down on him and "eat him up," that is, carry off

his cattle, put his kraal to the flames, and himself, his people, his wives, and children to the assegai. For the first time in the story of the great Kafir race, he can, when he rises in the morning, be sure that he will not sleep that night, stiff, in a bloody grave. He has tasted the blessings of peace and security, and what is the consequence? He has increased and multiplied until his numbers are as grains of sand on the sea-shore. Overlapping the borders of his location, he squats on private lands, he advances like a great tidal wave, he cries aloud for room, more room. This is the trouble which stares us in the face, looming larger and more distinct year by year; the great over-growing problem which thoughtful men fear must one day find a sudden and violent solution. Thus it comes to pass that there hangs low on the horizon of South Africa the dark cloud of the Native Question. How and when it will burst no man can pretend to say, but some time and in some way burst it must, unless means of dispersing it can be found.

There is now at work among the Kafir population the same motive power which has raised in turn all white nations, and, having built them up to a certain height, has then set to work to sap them until they have fallen--the power of civilisation. Hand in hand the missionary and the trader have penetrated the locations. The efforts of the teacher have met with but a partial success. "A Christian may be a good man in his way, but he is a Zulu spoiled," said Cetywayo, King of the Zulus, when arguing the question of Christianity with the Secretary for Native Affairs; and such is, not altogether wrongly, the general feeling of the natives. With the traders it has been different. Some have dealt

honestly--and more, it is to be feared, dishonestly--not only with those with whom they have had dealings, but with their fellow-subjects and their Government. It is these men chiefly who have, in defiance of the law, supplied the natives with those two great modern elements of danger and destruction, the gin-bottle and the rifle. The first is as yet injurious only to the recipients, but it will surely react on those who have taught them its use; the danger of possessing the rifle may come home to us any day and at any moment.

Civilisation, it would seem, when applied to black races, produces effects diametrically opposite to those we are accustomed to observe in white nations: it debases before it can elevate; and as regards the Kafirs it is doubtful, and remains to be proved, whether it has much power to elevate them at all. Take the average Zulu warrior, and it will be found that, in his natural state, his vices are largely counter-balanced by his good qualities. In times of peace he is a simple, pastoral man, leading a good-humoured easy life with his wives and his cattle, perfectly indolent and perfectly happy. He is a kind husband and a kinder father; he never disowns his poor relations; his hospitality is extended alike to white and black; he is open in his dealings and faithful to his word, and his honesty is a proverb in the land. True, if war breaks out and the thirst for slaughter comes upon him, he turns into a different man. When the fierce savage spirit is once aroused, blood alone will cool it. But even then he has virtues. If he is cruel, he is brave in the battle; if he is reckless of the lives of others, he regards not his own; and when death comes, he meets

it without fear, and goes to the spirits of his fathers boldly, as a warrior should. And now reverse the picture, and see him in the dawning light of that civilisation which, by intellect and by nature, he is some five centuries behind. See him, ignoring its hidden virtues, eagerly seize and graft its most prominent vices on to his own besetting sins. Behold him by degrees adding cunning to his cruelty, avarice to his love of possession, replacing his bravery by coarse bombast and insolence, and his truth by lies. Behold him inflaming all his passions with the maddening drink of the white man, and then follow him through many degrees of degradation until he falls into crime and ends in a jail.

Such are, in only too many instances, the consequences of this partial civilisation, and they are not even counterbalanced, except in individual cases, by the attempt to learn the truths of a creed which he cannot, does not, pretend to understand. And if this be the result in the comparatively few individuals who have been brought under these influences, it may be fair to argue that it will differ only in degree, not in kind, when the same influences are brought to bear on the same material in corresponding proportions. Whatever may or may not be the effects of our partial civilisation when imperfectly and spasmodically applied to the vast native population of South Africa, one thing must, in course of time, result from it. The old customs, the old forms, the old feelings, must each in turn die away. The outer expression of these will die first, and it will not be long before the very memory of them will fade out of the barbaric heart. The rifle must replace, and, indeed, actually has replaced, the assegai and the shield, and portions of the cast-off uniforms of all the armies of Europe are to be seen

