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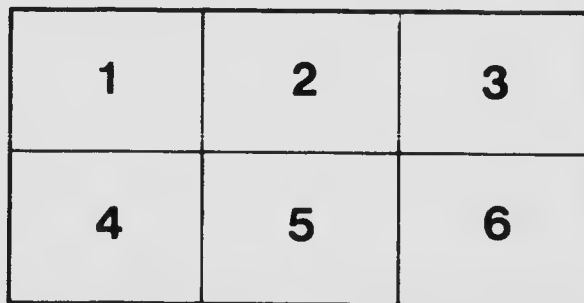
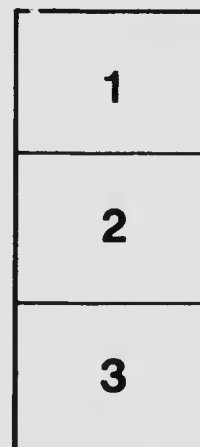
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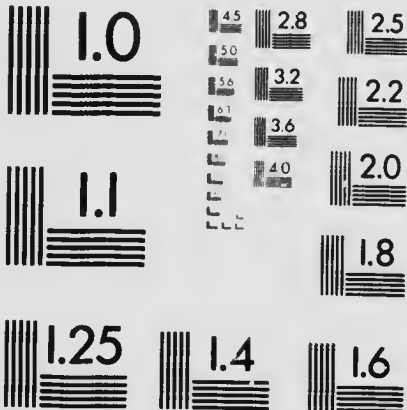
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A
HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY
OF THE
BRITISH DOMINIONS
VOL. IV
SOUTH AFRICA

PART II
HISTORY TO THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

BY
SIR. CHARLES LUCAS, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

WITH MAPS



OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

M DCCCC XV

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON EDINBURGH GLANGOW NEW YORK
TORONTO MELBOURNE BOMBAY
HUMPHREY MILFORD M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

MR. C. T. ATKINSON, of Exeter College, Oxford, was good enough to read through the proofs of the chapters on the War, and I am indebted to him for various corrections and suggestions. The maps in this book, as in the new edition of the preceding volume, are the work of Mr. B. V. Darbishire, and I gratefully acknowledge his valuable assistance in illustrating the text.

C. P. LUCAS.

June, 1914.

POSTSCRIPT

THIS book was put into print and prepared for press, and the above Preface was written, before the outbreak of the present war. History is a science being rapidly made in South Africa, and the outlook on the past must necessarily be modified; but I have let the pages stand as they were written, since they carry the story of South Africa up to a date when an entirely new chapter seems to be opening not only for South Africa but for the whole British Empire.

C. P. LUCAS.

January, 1915.

CONTENTS OF PART II

	PAGE
<i>Dates of some of the principal events in the later history of South Africa</i>	vi
CHAP. I. <i>South Africa in 1895</i>	1
CHAP. II. <i>From the Raid to the War</i>	26
CHAP. III. <i>The War. Part I: British Reverses</i>	104
CHAP. IV. <i>The War. Part II: The Turn of the Tide</i>	186
CHAP. V. <i>The War. Part III: The Guerrilla War and the Peace</i>	338
CHAP. VI. <i>Reconstruction and Reunion</i>	406
CHAP. VII. <i>General Summary</i>	473
APPENDIX I. <i>The Pretoria Convention of 1881</i>	488
APPENDIX II. <i>The London Convention of 1884</i>	498
APPENDIX III. <i>The Middelburg Terms offered by Lord Kitchener to General Botha, 7 March, 1902</i>	509
APPENDIX IV. <i>The Terms of the Vereeniging Treaty, 31 May, 1902</i>	511
APPENDIX V. <i>Books, Publications, &c., relating to South Africa</i>	513
INDEX	516

MAPS AND PLANS

	PAGE
Environs of Ladysmith	117, 163
Plan of Stormberg	131
Modder River to Kimberley	135
Tugela River from Venter's Spruit to the Klip River	143
Plan of Colesberg	151
Spion Kop	169
Paardeberg and Poplar Grove	203
Relief of Ladysmith	222
Western environs of Pretoria and Johannesburg	283
Brandwater Basin	309

Map of South Africa in 1895	<i>Beginning of volume</i>
Northern Cape Colony	<i>Facing page 218</i>
South-western Orange Free State	,, 256
Northern Natal	,, 298
Eastern Transvaal	,, 332
North-eastern Free State	,, 380
Western Transvaal	,, 390
Map of South Africa, showing area affected by the war, with inset sketch-map showing block-house lines, stationary garrisons, and posts	,, 404
Map of South Africa at the present day	<i>End of volume</i>

DATES OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL
EVENTS IN THE LATER HISTORY
OF SOUTH AFRICA

- 1881 Boer War and Convention of Pretoria giving back modified independence to the Transvaal.
- 1884 Convention of London. The Transvaal becomes the South African Republic.
German Protectorate declared in South-West Africa.
Basutoland separated from the Cape Colony.
- 1885 British Bechuanaland annexed, and Bechuanaland Protectorate proclaimed.
Railway opened to Kimberley.
- 1886 The Rand proclaimed a goldfield.
- 1887 Annexation of Zululand. Treaty with Amatongaland.
- 1889 Charter given to British South Africa Company.
Beginning of South African Customs Union.
- 1890 Occupation of Mashonaland. First Swaziland Convention.
Anglo-German agreement, settling frontiers of the German Protectorate.
Railway completed from Capetown to Bloemfontein.
- 1891 Anglo-Portuguese agreement.
Extension of charter of British South Africa Company to north of Zambesi.
- 1892 Railway completed from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg.
- 1893 Matabele war and conquest of Matabeleland.
Responsible government given to Natal.
- 1894 Swaziland Convention placing Swaziland under protection of South African Republic.
Pondoland incorporated in Cape Colony, making Cape Colony and Natal coterminous.
Railway opened to Mafeking.
- 1894-5 Railway communication completed from the Transvaal to Delagoa Bay and to Durban.
- 1895 British Bechuanaland incorporated in Cape Colony.
Trans-Pongola districts annexed.
British Protectorate proclaimed over Amatongaland.
The Drifts temporarily closed by President Kruger.
Dec. 29. The Jameson Raid.
- 1896 Feb. 4. Mr. Chamberlain presses the claims of the Uitlanders.

DATES OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS vii

- Native rising in Matabeleland. Trouble in Mashonaland.
- 1897 Retirement of Sir Hercules Robinson (Lord Rosmead) and appointment of Sir Alfred Milner as High Commissioner.
- Zululand and Amatongaland incorporated in Natal. Railway completed from the South to Buluwayo.
- 1898 Orange Free State ratifies the South African Customs Union.
- The Edgar incident at Johannesburg (December 18-19).
- 1899 March. Petition from Uitlanders in the South African Republic to Queen Victoria.
- Sir A. Milner's telegram (May 4) on the Uitlanders' grievances.
- Bloemfontein Conference (May 31 to June 5) between the High Commissioner and President Kruger.
- Mr. Chamberlain's despatch of July 27, urging a final settlement.
- Further negotiations and preparations for war.
- October 9. Ultimatum by the South African Republic.
- October 12. War begins at Kraaipan, between Vryburg and Mafeking.
- Boers invade Natal. Mafeking and Kimberley besieged.
- October 20. Fight at Talana, and death of General Symons.
- October 21. Fight at Elandslaagte.
- October 30. Boers close in upon Ladysmith. British losses at Nicholson's Nek.
- October 31. Sir Redvers Buller lands at Capetown.
- November 2. The Boers invade Cape Colony by Norval's Point.
- November 12. Lord Methuen reaches the Orange River. Fights at Belmont (Nov. 23), Graspan (Nov. 25), Modder River (Nov. 28), Magersfontein (Dec. 10-11).
- December 9-10. General Gatacre's failure at Stormberg.
- December 15. Sir Redvers Buller's defeat at Colenso.
- December 17. Lord Roberts appointed Commander-in-Chief of the forces in South Africa.
- 1900 January. The Colesberg campaign. The fight on the Platrand (Jan. 6).
- Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener reach Capetown (Jan. 10).
- Buller's campaign in Natal. Spion Kop (Jan. 24), Vaal Krantz (Feb. 5).
- French seizes the Modder Drifts (Feb. 13), and relieves Kimberley (Feb. 15).
- February 27. Surrender of Cronje at Paardeberg.

viii *DATES OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS*

- 1900 March 1. Buller relieves Ladysmith.
March 13. Lord Roberts enters Bloemfontein.
March 27. Death of General Joubert. Botha takes
chief command of the Boers.
May 17. Relief of Mafeking.
May 24. Annexation of the Orange Free State.
May 31. Lord Roberts enters Johannesburg.
June 5. Lord Roberts enters Pretoria.
July 4. The Natal army joins hands with the main
army.
July 30. Surrender of General Prinsloo and 4,000 Boers.
September 1. Annexation of the Transvaal.
September 11. President Kruger leaves for Europe.
October 2. Termination of Buller's command.
November 29. Lord Roberts gives up his command to
Lord Kitchener and returns to England.
Formation of Burgher Peace Committee and Refugee
Camps.
Guerrilla warfare.
- 1901 January. The Block-house system inaugurated.
February. De Wet invades the Cape Colony.
February 28. Conference at Middelburg to discuss
peace.
March. Beginnings of civil administration in the
Transvaal.
May 10. Transvaal Council of War.
June 20. Boer Council of War near Standerton.
August 7. Proclamation by Lord Kitchener demanding
surrender.
General Smuts invades the Cape Colony.
- 1902 January. Overtures for peace by the Netherlands
Government.
February 16-27. The Great Drive.
March. Death of Cecil Rhodes.
April 12. First Peace Conference at Pretoria.
May 15. Boer Convention at Vereeniging.
May 19. Second Peace Conference at Pretoria.
May 31. Peace declared. British sovereignty recog-
nized over the Orange Free State and South African
Republic.
- 1903 Customs Union Conference.
- 1904 Chinese immigration.
Railway carried up to the Victoria Falls.
July. Death of ex-President Kruger.
- 1906 Responsible government given to the Transvaal.
- 1907 Responsible government given to the Orange Free State.
- 1909 Union Act passed.
- 1910 Inauguration of the Union of South Africa.

