

was the financial salvation of the Free State; and the British operation of the Transvaal gold fields has lifted that republic from commercial nothingness to a state that has become at once the chief power and the chief danger to the neighboring states and colonies.



As there exists a great deal of misconception about the causes of the present war, we shall endeavor to review the main facts.

What led to the annexation of the Transvaal? It was not lust of gold, for only small alluvial diggings had been found as yet, and the great gold reefs of Johannesburg were then as little dreamt of as the Klondyke of Canada. It was because the Republic was bankrupt,* the Boers in many districts having refused to pay any more taxes, the country reduced to a state of anarchy by the incapacity of its administrators, by factions bitterly antagonistic to each other, and threatening civil war, and the failure of the Boer commandos to subjugate the native Chief Sekukuni, who was bringing other native tribes down upon the territory, the principal danger being threatened by the Zulus, under Cetywayo. This renowned Zulu King was anxious to pay off old scores with the Boers, who had constantly encroached on his territory, and frequently captured and enslaved his people and robbed them of their cattle and lands. The British Government might have allowed the Boer Republic to find its own way out of its financial difficulties, but when it came to their relations with the natives there was danger that once the Zulu King had overrun the Transvaal, with his 40,000 warriors, he could not restrain his army at that achievement, but it would then turn upon the British colony of Natal, which was neighbor to

*The Government £1 notes or "blue backs" then sold at a shilling, or say five cents on the dollar; while the salaries of the civil servants were three months in arrears.