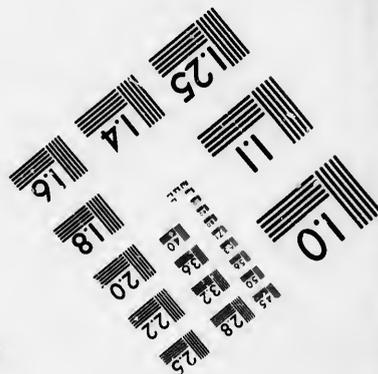
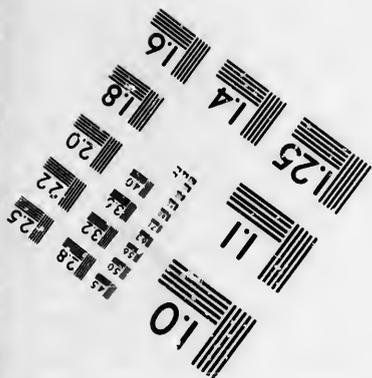
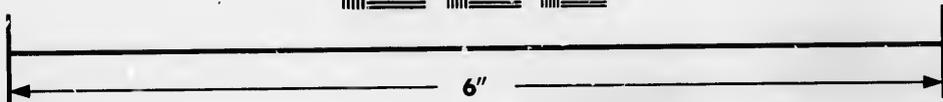
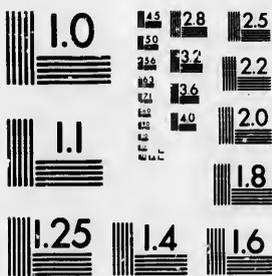


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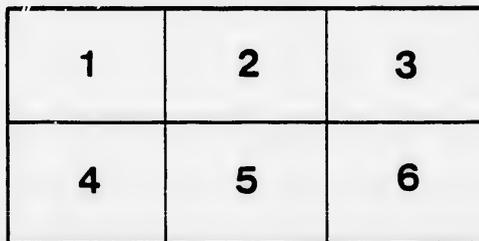
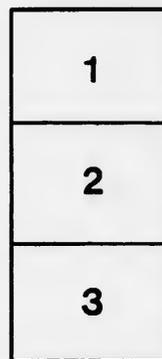
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## ENGLAND AND THE TRANSVAAL.

BY SYDNEY BROOKS.

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THE failure of the Bloemfontein Conference is a disappointment that may prove a tragedy. President Krüger and Sir Alfred Milner, the Governor of Cape Colony, met to discuss the Transvaal question with every external circumstance pointing to a happy issue. The time, the men and the place were all well chosen. In the neat and compact capital of the Orange Free State, the Boer President was among friends of his own race, and the British representative was not among enemies. Both commissioners had behind them the free trust of their respective governments. The President, with the help of his more liberal followers, could have forced upon the conservatives of the Old Boer party any agreement he had cared to sign. It was a good omen, after all these years of obstinate warfare, that he had consented to a meeting at all. It was a better omen that he had declared his willingness to discuss "all, all, all, except the independence of the Transvaal." Sir Alfred Milner, as Lord Cromer's right-hand man during the most arduous years of the reconstruction of Egypt, proved himself second only to his chief in farsightedness, tact, determination and strenuous common-sense; and nothing he has done or said in South Africa has caused the Boers to mistrust him.

The portents of international politics were even more propitious. One may doubt whether there has been since Majuba Hill, whether there is ever likely to be again, any such favorable chance for a peaceful settlement of the great issue of South Africa. To Mr. Chamberlain, the success of the conference meant the restoration of personal credit in a matter that has brought him little but discomfiture. Unquestionably, before risking another rebuff, he must have convinced himself that in a friendly debate lay some hope of getting this troublesome mole-hill finally cleared

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away, and himself left free to make his mark on English history as the first Colonial Secretary with a policy of his own. The people of Great Britain, still somewhat humiliated by memories of the raid, were never less inclined to be overbearing or more anxious to reach a just and pacific solution. There was nothing in the political situation in Cape Colony but what would quiet President Krüger's suspiciousness and urge him to moderation. His own kinsmen, the Dutch colonists, are there in control of the government, their racial sympathies all on his side, as against forcible interference in the domestic affairs of the Transvaal, their rough business sense counselling justice to the Uitlanders for the good of South African trade. Nothing was to be feared from the masterful empire-builder through whose "keen, unscrupulous course" Great Britain has lost much, even if she has gained more. At the time the conference met, Mr. Rhodes was not even in South Africa. From Germany came no encouragement to obduracy. The Kaiser, indeed, has long since done penance for his telegram, and given the Boers to understand that he can no longer afford to be their friend; and unless everything short of official confirmation is to be disbelieved, the Anglo-German agreement of last summer makes provision for the transfer of Delagoa Bay from Portuguese to British hands, and so cuts off from the Transvaal its last hope of reaching the sea. Even the French who have capital invested in the Rand, have of late put aside their Anglophobia and have been calling upon President Krüger to set his house in order. England and the Transvaal were thus left face to face, with the path towards a reasonable adjustment of their differences made as smooth as possible. That the conference, with all these circumstances in its favor, should have failed, and failed without a step being gained towards harmonious compromise, is a fact that must cause the gravest apprehensions.

The conference broke up over the eternal franchise difficulty, which, while it is certainly the *crux* of the whole dispute, is only one of many points of controversy that will have to be straightened out before long. What is known as the suzerainty question is almost as important and considerably more interesting, because more abstract, and I do not apologize for going backwards a little way into history to get its proper bearings.

When Mr. Gladstone made peace with the Boers, a few

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weeks after the defeat of Majuba Hill, he restored to them their former independence, subject to the suzerainty of the British Government. This suzerainty was very clearly defined by the second article of the Pretoria Convention of 1881. It consisted of a right to appoint a British Resident, to whom was given a vetoing power over the policy of the Republic towards the Kafirs—a very necessary provision, for the Boers make Deuteronomy their textbook on all native questions; a right to move troops through the State in times of war; and a right to control and conduct all diplomatic intercourse with foreign powers. Some such restrictions were necessary to make the surrender palatable to the British public, but neither Lord Derby, then Colonial Secretary, nor his successors cared much about enforcing them. The Transvaal was held to be a *damnosa hereditas* before the discovery of gold, and the suzerainty clauses were thrown in to save England's face. They did not work well. The Boers chafed under an arrangement that kept them from dealing with the natives in their own way, and disputes became so frequent that Mr. Gladstone proposed a revision of the convention in 1883.

The conference that led to the signing of the London Convention of the following year attracted very little notice. The British public was tired of the whole business. The spirit of Imperialism had not yet descended on the Colonial Office. The Boers badgered and badgered and got almost everything they wanted. All but complete independence was granted them in domestic affairs. The title of Resident was dropped to gratify their susceptibilities, and the British representative at Pretoria became a sort of consul-general on a reduced salary. The word "suzerainty" was omitted as offensive to Boer sentiment. The convention regulated the western boundaries of the Republic and pledged the Boers not to seek an extension of them. It laid an interdiction on slavery or any "apprenticeship partaking of slavery." In one clause only did the British Government assert its external authority. "The South African Republic," says this clause, "will conclude no treaty or engagement with any state or nation other than the Orange Free State, nor with any native tribe to the eastward or westward of the Republic, until the same has been approved by Her Majesty the Queen." This clause again was intended chiefly for home consumption. It was often disregarded by the Boers, and it was not thought important enough to be

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pressed home by the Colonial Office. The Transvaal in 1884 was a large but barren tract of ground, barely sufficient for the support of 100,000 stock-raisers. It had but a small connection with British interests. The one clear thing about it to the mind of Downing Street was that it had given England more trouble than it was worth, and that the best thing to do was to leave it alone.

But the finding of gold caused British officialdom to change its attitude with speed. Thousands of Englishmen, Australians and Americans swarmed into Johannesburg, and in a few years converted a bankrupt and disorganized state into the second gold-producing country of the world. The Transvaal and its bewildered burghers woke up to find themselves the centre of European intrigue, and the London Convention was discovered to be a document of capital importance.

It is, I think, clear by the terms of the clauses I have quoted that the South African Republic is not an independent state. Its freedom of action is circumscribed both within and without its own territory. Its boundaries, at any rate on one side, are not only fixed, but fixed immutably. In that direction it is forbidden to expand.—It cannot, under the clauses of the convention, introduce slavery, either openly, or in any of the veiled forms under which the institution is still countenanced. Especially, and this is the hinge of the whole convention, is its liberty of negotiation and diplomacy placed under restrictions. Now, no state can be properly called independent which is prohibited from managing its foreign affairs in its own way. The Transvaal is free to arrange treaties with the Orange Free State. With all other countries, as with all native tribes, to the east or west, its relations are ultimately controlled by the British Government. The exact word to describe the position in which the two countries stand to one another is hard to find. "Suzerainty" is a doubtful term of loose application in popular parlance, and of uncertain standing in international law. The word has simply been adopted as a convenient one to define the peculiar relations of England and the Transvaal. To employ it adds nothing to the real efficacy of the convention of 1884; to drop it does not diminish British authority in any way. Call that authority by what name one will—suzerainty, control or the right to veto—the fact remains that the Transvaal, in some most important branches of its national affairs, is finally subject to Great Britain.

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The dispute between the two governments over this point is, therefore, at bottom largely verbal and sentimental. Whether the amount of control possessed by Great Britain over the Transvaal constitutes a suzerainty cannot be settled, until we know exactly what a suzerainty is; and that nobody can tell us. The really important thing to know is that so long as President Krüger accepts and acts up to the terms of the London Convention, he is bound to the clause which carries with it the veto of the British Government on all the diplomatic negotiations of the Transvaal, except those connected with the Orange Free State.