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

OF

SOUTH AFRICA

PART II

CHAPTER I

SOUTH AFRICA IN 1895

IN all new countries, that is to say, in all countries new from the point of view of European settlement, there is as a rule a period of incubation, when progress is slow. Afterwards events move quickly, more quickly than in older lands. In South Africa the time of comparative stagnation was very prolonged. On the other hand it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to find at any date, or in any place, a parallel to the rapidity with which history has of late years been made in this Southern land. It is still early to tell the story, and it is impossible to tell it honestly without running the risk of controversy. But the facts speak for themselves, and the narrative, as far as possible, will keep in the forefront the object with which this series was designed, the evolution of the British Empire.

CH. I.

In the year 1895, Africa, south of the Zambesi, and excluding Portuguese East Africa, consisted of two British self-governing colonies, the Cape Colony and Natal; a territory administered by a British Chartered company, Rhodesia; certain native territories in varying degrees under British control, Basutoland, Zululand, Amatongaland, and the Bechuanaland Protectorate; one native territory, Swaziland,

*South
Africa in
1895.*

2 HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PART II. in which it was agreed that the South African Republic should have the predominating voice ; a German Protectorate ; and two Dutch Republics, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic.

*The result
of British
vacillation.*

There was no valid reason why all this diversity should ever have come into being, if British policy had throughout been reasonably firm and consistent, instead of having been throughout weak and vacillating to the last degree. Communication, no doubt, was difficult before the days, and in the early days, of railways, but so it was also in Australia ; and under wise and sympathetic administration, settlement might well have widened steadily and gradually inland, with the accompaniment of a certain number of Boer wanderings and a considerable number of Native wars, but without wholesale disruption. Successive British Governments, however, inspired to a large extent by the mischievous party system, seem to have developed a perfect genius for tactless dealing ; for rejecting the advice of their representatives on the spot, more often than not exceptionally able men, such as Durban, Grey, Frere, all of whom were recalled ; for throwing away opportunities which presented themselves ; for perpetually undoing. The inevitable result was complexity and disunion, when all might have been and ought to have been one.

It is true that, when the English took over the Cape, they took over a land which had been nominally appropriated by another European people : that that people was of a peculiarly strong and tenacious breed ; that the Boers had already developed restiveness under the misgovernment of their own fellow countrymen, the Directors of the Netherlands East India Company ; and that Boer dealings with the natives were obnoxious to public opinion in England, or, at any rate, to that section of public opinion which was in sympathy with missionary effort and philanthropy. But England had a great opportunity in South Africa. As in Canada, when Canada became a British possession, so in South Africa, there was

a noble possibility of proving that British rule was not merely a necessity but a positive gain. There was no fundamental religious difficulty in South Africa, as there was in Canada, for a Protestant nation was dealing with Protestants; and, whereas on the banks of the St. Lawrence, from below Quebec to Montreal, there was a more or less solid block of French settlement, which could not be appreciably leavened, in South Africa the 26,000 Dutchmen who came under the British flag were so dispersed as to give ample room for admixture of British colonists. The opportunity, however, was lost, the Dutch trekked, the wind was sown, and the whirlwind was reaped.

To British policy then, or rather want of policy, far more than to any other cause, must be attributed the course of events in South Africa, and in order to appreciate these events two effects of the policy may be specially noted. The first was that South African Dutchmen were placed in the position of being rulers, before they had ever had any training whatever even in ruling themselves. The Transvaal Boers represented the most determined of the trekkers, the Dutchmen who had the least leaven of civilization, who were at once the most independent and the most lawless of their kind. Paul Kruger was a typical representative. He had trekked as a boy from the Cape Colony, he knew much about fighting and hunting and bartering, but he knew nothing, and could know nothing, of the art of civilized government. When these Boers were fighting for independence, they were more or less in their element, and more or less commanded respect. When they were by way of governing, they were hopeless. The Government could not, or would not, control its own subjects; it could not, or would not, abide by treaties; it could not keep order or administer justice. The Orange Free State, in later years peaceful and orderly, contrasted with the Transvaal in perpetual anarchy. The reason was that the burghers of the Orange Free State were not originally—to use an

*The Boers
untrained
as rulers.*

4 HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PART II. Australian term—men of the back blocks to the same extent
—♦♦— as the Transvaal Boers: they lived in close touch with the Cape Colony and the Cape Dutch trained under British rule; and they lived in a territory which was, for a long time, comparatively a backwater, and where there was little ruling to be done. In the Transvaal a less civilized and wholly untrained section of Dutchmen had more ruling thrust upon them; and they were of necessity incompetent for the task. They failed when their administration concerned only coloured races; but when white men came into their territory, emigrants like themselves, then the failure became more glaring, and the end was convulsion. All this was the fault of England. England, whether she liked it or not, had the keeping, and knew that she had the keeping, of South Africa. When it suited her purpose, she could assert that she was the paramount power. It was her duty not to shirk responsibility; to ensure that South Africa, as a whole, worked out its destiny, as the Cape Colony was evolved from tutelage to manhood; not to produce and provoke a type of recalcitrant citizens unfit to rule, unwilling to be ruled.

Dutch bargaining.

The second effect of British policy was to strengthen, in a marked degree, the most difficult element in the Dutch character. The history of the Netherlands has been the history of a very great commercial people, and by common consent the Dutch have had, in a high degree, the bargaining instinct. It is impossible to study the history of South Africa without realizing that the dealings of England with the Boers were such as to encourage this bargaining instinct, until it became almost a disease. A policy which did not involve a profitable bargain was not even intelligible to a man of Kruger's type. His life had been spent between fighting and bargaining, and the English had carefully taught him the advantage of both the one course and the other. Kruger was an uncivilized South African Boer who had been moulded by British policy, and he stands out, and will stand out to all

time, as illustrating the result of a great nation not doing its plain duty.

CH. I.

The Cape Colony in 1895.

At the close of the year 1895 the boundaries of the Cape Colony, now the Cape of Good Hope province of the Union of South Africa, were the same as they are at the present day; but it was only in 1894 that Pondoland had been finally incorporated in the colony, bringing the whole of its north-eastern boundary into touch with Natal; and it was not until November 1895 that British Bechuanaland was handed over by the Imperial Government. In other words, the Cape Colony, from which Basutoland had been severed in 1884, was still more or less in the making. The census of 1891 had credited the colony, as it then was, with a population of over 1,500,000, 377,000 of whom were white; and of the white population 230,000 were returned as of Dutch or French origin, 130,000 as British. Nearly a quarter of a century had passed since the grant of responsible government, and the Prime Minister of the Colony at the end of this year was Cecil Rhodes, who stood for a forward constructive policy to an extent and with an effectiveness perhaps unparalleled in the whole history of the Empire. Rhodes had secured, in a singular degree, the backing of the Dutch element in the Cape Colony, his close friend being Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, who was for many years chairman, and at all times the controlling influence, of the Afrikaner Bond. The Bond had come into being in 1882 at the time of race bitterness caused by the first Transvaal War, and under Hofmeyr's guidance grew to be, in constitutional and parliamentary guise, at once the expression and the training ground of Dutch nationality in South Africa. The Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for South Africa was Sir Hercules Robinson, who, in 1895, came back, now an old man, to the post which he had already held in the troubled times of the early eighties.

Natal, in 1895, was much smaller than the province of *Natal*.

6 HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PART II. Natal at the present day. It did not include Zululand and Amatongaland, nor did it include the districts which were taken over from the Transvaal after the late South African War. The statistics of the 1891 census show that the white population was just short of 47,000; that the East Indians, as the result of coolie immigration, numbered 41,000; while the native population amounted to 456,000, the natives outnumbering the whites by nearly ten to one. Responsible government was in its infancy, dating from 1893. The latest incident in the history of the colony was one of great importance, the completion towards the end of 1895 of the railway between Durban and Johannesburg, the line to Harrismith in the Free State having already been opened in 1892.

