

affairs, by the history of the past twenty years, by the clash of interests, and by the temper of both parties to the quarrel.

It is not our intention to go through the whole history of the Transvaal during the past twenty-three years. Still, we shall go back to 1877-8, in justice to England, which has no doubt often acted wrongly, but not quite as wrongly, perhaps, as some of her severest critics represent. The annexation of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone was done without the firing of a shot. The country was in a terrible state of disorganization; the Treasury was empty, except for the sum of 12s. 6d.; the Government £1 bluebacks were selling at 1s., and the salaries of civil servants were all in arrears; and, what was still worse, the Transvaal was menaced by two powerful native chiefs, one of whom, the famous Cetewayo, commanded at least 30,000 warriors. Well, the British government took over the country, paid its debts, laid the foundation of its prosperity, and, at the cost of much money and many lives, broke the power of Cetewayo and Secocoeni—not the least assistance being rendered by the Boers in the warfare, although it is quite certain that Cetewayo, at any rate, simply wanted to fight *them*, and had no sort of quarrel with the British, except on account of their interference. In one sense, of course, the annexation of the Transvaal was a political crime; but, in another sense, it was just the kind of thing that expanding empires have always been doing, and have often had to do. At any rate, it seems to have saved the country from anarchy, and it was largely acquiesced in by even the official Boers. Joubert protested and threw up his post, but Kruger accepted office under the British occupation, and only resigned at last because he was refused an increase of salary. When the Boers rebelled, as they had a perfect right to, they began by what was very much like an act of treachery. Then they invaded Natal, precisely as they have done recently, so that this policy of theirs is an old one. They defeated Sir George Colley at Laing's Nek, Ingogo, and Majuba. This General was not a great commander, but he had very few men; even at Majuba his force only numbered 554 soldiers. It was therefore by no means a big battle. Lord Rosebery has called it merely a skirmish. Nor did it end the war, as is often supposed. Sir Evelyn Wood came up with much larger forces, and Sir Frederick Roberts was soon after these at the head of 10,000 men. It was Mr. Gladstone who ended the war. Not another blow was struck after Majuba. An armistice was arranged, and the Transvaal was given back to the Boers by the Treaty of 1881. Mr. Gladstone, in the opinion of his friends, acted magnanimously; in the opinion of his enemies he acted with pusillanimity. Probably his motives were mixed. But, in any case, the settlement was wise and just in the circumstances. It was not given to Mr. Gladstone to be a prophet. He could not foresee that the situation contained the secret germs of future trouble. No one knew that the Boers would henceforth look upon the Britishers as weak and contemptible. No one knew that the hidden gold and diamonds in the Transvaal would attract crowds of immigrants, until at length the Boers would be largely outnumbered by the Outlanders—that is, the "foreign" white population.