It is one thing to believe in the reality of British control, and quite another to approve its necessity. The first is a question of fact, the second of policy and opinion. Great Britain stands committed to the maintenance of the London Convention by the supposed necessities of her position as the paramount power in South Africa; and, after the coquetting between President Krüger and the German Emperor that followed the Jameson raid, the fear of foreign intrigue is too strong for any British ministry at present to allow the Transvaal the same latitude in foreign, as it enjoys in internal, affairs. The fear may seem unreasoning; to many it does seem unreasoning; but, though less potent to-day than it was three years ago, it is still vivid enough to make the preservation of the convention appear a sacred duty and any revision of it a sacrifice of imperial rights. There is room for a good deal of regret that this should be so. The London Convention has attained a quite undeserved and factitious sanctity in the eyes of English people. From seeing their government constantly at work defending it against real or alleged breaches, they have come to think it something very well worth defending. It is spoken and written of as a sort of Magna Charta of British dominion in South Africa, without which Cape Colony, Natal and the whole of Rhodesia would fall a ready prey to some designing power in alliance with the Transvaal. The question of its real value and of the possibility of revising its hasty clauses has never been squarely considered. Yet there is not much, either in its inception or after-history, to command such perfervid adoration. It was hurriedly and carelessly drafted to bring to its quickest end an issue of which everyone was wearied; it was so little thought of that the Boers might elaim it has lapsed through frequent unrebuked violations; above all, it dealt with a state of affairs that has altered in every particular

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since its promulgation. Wherein does its peculiar virtue consist? Most Englishmen would answer, truly enough, in the clause that regulates the external affairs of the Transvaal. But what, after all, is that clause worth? It has irritated and humiliated the Boers without benefiting England in a single essential. It has forced the British Government to an undignified and unproductive watchfulness over the doings of Transvaal emissaries abroad. If it was designed as an effective check on foreign diplomacy, then the intimate approaches of Germany proved its worthlessness to demonstration. It is, of course, impossible to believe that any power that thought it worth while to negotiate a secret treaty with the Transvaal would be deterred from doing so by the London Convention; and equally impossible to imagine that, if any such treaty were to be negotiated, the Transvaal would submit it to the approval of the British Government. The obstacle that keeps foreign nations from intriguing with the Transvaal for the overthrow of British ascendancy in South Africa, is not a fifteen-year-old piece of parchment, but the strength and position of the British Empire; and that strength and position would remain what they are and be a deterrent of undiminished persuasiveness, were the convention cancelled to-morrow. Either there is the possibility of foreign interference in South Africa, or there is not. If there is, the London Convention is no safeguard against it. If there is not, the London Convention, or at any rate its most prominent clause, is superfluous.

As a matter of fact, we know now that neither Germany nor any other power had serious thoughts of taking upon itself the tremendous responsibility of an attempt to oust Great Britain from South Africa. The true danger to the British position comes from quite another source, from the continued want of harmony and confidence between the English and the Dutch, due to the present turbulent condition of the Transvaal. A civil, not a foreign, war is the menace to be dreaded. It is in the power of the Boers to end the uncertainty that paralyzes commerce and provokes racial antagonism and unrest from Cape Town to the Zambesi by reforming their internal administration; and, as an inducement to set about the task, a guarantee of independence would be far more persuasive than the pointed summonses of the Colonial Secretary. It would seem to be at once an act of magnanimity and good policy if the British Government were to renounce **its**

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claims to a suzerainty and, if need be, abolish or revise the convention, in return for the grant of those concessions to the Uitlanders which can alone make the Transvaal a contented and friendly state. The Boers are keenly anxious to have their status as a nation placed beyond question. It galls them, as it would gall any high-spirited people, to find themselves, after all these years of struggle, still in a position of semi-dependence. From the British and imperial point of view, there is nothing in the London Convention to compare with the vital obligation of securing justice for the Uitlanders, and inducing the two races to live side by side in peace. Its abolition would involve the surrender of no right of guardianship over British subjects in the Transvaal that the ordinary law of nations does not already secure to the British Government; and the withdrawal of the suzerainty claims, which are an incessant source of bickerings between the two peoples, and bring no real profit to Great Britain, would do more than anything else to reconcile the Boers to an adequate measure of reform. On the bare terms of the London Convention, as a matter of technical legal right, it is more than doubtful whether Mr. Chamberlain is strictly justified in protesting against any of the features of the President's domestic policy. Yet no one can doubt that, had the convention been non-existent, the protests would have flowed in just the same, and possibly with greater force and boldness. The convention, at best, throws but a dubious legality upon a course of action already founded on broad principles of duty and justice. It really hampers, rather than aids, British ministers in their endeavor to transform President Krüger's fascinating mediævalism into something approaching a modern system of government. No sooner are the Uitlanders shackled with fresh fetters, than a brilliant and quite interminable debate springs up between the law officers of the Crown and the legal luminaries employed by Mr. Krüger, as to whether the new imposition is or is not a breach of the convention; the fetters, meanwhile, remaining where they were placed. The net workings of the convention have all along favored the Fabian tactics which the President knows so well how to pursue; and, but for one point, he would probably be quite well satisfied to let it remain as it is. That point is the limitations contained in the convention on the full sovereignty of the Transvaal; and to sweep those restrictions away and place the Republic on an equality with Great Britain, there

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are probably few concessions which he would not be glad to make. There seems at all events to be here an opportunity for an honorable and satisfactory bargain. An independent Transvaal, with the Uitlanders admitted to the franchise, would be no more a menace to the British position in South Africa than is the Orange Free State.

Sir Alfred Milner, of course, went to Bloemfontein with no such heroic proposals in his portfolio. In the present state of England's attachment to the convention, one has to admit that no such proposals are possible. National dignity, pride of possession and fears of foreign interference are too keenly aroused to brook the seeming humiliation of retreat, even from a false and unprofitable position. Too much zeal has been spent on the defence of the convention to make its surrender seem anything but a gross betrayal. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the conference foundered in part on this very rock. The President proposed that certain of the matters in dispute should be submitted to arbitration. Sir Alfred Milner was obliged to answer, in effect, that on any matter of real importance there could be no arbitration between a suzerain state and its dependency. Such pistolling diplomacy does not make for a peaceful issue. The concessions that will have to be granted to end the veiled warfare that threatens to disrupt the Transvaal and bathe the whole of South Africa in blood, cannot be expected to come from one side only. It is the President's misfortune to have put himself morally in the wrong on almost every point of domestic policy. That does not relieve Great Britain from the obligation of considering whether it would not be an act of mingled wisdom and generosity to make the task of extrication as easy as possible. The renunciation of suzerainty is the only adequate reward in sight that will atone for the comprehensive surrenders required for the reorganization of the Republic's internal economy. It would remove, in great part, the fearfulness of the Boers lest, in yielding to the demands of the Uitlanders, they imperil their own independence; and it would show, as nothing else can, the sincerity and honesty of purpose which animate the English people in their dealings with the Transvaal.

In the Transvaal itself the situation is almost too fantastic for serious presentation. The Uitlanders, seven-eighths of whom belong to the English-speaking race, outnumber the Boers by more

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than two to one. They own half the land and contribute nineteenth-twentieths of the public revenue. It is through their brains and energy that the Transvaal has been raised from bankruptcy into its present prosperity. They are citizens of the most progressive countries in the world, accustomed to self-government and intolerant of any encroachments upon their liberty. The Boers have altered little, if at all, since the days when the Dutch East India Company planted them at the Cape, except to add some of the vices of the nineteenth century to the ignorance of the seventeenth. "In some of the elements of modern civilization," says Mr. Bryce, a witness of inspired impartiality, "they have gone back rather than forward." A half-nomad people, of sullen and unsocial temperament, severed from Europe and its influences for over two hundred years, living rudely and contentedly on the vast, arid holdings where their sheep and cattle are pastured—each man as far as may be from his neighbor—disdaining trade, disdain agriculture, ignorant to an almost inconceivable degree of ignorance, without music, literature or art, superstitious, grimly religious, they are in all things, except courage and stubbornness of character, the very antithesis of the strangers settled among them. The patriarch Abraham in Wall Street would hardly make an odder contrast. The Uitlanders have an even greater share of the intelligence of the country than of its wealth. Nevertheless, they are kept in complete subjection to their bucolic task-masters. They are not allowed to vote, except for a legislative chamber that cannot legislate; they have no voice in the spending of the money taken from their pockets; they see millions of dollars lavished on the secret service and fortifications at Pretoria, while Johannesburg remains a pest-hole; their language is proscribed in the schools and law-courts of a city where not one man in a thousand speaks anything but English; a clipped and barren dialect, as much beneath pure Dutch as Czechish is beneath Russian, is enthroned in its place; and their children are forced to learn geography and history from Dutch text-books after passing the elementary standards—the President, with a directness that would have come home to the late Mr. Dingley, seeking to popularize his native *taal* by a tax of one hundred per cent. upon foreign books.

It is grotesque to think of Englishmen and Americans being treated in this fashion, and it is quite beyond imagination that they should rest passive in such a house of bondage. The restric-

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tions on franchise and education fall hardest, not on the capitalists and large mine owners, who are mostly absentees, but on the lawyers, doctors, business men and the working classes who have settled in the Rand district less as a speculation than to make it their home and earn a living and bring up their families. The recent petition from the Uitlanders to the Queen was entirely the work of professional men and laborers. Neither Mr. Rhodes, nor the Chartered Company, nor the capitalists had anything to do with it. It was a genuine and thoughtful protest from the average working immigrant against the intolerable oppression to which he is subjected. Even raids and poets laureate cannot weaken the solidity of these grievances. "Diggers," ventured an Australian Premier, "have no country." That may hold good for Coolgardie and the Klondyke, but not for the Transvaal; for gold-mining in the Rand is less hazardous and uncertain than elsewhere. A payable reef once found, there is little anxiety of its suddenly petering out. Its owner can reckon with some confidence that deep borings will show the same percentage of gold to rock as appears near the surface; and this unique assurance makes it possible to speculate approximately on the duration of the mines. The opinion of the most competent specialists seems to be that the district, as a whole, will not be exhausted for fifty, and possibly not for seventy or eighty, years to come. This puts the Rand on quite a different footing from the gold-fields of Australia and California. The foreigners who have rushed to Johannesburg are, for the most part, genuine settlers, men who look forward to spending their whole lives either in the employment of the mine-owners, or in the ordinary trades and professions that gather round the centre of a great industry. They are not of the order of speculative transients, whose interest in their new resting place ceases with the discovery and exhaustion or sale of a "lucky strike." In other words, they have a country; and that country is the Transvaal; and as men who have taken up a permanent residence in it, they demand, not unreasonably, that it should be made politically and socially endurable.