*Rhodesia
and the
Bechuana-
land Pro-
tectorate.*

The close of the Matabele War left the British South Africa Company with the task of organizing the newly conquered territory, of which Dr. Jameson became administrator. For the regions beyond the Zambesi, which were included under the terms of the charter, as extended in 1891, the Commissioner of Nyasaland, by arrangement with the Imperial Government, acted for a while as the Company's representative; but in November 1894 it was decided that this arrangement should come to an end, and that the Company should become directly responsible for the Trans-Zambesi territories, other than Nyasaland, not later than the following June 1895. On May 1, 1895, the Directors issued a proclamation to the effect that 'the territories now or hereafter placed under the control of the British South Africa Company shall be named collectively Rhodesia. The provinces at the present time included in the territory of Rhodesia are Mashonaland, Matabeleland, and North Zambesia'. Thus the great north of South Africa, 'this great dominant North,' as Rhodes termed it in 1901,¹ was appropriately christened

¹ Speech at Buluwayo, June 1901. See Sir L. Michell's *Life of Rhodes*, 1910 ed., vol. ii, p. 296.

after the man who had inspired and carried out the whole enterprise, whereby it became in effect a British possession, and who was at the same time the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. Like the Romans of old, Rhodes was pre-eminently great in the work of communications, and on the south and east railway construction was pressed forward to link up Rhodesia with the Cape Colony and with the Portuguese port of Beira. In the summer of 1894 the railway from the south was opened as far as Mafeking, near the northern border of British Bechuanaland. Thence the trace lay through the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The Protectorate, as has been told,¹ came into existence in 1885, as the result of Sir Charles Warren's expedition, at the same time that British Bechuanaland, the southern section of the Bechuana's country, was proclaimed a British colony. The leading chiefs to the north of the Molopo River accepted British protection at this date; and subsequently, in May 1891, the limits of the Protectorate were more clearly defined by Order in Council. The railway having been carried as far as Mafeking, and the decision having been taken to annex British Bechuanaland to the Cape Colony, it was intended, in view of further railway extension to the north, to hand over the Protectorate to the control of the Chartered Company. But the prospect of being removed from under the direct protection of the Crown and the Imperial Government alarmed the Bechuana chiefs, the most prominent of whom was Khama. In the autumn of 1895 they went to England to plead their case in person; and the result of their interviews with the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Chamberlain, was a decision, given in November 1895, that within defined limits their lands should be constituted native reserves, under the protection not of the Company but, as before, of the Crown.² Outside those limits, the Protectorate was to pass under the direct administration of the British South Africa Company,

¹ Part I, p. 304.

² See C. 7962, February 1896.

8 HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PART II.

Basuto-land.

and in view of the coming transfer the Bechuanaland Border Police, who kept order in the Protectorate, were disbanded, many of its members taking service with the company.

Basutoland, which by a Cape Act of 1871 had been annexed to the Cape Colony, remained a part of the Colony, though not under the ordinary laws, down to the year 1884. From 1879 onward there was constant friction; and a general rising of the Basutos in 1880, brought on by an attempt to enforce disarmament, led to arbitration between the natives and the Colonial Government by the High Commissioner. This was not the end of troubles, and eventually, in 1883, the Basutos on the one hand and the Cape Government on the other agreed to the Imperial Government taking control of the territory, which was severed from the Cape Colony, and from March 13, 1884, became a British Crown colony. From that date to this Basutoland and its people have been in the main prosperous and contented in a marked degree, a result largely due to skilful handling by the Resident Commissioners, notably the late Sir Marshall Clarke, and Sir Godfrey Lagden, who in the year 1895 was in charge of the colony.

Zululana and Amatongaland.

Zululana, or what remained of Zululana after the Transvaal Boers had carved out of it the New Republic, which soon became merged in the South African Republic, was in 1895, as it had been since 1887, a Crown colony, separate from Natal, but under the Governor of Natal. In 1888 and 1890 it had been somewhat extended on the northern side, and mention has been made in the previous volume¹ of the fact that in 1895 it received a further addition by the inclusion within its borders of a small territory or territories lying between the Pongola River, where it flows to the north, and the Ubombo or Lebombo Mountains. This Trans-Pongola district, after its annexation to Zululana, was given the name of Ingwavuma. The annexation was proclaimed late in

¹ See Part I, p. 302.

April 1895, and the British flag was hoisted late in May, the step being taken by instruction of the Liberal Government in England, shortly before the Ministers left office. At the same time a definite British Protectorate was proclaimed over Amamongaland on the eastern side of the Pongola River, between Zululand and the Portuguese frontier, the Queen of Amamongaland having already in July 1887 placed her foreign relations in the hands of the British Government. The net result was to bring the whole eastern coast-line of South Africa as far as the Portuguese frontier finally and definitely under British control. It may be added that in September and October 1895 there was an exchange of notes between the Governments of Great Britain and Portugal, supplementing the third article of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1891, and providing that Portuguese territory on the eastern side of Africa should be recognized 'as far south as a line following the parallel of the confluence of the River Pongolo with the River Maputo to the sea-coast'. The boundary thus laid down was delimited by an Anglo-Portuguese Commission, and the findings of the Commission were formally accepted by the two Governments in 1898-9.

Separated on the east by the Lebombo Mountains from *Swaziland*, the Trans-Pongola district of Zululand and Portuguese territory, encircled on the other sides by the South African Republic, was Swaziland. The Swazis had always deserved well of the English, and their independence had been expressly safeguarded both in the Convention of Pretoria and in that of London. But, as in Zululand so in Swaziland, adventurers and interlopers swarmed in, the resident whites being mainly British subjects, the non-resident concessionaires mainly subjects of the South African Republic. The Swazi king was pre-eminent even among native potentates for the number and variety of the concessions which he granted; the country and resources were being eaten up by the incomers, and it became necessary to devise some form of control.

PART II. Three times the Boer and British Governments concluded
 ——— Conventions on the subject: in 1890, when Hofmeyr was the principal negotiator on the British side, little to the liking of President Kruger and the more extreme section of the Dutch party in South Africa; in 1893; and finally in 1894. By the terms of the last Convention, Swaziland was practically placed under the protection and control of the South African Republic.

The German Protectorate.

The German Protectorate in South-West Africa was in 1895 still in its infancy, and had made no history. Its frontiers had been settled by the Anglo-German agreement of 1890.

The Orange Free State.

Of the two Boer Republics, the Orange Free State, under the long, wise Presidency of Sir John Brand, had been in amity with its neighbours. It was a pastoral and agricultural state, limited in size and population. There were diamond mines in the west, at Jagersfontein and Koffyfontein, over against the Kimberley districts, but no great finds of gold had attracted crowds of restless intruders. The main trouble had been with the Basutos, and had been laid to rest since the Convention of Aliwal North in 1869, whereby the rich corn-lands in the valley of the Caledon, which the Basutos had once owned, were finally incorporated in the Republic, the rest of Basutoland having already been constituted British territory. There had subsequently been irritation against the British Government, on the ground of the British annexation of Griqualand West, but this issue too had been finally settled between Lord Carnarvon and President Brand in 1876. Brand died in 1888, and was succeeded, at the beginning of 1889, by a far more pronounced partisan of Dutch nationality, President Reitz, who had been one of the original founders of the Afrikander Bond. From this time dates the beginning of the alliance between the two Republics as against the British power in South Africa; and the treaty of Potchefstroom, signed in 1889, bound either state to join

in defending the other against external attack. Yet the relations between the Free State and the Cape Colony continued to be close and friendly. In 1889 the Republic and the Colony joined hands in the first beginning of a South African Customs Union, and the Cape Government constructed the trunk railway line through the Free State which was opened as far as Bloemfontein in December 1890 and reached the Vaal River in 1892, being linked on to Johannesburg in September of that same year by the Netherlands Railway Company.

The centre of unrest in South Africa in 1895 was, as it had been in former years, the South African Republic. The Republic, or at any rate the leader of the Republic, stood for the irreconcilable Dutch element in South Africa. In order to do justice to this element, it must be borne in mind that British mismanagement had had much the same effect in South Africa in the nineteenth century, as it had in North America in the eighteenth. In other words, just as the United States had achieved republican independence after fighting for it; and, having achieved it, went forward from year to year with the fathers remembering and the children hearing of England as the traditional foe, with whom there had been a great war and over whom there had been a signal triumph—so to the burghers of the South African Republic, England was the one white enemy whom they had known, and with antagonism to whom was associated success, nationality, patriotism, and freedom. Though in either case there had been no oppression but simply tactless impolicy, oppression could hardly have engendered more bitterness than the irritation which weakness and vacillation always produce. On the other hand, unlike the citizens of the old North American colonies, the Boers of the South African Republic by their fighting had not recovered complete independence. They were not as free, at any rate in name, as their brethren in the Orange Free State. Their foreign

CH. I.

*The South
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Republic.*

PART II. relations were tied, they were bound over to adhere to prescribed boundaries. Great Britain claimed suzerainty over the Republic, though the claim was constantly contested. The original Sand River Convention had left them free in all respects, save for the provision against slavery. It was not unnatural that they should chafe against the restrictions imposed by the Convention of Pretoria, even when relaxed by the Convention of London. What fighting had not done for them, they hoped from past experience to make good by bargaining, and little by little to wear away the bonds which held them in.

But meanwhile the signs of the times were somewhat ominous to the irreconcilable Dutchmen, whose point of view we are trying to appreciate. Outside the Republic, the British Government to some extent, British citizens to a much greater extent, were waking up; and the Convention of London was proving to be not merely a sentimental grievance but an inconvenient reality. Restriction on foreign relations and on future expansion was coming to mean more than had been contemplated on the Boer side when the Convention of London was signed, and at the same time within the Republic a new and dangerous leaven was entering into the population. Time was beginning to make not for but against the Boers, and the Boers were beginning to realize it.

The outside of the South African Republic.