where, until lately, the bronze-like form of the Kafir warrior went naked as on the day he was born. But so long as native customs and ceremonies still linger in some of the more distant locations, so long will they exercise a certain attraction for dwellers amid tamer scenes. It is therefore from a belief in the magnetism of contrast that the highly-civilised reader is invited to come to where he can still meet the barbarian face to face and witness that wild ceremony, half jest, half grim earnest--a Zulu war dance.

It was the good fortune of the writer of this sketch to find himself, some years ago, travelling through the up-country districts of Natal, in the company of certain high officials of the English Government. The journey dragged slowly enough by waggon, and some monotonous weeks had passed before we pitched our camp, one drizzling gusty night, on a high plateau, surrounded by still loftier hills. A wild and dismal place it looked in the growing dusk of an autumn evening, nor was it more suggestively cheerful when we rode away from it next morning in the sunshine, leaving the waggons to follow slowly. Our faces were set towards a great mountain, towering high above its fellows, called Pagadi's Kop--Pagadi being a powerful chief who had fled from the Zulus in the early days of the colony, and had ever since dwelt loyally and peacefully here in this wild place, beneath the protection of the Crown. Messengers had been duly sent to inform him that he was to receive the honour of a visit, for your true savage never likes to be taken by surprise. Other swift-footed runners had come back with the present of

a goat, and the respectful answer, so Oriental in its phraseology, that "Pagadi was old, he was infirm, yet he would arise and come to greet his lords." Every mile or so of our slow progress a fresh messenger would spring up before us suddenly, as though he had started out of the earth at our feet, and prefixing his greeting with the royal salute, given with up-raised arm, "Bayete! Bayete!"--a salutation only accorded to Zulu royalty, to the governors of the different provinces, and to Sir T. Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs--he would deliver his message or his news and fall into the rear. Presently came one saying, "Pagadi is very old and weak; Pagadi is weary; let his lords forgive him if he meet them not this day. To-morrow, when the sun is high, he will come to their place of encampment and greet his lords and hold festival before them. But let his lords, the white lords of all the land from the Great Mountain to the Black Water, go up to his kraal, and let them take the biggest hut and drink of the strongest beer. There his son, the chief that is to be, and all his wives, shall greet them; let his lords be honoured by Pagadi, through them." An acknowledgment was sent, and we

still rode on, beginning the ascent of the formidable stronghold, on the flat top of which was placed the chief's kraal. A hard and stiff climb it was, up a bridle path with far more resemblance to a staircase than a road. But if the road was bad, the scenery and the vegetation were wild and beautiful in the extreme. Now we came to a deep "kloof" or cleft in the steep mountain-side, at the bottom of which, half hidden by the masses of ferns and rich rank greenery, trickled a little stream; now to an open space of rough ground, covered only with huge, weather-washed

boulders. A little further on lay a Kafir mealie-garden, where the tall green stalks were fairly bent to the ground by the weight of the corn-laden heads, and beyond that, again, a park-like slope of grassy veldt. And ever, when we looked behind us, the vast undulating plain over which we had come stretched away in its mysterious silence, till it blended at length with the soft blue horizon.