Before the discovery of gold any settler in the Transvaal could secure the electoral franchise after a residence of two years. The Boers welcomed the money that flowed into the exchequer when the value of the Rand district became known; but they took instant alarm at the stream of capitalists, engineers, traders and

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miners—all speaking the tongue of their hereditary foes—that threatened to overwhelm their independence. To preserve the political *status quo*, they raised the probationary term of qualification for the franchise, first to five years and then to fifteen. In 1890, as a sop to the inevitable clamor for representation, they created a Second Volksraad for the members of which aliens might vote after taking the oath and residing for two years in the country. As the Second Volksraad is not allowed to discuss matters of taxation and as all its decrees are subject to the approval of the First Volksraad—which can legislate without requiring the assent of the inferior chamber—the concession is not worth much. At present no immigrant can vote for the First Volksraad unless he has passed the age of forty and lived for at least fourteen years in the country, after taking the oath and being placed on the government lists, lists on which, according to Mr. Bryce, the local authorities are nowise careful to place him. Even the niggardly reforms proposed by the President at the end of last May were negatived by his burghers. Practically, the Uitlanders are disenfranchised. In every other state, Dutch and English stand on the same equality. In the Transvaal, the English are treated like Kafirs. They have not only taxation without representation, but taxation without police, without sanitation, without schools, without justice, without freedom of the press, without liberty of association. Johannesburg is ill-paved, ill-lighted and abominably deficient in drainage and water-supply, because it is English. The courts of law have been prostituted to the whims of the Legislature, in defiance of the written Constitution of the Republic, that thereby the English might be deprived of their one legal remedy against injustice. Education, except in the Boer *taal*, is forbidden above the third standard, in the hope of forcing the English to unlearn their native tongue. And these indignities are put upon the men who are the source of all the country's prosperity, and its saviours from internal dissolution.

There can be little doubt that, had President Krüger yielded to the demand for the franchise when it was first made, he would have to-day, in the gratitude and contentment of his new citizens, the best guarantee for the independence of the Republic. The suspiciousness and conservatism of the Boer character dictated a policy of refusal and delay and unfulfilled promises, from the effects of which the state has been saved more by the mistakes of its

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opponents than by the President's own shrewdness. If the existence of the Republic seems to be imperilled to-day, President Krüger has chiefly himself to thank for it. His resistance to a just demand has driven the Uitlanders, by a process common to most political agitations, to put forward other and less reasonable claims. A section of the excluded settlers has started the theory, based on Great Britain's suzerainty, that the taking of the oath of allegiance to the Transvaal does not involve the surrender of British citizenship. If the contention were sound, President Krüger would be well within his rights in refusing the franchise to all such hybrid citizens. But the argument will not hold water for a moment. Mr. Chamberlain and all the best legal authorities in England have condemned and disowned it. A British subject on swearing the oath of allegiance to the South African Republic, or any other state, forfeits at once all his rights of British citizenship, and becomes, suzerainty or no suzerainty, a foreigner. It is a pity a contrary plea was ever urged. It has only served to misrepresent the intentions of the average Uitlanders. As a body, the Uitlanders demand, firstly, such an alteration of the present franchise law as will give them at least an effective minority representation; secondly, permission to educate their children in their own tongue; and thirdly, a rearrangement of the tariff. The present tariff mulcts the whole of Johannesburg for the benefit of a few Boer farmers, and forces the price of the necessities of life to an inordinate figure. Between the omnipotence of a few large capitalists and the fiscal exactions of the Boers, which press as hardly upon Natal, the Orange Free State and Cape Colony as upon Johannesburg, the middle and working classes in the Rand district, in spite of the high rate of wages, are hard put to it to make both ends meet.

The capitalists have grievances of their own, which their enormous influence in a country of poor men has managed to keep well to the front. The nature and continuance of these grievances show to what lengths the distrust felt by the Boers towards the British will carry them, even to the detriment of the national exchequer. The government of the Transvaal has made it its policy to hamper in every way the development of the mines from which the public treasury is filled. A French expert has calculated that better legislation and administration would decrease the cost of production by about thirty per cent. Heavy

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duties are levied on machinery and chemicals; the tariff more than doubles the price of maize, which is the chief food of the native workmen; and the liquor laws, by making it easy for Kafirs to get drunk, reduce the supply of regular labor and greatly increase the number of accidents. But the loudest complaints are directed against the dynamite and railroad monopolies, from the first of which the state derives not a penny in compensation, and from the second a mere fraction of the sum that goes into the pockets of German and Dutch stockholders. The dynamite monopoly was granted to a German firm some years ago, and securely hedged around by a prohibitive duty on the imported article. The usual consequences have followed. The dynamite is poor in quality and nearly fifty per cent. higher in price than it ought to be. The Netherlands Company, which owns all the railroads in the Transvaal, joins in the merry war of extortion with a series of outrageous freight charges. Taken altogether, these impositions make a difference of three or four per cent. on the dividends of the best mines, threaten the prospect of any dividend on the second best, and make it useless to persevere with those of a still lower grade; the state treasury, of course, suffering in proportion.\* One most unwholesome result of this policy is that the rich mines, which can bear the exactions, buy up the poorer ones that cannot, and so tend to bring almost the entire Rand into the hands of two or three capitalists.

It must not be supposed that President Krüger has carried with him the unanimous support even of his own countrymen in making repression the keynote of his policy. There has always been among the Boers a small and liberal minority that favors reforms, and sees in the persistent refusal of the franchise a weapon of offence placed in the hands of their enemies. This minority is still further incensed by the President's importation of Hollanders to fill the government offices, and by his reckless defiance of the Constitution in making the Supreme Court subservient to the Volksraad. Nor have the more enlightened Dutch of Cape Colony and the Orange Free State stood unreservedly on the side of their northern kinsmen. It is true that if any attack were made on the independence of the Transvaal, their racial sympathies might bring them to the support of the Boers; but they are

\*I am indebted for these and other facts to Mr. Bryce's "*Impressions of South Africa*," a book the value and thoroughness of which are hardly to be inferred from the modesty of its title.

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hardly less desirous than the Uitlanders of seeing the unrest at Johannesburg put an end to. The heavy tariff on wool, wines, brandy and food-stuffs all but closes the richest market in South Africa to their staple exports; and they, like everyone south of the Zambesi, feel the effects of the discontent that radiates from the Transvaal, paralyzing commercial enterprise and development, and wrapping the whole country in a cloud of uncertainties. While opposed to any forcible interference with the domestic affairs of their kinsmen, they have used their influence more than once, but never with much effect, in the direction of peace and moderation. The President's strength lies in the aptitude of his appeals to the spirit and prejudices of the Old Boer party. These stalwart conservatives concentrate all their hatred and contempt for foreign ways and customs upon the British, the only enemies they have known. It was to escape from British rule that their forefathers struck out from the Cape, across the wilderness, and founded a Republic of their own. The incidents of the Great Trek in the thirties, of which the President is the last survivor, are still held in patriotic memory. The British annexed the new-born state under pledges delayed so long that the Boers took up arms to enforce them and won back their old independence. The British stopped the expansion of the Transvaal on the north by occupying Matabeleland and Mashonaland, and on the west by pouncing upon Bechuanaland. It was with British gold, and under the command of British officers, that the raid of 1895 was planned and carried out. Small wonder that the Boers saw and still see in the demand for the franchise only another British plot to rob them of their independence. The Uitlanders had come into the country uninvited and undesired, seeking only gold, and with full warning that it was a Boer Republic they were entering. By what right could these strangers of yesterday claim to be put on a level with the old burghers, who had fought and bled to keep the state free from alien control? And what Boer, looking to the past experiences of his people with the English, could guarantee that their capture of the franchise would not lead to their capture of the entire state, that the Republic would not become an English Republic with an English President, and its original founders a despised and oppressed minority?

It would have been a high achievement in diplomacy if Sir Alfred Milner could have persuaded the President, and through

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him the Boers, that their fears, if not baseless, are very unlikely to be realized. So long as the reasonable grievances of the Uitlanders are met with an obstinate *non possumus*, the Transvaal runs the risk of perishing suddenly and in violence. The danger can only be avoided by altering the franchise laws to give Johannesburg a voice, not necessarily a preponderating voice, in the government of the country; and by removing the barriers upon the education of English children in English. A revision of the dynamite and railroad monopolies, and a rearrangement of the tariff schedule, would give the capitalists all the privileges they care for, and at the same time add largely to the revenue of the Republic. It is clear that the old suspicious policy of denial and opposition has only endangered the security it was foolishly meant to safeguard. The best hope for the independence of the state must lie in the happiness and contentment of its citizens; and that contentment can only be reached by abolishing racial discriminations and putting British and Boer on an equality before the law. Under a *régime* of frankness and conciliation, the two peoples will be able in time to forget their former animosities and come together in harmony and good-fellowship, as they did in the early days of the American colonies, as they still do in Cape Colony. The newly enfranchised citizens, no more the victims of a mediæval oligarchy, will then be as little tempted to hoist the British flag over Pretoria as the French in Canada to return to their old allegiance. The people of England have no hostility towards the Boers, and no ambition to annex their country. They have, on the contrary, an uncomfortable feeling that, in their clashes with the Transvaal, the British reputation for fair-dealing, which so long as it is deserved is the backbone of the Empire, has not been altogether maintained. They admire the old President's pluck and shrewdness and wish him well in his struggle, even where they have to condemn his methods of carrying it on. They cannot find much in his policy that is defensible except its object, and yet they feel that, were they in his place, they would have done much as he has done; and it is because they are sincere in wishing the Transvaal to outlast the life-time of its rugged champion, that they look to him even at the eleventh hour to overcome prejudice and rebuild his state on the only foundation that has in it the promise of permanency.

SYDNEY BROOKS.

## A VINDICATION OF THE BOERS.

A REJCINDER TO MR. SYDNEY BROOKS.

BY A DIPLOMAT.

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ONE of the principal arguments used against the Boers is that they are not only a stationary, but a positively retrograde, people. Among the proofs adduced to substantiate this charge, no one has thought, "*et pour cause*," of mentioning the fact that they are totally ignorant of the art of using the press as a means of influencing public opinion.