Let us first look at the outside surroundings of the Republic, as they must have appeared to the Boers or their leaders in the year 1895. The Orange Free State in Sir John Brand's time stood for a peaceful friendly Dutch community, largely because it had long known as an inevitable reality the outside conditions which were new to the South African Republic, and because under Brand's guidance those conditions had been recognized and accepted. In other words, the borders of the Free State had long been clearly defined. The territory was enclosed, but it was enclosed by neighbours

who were not suspected of designs upon the Free State, and on whom the citizens of the Free State had no desire to encroach. The facts were construed in the light of neighbourly common sense; and, as has been seen, the Free State accepted the offer of the Cape Colony to link up the two territories by railway and joined hands with the Colony in a Customs Union. It was not so with the South African Republic. Here geography and history had promoted centrifugal tendencies, had encouraged the nomad trekking spirit. Here, until the British South African Company appeared on the scene, was an unlimited field for possible movement to the north. On the east there was access to a territory under a non-British European power, the Portuguese; and south of Portuguese territory on this same eastern side there was hope of an outlet to the sea otherwise than through British ports. It was true that the London Convention had defined the boundaries of the Republic in minute detail; that by the second article the Government of the South African Republic undertook that it 'will strictly adhere to the boundaries defined in the first article of this Convention, and will do its utmost to prevent any of its inhabitants from making any encroachments upon land beyond the said boundaries'; that by the fourth article it bound itself to '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'; that by another article the independence of the Swazis was fully recognized. But Conventions from the Boer point of view were only temporary expedients, texts for further bargaining; at the very time when the Convention was being made and immediately afterwards, Bechuana-land and Zululand were being overrun by Transvaal Boers; and any steps taken by England to hold the Boers to the terms of the Convention were in the naivest possible manner

PART II. held to be a legitimate ground of complaint. It was a different matter altogether when the Republic was actually barred on the west by an effective British Protectorate, on the north by a British Company led by the Premier of the Cape Colony, and on the east by the fact that the whole of the sea-coast and the ways to the sea-coast up to Portuguese territory were constituted British territory or British Protectorate. On all sides the Boers were beginning to feel themselves cribbed, cabined, and confined. The boundaries which they had accepted on paper were being converted into realities. This was not what had been looked for or contemplated. To the Boer mind the English, in treating the London Convention as a document which meant something, were hardly playing the game.

The Trans-Pongola Territories.

It has just been told that in this year 1895 the small area between the Pongola River and the Lebombo Mountains was annexed to the British colony of Zululand. This action appeared to the Boers to be the last step in the policy of enclosing the Republic. In 1887, the year in which the Queen of Amatongaland first placed her foreign relations in British keeping, the Boers made agreements with the chiefs of the Trans-Pongola districts. In the following February 1888 they were informed by the High Commissioner that the whole area between Swaziland and the sea was 'regarded by Her Majesty's Government as exclusively within the sphere of British influence'. In October they protested that 'this Republic would, by reason of the existence of a large river in that territory, obtain a closer connexion with the sea, and such a connexion is naturally considered very desirable by this Republic'. The protest continued 'or—and it is not indeed possible for this Republic to entertain such an opinion—it must be that the British Government has for its object to separate this Republic as far as possible from the sea, and thus to retard its development, and finally to annihilate it'.¹ Meanwhile,

¹ C. 7780, June 1895, pp. 2, 7.

despite the provisions of the London Convention, the Boers were aiming at Swaziland, and in 1890 the first Swaziland Convention was concluded. Under its terms they might have had access to the sea on condition that the foreign relations of the port to be and its connexions and surroundings were under British control, and that the South African Republic joined the South African Union, to which the Orange Free State had adhered. The terms were left open for three years, but no advantage was taken of them.

This same Swaziland Convention¹ contained some other important provisions. Two of these were, like the article relating to the South African Customs Union, designed to bring the Republic into more friendly relations with its neighbours. One was to the effect that the produce of the neighbouring states or colonies, which gave free admission to the produce of the Republic, should in turn be admitted free of duty into the Republic. The other embodied a promise by the Republic to withdraw all opposition to railway extension to or towards its boundaries, and 'to take into consideration the extension of such railways' to Johannesburg and Pretoria — a provision which spoke volumes as to the attitude of the Republic towards the British colonies in South Africa. There was further a third and very important provision—the tenth article of the Convention—which, in the interests of the British South Africa Company, reaffirmed the northern boundary of the Republic. The terms of this article were that 'The Government of the South African Republic withdraws all claim to extend the territory of the Republic, or to enter into treaties with any natives or native tribes to the north or north-west of the existing boundary of the Republic, and undertakes to aid and support by its favouring influence the establishment of order and government in those territories by the British South Africa Company within the limits of power and territory set

CH. I.

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¹ For the Swaziland Convention see C. 7611, February 1895.

PART II. forth in the charter granted by Her Majesty to the said
 —♦— Company'. In other words, for the considerations embodied in the Swaziland Convention, the Government of the South African Republic undertook, in regard to extension of territory, to abide by the terms of the Convention of London only six years old, and agreed not to make treaties with natives on the northern side of the Republic, which had not been explicitly prohibited by the London Convention. In 1891, the year which followed the conclusion of this first Swaziland Convention, the Boer Government complied with the article in question by effectually denouncing the projected Adendorff or Banyailand Trek, which threatened the beginnings of Rhodesia by a migration of Boers across the Limpopo; and in 1891 too the same Government accepted an advance of £600,000 from the Cape Government to the Netherlands Railway Company, in order to finance the construction of the fifty-two miles of line from the Vaal to Johannesburg. But again the 'damping' of the Banyailand trek was bought for a price, and that price was reconsideration of the Swaziland Convention, to which the Transvaal Volksraad had only given a kind of conditional adhesion, at an earlier date than the prescribed date, which was August 1893. In consequence, as has been noted, the year 1893 saw a second Swaziland Convention; the year 1894 yet a third; and following upon this third and last Convention, as the Boers had not accepted the terms on which they might have gained access to the sea, and as encroachments beyond the boundaries of the Republic continued, the Trans-Pongola territories, through which lay the way to the sea, were annexed by Great Britain.

The Adendorff Trek.

This completed—from the Boer point of view—the hemming in of the Republic; and, ignoring the fact that they had themselves to blame for not having accepted the terms which had been offered, the Government of the South African Republic protested against the annexation as an unfriendly act. The terms which had been offered had been designed

to bring the Republic into line and friendly co-operation with the other colonies and states of South Africa, but that was not to the taste of men of the type and upbringing of President Kruger. He suspected co-operation in the form of Customs Unions and railways. They seemed to him to be a pendant to the hemming-in process, bringing the Republic more inside instead of removing it further from British influence; consequently, against the railways which were linking the Transvaal to British ports he set the Delagoa Bay line, with its outlet in Portuguese territory and constructed and worked by a Dutch Company—the Netherlands Railway Company.

In 1884, when Kruger and his fellow delegates came over to Europe to negotiate the Convention of London, they arranged a concession to a group of Dutch and German capitalists of all the prospective railways in the South African Republic. In 1887 the Netherlands Railway Company was floated by the concessionaires at Amsterdam, but the Delagoa Bay line was not completed till nearly the end of 1894. When in 1891 the Cape Government advanced the money to the Netherlands Railway Company to construct the extension of the Cape Colony and Orange Free State Railway from the Vaal to the Rand, it was a condition of the advance that the Cape Government should fix the rates on the extension until the end of 1894 or the opening of the Delagoa Bay line, should the line be finished at an earlier date. The agreement ended on December 31, 1894, and President Kruger was set free to differentiate against the line that fed and was fed by the ports of the Cape Colony. He did so. The average rates fixed by the Cape Government for the extension from the Vaal to Johannesburg amounted to $2\frac{4}{10}d.$ per ton per mile. The Netherlands Railway Company raised the rates to nearly $8d.$ per ton per mile. Importers into the Transvaal then adopted the course of bringing their goods by train as far as the Vaal and taking them from the Vaal in ox-wagons. Kruger replied by a proclamation closing the fords of the

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PART II. Vaal, viz. Viljoen's Drift and Zand Drift, 'for the importation of oversea goods.' For two or three weeks, from October 1, 1895, the drifts were actually closed, and war with Great Britain was within measurable distance when, with the hope of some further bargaining, the President gave way.

Taking then the outside relations of the South African Republic towards the close of 1895, and trying to appreciate the views of the old-time Boers, who remembered the beginnings of the Transvaal and the Sand River Convention, we find a tradition centrifugal and strongly anti-British; a rooted instinct against being surrounded in peace as in war; a disregard of treaty obligations, based upon the instinct of self-preservation, coupled with the assumption that the other party to the treaty was a natural enemy, who had been outwitted before and ought as a matter alike of principle and of interest to be outwitted again; and lastly an enduring faith in the virtue of bargaining, and the power of the rifle.

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From the inside, the South African Republic presented an interesting study. The discoveries of gold had wholly changed the conditions of the State. In 1895, if judged by the number of white residents and not by the number of burghers or citizens, it was no longer, as it had been to a greater extent even than the Orange Free State, in the main a Boer Republic. In October 1894 the British Agent in Pretoria estimated the white population of the Republic at nearly 149,000 souls; of these nearly 71,000 were Transvaalers or Orange Free Staters, and 78,000 were aliens, of whom over 62,000 were British subjects.¹ The Transvaal had come to a point in its history at which Aristotle's words were singularly applicable. 'Another cause of revolution is difference of races which do not at once acquire a common spirit; for a state is not the growth of a day, neither is it a multitude brought together by accident. Hence the reception of strangers in colonies, either at the

¹ C. 7633, February 1895.

time of their foundation or afterwards, has wholly produced a revolution.¹

CH. I.