At last, after much hard and steady climbing, we reached the top and stood upon a perfectly level space ten or twelve acres in extent, exactly in the centre of which was placed the chief's kraal. Before we dismounted we rode to the extreme western edge of the plateau, to look at one of the most perfectly lovely views it is possible to imagine. It was like coming face to face with great primeval Nature, not Nature as we civilised people know her, smiling in corn-fields, waving in well-ordered woods, but Nature as she was on the morrow of the Creation. There, to our left, cold and grey and grand, rose the great peak, flinging its dark shadow far beyond its base. Two thousand feet and more beneath us lay the valley of the Mooi river, with the broad tranquil stream flashing silver through its midst. Over against us rose another range of towering hills, with sudden openings in their blue depths through which could be seen the splendid distances of a champaign country. Immediately at our feet, and seeming to girdle the great gaunt peak, lay a deep valley, through which the Little Bushman's River forced its shining way. All around rose the great bush-clad hills, so green, so bright in the glorious streaming sunlight, and yet so awfully devoid of life, so solemnly silent. It was indeed a sight never to be forgotten,

this wide panoramic out-look, with its towering hills, its smiling valleys, its flashing streams, its all-pervading sunlight, and its deep sad silence. But it was not always so lifeless and so still. Some few years ago those hills, those plains, those rivers were teeming each with their various creatures. But a short time since, and standing here at eventide, the traveller could have seen herds of elephants cooling themselves yonder after their day's travel, whilst the black-headed white-tusked sea-cow rose and plunged in the pool below. That bush-clad hill was the favourite haunt of droves of buffaloes and elands, and on that plain swarmed thousands upon thousands of springbok and of quagga, of hartebeest and of oribi. All alien life must cease before the white man, and so these wild denizens of forest, stream, and plain have passed away never to return.

Turning at length from the contemplation of a scene so new and so surprising, we entered the stockade of the kraal. These kraals consist of a stout outer palisade, and then, at some distance from the first, a second enclosure, between which the cattle are driven at night, or in case of danger. At the outer entrance we were met by the chief's eldest son, a finely-built man, who greeted us with much respect and conducted us through rows of huts to the dwelling-places of the chief's family, fenced off from the rest by a hedge of Tambouki grass. In the centre of these stood Pagadi's hut, which was larger and more finely woven and thatched than the rest. It is impossible to describe these huts better than by saying that they resemble enormous straw beehives of the old-fashioned pattern. In front of the hut were grouped a dozen or so

of women clad in that airiest of costumes, a string of beads. They were Pagadi's wives, and ranged from the first shrivelled-up wife of his youth to the plump young damsel bought last month. The spokeswoman of the party, however, was not one of the wives, but a daughter of Pagadi's, a handsome girl, tall, and splendidly formed, with a finely-cut face. This prepossessing young lady entreated her lords to enter, which they did, in a very unlordly way, on their hands and knees. So soon as the eye became accustomed to the cool darkness of the hut, it was sufficiently interesting to notice the rude attempts at comfort with which it was set forth. The flooring, of a mixture of clay and cow-dung, looked exactly like black marble, so smooth and polished had it been made, and on its shining, level surface couches of buckskin and gay blankets were spread in an orderly fashion. Some little three-legged wooden sleeping-pillows and a few cooking-pots made up its sole furniture besides. In one corner rested a bundle of assegais and war-shields, and opposite the door were ranged several large calabashes full of "twala" or native beer. The chief's son and all the women followed us into the hut. The ladies sat themselves down demurely in a double row opposite to us, but the young chieftain crouched in a distant corner apart and played with his assegais. We partook of the beer and exchanged compliments, almost Oriental in their dignified courtesy, in the soft and liquid Zulu language, but not for long, for we still had far to ride. The stars were shining in southern glory before we reached the place of our night's encampment, and supper and bed were even more than usually welcome. There is a pleasure in the canvas-sheltered meal, in the after-pipe and evening talk of the things of the day that has

been and those of the day to come, here, amid these wild surroundings, which is unfelt and unknown in scenes of greater comfort and higher civilisation. There is a sense of freshness and freedom in the wind-swept waggon-bed that is not to be exchanged for the softest couch in the most luxurious chamber. And when at length the morning comes, sweet in the scent of flowers, and glad in the voice of birds, it finds us ready to greet it, not hiding it from us with canopy and blind, as is the way of cities.