The English, with whom, through centuries of initiation, the press has become such a mighty instrument of combat or propaganda, have flooded the world with a mass of publications designed to ruin the Boer cause in both hemispheres. The success of this campaign has been facilitated by the fact that foreign interests in the Transvaal, other than English, could only hope to benefit by it simultaneously with the English interests. Thus, the United States and even France have endorsed the British view of the question. On the other hand, the Boers have done nothing to meet their adversaries on this most important field of international warfare. Trusting exclusively to diplomatic action and military resistance to foil the purpose of the English—with what success in the former line the ostentatious passage of the German Emperor from sympathy to indifference, and the open opposition of France to their claims, have already told us; and, in the latter line, England's determination makes it only too easy to predict—they have totally neglected to enlist public sympathy in foreign countries on their side; and yet their case offers aspects which, properly presented, could not fail to cause the impartial mind to pause and deny the righteousness of the English demands. Whether this feeling would take the form of any practical ad-

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vantage to the Boers, is more than questionable; but it is always desirable for a nation, if only in the interest of morality and its own reputation, to establish its innocence and proclaim the guilt of the aggressor.

It has struck the writer of these pages that what the Boer government and citizens have refrained from doing, a foreigner, totally unconnected with them, might think of achieving, prompted thereto simply by his sympathy with the persecuted, and by the innate impulse of man to disprove error and combat injustice. By placing myself on the broad grounds of public and international law, natural equity and history, I hope to cover the whole subject of the debate now raging between the "Paramount Power" in South Africa and the Boers, and so help in popularizing the conclusion that the Transvaal is only fighting for dear life against a foe who is meditating a crime nearly as great as was the suppression of Poland.

Before going deeper into the matter, I should like to express the sentiment that, in constituting myself the champion of the Boers, or rather of international faith and honesty, in a United States Review, I address myself more particularly to that section of the American people whose inborn love of truth and justice will not allow their judgment to be obscured by sympathy of race, or by a certain analogy of situations and methods of solution between what was the Cuban Question for the Americans, and what is the Transvaal Question for the English.

The July number of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW contains a very interesting article by Mr. Sydney Brooks, dealing with the subject we have in hand from the English point of view. It has occurred to me that an excellent way of carrying out my object is to follow Mr. Brooks in his very complete statement of the case, esteeming that, if I can prove the appreciations of this earnest and well equipped upholder of the Uitlander *Credo* to be false, I shall have achieved a sufficient triumph for the Boers.

After deploring the breakdown of the negotiations between President Krüger and Sir Alfred Milner, in which sentiment everybody must join, Mr. Brooks prefaces his account of the present condition of affairs in the Transvaal with a short review of what is known as the Suzerainty question. From this description we gather that, as a result of a struggle reaching far back into the beginning of the century, and marked by the pas-

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sionate attachment of the Boers to their independence and by a lesser tenacity of feeling on the part of the English, two conventions were concluded—one at Pretoria, the other in London; the last of which, although giving away a great deal of the authority maintained by England over the Transvaal, notwithstanding the defeat at Majuba Hill, still kept the Republic in a state of subjection to English control in one or two things. Mr. Brooks goes on to say, and he proves it vigorously, that this right of partial control—call it “suzerainty” or anything else, the term has no importance—to which England clings with great fervor, especially since the discovery of gold in the Transvaal, constitutes a worthless instrument in her hands, whereas it is wormwood and gall to the Boers. Finally, Mr. Brooks suggests—and this suggestion should be particularly noticed, because it embodies his idea of a solution of the Transvaal question—that the total surrender of this right of control on the part of the English should and might be a means of achieving a settlement of the affairs in dispute, because “there are probably few concessions President Krüger would not be glad to make, in order to sweep away the limitations on the full sovereignty of the Transvaal and place the Republic on an equality with Great Britain.”

Now, here I part from Mr. Brooks. If it is an illusory advantage for England to claim suzerainty over the Transvaal, as granted by the London convention, it would be no less illusory a concession to the Republic to free her from the effect of mere empty words. Undoubtedly, the Boers would derive a moral satisfaction from the proclamation of their complete independence; but, before making a bargain in that direction, President Krüger, of whose shrewdness Mr. Brooks is rightly assured, must see to it that he does not give very valuable wares in exchange for false coin. Why, if the proposition of Mr. Brooks means anything at all, it signifies that the privilege of freeing itself from an insignificant state of dependency is to be acquired by the Transvaal for the enfranchisement of the Uitlanders—that is to say, for a weapon with which the English will obtain a complete mastery over it. There is mockery in Mr. Brooks’ advice; although he may deny this by saying, as in fact he does say in the course of his argument, that the enfranchisement of the English will not lead to any substitution of authority in the Transvaal. He may say so; but who can help smiling at such a declaration. However,

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this aspect of the case should not concern us just yet. Let us first look into the matter of enfranchisement, considered as a grievance of the Uitlanders, and speak of it together with their other complaints.

The whole Transvaal issue hinges on one question: Have the Boers the right to govern themselves as they choose; or, rather, have the English the right to interfere with the form of government, administration and life that the Boers have chosen for themselves? The answer to this query involves considerations of public and international law which are of great importance.

It is the practice of those Powers who have embarked on colonization to occupy territories belonging to savage or semi-savage populations, without much reference to the lawfulness of the operation. In this way, England, France, Germany, ill-advised Italy, and, recently, the United States have spread their dominion over immense tracts of country. Challenged to prove the justifiableness of their conduct, they will begin by solemnly invoking the clauses of conventions concluded with local potentates; and, when the flimsiness and utter hypocrisy of this line of defence are denounced—for we all know the part that intimidation and gin play in these transactions—they fall back on the plea that they are acting in the name of the higher interests of humanity; nay, some say, and they have said it in verse (*vide* Kipling's poem on "The White Man's Burden"), that they are *sacrificing* themselves in behalf of a high notion of duty. Thus, quite a new doctrine has sprung up. Undoubtedly, the substitution of enlightened European or American rule for the primitive and too often ferocious modes of savage administration benefits mankind and the natives themselves, for whom it is not much of a gain, but still a gain, to die from gin instead of by murdering one another. Yet it would seem that there is something lame in the colonial doctrine, since, even in the most flagrant cases of incapacity on the part of barbarous races to govern themselves, the violent or stealthy occupation of their territories causes a secret unrest to the public conscience and mind. This uneasiness does not result so much from the long standing conviction, confirmed by the accusations imprudently hurled by the Powers against one another in their spiteful moods, that national, and sometimes only personal, greed is at the bottom of colonization, as from a deeper, though vaguer, source of misgiving. If we exert our minds to

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give body and shape to this feeling, we recognize in it the instinctive revolt of our nature against anything that threatens the foundations of society; and this the colonial doctrine does, because it is the indirect negation of the principle of property, whether individual or national. That this is so, and that it contains the germ of shocking disturbances to the peace of the world,—a germ whose growth helps to render even more farcical the meeting of the conference which recently sat at the Hague—is strikingly proved by what is going on in China, and, what is of more special interest to us, by the events hurriedly preparing in the Transvaal.

From being applied only to the savage populations of Africa and Asia, the principle of the rights of superior races and civilizations has come, by a steep incline, to mean also that it has reference to countries like the Celestial Empire and the Boer Republic. Between the Zulus and the Boers, what is the difference? Only one of degree. Fine reasoning clears the way for the perpetration of any outrage on the liberty and sovereignty of minor or weak States.

I do not mean to contradict my former statement, which is sincere, notwithstanding the irony it seems to contain, regarding the general profit arising from the substitution of civilization for barbarism—especially when the barbarism is of a sanguinary kind—and the justification of transfer of territory in such cases; but what I want to point out is that, invented in an hour of need, a principle has been laid down which is false, because it is loose in its aim and wording, and thus leaves the door open to abuse. We are thus confronted with the angry claims of the English to govern in the Transvaal—enfranchisement means nothing else—followed by threats of war if they are not satisfied.

The demonstration of the inferiority of the Boers is eagerly undertaken by Mr. Brooks, who calls the situation in the Transvaal "almost too fantastic for serious presentation." On the one hand, we are presented with a bright sketch of the qualities and achievements of the Uitlanders; on the other, with a sombre picture of the Boers, which represents them as being in a semi-barbarous condition. Mr. Brooks says:

"A half nomad people, of sullen and unsocial temperament, severed from Europe and its influences for over two hundred years, living rudely and contentedly on the vast, arid holdings where their sheep and cattle are pastured—each man as far as may be from his neigh-

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bor—disdaining trade, disdaining agriculture, ignorant to an almost inconceivable degree of ignorance, without music, literature or art, superstitious, grimly religious, they are in all things, except courage and stubbornness of character, the very antithesis of the strangers settled among them."

And yet, *horribile dictu*, these strangers are kept "in complete subjection to their bucolic task masters." Thus, out of the superiority of the Uitlanders arises a demand for a share in the legislation of the Transvaal; and, because this is opposed, it becomes an additional grievance, the principal one.

Now, what are the specific grievances originally formulated by the Uitlanders? Mr. Brooks speaks of bad administration, as illustrated by the absence of sufficient police and sanitary arrangements, by the prostitution of the law courts to the whims of the legislature, and by the adoption of prohibitive measures against commerce and industry and the spread of the English language. Even if this is a correct representation of the state of things in the Transvaal—and it may be, except in its reference to justice, which is susceptible of reservations—the English cannot make it a plea for the suppression of Boer government, because that government, although primitive and slowly progressive, as I can afford to admit it is, does not come within the class of institutions which are an outrage to the moral feelings of mankind and provide the only excuse a State can invoke for the suppression of another State. No Englishman, I hope, will deny that the essential notions of morality, if not of civilization, pervade the Transvaal State. What is missing in it, is a set of institutions and ideas productive of well being and luxury. The faculty of a people to dispense with these, calls forth the frequent commendation of the English themselves in their political and social literature, as well as in their current talk, with the help of expressions such as "healthy simplicity of life," "freedom from the enervating and corrupting influences of civilization," and so forth. Besides, the unfriendliness of the soil, as well as the geographical situation, of the Transvaal, together with other circumstances, conspired to maintain the Boer community in the state of primitiveness to which it adhered as a matter of temperament, as well as of social and religious principle. If, even after the discovery of the gold mines, it did not adopt the Anglo-Saxon ideal of a State, it was—supposing there be any necessity to justify a belated form of existence in a nation on other grounds than that of

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its right to shape its destinies as it pleases, provided it does not tend to become a source of immorality—it was, I say, because, by opposing the spread of what is called civilization within its confines, it hoped to discourage the influx of foreigners, in whose presence, especially in that of the English, it immediately detected the germ of a great danger to its independence. In fact, the inertia of the Boers in the matter of reforms, and their activity in creating obstacles to the development of industry and commerce and to the use of the English language, are inspired as much by this thought as by their constitutional aversion to what the English are free to call “blessings,” and what *they* are free to call “the curses,” of civilization. If there is one duty to which a State is more particularly pledged than to any other, it is the obligation to maintain its existence, and to prefer its own interests to those of other Powers. With this object in view, the Boers are distinctly justified in overlooking the complaints of the British; and there are States which have gone a much greater length in their indifference to the choice of means in devising plans for the national safety, without international law allowing of interference on the part of their neighbors.