The Boer.

The poles are not further apart than were the view of the genuine old-time anti-British Boer and the view of the genuine Uitlander. The former regarded the Transvaal and all in it as his property. He had taken it by might and by right. The natives in it did not count, and there was no reason why white aliens should count either. So far as the latter produced wealth, they were a convenience. So far as they grew in numbers, especially if they were British, they were a danger. In any case they were in a land which belonged to somebody else; they were there on sufferance and at their own risk. They had no claim to citizenship, and they must pay whatever taxes the citizens liked to impose. The land was a Boer Republic and a Boer Republic it was going to remain.

The view of the genuine Uitlander was that the Boer was an immigrant like himself. The old men among the Boers, including Paul Kruger, had not been born in the Transvaal. There was no long-standing Dutch inheritance in the country. The Dutchmen had taken the land in quite recent times, and had made little of it. They could not therefore even plead the right of beneficial occupation. Their tenure was a conditional tenure. The country had only been given back to them on the assumption that all white men in it would receive something like equal treatment, and that no obstacles would be placed in the way of non-Dutchmen becoming citizens if they wished to throw in their lot with the Republic; Kruger had said as much explicitly when the Convention of Pretoria was being negotiated. It was the Uitlanders, not the Boers, who had developed and were developing the wealth of the State; they paid the bulk of the taxes. In the neighbouring British colonies Dutchmen and Englishmen were on precisely the same footing. On what possible ground of reason, justice,

*The
Uitlander.*

¹ Aristotle's *Politics*, 5. 3. 11, Jowett's Translation.

PART II. or good faith could Dutchmen claim exclusive rights in the South African Republic? 'The principal ground for criticizing the policy of the Republic', wrote Lord Ripon, the Liberal Secretary of State for the Colonies, in October 1894, 'is that, whilst for seven years past it has been gaining in wealth and strength by the industry, capital, and intelligence of a body of foreigners who, counting adult males against adult males, now exceed its native population in numbers, and greatly exceed them in contributions to the State, it has been at the same time adding to the stringency of the conditions on which the men who compose this new and indispensable element in the body politic can obtain the full right of participating in public affairs which concern them so vitally and which they have influenced so favourably.'¹ These words summed up temperately the case for the bona fide Uitlanders at the time when this despatch was written, though the reference to the Boers as the native [white] population of the Transvaal was unduly favourable to the Boers. Seventy years had not passed since the defeat of Moselikatse's hordes had left the Transvaal open to the Dutch immigrants. The space of a man's life and no more was their title to the soil.

The Franchise. In the history of most communities, European or of European parentage, at any rate in modern days, the tendency has been to broaden citizenship, not to contract it. In the South African Republic the opposite course was taken. Under a law of 1876 one year's residence in the Republic qualified for citizenship: a law of 1882 made five years necessary. Then came the gold discoveries and the rush of foreign immigrants; and by laws dating from 1890 to 1894 it was made practically impossible for an alien ever to gain the full franchise except by the goodwill of the Government. The law of 1894 closed the political drifts. It embodied the policy of Boer exclusiveness in its baldest form. The franchise

¹ Lord Ripon's despatch of October 19, 1894 (C. 7933, February 1896, App., p. 93).

should not be given because it involved a national danger, and the Boers—only the Boers—were the nation.

If the Transvaal Boers towards the end of the last century could be regarded simply and solely as a half-civilized people made exclusive by tradition, by religious creed, by political and geographical environment, this point of view might admit of apology on the ground that the Boers had had no training in the art of rule, assuming rule to mean more than some shade of Turkish domination. The Boers might in fact be likened to the Spartans, of whom Aristotle used the memorable words that warring was their salvation and ruling their ruin. But the case was not by any means the comparatively simple case of rude though exceedingly shrewd forefathers of a nascent nation, with virtues and shortcomings to be accounted for by race and place. The gold, which had brought in the aliens, had at the same time given new strength and opened new prospects to the dominant race; and from the motherland of the race had come a leaven of men skilled in modern methods alike of public policy and of private profit. 'The Hollander taught the Government of this country the art of red tape qualified by corruption.'¹ This was the view of a writer friendly to the Boers in the year 1900. That Boer rule with money at its back became tainted and corrupt in a high degree is an unquestionable fact, and it is needless to recall the many scandals which have been recorded in various books. That there were upright Boer citizens who did not share the taint and deplored the scandals is also a fact not to be forgotten. But they did not control the Volksraad, much less the Government; and when Sir Henry Loch, the High Commissioner, by instructions of the Imperial Government, visited Pretoria in the summer of 1894, in a petition which was presented to him by 'certain British subjects resident in the South African Republic', and which was dated Johannesburg, June 1894, the petitioners spoke of themselves as 'having

¹ *The War in South Africa*, by J. A. Hobson, 1900, p. 74.

PART II. recently been subjected to the indignity of seeing a petition presented by 13,000 residents—mainly subjects of the Queen—praying for some relaxation of the unjust franchise laws, greeted with laughter and scorn by the legislature'.¹

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Lochl's visit to Pretoria was due to the action of the Boer Government in commandeering British subjects to serve in a trifling native war, and he secured for them exemption from the operation of the commando law in future. But the fact that British subjects, who were excluded from Transvaal citizenship, should, when there was no pretence of grave public emergency, be ordered out on commando, was very significant as showing that the Boer Government in the case of the Uitlanders, and not least but most in the case of British subjects, was minded to add insult to injury and injury to insult. What was the meaning of it? Was the Boer Government determined to pick a quarrel with England and to force on a war? Was President Kruger mad, or was there method in his madness?

In his evidence before the South African Committee which inquired into the circumstances of the Jameson raid, Charles Leonard, Afrikaner born, and chairman of the Transvaal National Union, which represented the Uitlanders, stated: 'It was not a case of the Transvaal being in a backward condition, but it had deliberately gone back from nineteenth century civilization to seventeenth century civilization.'² Later on in his evidence he referred to 'the conferring upon continental people concessions and powers which gave them almost complete control of our destinies', and defined the 'continental people' as 'Germans and Hollanders. Those people were egging on the Boers to methods of legislation absolutely unknown to our people. The Boer idea of government was fair enough; it was perfectly liberal until after we got in, and

¹ C. 7554, August 1894.

² Second Report from the Select Committee on British South Africa. &c., 311, July 1897, pp. 410, 416.

then they altered'. It was not only that through want of training, which want of training was due to the tortuous and vacillating policy of successive British Governments, the Boers had not learnt how to rule on progressive lines; that their traditions were rather traditions of successful force and successful cunning, traditions of getting some immediate advantage by strength or guile, than traditions of creating a community in the true sense and on a broad basis building up a State. It was more than this. It had become a settled policy with those who saw with the eyes of President Kruger and of his foreign anti-British advisers that rule on the lines of British rule, largely because those lines were British lines, should not come to pass. British expansion meant hemming in of Boer territory. Citizenship on the model of British citizenship implied swamping of the old Boer régime. That régime had been established and maintained in the past by fighting and by bargaining; how could these same familiar means be still made effective under modern conditions? Gold supplied the answer, stimulating audacity in public policy, and suggesting as a valuable by-product opportunities of personal gain. Riches were now available, funds for opposition in peace and war. Transvaal gold meant at once sinews for Boer nationalism and perquisites for the Boer leaders for the time being. Within the Boer circle the dominant party who stood for exclusiveness could by gold be maintained in office against the more enlightened and progressive section; while for the Boers as a whole the wealth of the Rand opened a prospect for the Republic, not merely to remain a Boer Republic, but to become the nucleus of something greater. The cause of Dutch nationality had strong backing throughout South Africa, as was proved by the vigorous existence of the Afrikaner Bond, and the Transvaal with its untold riches could now bid for and find allies outside South Africa. When the State was poor and single-handed it had held its own against Great Britain. Now it could look for support among

PART II. the nations of the world, and especially among those peoples who, as it was no longer a poor relation, would be glad to claim kindred blood. So in January 1895, on the occasion of the German Emperor's birthday, President Kruger in no obscure terms pointed to the possibility of an alliance with Germany against England. The time had come, he said, to knit ties of the closest friendship between Germany and the South African Republic.

The record of this time is, in short, a record of perpetual challenge to Great Britain on the part of the Government of the South African Republic, of singular disregard of treaty relations as well as of the elementary rules of international comity. But from the ultra-Boer point of view the game was worth playing. It was well appreciated that the British Government had had bitter experience of South Africa and South African wars, and that South African questions were always the questions which divided the English most. It was safe to count upon Great Britain putting up with endless infringements of obligation and courtesy in preference to war. Each new trespass upon British rights or indignity to British citizens was calculated to bring more backing to the Boer cause on the ground that nothing succeeds like audacity and success, and each new trespass at the same time invited a new concession to the trespasser as the price of keeping the peace. If worst came to worst, war would present itself as a struggle for Dutch independence against alien aggression, in which the Transvaal Boers might expect the solid support of Dutchmen throughout South Africa, and possibly, if not probably, more powerful support beyond the seas. The one real danger lay in action which might make Dutchmen and Englishmen in South Africa, but outside the Transvaal, come closer together instead of drifting farther apart. The closing of the fords of the Vaal River contained this element of danger, and then President Kruger was wise and gave way.