The scene of the coming spectacle of this bright new day lies spread before us, and certainly no spot could have been better chosen for dramatic effect. In front of the waggons is a large, flat, open space, backed by bold rising ground with jutting crags and dotted clumps of luxuriant vegetation. All around spreads the dense thorn-bush, allowing but of one way of approach, from the left. During the morning we could hear snatches of distant chants growing louder and louder as time wore on, and could catch glimpses of wild figures threading the thorns, warriors hastening to the meeting-place. All through the past night the farmers for miles around had been aroused by the loud insistent cries of the chief's messengers as they flitted far and wide, stopping but a moment wherever one of their tribe sojourned, and bidding him come, and bring plume and shield, for Pagadi had need of him. This day, we may be sure, the herds are left untended, the mealie-heads ungathered, for the herdsmen and the reapers have come hither to answer to the summons of their chief. Little reck they whether it be for festival or war; he needs them, and has called them, and that is enough. Higher and higher

rose the fitful distant chant, but no one could be seen. Suddenly there stood before us a creature, a woman, who, save for the colour of her skin, might have been the original of any one of Macbeth's "weird sisters." Little, withered, and bent nearly double by age, her activity was yet past comprehension. Clad in a strange jumble of snake-skins, feathers, furs, and bones, a forked wand in her outstretched hand, she rushed to and fro before the little group of white men. Her eyes gleamed like those of a hawk through her matted hair, and the genuineness of her frantic excitement was evident by the quivering flesh and working face, and the wild, spasmodic words she spoke. The spirit at least of her rapid utterances may thus be rendered:--

"Ou, ou, ou, ai, ai, ai. Oh, ye warriors that shall dance before the great ones of the earth, come! Oh, ye dyers of spears, ye plumed suckers of blood, come! I, the Isanusi, I, the witch-finder, I, the wise woman, I, the seer of strange sights, I, the reader of dark thoughts, call ye! Come, ye fierce ones; come, ye brave ones, come, and do honour to the white lords! Ah, I hear ye! Ah, I smell ye! Ah, I see ye; ye come, ye come!"

Hardly had her invocation trailed off into the "Ou, ou, ou, ai, ai, ai," with which it had opened, when there rushed over the edge of the hill, hard by, another figure scarcely less wild, but not so repulsive in appearance. This last was a finely-built warrior arrayed in the full panoply of savage war. With his right hand he grasped his spears, and on his left hung his large black ox-hide shield, lined on its inner side

with spare assegais. From the "man's" ring round his head arose a single tall grey plume, robbed from the Kafir crane. His broad shoulders were bare, and beneath the arm-pits was fastened a short garment of strips of skin, intermixed with ox-tails of different colours. From his waist hung a rude kilt made chiefly of goat's hair, whilst round the calf of the right leg was fixed a short fringe of black ox-tails. As he stood before us with lifted weapon and outstretched shield, his plume bending to the breeze, and his savage aspect made more savage still by the graceful, statuesque pose, the dilated eye and warlike mould of the set features, as he stood there, an emblem and a type of the times and the things which are passing away, his feet resting on ground which he held on sufferance, and his hands grasping weapons impotent as a child's toy against those of the white man,--he who was the rightful lord of all,--what reflections did he not induce, what a moral did he not teach!

The warrior left us little time, however, for either reflections or deductions, for, striking his shield with his assegai, he rapidly poured forth this salutation:--

"Bayete, Bayete, O chief from the olden times, O lords and chief of chiefs! Pagadi, the son of Masingorano, the great chief, the leader of brave ones, the son of Ulubako, greets you. Pagadi is humble before you; he comes with warrior and with shield, but he comes to lay them at your feet. O father of chiefs, son of the great Queen over the water, is it permitted that Pagad' approach you? Ou, I see it is, your face is pleasant; Bayete, Bayete!"