The safety and interest of the State are the supreme law of nations.

The methods it suggests very often take the form of downright unscrupulousness and cruelty, which is far from being the case in the Transvaal; and, if any Great Power ever thinks of making representations to another on this head, which it can only do in a friendly and officious way, it is because it does not see the beam in its own eye. Need I quote Russia and Germany in this connection? Need I quote the United States? Nay, need I quote England herself? Who is ignorant of the painful aspects of the “language” and “religion” questions in the Empire of the Romanoffs, and in that of the Hohenzollerns? Are the United States free from the pangs of conscience in the matter of the Indians; and, in excluding a whole race, the Chinese, from establishing themselves in American territory, have they not used incomparably more rigor, in order to defend the economical situation of the country, than the Boers in putting difficulties in the way of English immigration, in order to defend the very existence of the State? Or is Great Britain less open to criticism in this relation—she, who is the essence of liberalism when her own

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people are concerned, but who does not scruple to practice the most despotic principles, when it suits her purpose, in dealing with conquered and alien races; she, who, to quote a curious instance of inconsistency on her part, thunders against the intolerable abuse of the quarantine system in other countries, and yet applies the same system herself in Malta?

If the Transvaal State is against the development of commerce and industry on principle, it is within its rights to be so, as much as the United States in adopting the McKinley and Dingley tariffs. It is a matter of opinion, moral or social in the Transvaal, economic in the United States. If the English were more logical and more careful to avoid the reputation of being over-bearing with the weak, they would no more think of calling the Transvaal to account for its economic policy, than they would of challenging the United States for theirs. What Mr. Brooks calls the prostitution of the law courts to the whims of the legislature, does not apply to the ordinary dealings of justice in the Transvaal, but to the political situation, which, as we have explained, must be governed by the principle of the safety of the State. Finally, if the police and sanitary arrangements are not better, Mr. Brooks himself offers us the best possible explanation: it is because the Boers, in order to defend their threatened independence, are obliged to spend nearly all their money on fortifications and the secret service.

Because they cannot obtain redress, through the Boers, for their imaginary grievances, the English claim a share in the government of the Transvaal, insisting that they have a right to be represented in the Raad; and, being denied this privilege, they make it their principal grievance. On what is this claim founded? Certainly not on the doctrine or practice of other States. I defy anybody to prove that any State or, for that matter, any theory of international law, considers it an "obligation" for governments to enfranchise aliens, however great their services to the country in which they reside, however great their contributions to its exchequer, however marked their superiority over the natives. Representation, where it exists, is a consequence of citizenship. "Well, then, we have a right to Transvaal citizenship," say the English. Again, why? Some States show a tendency to favor the naturalization of foreigners, especially the American republics; others, like Russia, are opposed to it; and some, like

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France, from being very liberal in this matter are now undergoing the effects of a reaction. In England, a clause of the law on naturalization provides the Home Secretary with the power to ultimately use his own discretion. But, even in those countries which are most distinctly favorable to naturalization, the practice of adopting aliens is in no way viewed as resulting from an obligation, moral or other, but from the consideration of their own convenience and interest, and it is subject to their own conditions. Nay, in the matter of naturalization, the opinion of the State is so absolutely considered to be all, and the opinion of the individual nothing, that the alien is often naturalized against his will, as is the case in the South American republics. In fact, the question is one that is connected to such an extent with the rights of sovereignty, that it can be only regulated by treaty. There is no treaty binding the Transvaal on this head; therefore, the Boers are perfectly free to oppose the English demands. But, says Mr. Brooks, the English are two to one in the Transvaal. If anything, that is an additional reason for refusing to naturalize them, and we know why. That a majority should be governed by a minority is an anomaly; but it is an admitted situation in public and international law. In India, a handful of Englishmen govern 300,000,000 of natives. In the Transvaal, the case of the governing minority is strengthened by the fact that their authority does not proceed from invasion and conquest, which is a vitiating element in the position of England in India, but from a prior establishment in the land, and is exercised against the majority in the defence of a settled order of things, which has received the sanction of international law.

I leave it to the appreciation of my readers to decide whether the foregoing pages do not contain sufficient proofs of the unrighteousness of the quarrel England has picked up with the Transvaal, and of the justifiableness, nay more, the positive meritoriousness of the attitude of the Boers, whom no generous nation can do otherwise than admire for the pluck and stubbornness with which they are defending their sovereignty. Might I explain here that I have purposely adopted the darkest colors of Mr. Brooks' palette to reproduce the picture of the Transvaal, in order to strengthen my argument, by showing that, even if things are quite as the English represent them to be, the Uitlanders cannot make out a case for themselves. As a matter of fact, the

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Boers, whether they will it or not, are submitting much more than the English will admit to the intrinsic force of modern ideas. They are certainly not in a hurry to make a complete surrender to the tide of innovation and reform; but to depict them as radically refractory to the notions of progress is an injustice. The political situation is more to blame for their backwardness than their old-fashioned conservatism; and, as to the bitter complaints concerning the want of proper administration in the Transvaal, these might be proved on closer inspection to be considerably exaggerated, and to be more the result of the animosity of the English against the Boers, than of a real sense of annoyance and discomfort on the part of men who belong to a class accustomed to rough it, and who, moreover, knew exactly what they had to expect in crossing the borders of the Republic.

I think it is also necessary to recall to mind that, notwithstanding the depth of his convictions in his differences with the English, and however great his stubbornness at heart in thwarting their purposes, Mr. Krüger has not pressed his case with all the force it derives from absolute legitimacy and from the importance of the points at issue; and that he has not only avoided provocative forms, but has actually made concessions, the value of which may be a matter of discussion, but whose existence is nevertheless proof of his desire to spare the pride of a great nation.

I will now revert to the important question of the franchise—the one that dominates the whole situation in the Transvaal and has absorbed in itself all the other grievances of the Uitlanders.

Following Mr. Brooks, I have once or twice taken up a stand on his own ground, that of the harmfulness or innocuousness of enfranchisement granted to the English. Although I have been hitherto more concerned with the legal aspects of this question, a practical view of it forced itself upon my attention at an early stage of this discussion, and I contended against Mr. Brooks, apart from all considerations of legitimacy or non-legitimacy, that, as a matter of opportuneness, the franchise should not be granted by the Boers to the English, because it would lead to the loss of their independence. I will now prove it.

When representation is claimed, it is done with the idea that it will be efficacious; else why claim it? When the English demand representation in the Boer Parliament, they do so with the

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intention, not of satisfying a whim, but of modifying the legislation of the Transvaal in a way to make it meet their views. They cannot hope to do so without having a majority. Therefore, they aim at outnumbering the Boers in the Raad; and, once this desideratum has been fulfilled, the government of the country will have passed into the hands of men who, following the ordinary impulses of flesh and blood, will transform the Boer State into an English dependency—notwithstanding any assurances to the contrary or even the taking of the oath of allegiance. Can anybody contest this view? Is it at all conceivable that a large body of Englishmen, invested with the power to rule in the Transvaal, will continue to submit to the direction of a President and government representing a helpless minority, and belonging to what they consider an inferior race? In many things the enfranchised Uitlanders may quarrel with one another, but they will act like one man to Anglicise the State. Is the contrary technically possible in a State founded on the play of liberal institutions? Besides, do not circumstances point to the existence of a deep-laid scheme, on the part of England, to annex the Transvaal? Has it not been made evident that, in pursuance of a gigantic conception, England is forging the links of a dominion that will extend from the North to the South of Africa, and that the Transvaal will be the next of these links? The Republic is an obstacle—geographical, ethnical and political—to English expansion. Even if it did not stand seriously in their way, history teaches us that it would yet be impossible for the English to resist the temptation of occupying, for convenience' sake, a country that, being weak, is at the same time deprived of the traits that might render it sacred, as Greece is for example, in the eyes of the world, and provide it with friends in the hour of need, even among the Philistines themselves. There is, what for want of a better and less flattering term I will call a sense of the artistic and æsthetic in the spirit of expansion, a sense which revels in conceptions of beautifully rounded and delicately finished frontiers, and uninterruptedly national tracts of territory; and the Transvaal, if for no better reason, is marked out for suppression, because, in the eyes of the English Imperialist, it takes the aspect of an absurdity and an eye-sore in the midst of uniformly British possessions, and spoils the whole map of South Africa with the glare of its color impertinently asserting itself within a huge mass of British pink.

### A VINDICATION OF THE BOERS.

I shall make myself better understood by recalling the instinct of the individual landed proprietor, who is not happy until his estate shows continuity and unindented lines.

Mr. Brooks affirms that the English have no designs on the Transvaal; yet, at the same time, with a contradiction which does not in the least disturb his equanimity, he endorses the apprehensions of the Boers. What he says is too precious not to be literally repeated:

"The President's strength lies in the aptitude of his appeals to the spirit and prejudices of the Old Boer Party. These stalwart conservatives concentrated all their hatred and contempt for foreign ways and customs upon the British, the only enemies they have known. It was to escape from British rule that their forefathers struck out from the Cape, across the wilderness and founded a Republic of their own. The incidents of the Great Trek in the thirties, of which the President is the last survivor, are still held in patriotic memory. The British annexed the new-born State under pledges, delayed so long, that the Boers took up arms to enforce them and won back their independence. The British stopped the expansion of the Transvaal on the north by occupying Ma'abeleland and Mashonaland and on the west by pouncing upon Bechuanaland. It was with British gold and under the command of British officers that the raid of 1835 was planned and carried out. Small wonder that the Boers saw, and still see, in the demand for the franchise, only another British plot to rob them of their independence. The Uitlanders had come into the country uninvited and undesired, seeking only gold and with full warning that it was a Boer Republic they were entering. By what right could these strangers of yesterday claim to be on a level with the old burghers who had fought and bled to keep the State free from alien control, and what Boer looking to the past experiences of his people wish the English could guarantee that their capture of the franchise would not lead to their capture of the entire State, that the Republic would not become an English Republic with an English President and its original founders a despised and oppressed minority?"