On these lines it is possible to appreciate the very unscrupulous

pulous policy of the Government of the South African Republic, as it stood in the year 1895. It is intelligible that Kruger and his advisers were in a tainted and unclean manner making the best fight they could for Republicanism and Dutch nationality. On the other hand there is no difficulty whatever in understanding the position of the Uitlanders. They had formed a National Union in 1892, and in July 1894, after Sir Henry Loch's visit to Pretoria, there was a meeting of the Union at Johannesburg, at which Leonard, who later in the year became President of the Union, was the chief speaker. He stated that their policy consisted 'in the broadening of the basis of government, of adapting the constitution in a new country to the needs of a new country; the taking in of the sinew and bone and strength which comes with a new population; a fusion of the populations to arriving at one common end—the good of South Africa'. He repudiated any desire to extend British dominion: 'There is no room for Imperialism in South Africa'; and he added an expression of opinion, which is interesting when read in the light of subsequent events, 'for my own part, I do not think that in the lifetime of those who are here to-night we shall see a united South Africa in the sense of one flag.'¹ The Uitlanders' case was a perfectly simple one. The grievances which they suffered and resented were glaring, substantial, and indefensible. Abuses were all round them, and they were taxed, without representation, to support the abuses. They did their utmost to obtain redress by constitutional methods; months and years went by, redress was refused, and the inevitable result was that a reform committee laid plans for revolution. These aliens were not all British subjects by any means. Their first and foremost aim was not to undermine the independence of the Republic, but simply and solely to overthrow a patently unjust and impossible government. At the end of 1895 the South African Republic had come to the point at which revolution was in the course of nature.

¹ C. 8159, July 1896, pp. 42-9.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE RAID TO THE WAR

PART II. ON Monday, December 30 1895, the world in general, and Great Britain in particular, was startled by rumours that the South African Republic had been invaded by an armed force under the command of Dr. Jameson, the administrator of the territories of the British South African Company. The report turned out to be true, and the story was briefly as follows:

The Jameson Raid.

It has been seen that the Bechuanaland Protectorate was, with the exception of the native reserves, in process of being handed over to the control of the Chartered Company, and that many of the disbanded Bechuanaland Border Police took service with the Company. In the latter part of the year a considerable number of the Company's own forces were moved southwards from Matabeleland, ostensibly on grounds of economy and for the purpose of guarding the railway line which was under construction, a camp being formed at a place called Pitsani Pitlogo, which was in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, about twenty-eight miles north of Mafeking, and between three and four miles from the Transvaal frontier.

Starting from this point on the evening of Sunday, December 29, 1895, with some 350 mounted men, Jameson crossed the border. At sunrise on the Monday morning he reached Malmani, a village in the Transvaal, thirty-nine miles from Pitsani, and here he was joined by another contingent of about 120 ex-troopers of the Bechuanaland Border Police, who had come from Mafeking, where the transfer of the men to the Company had been taking place. The united force of rather under 500 men, with eight Maxims and three light

field-guns, rode eastwards, for Johannesburg or Pretoria, as circumstances should dictate, Johannesburg being about 170 miles distant from the starting-point. The object was to reach the goal without fighting, if possible, and to a Boer commandant who protested against the invasion, Jameson wrote that he had no hostile intention against the people of the Transvaal. The ride went on more or less continuously day and night, and over 150 miles had been covered in seventy hours when, on the afternoon of Wednesday, January 1, 1896, near Krugersdorp, some twenty miles west of Johannesburg, the way was barred by a Boer force, who had taken up a position on rising ground. From 3 o'clock in the afternoon till nightfall Jameson's men attempted to dislodge the Boers, but without success; they drew back, bivouacked for the night amid desultory shooting, and at daybreak on Thursday, January 2, tried to make their way to Johannesburg round the Boer position. But they were badly guided as to direction; they were hopelessly outnumbered by the Boers, who had been reinforced during the night with men and with artillery. Worn out with marching and fighting, with want of sleep and food, they could do no more; and at 9.30 in the morning, at a place called Doornkop, the inevitable surrender took place, Commandant Cronje promising that the lives should be spared. The force had lost nearly sixty men in killed and wounded; the Boer casualties were five killed and three wounded. On the 7th of January the people of Johannesburg, who had taken up arms on hearing of Jameson's advance, gave in their submission to the Government. Jameson and his men were subsequently handed over to the British authorities, and the leaders of the Reform party at Johannesburg were arrested for high treason and thrown into prison.

How had this disastrous inroad originated? The evidence which came to light after the crisis was over showed that the reformers at Johannesburg, having, as the natural outcome of

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movement.*

PART II. misgovernment, become revolutionaries, had conspired with the leaders in South Africa of the Chartered Company, against the existing régime in the South African Republic. Arms and ammunition were to be brought, and to some extent were brought, secretly into Johannesburg. A force was to be held in readiness near the border. That force was to act simultaneously and in concert with a rising in Johannesburg. The Government arsenal at Pretoria, with guns and stores, was to be seized, and the Government was to be overawed or overthrown. An undated letter, signed by five of the Reform leaders, had been handed to Jameson, inviting him to come to the aid of Johannesburg should a disturbance arise. This letter was intended to justify him to his Directors, in the event of the movement taking place. The conspiracy had been organized and subsidized by Rhodes, who was at once the leader of the British South African Company, Managing Director of one of the great gold-mining companies in the South African Republic, and Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.

Causes of failure.

The normal fate of conspiracies is either complete success or complete failure. For complete success, complete unanimity and a perfect understanding as to time and place are necessary. These essentials are difficult to secure when the conspirators are at a distance from one another. The reformers were at Johannesburg, Jameson was in the Protectorate, Rhodes at Capetown. As the appointed time drew near, the Johannesburg leaders inclined to postponement, partly because the importation of arms was slow, partly because the conspirators were not all British subjects, and an assurance was required that revolt against the Government was not intended to endanger the independence of the Republic, to substitute the Union Jack for the Vierkleur. Leonard went down to Capetown to confer with Rhodes. Telegrams and messengers were sent to Jameson to warn him not to move until summoned from Johannesburg, and

a manifesto of the National Union was published, signed by Leonard as chairman, dated the 27th of December, and purporting to call a public meeting on the following 7th of January. This manifesto defined the objects of the Union as being three—the maintenance of the independence of the Republic, the securing of equal rights, and the redress of grievances. ‘We are the vast majority in this state. We own more than half of the land, and, taken in the aggregate, we own at least nine-tenths of the property in this country. Yet in all matters affecting our lives, our liberties, and our properties, we have absolutely no voice.’¹

Jameson meanwhile was tired of waiting. He had reason to think that Boer suspicions were being aroused and that, if the start was postponed, the way would no longer be open. By demonstration of force he hoped to secure, without fighting, the desired reforms; and, though the special messengers from Johannesburg urging delay reached him just before he started, one on the Saturday night, the other on the morning of the Sunday, though he had not authority from Rhodes to move when he did move, he took the bit in his teeth and decided to force the pace, setting out with fewer men than had been contemplated, before Johannesburg was prepared, and against the expressed wishes of the leaders of the Uitlanders. When the news of his having started reached Johannesburg, an Emergency Reform Committee was constituted, arms were distributed, and steps were taken to defend the town. But no armed support was given to Jameson, though on the morning of the surrender a small body of mounted men was sent to meet him if possible; and a manifesto published by the Committee deprecated any measure which might be construed as an overt act of hostility against the Government of the Republic.

Jameson and his men were British subjects, and their incursion was a most serious matter for the British Govern-

¹ C. 7933, February 1896, p. 66.

PART II. ment. Mr. Chamberlain, who had only been a few months
 →♦♦♦♦♦ in office, and whose colleagues were away from London for
 the Christmas holidays, acted with singular promptness and
 decision and, to quote the words of one of his own telegrams,
 did everything in his power 'to undo and to minimize the
 evil caused by the late unwarrantable raid by British subjects
 into the territory of the South African Republic'.¹ Messengers
 were sent out at once to overtake Jameson and to meet him,
 and turn him back, the first messenger reaching him on the
 morning of the 31st of December. On the same day, the
 31st of December, at the strong instance of Hofmeyr, leader
 of the Dutch party in the Cape Colony, the High Com-
 missioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, issued a proclamation
 repudiating the armed violation of the territory of a friendly
 state, commanding Jameson to retire, and calling upon all
 British subjects in the South African Republic to refrain from
 giving him help. Two days later, on the night of the 2nd of
 January, Sir Hercules Robinson went himself to Pretoria,
 reaching that town on the 4th of the month.

Feeling
 against
 Great
 Britain.