He ends, and, saluting again, springs forward, and, flying hither and thither, chants the praises of his chief. "Pagadi," he says, "Pagad', chief and father of the Amocuna, is coming. Pagad', the brave in battle, the wise in council, the slayer of warriors; Pagad' who slew the tiger in the night time; Pagadi, the rich in cattle, the husband of many wives, the father of many children. Pagad' is coming, but not alone; he comes surrounded with his children, his warriors. He comes like a king at the head of his brave children. Pagadi's soldiers are coming; his soldiers who know well how to fight; his soldiers and his captains who make the hearts of brave men to sink down; his shakers of spears; his quaffers of blood. Pagad' and his soldiers are coming; tremble all ye, ou, ou, ou!"

As the last words die on his lips the air is filled with a deep, murmuring sound like distant thunder; it swells and rolls, and finally passes away to give place to the noise of the rushing of many feet. Over the brow of the hill dashes a compact body of warriors, running swiftly in lines of four, with their captain at their head, all clad in the same wild garb as the herald. Each bears a snow-white shield carried on the slant, and above each warrior's head rises a grey heron's plume. These are the advance-guard, formed of the "greys" or veteran troops. As they come into full view the shields heave and fall, and then from every throat bursts the war-song of the Zulus. Passing us swiftly, they take up their position in a double line on our right, and stand there solemnly chanting all the while. Another rush of feet, and another

company flits over the hill towards us, but they bear coal-black shields, and the drooping plumes are black as night; they fall into position next the firstcomers, and take up the chant. Now they come faster and faster, but all through the same gap in the bush. The red shields, the dun shields, the mottled shields, the yellow shields, follow each other in quick but regular succession, till at length there stands before us a body of some five hundred men, presenting, in their savage dress, their various shields and flashing spears, as wild a spectacle as it is possible to conceive.

But it is not our eyes only that are astonished, for from each of those five hundred throats there swells a chant never to be forgotten. From company to company it passes, that wild, characteristic song, so touching in its simple grandeur, so expressive in its deep, pathetic volume. The white men who listened had heard the song of choirs ringing down resounding aisles, they had been thrilled by the roll of oratorios pealing in melody, beautiful and complex, through the grandest of man's theatres, but never till now had they heard music of voices so weird, so soft and yet so savage, so simple and yet so all-expressive of the fiercest passions known to the human heart. Hark! now it dies; lower and lower it sinks, it grows faint, despairing: "Why does he not come, our chief, our lord? Why does he not welcome his singers? Ah! see, they come, the heralds of our lord! our chief is coming to cheer his praisers, our chief is coming to lead his warriors." Again it rises and swells louder and louder, a song of victory and triumph. It rolls against the mountains, it beats against the ground: "He is coming, he is

here, attended by his chosen. Now we shall go forth to slay; now shall we taste of the battle." Higher yet and higher, till at length the chief, Pagadi, swathed in war-garments of splendid furs, preceded by runners and accompanied by picked warriors, creeps slowly up. He is old and tottering, and of an unwieldy bulk. Two attendants support him, whilst a third bears his shield, and a fourth (oh bathos!) a cane-bottomed chair. One moment the old man stands and surveys his warriors and listens to the familiar war-cry. As he stands, his face is lit with the light of battle, the light of remembered days. The tottering figure straightens itself, the feeble hand becomes strong once more. With a shout, the old man shakes off his supporters and grasps his shield, and then, forgetting his weakness and his years, he rushes to his chieftain's place in the centre of his men. And as he comes the chant grows yet louder, the time yet faster, till it rises, and rings, and rolls, no longer a chant, but a war-cry, a paean of power. Pagadi stops and raises his hand, and the place is filled with a silence that may be felt. But not for long. The next moment five hundred shields are tossed aloft, five hundred spears flash in the sunshine, and with a sudden roar, forth springs the royal salute, "Bayete!"