Following up this amusing piece of treachery, of which he is unwittingly guilty toward himself and his thesis, Mr. Brooks goes on to say that it would have "been a high achievement of diplomacy if Sir Alfred Milner could have persuaded the President, and through him the Boers, that their fears, *if not baseless*, are very *unlikely* to be realized." I need not point to the delicious effect of the words, "if not baseless, are very unlikely to be realized." But the crowning point of Mr. Brooks' originality is to be found in the following passage:

"The people of England have no hostility toward the Boers and no ambition to annex their country. They have on the contrary an uncomfortable feeling that, in their clashes with the Transvaal, the British reputation for fair-dealing, which so long as it is deserved is

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the backbone of the Empire, has not been altogether maintained. They admire the old President's pluck and shrewdness\* and wish him well in his struggle, even when they have to condemn his methods of carrying it on. They cannot find much in his policy that is defensible, except its object; and yet they feel that, were they in his place, they would have done much as he has done. . . . "

If ever there was truth in the saying, "I can cope with my enemies, but, oh, God! save me from my friends," it would be in its application by the English to Mr. Brooks.

To quote this gentleman's words for the last time, he says that "so long as the reasonable grievances of the Uitlanders are met with an obstinate *non possumus*, the Transvaal runs the risk of perishing suddenly and in violence." In other words, it is threatened with war.

Therefore, it is a choice of two evils for the Transvaal, of suicide or death at the hands of another. One way or the other, whether they yield or appeal to arms, the Boers are doomed; for, in case it is war, England is determined to bring all her might to bear upon them this time, and then all their bravery and military capacity will not save them from defeat and destruction. They can hope to achieve new distinction by a heroic resistance, by gaining some battles, but this will be of no material avail to them, as they must be overpowered and beaten in the end. With the confidence and increased energy of purpose derived from her triumphs in Egypt, Great Britain means to settle the South African problem in her own way and at any cost. Whatever the choice of the Boers, the end seems to be fast approaching. Most of us will probably live to see the curtain fall on the last act of the tragedy now enacting in the Dark Continent, the suppression of the Transvaal. Europe will look on, but will not stir; and Great Britain, at the zenith of her power and glory and prosperity, will continue to shoot in the skies of international politics, a fiery and uncontrollable orb, until she meets the star that is rising from the East, borne on the wings of Autocracy and Orthodoxy, and which is slowly but steadily moving on the same path. Then the heavens will ring and shake with the tremendous clash, and we shall witness the truth or falsehood of the proud English creed that there is no end to the mission of Great Britain, that she can only grow and spread her Empire, and that, superior to Rome, she will achieve durability in the midst of supreme power.

\*I wonder what else "shrewdness" means here but the faculty to see through English schemes.

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## A TRANSVAAL VIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION.

BY DR. F. V. ENGELENBURG, EDITOR OF THE "PRETORIA VOLKSSTEM."

SOUTH AFRICA is poor, extremely poor, in spite of its gold output of nearly two millions per month and its diamond export of five millions per year.

The disabilities from which South Africa suffers are manifold. The climate is glorious, the soil fertile, but the rainfall is uncertain and irregular. There are large tracts where rain falls only once every four or five years; and, where circumstances are more favorable, there are no natural reservoirs in which water can be stored, or certainly none to any appreciable extent. The rivers, dry in summer-time, become foaming torrents in the rainy season, and pour the whole of their waters into the sea. If the Witwatersrand were not situated alongside an extensive formation of dolomite, which absorbs rainwater, and stores it up like a sponge, it would have been utterly impossible for its unrivalled gold industry to attain its present condition, and the Boers to-day would be enjoying the rest and peace which they have ever longed for and deserve.

In addition to the dearth of water, South Africa has had to contend with many other drawbacks, resulting from its clumsy topographical configuration. On its northern confines, it is defenceless against the ravages of nature, which sweep like a whirlwind through the whole of the southern continent. From olden days, Africa has been known as the land of plagues and calamities. Rinderpest sweeps down from the north, and its latest attack, in 1896, brought ruin to both white and black; from the north, too, come the locusts and other noxious insects; from the

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north, come the hot tropical winds, bringing drought and warding off the beneficent rain; and from the north have many clouds arisen casting sinister shadows on this part of the continent. The clumsy configuration of South Africa, to which I have alluded, is the natural result of its plateau-form, with its abrupt descent to the Indian Ocean. The region is devoid of navigable rivers; the seacoast is an endless, monotonous line without fiords, without estuaries, without inlets of any kind, and therefore without harbors. The west coast is, moreover, separated from the interior by wastes of sand dunes; the east coast is unhealthy and haunted by the tsetse fly. No wonder that Phœnicians, Arabs and Portuguese, after their first experience of the country, had little inclination to colonize it, and to make it their home. The only white men who manage to adapt themselves to the exigencies of the southern continent and build up a stalwart nation are the Afrikanders. They are destined to occupy the land for ever, and to thrive here when diamonds and gold shall be things of the past.

And the blacks? I have already said that South Africa is poor, and has never possessed any large population, for the reason that it could not support it. The Bushmen live like beasts of prey in the wilderness; the Hottentots were subject to continuous decimation through sickness and famine. When the warlike Zulus, several centuries ago, came down along the east coast, they drove before them the few handfuls of human beings they encountered, like leaves before the wind, became masters of the best sub-tropical portion of the eastern provinces, murdering and slaying like swarthy Huns, and pressed down to Natal. But although their social organization was higher than that of the nomadic tribes which they superseded, the poverty of South Africa constrained them to continue war amongst themselves. As soon as one Zulu tribe commenced to thrive and increased in wealth of cattle, it became necessary to obtain more land—in other words, to wage war against its neighbors; for South Africa was not able to give shelter to any dense population. That is why the Zulus could only manage to exist either by internecine strife or by occasional emigration, to the natural detriment of the weaker races. Both the legendary and documentary history of South Africa's blacks tends to prove that, when sickness had not to be reckoned with, war inevitably became the means of re-

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ducing the population of this region to its normal sustaining capacity. In recent years, the supremacy of the whites has materially affected internecine war as a limiting factor with regard to native population; but its place has been filled in some measure by disease and drink. There is no doubt, however, that the black population is greatly on the increase, now that they are not permitted to indulge in war amongst themselves. But, at the same time, the importation of foreign "mealies" (maize)—the staple food of the Kaffirs—has also steadily increased; in 1897, the South African Republic imported nearly 36 million pounds of mealies; in 1898, the total importation had risen to over 44½ millions. There will come a day when the natives will cease to get work at the mines, when the mines will be exhausted. Then the importation of South American cereals will fall off, and South Africa will be expected to provide food for its own native population. Will it be equal to the task? The history of the past supplies an eloquent answer.

But with the industrious European colonist, schooled and disciplined by labor, can South Africa not produce what is necessary for his support? The white population of this part of the world amounts, in round numbers, to two millions—a very generous estimate—inhabiting a vast extent of country, larger than France, Germany and Italy together. This population is dependent on the outside world, not merely for the products of technical industry, but also for those of agriculture. We import potatoes and frozen meat from Australia, wood from Canada and Norway, eggs and butter from Europe, meal and mules from America. The sugar and tea grown in Natal cannot compete with the products of Mauritius and Ceylon, without the aid of protection. In order that these two millions of whites may be commercially accessible to the outside world, and that this huge import trade may be practicable, more than fifty million pounds sterling have been devoted to railway construction. Every week sees numerous steamers arriving from all parts of the world, laden with every conceivable kind of goods, to supply the limited South African community with many necessaries of life. Should this means of supply ever be cut off, a large portion of our white and other population would simply starve, or at any rate be deprived of the comforts of life. Only the Boers, who eke out a frugal existence on their secluded farms, and have not yet become depend-

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ent on frozen meat, European butter, American meal and Australian potatoes—only the Boers, who, with rare endurance, the heritage of their hardy race, boldly face years of drought, rinderpest, locusts and fever, could survive such a collapse of the economic machinery of a country so severely dealt with by nature. The remaining Europeans would gradually disappear, just as the Phœnicians and the Arabs disappeared in the days long past. As long as the gold mines and the diamond mines can be worked and made to pay, so long will the abnormal economy of South Africa preserve its balance; but as soon as South Africa has swallowed up its capital to the very last bit of gold, the Uitlander will have to seek for fresh fields for the exercise of his nervous energy, and the Afrikander will be abandoned to his struggle with the inimical elements, as has ever been his lot in the past. By the sweat of his brow he will have to lead his carefully stored-up water to the fields continuously threatened by locusts, he will have to shield his flocks from plague and theft, he will have to preserve continual watch against the inroads of the ever-increasing blacks. The Boer—that is the agriculturist—is destined to be the Alpha and Omega of South Africa's white culture; he alone, in this quarter of the globe, can save civilization from the ultimate gulf of bankruptcy. To say that South Africa is a rich land, or to paint its future in glowing colors and to dilate on the brilliant prospects that it offers to an unlimited white population, is only possible to an extraordinarily superficial observer, to an unscrupulous company-promoter, or to an over-zealous emigration agent, whose salary is in proportion to the number of his victims.