Both in and out of South Africa confidence in Great Britain
 had been rudely shaken and British influence gravely en-
 dangered. The section of Dutchmen in the Cape Colony,
 such as Hofmeyr himself, who had been opposed to Kruger
 and his policy and had given support to Rhodes, were now
 heart-whole in feeling with the Transvaal Boers, suspicious of
 England and the English, and full of bitterness against the
 Prime Minister of their Colony, by whom they felt that they
 had been betrayed. The acting President of the Orange
 Free State called out a force of burghers to be ready to help
 their brethren beyond the Vaal. The British Agent at
 Pretoria telegraphed that the President of the South African
 Republic had asked for the intervention of Germany and
 France; and on the 3rd of January the public learnt that the
 German Emperor had telegraphed to President Kruger his

¹ C. 7933, February 1896, p. 19.

congratulations that 'without appealing to the help of friendly powers' he had succeeded in maintaining the independence of his country 'against foreign aggression'. It subsequently transpired that the German Government applied, though without success, to the Government of Portugal to allow German soldiers to be sent to Pretoria through Delagoa Bay. All the cards had been thrown into President Kruger's hands by one reckless move. It was the greatest piece of good fortune which had ever fallen to the lot of a thoroughly bad Government.

For the moment the dominant feature in the situation was that Jameson and his men were at the mercy of that Government. The circumstances under which they had surrendered were not clearly known, and the Boers interpreted the surrender as unconditional. A rumour that the prisoners would be shot led to a personal appeal from Mr. Chamberlain to the President's generosity, and similar considerations weighed heavily with the Johannesburg men when they listened to the High Commissioner's advice and gave up their arms. Public opinion in England and in Rhodesia clamoured for the safety of gallant though reckless men; and it all enured to President Kruger's advantage. At every point he was playing a winning game. In the eyes of the world he had been wronged by England, triumphant over England, and was magnanimous in listening to English supplications for the lives of Englishmen. Nor can it be questioned that his action in regard to the prisoners, whatever may have been his motive, was distinctly forbearing and generous. The end of it was that, before the High Commissioner left Pretoria on the 14th of January, it was arranged that the whole of the prisoners should be put across the Natal frontier, on the understanding that all whose domicile was in England should be sent to England and the leaders placed on trial in England. This was done. The leaders were sent in one ship; the rest in another. Immediately after Jameson and his chief officers

Action taken with regard to Jameson and his men.

PART II. reached England, towards the end of February, they were charged at Bow Street under the Foreign Enlistment Act. The trial took place before the Lord Chief Justice of England in the latter days of July, and varying sentences were awarded, the longest being in the case of Jameson himself, fifteen months' imprisonment. The state of his health necessitated his release before he had served the full term.

The South African Committee. Immediately after the trial Mr. Chamberlain moved for a Select Committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the origin and circumstances of the Raid and the administration of the British South Africa Company. Before this Committee the principal actors in the disastrous episode told their stories and were rigorously cross-examined. A year passed before the Report appeared, and in the meantime the facts of the case had formed the subject of a report by a similar Select Committee of the Cape House of Assembly. The House of Commons Committee, in words which all men accepted, condemned the Raid, noting that 'the result caused for the time being grave injury to British influence in South Africa. Public confidence was shaken, race feeling embittered, and serious difficulties were created with neighbouring states.'¹ They condemned the part which Rhodes had played. But by the time that they had reported the mischievous party spirit, which has so often and so vitally injured South Africa in England and England in South Africa, had infected men's views, and the common-sense findings of the Report seemed out of date. Attempts were made to inculcate Mr. Chamberlain, in the wisdom and honesty of whose action at the time of the Raid all parties had concurred, and the Chartered Company with its leaders and associates was regarded by fanatical opponents as merely an agency for undermining peoples for the sake of gain. The Company certainly had not profited by the transaction, except that they gained the more exclusive attention of Rhodes, no longer Premier of Cape Colony. At a critical

¹ House of Commons paper 311, July 1897, p. xvi.

time they lost the services of their capable and experienced Administrator, Jameson, whose dismissal on the 5th of January, 1896, followed immediately upon the Raid. The Bechuanaland Protectorate was withdrawn from them. All the armed forces in their own territories were removed from the authority of the Directors and placed under the command of an Imperial officer; and finally, by the Southern Rhodesia Order in Council, passed in 1898, the administration of Rhodesia was placed under the supervision of the High Commissioner, represented on the spot by an Imperial Resident Commissioner.

In Sir Lewis Michell's *Life of Rhodes* the Jameson Raid is described as 'a picturesque and irregular episode in the long duel between Republican aspirations and the settled convictions of those who preferred British institutions under the Supremacy of the Crown'.¹ This statement, as it stands, is not adequate to the facts of the case; but undoubtedly the true historical view of the incursion is that it was an episode, an incident in a train of circumstances, arising out of what had gone before, stimulating and hastening, but not creating, what came after. At the time it was played for far more than it was worth, treated as an event of world-wide enormity that stood by itself, not merely as an abortive and unscrupulous, but in the light of antecedent conditions perfectly intelligible, attempt to upset an impossible Government. Had Kruger and his friends been Englishmen, had the Uitlanders and Jameson been Dutchmen, and had the attempt succeeded, it is difficult to doubt that those in England who were loudest in denouncing the iniquities of their countrymen, who embodied what Rhodes in his bitterness called 'unctuous rectitude', would have passed a verdict on the dethroned English Kruger that it served him right. The real sin of the Raid was that it gave away the good name of England. Had it succeeded, the position of the British Government would have

*Historical
view of
the Jameson
Raid.*

¹ Vol. ii, p. 139.

PART II. been more difficult even than when it failed, and nothing
 —•— could justify the great man, who was at the time Premier of
 the leading British Colony in South Africa, in at once holding
 that position and organizing and abetting a revolutionary
 movement against a nominally friendly State.

*The
 Johannes-
 burg Re-
 formers.*

It has been seen that, when they heard that Jameson had broken into the Republic, the Johannesburg reformers prepared for defence but avoided any measure of offence. For the moment the Republican Government were in danger and they knew it. The President issued a moderate Proclamation, calling upon the inhabitants of Johannesburg to support law and order, and intimating readiness to consider grievances. Two representatives of the Moderates among the Boers visited Johannesburg on Tuesday, the 31st, to confer with the Reform Committee; and on the following day representatives of that Committee visited Pretoria. It was agreed that, as the High Commissioner was coming to Pretoria, and pending his arrival, no hostile step should be taken on either side, and again serious consideration of the grievances of which the Uitlanders complained was promised by or on behalf of the Boer Government. Jameson surrendered, and his life and the lives of his comrades were believed to be in danger. Sir Hercules Robinson reached Pretoria, and learnt from President Kruger that unconditional surrender at Johannesburg must precede discussion and consideration of grievances. He urged surrender upon the Johannesburg reformers, and in order to ensure the safety of the prisoners and to clear the way for discussion and redress of grievances, the Johannesburg men gave up their arms.

*Mr. Cham-
 berlain in
 favour of
 pressing for
 reform.*

The true sane view of the inroad, as has been said, is that it was not an isolated act of abnormal mischief or criminality, but the outcome of existing conditions. It was Mr. Chamberlain's great merit that from the first, amid the general bewilderment and indignation, he rightly diagnosed the situation. While doing all that man could do to reprobate and minimize

the outrage against a State which was outwardly in friendly relations with England, he was none the less determined to use the occasion if possible for eliminating the causes which led to the outbreak. On the 4th of January, the day on which Sir Hercules Robinson reached Pretoria, he telegraphed summing up the subjects on which he considered that the High Commissioner might, on behalf of the British Government, make friendly representation to the Government of the Republic, with a view to removing the discontent of the Uitlanders and ensuring future peace and goodwill. There was the all-important question of the franchise, the unequal taxation, the absence of provision for education in other than the Dutch language, the want of adequate police and adequate mine inspection, the lack of full municipal privileges for the citizens of Johannesburg. The Secretary of State pointed out that the danger from which the Transvaal Government had just escaped 'was real, and one which, if the causes which led up to it are not removed, may recur, although in a different form', and he urged that concession might now be made with the best results, as the fruit not of pressure but of voluntary moderation.¹ Meanwhile, in view of the German Emperor's telegram, a flying squadron was mobilized as an indication that foreign interference in the relations between Great Britain and the South African Republic would not be tolerated. Subsequently, in a further telegram of the 13th of January, Mr. Chamberlain again emphasized the desirability of 'a permanent settlement by which the possibility of further internal troubles will be prevented', and expressed the hope that President Kruger 'will now take the opportunity afforded to him of making of his own free will such reasonable concessions to the Uitlanders as will remove the last excuse for disloyalty, and will establish the free institutions of the Republic on a firm and lasting basis'.² The terms of the later telegram were friendly as before, but with

¹ C. 7933, pp. 18-20.

² C. 7933, pp. 50-1.

PART II. the friendship was coupled an intimation in the plainest terms that President Kruger was not to expect the support of foreign Powers, and that Great Britain intended at all costs to maintain her position as the Paramount Power in South Africa.

No action taken by the High Commissioner.

Nothing was done. Before this last telegram reached the High Commissioner, he was on his way back to Capetown. He had communicated to President Kruger Mr. Chamberlain's former telegram of the 4th of January, and in his own telegrams to the Secretary of State had intimated that he meant to raise the question of the Uitlanders' grievances as soon as Johannesburg had come into line again. But, as days went on and hitches occurred in the negotiations, his whole attention, like that of the public, had been centred upon the fate of Jameson and his men, and he did not deem it opportune to take up the subject of reforms. The situation no doubt was full of difficulty. The Boers, when the immediate danger had passed by, tended to become more intractable; and the greater issues, both in South Africa and in England, were obscured by natural but not expedient anxiety for the safety of the men who had brought on the crisis. Still, the Johannesburg reformers had been given reason to expect that, if they submitted, their cause would not suffer in the High Commissioner's hands, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that an opportunity was lost which might have been taken, and which in the hands of a younger man in full health and strength might possibly have been used to the lasting good of all.