The chief draws back and gives directions to his indunas, his thinkers, his wise ones, men distinguished from their fellows by the absence of shield and plume; the indunas pass on the orders to the captains, and at once the so-called dance begins. First they manoeuvre a little in absolute silence, and changing their position with wonderful precision and rapidity; but as their blood warms there comes a sound as

of the hissing of ten thousand snakes, and they charge and charge again. A pause, and the company of "greys" on our right, throwing itself into open order, flits past us like so many vultures to precipitate itself with a wild, whistling cry on an opposing body which rushed to meet it. They join issue, they grapple; on them swoops another company, then another and another, until nothing is to be distinguished except a mass of wild faces heaving; of changing forms rolling and writhing, twisting and turning, and, to all appearances, killing and being killed, whilst the whole air is pervaded with a shrill, savage sibillation. It is not always the same cry; now it is the snorting of a troop of buffaloes, now the shriek of the eagle as he seizes his prey, anon the terrible cry of the "night-prowler," the lion, and now--more thrilling than all--the piercing wail of a woman. But whatever the cry, the cadence rises and falls in perfect time and unanimity; no two mix with one another so as to mar the effect of each.

Again the combatants draw back and pause, and then forth from the ranks springs a chosen warrior, and hurls himself on an imaginary foe. He darts hither and thither with wild activity, he bounds five feet into the air like a panther, he twists through the grass like a snake, and, finally, making a tremendous effort, he seems to slay his airy opponent, and sinks exhausted to the ground. The onlookers mark their approval or disapproval of the dancer's feats by the rising and falling of the strange whistling noise which, without the slightest apparent movement of face or lip, issues from each mouth. Warrior after warrior comes forth in turn from the ranks and does battle with his invisible foe, and

receives his meed of applause. The last warrior to spring forward with a wild yell is the future chief, Pagadi's son and successor, our friend of yesterday. He stands, with his shield in one hand and his lifted battle-axe--borne by him alone--in the other, looking proudly around, and rattling his lion-claw necklets, whilst from every side bursts forth a storm of sibillating applause, not from the soldiers only, but from the old men, women, and children. Through all his fierce pantomimic dance it continues, and when he has ended it redoubles, then dies away, but only to burst out again and again with unquenchable enthusiasm.

In order, probably, to give the warriors a brief breathing space, another song is now set up, and it is marvellous the accuracy and knowledge of melody with which the parts are sung, like a glee of catch, the time being kept by a conductor, who rushes from rank to rank beating time with a wand. Yet it is hardly like chanting, rather like a weird, sobbing melody, with tones in it which range from the deepest bass to the shrillest treble. It ends in a long sigh, and then follows a scene, a tumult, a melee, which hardly admits of a description in words. The warriors engage in a mimic combat, once more they charge, retreat, conquer, and are defeated, all in turns. In front of them, exciting them to new exertions, with word and gesture, undulate in a graceful dance of their own the "intombis," the young beauties of the tribe, with green branches in their hands, and all their store of savage finery glittering on their shapely limbs. Some of these maidens are really handsome, and round them again dance the children, armed with mimic spears and shields. Wild as seems the confusion, through it all, even the moments

of highest excitement, some sort of rough order is maintained; more, it would seem, by mutual sounds than by word of command or sense of discipline.

Even a Zulu warrior must, sooner or later, grow weary, and at length the signal is given for the dance to end. The companies are drawn up in order again, and receive the praise and thanks of those in whose honour they had been called together. To these compliments they reply in a novel and imposing fashion. At a given signal each man begins to softly tap his ox-hide shield with the handle of his spear, producing a sound somewhat resembling the murmur of the distant sea. By slow degrees it grows louder and louder, till at length it rolls and re-echoes from the hills like thunder, and comes to its conclusion with a fierce, quick rattle. This is the royal war-salute of the Zulus, and is but rarely to be heard. One more sonorous salute with voice and hand, and then the warriors disappear as they came, dropping swiftly and silently over the brow of the hill in companies. In a few moments no sign or vestige of dance or dancers remained, save, before our eyes, the well-trodden ground, a few lingering girls laden with large calabashes of beer, and in our ears some distant dying snatches of chants. The singers were on their joyful way to slay and devour the oxen provided as a stimulus and reward for them by their chief's liberality.