The first European power which acquired a firm footing in the East Indies, the Portuguese, simply ignored South Africa. The Portuguese were succeeded by the Hollanders, who, not until after much hesitation and two futile attempts to conquer Mozambique, decided to take possession of Africa's southern extremity. And the English, in common with the Hollanders, never desired aught but the few harbors which South Africa possesses; the interior had no value in the eyes of the European maritime powers, which only looked to the opulent East. A clear illustration of this is furnished by the fact that, although possessing Walvisch Bay, England quietly acquiesced in Germany's protectorate over the hinterland; and another instance is to be found in the anxiety which England has recently shown to get hold of Delagoa Bay

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and Beira. The possession of these harbors would give to the British Empire control of the sea-way to the East, and to the English merchants such trade with the interior of South Africa as circumstances might permit. Neither the Dutch East India Company nor the British rulers bestirred themselves in any way, in connection with the steady expansion of the white colonists in the hinterland. And this interior colonization had barely acquired any importance before there arose both petty and material disturbances with the authority representing the purely European factor. This was not at all difficult to understand. The community at the Cape was composed of administrators and merchants who amassed considerable fortunes by means of the uninterrupted trade between Europe and India; the luxury which reigned at the foot of Table Mountain was proverbial; all the comforts of European civilization could be enjoyed in sunny South Africa, untroubled by the shadows of the Old World. In vivid contrast to this luxurious life of ease, the burdens of the inland colonists were, indeed, grievous to be borne; rough, hardy pioneers of the wilderness, their life was one prolonged struggle with poverty, with ravaging beasts of prey, and with stealthy Bushmen and Hottentots. No wonder, therefore, that, little by little, a social gulf was created, that a marked dissimilarity of character was gradually developed between the up-to-date Cape patricians, treading the primrose paths of luxury, and the nomadic shepherds of the veldt, independent of aught save their fowling-pieces, and undisputed lords of the limitless plateau behind the mountains fringing the coast. No wonder, therefore, that the mere handful of conquerors of the Great Karroo had little love for the arbitrary rule of a Proconsul in Cape Town Castle, on behalf of an authority having its headquarters in Europe.

Under the Dutch East India Company friction often arose between the two white elements of the Colony, and when the Cape fell into the hands of the British, in the beginning of the present century, the old antagonism continued to exist. I once heard it said that when Napoleon surrendered to the British in 1815, there was some talk of assigning to him, as a final resting-place, that pretty country estate of the early Dutch Governors, not far from Cape Town, but that this idea had to be given up, on account of distrust of the feelings of the inland colonists, there being some fear that South Africa might see a repetition of the

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Elba incident. As long as the Imperial authorities left the inland colonists to themselves, and only exercised a general repressive control, the relationship between the two white communities of South Africa remained satisfactory, but as soon as the strings were pulled too suddenly from Europe, and the Cape authorities had to carry out a grasping, despotic policy, the two elements inevitably came to loggerheads. The best South African politicians—both British and Boer—are those who have frankly admitted that the political key to South Africa lies in an intelligent insight into the limit which should be allowed to Briton, Boer and Black. In other words, let each of the three fulfil the mission which nature has allotted to him, and then this much-vexed continent will enjoy the rest and peace of which it so urgently stands in need.

Is it necessary to give a résumé of the painful episodes which thronged upon one another in South Africa in the nineteenth century? The result of a hundred years of incompetency, weakness, vacillation, and reckless greed culminates to-day in the awful probability of an insensate strife between two hardy vital races, races unique by reason of their capacity for colonial expansion, races of similar origin and religion, races whose internal co-operation could have made this country, if not exceptionally prosperous, at least a particularly happy land, so that the dream of one of its most gifted children, Thomas Pringle, might have been fulfilled in gladsome measure:

"South Africa, thy future lies  
Bright 'fore my vision as thy skies."

The first beneficent breathing-space which was granted to South Africa by the fatal British policy, was when, in 1852 and 1854—after numberless mistakes had been committed by the Imperial authorities, mistakes which no historian now attempts to deny—the South African Republic and the Free State were respectively left to their own resources, by solemn covenants with the British Government—in other words, when the formal principle was adopted by England that the Briton should be "baas" of the coast and the Boer of the hinterland. The circumstances under which this took place had in the meantime become very grievous: the Boer States never had a fair start; the British maritime colonies levied enormous duties on goods consigned to the interior, and squeezed as much out of the Afrikander republics as

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they possibly could. And thus whilst the British merchants at Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban waxed fat and wealthy, the Boers became more and more impoverished. But they were sustained in their struggle against poverty by the hardy spirit which was their peculiar heritage from their forefathers. And although the Free State and the Transvaal languished in their material development, and Natal and the Cape battered upon them, the Boers were satisfied, like the lean dog in the fable who did not envy the lot of his richer brother, because the latter had to wear a heavy collar of gold.

The generous policy of 1852 and 1854 was only too short-lived. The lucid moments of the Anglo-African politicians have been, alas! few and far between. First came the ruthless annexation of Basutoland by the British authorities, just at the moment when the Free State had clipped the wings of the Basutos and rendered further resistance futile. Then came the unrighteous annexation of Griqualand West, which suddenly found favor in the eyes of the British on account of the discovery of diamonds, and on which arose the Kimberley of to-day. This was followed by the annexation of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, with all the bitter feeling that naturally resulted therefrom. And then the Sir Charles Warren expedition, by which the Boers were deprived of Bechuanaland, because Mr. Rhodes—whose fortunate career at the Kimberley Diamond Fields enabled him to give the rein to his restless ambition—wanted to open up a pathway to the north, to the Rhodesia of to-day. Then came the establishment of the Chartered Company, followed by the notorious Jameson Raid. Such petty incidents as the Keate Award, the Swazieland Muddle, the Annexation of Sambaan's Land, I will pass over, for brevity's sake. In short, the beneficent policy of 1852 and 1854, which was for a moment revived under the Gladstone Ministry of 1881—when the independence of the South African Republic was restored—has been the exception during the century now speeding to its close. British statesmen apparently failed to see that South Africa could only be served by giving each race the domain which destiny had prepared for it, viz., the Boer the hinterland and the Britisher the coast, together with the rights and obligations connected therewith. The welfare of the interior states has ever been the life-buoy to which the whole of South Africa has clung, in times of darkness and

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depression. Let the interior have a fair opportunity of thriving as well as the peculiar circumstances of the country permit, and the subjects of Queen Victoria will be able to enjoy the manifold pleasures of life without one drop of English soldiers' blood having to be spilt.

The immediate motive which prompted Sir Theophilus Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 was the commencement made by President Burgers of the long-cherished railway to Lourenço Marques. Natal and Cape Colony were not satisfied with squeezing the inland States by means of heavy duties, high postal tariffs, and enormous trade profits; they sought the complete economic dependency of the Republics, by prohibiting all railway traffic except through British ports. The selfishness of a commercial community knows no limit.

The second attempt to annex the South African Republic—with which the names of British politicians were connected—was not the result of a commercial policy, but it furnishes a striking illustration of the capitalism which has become such an important factor in South African policy, since the amalgamation of the diamond companies of Kimberley into one mighty body. The fact that to-day—whilst these lines are being written—this unhappy continent is on the eve of a *bellum omnium contra omnes*, can only be explained by the overwhelming influence acquired by certain "*nouveaux riches*"—whose social existence depends upon the Transvaal gold industry—among those who on the British side are shaping the fate of South Africa.

During the course of the present century, this part of the world has witnessed a variety of "agitations." It was the negrophilist agitation which drove the Boers in bitterness of spirit beyond the boundaries of Cape Colony; and it was an administrative agitation which for a long time impeded their progress and threw all manner of obstacles in their way; it was the politics of the counting-house which suggested the annexation of the Diamond Fields and the annexation of the Transvaal; and it is a stock exchange organization which is pulling the strings of the movement of to-day. Of all these agitations, the last—that of the financiers—is the most despicable, the most ominous, the most dangerous, and the most unworthy of the British nation. The Boers can forgive Dr. Philip for his negrophilist ardor, they can forgive Sir Harry Smith, Sir Philip Wodehouse, Sir Bartle Frere, and

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Sir Owen Lanyon for their excess of administrative zeal, but no Afrikaner will bow down at the bidding of a group of foreign speculators.

When the Witwatersrand gold fields were discovered, the Transvaalers had already had some experience of the advantages and disadvantages attendant on the possession of mineral wealth. In the early seventies, the opening up of the alluvial deposits at Pilgrim's Rest, in the northeast of the Republic, was the cause of considerable immigration. In the eighties, there was a rush to the diggings at DeKaap, of which Barberton became the centre, the Afrikaner element being strongly represented. From the very beginning, the law-makers of the Transvaal dealt very leniently with the miners, the vast majority of whom were foreigners. The Boers knew of the mineral wealth of their country at an early date, but they never felt constrained to exchange the quietude of their pastoral life for the feverish existence of the gold-seeker. The Boers have never endeavored to turn the presence of gold in their soil to practical account, and make it a direct source of national income; as, for instance, the Chartered Company has done, expropriating a large portion of the profits of the gold fields. An instance of this liberal legislation, more striking than a long array of figures, is furnished by the public lottery of gold claims—some of which are extremely valuable—which is now taking place, and in which both burghers and Uitlanders can participate without distinction.

The exceptionally generous legislation of the Boers with regard to mining matters was effected with the sole object of fostering agriculture; this has, however, only been realized in part, owing to the fact that the expansion of the mining industry gradually made native labor dear, and thus heavily handicapped the agriculturist. The administration of the Boers in the days of Pilgrim's Rest and Barberton compares very favorably with that of the Diamond Fields of Cape Colony. The Transvaalers were good-natured, but they had no inclination to be trifled with. In those days there was no talk of Uitlanders' grievances, nor even during the early years of Johannesburg. The Witwatersrand is not situated, like Pilgrim's Rest and Barberton, in an unfrequented part of the country, but it lies to the immediate south of Pretoria, between Potchefstroom and Heidelberg, in the very heart of the Boer States. Johannesburg sprang up with aston-

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ishing rapidly, and offered special attractions to the large number of South African adventurers who, like Mr. Micawber, were only "waiting for something to turn up." From their farms in the Free State, from their wayside stores in Cape Colony, from their plantations in Natal, from their broker offices in the Diamond Fields, they gathered together—men of every type and every class, but united in their feverish thirst for wealth. The expectations of the most sanguine were realized; they reaped a rich harvest in the shape of large exchange profits, although many of their number knew practically nothing about mining or financial administration. Then came the inevitable collapse in 1889, which only spared the most fortunate; and the great majority of this strangely mixed community were gradually compelled to make room for more competent men from Europe and America. These brought brains and experience into their work, and placed the industry upon a more solid basis; but they also inoculated the Uitlanders with the *bacilli* of discord and revolution, much to the detriment of the shareholders across the sea.

