

was the African Company, whose interests were mainly in the slave trade. Then come disputes between these settlers and the surrounding tribes. Then the necessity for an armed force to ensure safety and the observance of obligations entered into by the native chiefs; then the gradual assumption of governmental authority, conflicts with the home authorities, interference of the Imperial Government, which, in this instance, became necessary from the African Company favoring the slave trade; and finally, after a number of disputes and petty wars on the minutest scale, an attack in force on some troublesome neighbor, followed by the establishment of the British power as supreme.

In 1826 Great Britain, after a short fight with the Ashantees, concluded with them a treaty of peace in which the King renounced his claim to exact tribute or homage from the surrounding kings, they being bound, in case of dispute, to abide by the decision of the British Governor at Cape Coast Castle, and to abstain from wars with each other and against the King of Ashantee. In 1840 the Crown resumed its authority over the forts on that coast, and a very dubious kind of Protectorate was established over the various tribes. During the Colonial administration of Lord John Russell a very absurd effort was made to establish, in this region, a form of constitutional government. A Parliament was assembled, a system of taxation established in consideration of the Protectorate, which was no sooner arranged than one of the chiefs of Assim undertook to break the bargain and become tributary to the King of Ashantee. This nearly led to a war, but the conflict was averted, and peace reigned for about ten years. An attempt, in 1862, to compel the Governor of Cape Coast Castle to give back a runaway slave, although the owner, the ruler of the Ashantees, well understood that the English were bent upon destroying the system of slavery, and could not recognize property in human flesh, raised another trouble. The whole region under British Protectorate was overrun with Ashantees, and the Governor then urged on the Imperial Government that "policy, economy, nay, even mercy! demand that a

final blow be struck to humble the Ashantee Kingdom."

Policy and mercy were, however, sacrificed to economy, and trouble after trouble arose until the rising last year, which was doubtless part of a long-considered plan to assert, once for all, the supremacy of the Ashantees over those minor tribes who had been placed under the shelter of the Union Jack.

As to the rights and wrongs of this war we care not to enquire. To hear both sides when one side is a savage utterly incapable of comprehending the principles of international justice, and the other a civilized power incapable of recognizing the savage's ideas of right and wrong in such a quarrel, would not be very instructive. The probabilities are that the Ashantees had as much right to invade their neighbors' territory as England had to settle down in such a place and bring a number of tribes into subjection.

The march of every race from barbarism to civilization has been through blood and fire. Whether the African races, with whom Britain has been at war here and there round the Continent for a century past, will ever be civilized, is one of the greatest problems of humanity. The Ashantee war, we hope, will prove of service in working out this problem. It will, if successful, probably root out the cruel rites of heathenism, the wholesale massacres, the feasts of blood, the slavery, which make Africa the earth's Golgotha.

The victor of Coomassie is to meet, on his homeward voyage, the remains of Livingstone, to give them honorable escort to the shores of the land which begrudged to the missionary explorer what, years ago, would have done infinite service to the cause of humanity and saved him from his melancholy fate.

We do not disparage the work done by Wolesey, the soldier—it will bear good fruit in time; but we should rejoice to find the old land less free in entering upon such enterprises, and readier, heartier, more free-handed in supporting that work, which must be vigorously pursued—the work of Livingstone—if ever Africa is to be other than a reproach to the civilized world.