When the last dusky figure had topped the rising ground over which the homeward path lay, and had stood out for an instant against the flaming background of the western sun, and then dropped, as it were, back into

its native darkness beyond those gates of fire, the old chief drew near. He had divested himself of his heavy war-dress, and sat down amicably amongst us.

"Ah," he said, taking the hand of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, and addressing him by his native name, "Ah! t'Sompseu, t'Sompseu, the seasons are many since first I held this your hand. Then we two were young, and life lay bright before us, and now you have grown great, and are growing grey, and I have grown very old! I have eaten the corn of my time, till only the cob is left for me to suck, and, ow, it is bitter. But it is well that I should grasp this your hand once more, oh, holder of the Spirit of Chaka,[*] before I sit down and sleep with my fathers. Ow, I am glad."

[*] The reader must bear in mind that the Zulu warrior is buried sitting and in full war-dress. Chaka, or T'chaka, was the founder of the Zulu power.

Imposing as was this old-time war-dance, it is not difficult to imagine the heights to which its savage grandeur must have swelled when it was held--as was the custom at each new year--at the kraal of Cetywayo, King of the Zulus. Then 30,000 warriors took part in it, and a tragic interest was added to the fierce spectacle by the slaughter of many men. It was, in fact, a great political opportunity for getting rid of the "irreconcilable" element from council and field. Then, in the moment of wildest enthusiasm, the witch-finder darted forward and lightly touched

with a switch some doomed man, sitting, it may be, quietly among the spectators, or capering with his fellow-soldiers. Instantly he was led away, and his place knew him no more.

Throughout the whole performance there was one remarkable and genuine feature, the strong personal attachment of each member of the tribe to its chief--not only to the fine old chief, Pagadi, their leader in former years, but to the head and leader for the years to come.

It must be remembered that this system of chieftainship and its attendant law is, to all the social bearings of South African native life, what the tree is to its branches; it has grown through long, long ages amid a people slow to forget old traditions, and equally slow to receive new ideas; dependent on it are all the native's customs, all his keen ideas of right and justice; in it lies embodied his history of the past, and from it springs his hope for the future. Surely even the most uncompromising of those marching under the banner of civilisation must hesitate before they condemn this deep-rooted system to instant uprootal.[*] The various influences of the white man have eaten into the native system as rust into iron, and their action will never cease till all be destroyed. The bulwarks of barbarism, its minor customs and minor laws, are gone, or exist only in name; but its two great principles, polygamy and chieftainship, yet flourish and are strong. Time will undo his work, and find for these also a place among forgotten things. And it is the undoubted duty of us English, who absorb people and territories in the high name of civilisation, to be true to our principles and our

aim, and aid the great destroyer by any and every safe and justifiable means. But between the legitimate means and the rash, miscalculating uprootal of customs and principles, which are not the less venerable and good in their way because they do not accord with our own present ideas, there is a great gulf fixed. Such an uprootal might precipitate an outburst of the very evils it aims at destroying.

> [*] I do not wish the remarks in this paper, which was written some years ago, to be taken as representing my present views on the Natal native question, formed after a longer and more intimate acquaintance with its peculiarities, for which I beg to refer the reader to the chapter on Natal.--Author.

What the ultimate effect of our policy will be, when the leaven has leavened the whole, when the floodgates are lifted, and this vast native population (which, contrary to all ordinary precedent, does not melt away before the sun of the white man's power) is let loose in its indolent thousands, unrestrained, save by the bonds of civilised law, who can presume to say? But this is not for present consideration. Subject to due precautions, the path of progress must of necessity be followed, and the results of such following left in the balancing hands of Fate and the future.