The appearance of the present-day Uitlander—that is to say, the grievance-bearing or rather grievance-seeking stranger—dates from the period when qualified experts satisfied themselves as to the uniquely favorable situation of the precious metal in Witwatersrand—from the time when wild speculation began to make room for a genuine exploitation of the mines. The preliminary period to which I refer above was the cause of an influx of immigrants into the Republic. They spread themselves over the face of the country, penetrating into the most outlying spots, in order to procure material for the flotation of mining companies. This period also saw the birth of the "Land and Estate" Companies, who generally bought up the most uninhabited or uninhabitable farms for speculative purposes. By reason of foreign ownership of large tracts of land, the argument is often advanced that an enormous portion of the South African Republic no longer belongs to the Boers. It may be remarked, *en passant*, that, whilst the Boer has been severely condemned for his slothfulness in matters agricultural, practically none of the land companies has ever devoted more than a few acres to the growing of crops. When the period of wild speculation suffered a collapse, the Uitlander no longer spread himself over the whole of the Republic. Henceforward, the Witwatersrand was the exclusive scene of his

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labors, and here he elected to pitch his tent. Outside the Rand, he confined himself to the ordinary occupations of the olden days—that of storekeeper for the folk of the few rustic centres, and bank manager, hotelkeeper, and clergyman in the solitary country towns.

After the crash of 1889, Johannesburg slowly became the Uitlander town *par excellence*. It deserves to be recorded that, as the output of gold began to show a continual increase, the "Uitlander question" acquired a proportionate magnitude. In every country where foreigners are to be found in appreciable numbers, there is an Uitlander question. It exists in France, in regard to the Italians and Belgians living there; in Japan, in regard to the Americans and Britishers; in London, in regard to the Poles; in the Middle Ages the Jews were in many cases a powerful "Uitlander" element. During the last century, the Germans in Russia have been "Uitlanders," and, according to the Czechs and Hungarians, they are so in Austria to-day. But the Uitlander question in the South African Republic differs from the Uitlander question elsewhere, as it has been made the cause of an international dispute between two States of unequal strength. In its present form, the Uitlander question is only the mask of a financiers' plot, of a piece of Exchange jobbery. It has steadily kept pace with the gold output. In 1889, £1,500,000 was produced. In that year, Johannesburg was horrified by a series of stealthy murders which were only explained as the handiwork of "Jack the Ripper." No one thought at that time, however, of saddling the Transvaal Government with responsibility for them, or of sending plaintive petitions to England as to the danger of life in the South African Republic! Everyone understood, then as now, that gold-fields offer peculiar attractions to questionable characters of all classes. In March, 1890, during a visit of President Krüger to the Golden City, the Transvaal flag was pulled down from the Government buildings. It subsequently transpired that this was only the work of some drunken rough, and the mining and mercantile communities lost no time in expressing their disapproval of the incident. The realization of the practical value of the deep-level theory—in other words, the ultimate conviction as to the indisputable durability and wealth of the Witwatersrand gold-fields—has, in the meantime, become the signal for an agitation against the Government and

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the people of the South African Republic. From this period dates England's claim to suzerainty over the South African Republic and the paramount-powership in South Africa, of which hitherto no mention had ever been made. In 1894, the then High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch, was present at some diamond-drill experiments at the Rand, which proved beyond dispute the continuous nature of the gold-bearing reef at a considerable depth, and at an important distance from the outcrop reef. During this visit, Sir Henry Loch made a promise to the mining magnates—as per letter of Mr. Lionel Phillips, then the Chairman of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines\*—to stir up the Transvaal Government on condition that the "Uitlander" agitation increased in intensity. The Transvaal Green Book provides instructive reading even for to-day; it contains extracts from private letters from Mr. Phillips to his London friends. On the 10th of June, 1894, he wrote to Mr. Beit:

"As to the franchise, I do not think many people care a fig about it."

On the 1st of July of the same year, he wrote to Mr. Wernher:

"Sir H. Loch (with whom I had two long private interviews alone) asked me some very pointed questions, such as what arms we had in Johannesburg, whether the population could hold the place for six days until help could arrive, etc., etc., and stated plainly that if there had been 3,000 rifles and ammunition here he would certainly have come over. He further informed me, in a significant way, that he had prolonged the Swaziland agreement for six months, and said he supposed in that time Johannesburg would be better prepared—as much as to say, if things are safer then we shall actively intervene."

This conversation took place at Pretoria, where Sir Henry Loch, as the representative of Her Majesty's Government, was the honored guest of the Transvaal people! On the 15th of July of the same year, Mr. Phillips wrote to Mr. Beit:

"We don't want any row. Our trump card is a fund of £10,000 or £15,000 to improve the Volksraad. Unfortunately the Gold Companies have no Secret Service Fund."

All this happened in 1894, when the gold output had already reached a total of nearly 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  millions sterling. In 1895, it had risen to 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  millions; the "trump card" had also risen and amounted to £120,000, with which sum the Reform movement at Johannesburg was partially financed—a movement which came to an untimely end at Doornkop.

\* *Vide Transvaal Green Book, No. 2, of 1896.*

### TRANSVAAL VIEW OF SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION.

In 1897 the inquiry by the official Industrial Commission took place, the result being a substantial lowering of railway tariffs and import dues. But the "grievances" still remained, and increased in 1897 in sympathy with the gold output, which had now reached the large figure of 11½ millions. Still more "unbearable" were these "grievances" in 1898, during which year 16¼ millions of gold was dug out of Transvaal soil. This was the year of the Edgar affair and of the Uitlander Petition, and in the same year forty-five gold companies of the Rand (the share capital issued being £20,294,675) paid out in dividends no less than £5,089,785—an average of 25 per cent.! The output for 1899 has already been estimated at 22½ millions, and the number of dividend-paying companies increases every month.

In 1896, the rural population were visited by a series of grievous plagues—by rinderpest, by drought, by locusts, and by the dreaded fever. While the Uitlanders of the Rand were reported to be groaning under the oppression of their Egyptian taskmasters, and European shareholders were depicted as helpless victims of a corrupt Krüger régime, the Boers were "taking up arms against a sea of troubles" which threatened to overwhelm them, and of which we heard exceedingly little, either in the local papers or in the cable columns of the London press. Whilst thousands of Boer families saw the fruit of long years of toil plucked away by the hand of God in a single season, the campaign of libel on behalf of the Uitlanders was vigorously prosecuted with the help of money won from Transvaal soil by mining magnates, the princely munificence displayed by whom in London and other places outside South Africa was occasionally referred to in the local papers as a joyous chord between the "grievance" symphonies that were struck in the minor key.

I have little inclination to expatiate on the true character of the present movement against the Boers; but I do say that to support the latest type of agitation against the white population of the interior of South Africa is unworthy of the traditions of the Anglo-Saxon race. The South African Republic is not without political blemishes; as in every other country, we have our administrative scandals, both great and small; we have our social and economic plague-spots, which must be made to disappear. Gold-fields never were fountains of pure morality nor are they so in South Africa. Has one ever pictured the future of the

### *BRITAIN AND THE BOERS.*

most civilized country of the Old World if a second Johannesburg were to spring up in mushroom fashion? I do not wish to speak evil of the wire-pullers of the present agitation against the Afrikaners; but, surely, those persons whose princely palaces have been built with Transvaal gold, and who cry out so loudly against our government, should be the last to throw stones against the Republic. The "oligarchy" at Pretoria—to use Mr. Chamberlain's recent expression—consists of barely a few dozen Boers; there is, therefore, strong evidence in favor of this "oligarchy" in the fact that it has been able to offer such prolonged resistance to the well-disposed and undoubtedly disinterested attempts of such gentlemen as Lionel Phillips to "improve" them from Johannesburg and London. Such an "oligarchy" is without a parallel in modern times. It forms a striking contrast to the worship of the golden calf on the Witwatersrand, from which Pretoria is only distant about three hours on horseback. Such an "oligarchy" deserves to be carefully preserved rather than destroyed, as we preserve from total extinction some rare plant or peculiar species of animal.

There are undoubted grievances in the South African Republic, but they are not the exclusive property of the Uitlanders; a discreet silence is observed with respect to the wrongs of the Transvaal burghers, and I do not feel it to be my task to dilate upon them now. But still they exist, although the absorbing selfishness of the mining magnates keeps back the light of day; the lust for gold stifles all generosity, compassion, mercy, brotherly love, and respect for the rights of the weak. What Monomotapa was to the Phœnicians and Arabs, Witwatersrand is to our present gold-seekers, and to most of the Uitlanders—a temporary land of exile, which they only endure for the sake of the gold. Can we picture the wise king Solomon demanding the franchise for his subjects in the realms of the Queen of Sheba?

South Africa is poor; it will remain poor, in spite of its gold and its diamonds. It will never be able to pay back the cost of a bitter strife, unless the gold-bedecked princes come forward with the treasure which they have wrung from the land. As long as the Boers allow the modern Phœnicians to dig the precious metals out of Transvaal soil without heavy impositions, and to have a free hand in the administration of the country and the government of the native population, it will be found that the best busi-

### TRANSVAAL VIEW OF SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION.

ness policy will be to leave the Boers in undisturbed possession of their country, free to rule it by their own healthy instinct and according to the good old traditions of their forefathers, with their own language, their own rulers, their own aspirations—even with their own faults and prejudices.

It should not be forgotten that, from the earliest days of the gold-fields, the Uitlanders knew that the South African Republic was an "oligarchy"; they knew that the Boers were "illiterate," "stupid," "ignorant," and a great deal besides; they knew that a dynamite monopoly existed, and that President Krüger was a "hard nut to crack." Notwithstanding this knowledge the "Uitlanders" have flocked in by thousands, and foreign capital has been invested amounting to several hundreds of millions sterling. During the first five months of the present year, Transvaal gold and other companies were registered here with a combined capital of over £15,391,389. In July last—in the middle of the crisis—five new companies were registered with a capital of £1,159,000. And of all the Uitlanders only a section of the British subjects are genuinely dissatisfied. Notwithstanding that the "oppression" of the Transvaal "oligarchy" has been told and retold, until the world has become sick and weary, immigrants are still pouring in from all quarters of the globe.

The Boers do not ask for mercy; they ask for justice. Those who keep up the unfair agitation against the South African Republic are the last men, however, to listen to the voice of righteousness, or to be guided by any noble impulse; political corruption is the seed they sow, and by their unexampled opportunities they feel confident of reaping their criminal harvest. Up to the present they have gathered only tears; a still more bitter time of reaping has yet to come. In the past, the Boers have been able to fight against immensely superior odds. They feel that the final victory will be theirs; for they know they have right on their side.

Well would it be for the British nation if they could but realize the significance of those words of Russell Lowell:

"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne,  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

F. V. ENGELBURG.

Pretoria, August, 1899.

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