The fate of the Reformers.

Some days before Sir Hercules Robinson left Pretoria, the leaders of the Johannesburg movement had been lodged in the town gaol. He was on the spot, but his view was that, pending their trial for conspiracy against the Republic, it would not be well to interfere—much less to press for the extension of political privileges to men who might be convicted of having been enemies to the State. The Government were acting within their legal rights, and he did no more than urge upon President Kruger a policy of moderation. Day by day

President Kruger's hands had been strengthened, and day by day he had played his cards with characteristic skill and want of scruple. In the hour of the crisis the Johannesburg leaders and the representatives of the Transvaal Government had negotiated on friendly terms. Jameson's surrender, treated as unconditional, had provided a lever for securing unconditional surrender of arms at Johannesburg. That surrender on the 7th of January, made in the belief that friendly consideration of grievances would follow, was followed instead by the arrest of the leaders on the 9th and 10th. On the 9th was issued a Proclamation promising an amnesty to all, except the principal offenders, who should have laid down their arms by the following evening, and next day there came a Proclamation to the inhabitants of Johannesburg holding out hopes of a municipality and inviting a policy of Forget and Forgive. Rather more than sixty men were committed for trial, and towards the end of April they were tried. The four leaders who had signed the letter to Jameson—Leonard being out of reach—agreed to plead guilty to the count of High Treason, but set out the facts of their case in a plain statement on which it would be difficult to condemn them at the bar of History; they were sentenced to death, minor sentences being imposed upon the other prisoners. The death sentences were forthwith commuted; and in a few weeks' time, after haggling and negotiation and intrigue and strong representations from outside, heavy fines and temporary exclusion from Transvaal politics secured the release of all the prisoners with the exception of two, Woolls Sampson and Davies, who preferred imprisonment—and endured it for thirteen months—to making any appeal to Kruger and his Government.

The circumstances of this trial and the reputed conditions of imprisonment at Pretoria did no good to the Boer cause. The Boer learnt that, now that the plague was over, President Kruger had hardened his heart; that justice, in the sense of even-handed trial, was not to be looked for in the

*Boer
feelings and
the net
result of
the Raid.*

PART II. South African Republic; that money was the one thing
— needful; that under the old régime, strengthened and restored, the old unclean conditions would more than ever prevail. But we have also to appreciate the view of the many Boers who could love their country and their flag without being tainted with gold or concerned in political duplicity. There was the fact that a revolution had been on foot and had been abetted from the outside, the prime movers being Englishmen. As time went on, patriotic burghers may not unnaturally have reasoned that British sympathy with those who in their eyes had tried to steal from them their State, was evident from the lenient sentences awarded in England to the chief culprits, from the fact that the prime mover, Rhodes, was still a member of the Queen's Council, that the charter of the South African Company had not been cancelled. They may not have loved Kruger and his associates, they may not have loved the Hollander and the German; but to them the Johannesburgers were now more than ever a gang of British interlopers, and if against them and against England Kruger stood for the independence of the Republic, they would stand by Kruger. This was the spirit which Jameson's ill-advised enterprise had called out, and it had done more. The Boers and their Government realized how great and imminent was the danger from which they had escaped and for which they had not been prepared. They must not be caught napping again; they had money in plenty, they would prepare for war. Such was the net result of the Jameson Raid. Inside the South African Republic and outside it, it enlisted public sympathy on the wrong side. Patriotism supported corruption, rascality was read into reform. Throughout South Africa, whether under the British flag or beyond it, anti-British feeling was strengthened and consolidated. Difficult as had been the position of the Imperial Government in regard to South Africa, its difficulties were now greatly increased. The causes of unrest remained. The Uitlanders

had gained nothing, and some of them had lost much. One man had conspicuously triumphed, and that was President Kruger, who stood out more than ever as the pillar of Dutch nationality in South Africa.

We now come to a period of between three and four years, the first part of which included what may be called the aftermath of the Raid, while the second part was the prelude to the South African War. Inasmuch as the South Africa Committee of the House of Commons did not report until July 1897, it may be said that the Raid coloured the years 1896 and 1897, but that later the main issues emerged more clearly, and were grasped both in South Africa and in England, as they had not been grasped before.

The views which Mr. Chamberlain had pressed from the first as to the necessity for redressing the Uitlanders' grievances, were set forth at length with singular force and clearness in a despatch of the 4th February, 1896,¹ which was published in England before more than a telegraphic summary of its contents had reached South Africa. In this despatch he pointed out that 'the aliens (the large majority of whom are British subjects) at the present time outnumber the citizens of the Republic', that 'the newcomers are men who were accustomed to the fullest exercise of political rights', and that they contributed 'eighteen or nineteen-twentieths of the total revenue'. He traced the causes of the immigrants' discontent, and their failure to obtain redress by constitutional means. He summed up the story of the Raid, and enumerated the main grievances which the Transvaal Government would do well to remedy. Referring to the President's expressed intention to give municipal institutions to Johannesburg, he made the suggestion that expansion of municipal privileges into some form of local autonomy for the Rand district might be the best solution of the difficulties which the case presented, and finally he invited President Kruger to come to England

CII. II.

*Mr. Chamberlain's
Despatch
of 4th February,
1896.*

¹ C. 7933, pp. 83-91.

PART II. to discuss the questions at issue. It is interesting to note that a scheme of Home Rule for Johannesburg and the surrounding district had also occurred to a South African Englishman, whose subsequent career showed that he was not wanting in sympathy for the Boers. On the 10th of January, while Sir Hercules Robinson was still at Pretoria, Mr. Merriman had telegraphed to him suggesting that the free cities of the German Empire might be taken as a model for giving extended municipal rights to the Rand.¹

*The
British
and the
Boer posi-
tion.
President
Kruger's
reply to
Mr. Cham-
berlain.*

What was the *locus standi* of the British Government in the matter? Great Britain had, as Mr. Chamberlain's despatch pointed out, certain special rights under the terms of the London Convention. Over and above her position in virtue of the London Convention she had, as the *de facto* Paramount Power in South Africa, an undoubted claim to be heard where the interests of the whole of South Africa, its peace and prosperity, were concerned. Furthermore, as the majority of the complainants were British subjects, on this ground also she was by international comity specially entitled to make representation. The Boer position, on the other hand, was that under the London Convention the South African Republic had obtained complete self-government, limited only by the terms of the Convention, and that the Uitlander question was entirely a matter of domestic economy with which Great Britain had no concern. The publication of the Secretary of State's despatch in England before it reached the Transvaal Government gave some colourable ground of complaint, and the suggestion of autonomy for the Rand brought an intimation that that Government 'cannot suffer any interference and intermingling, however well intended, with the internal affairs of the country'.² But the President expressed his willingness to come to England, provided that the field of the future discussion was sufficiently wide. Very wide he wished

¹ C. 8063, April 1896, p. 162.

² C. 8063, p. 11.

it to be. The main subjects for discussion which he enumerated were the withdrawal of the London Convention, the substitution for it of a treaty of peace, friendship, and commerce with most-favoured nation treatment, guarantees against any future violation of the territory of the Republic from the Cape Colony or the territories of the British South Africa Company, and against disturbing military operations on the border of the Republic, compensation for the injuries, direct and indirect, which the late disturbances had caused. Among supplementary subjects were incorporation of Swaziland in the South African Republic, favourable arrangements for the Republic in regard to the much-coveted Trans-Pongola districts, and cancelling of the British South Africa Company's charter. The terms in which reference was made to the London Convention were significant. It was laid down that with the signing of the Convention, British Suzerainty had disappeared. The Convention was to be abolished, because in several respects it had virtually ceased to exist, because in other respects there was no more cause for its existence, because it was injurious to the dignity of an independent Republic. It was not to be supposed that these demands would be conceded. Mr. Chamberlain intimated that in any case the important fourth article of the Convention of London, which gave Great Britain a hold over the foreign relations of the Republic, would be maintained, and in no long time the invitation to President Kruger to visit England not being accepted was withdrawn. There was, in fact, no meeting-ground between two diametrically opposite points of view. The British Government was not going to part with its rights in regard to the South African Republic. The Government of the South African Republic was not going to concede any right of interference on the part of Great Britain in regard to the case of the Uitlanders, whose grievances were styled by the British Government 'admitted', by the Transvaal Government 'alleged'.

PART II. The upheaval caused by Jameson's inroad was followed by a serious native rising in Matabeleland, to which further reference will be made. This rising necessitated the moving of troops from the Cape Colony along the western border of the Republic. Resentful and suspicious, the Boers feared some further design against their state. They had noted at an earlier date the preparation of a flying squadron, and the sending of ships to Delagoa Bay. The English seemed ready to take measures of offence, but not so ready to call wrongdoers to account. Circumstances, in short, were such that, if the Republican Government wished to hold England at arms' length, they could make out a very good case for doing so, and in doing so rely in the main upon the sympathy of the public. The Government was really at the parting of ways. There was now a singularly favourable opportunity for making, as a free gift, substantial and bona fide reforms; placing the Republic once for all upon a broad basis of freedom in lieu of a narrow basis of race, and substituting solid friendship with England and the English for the antagonism which had embittered the history of South Africa. On the other hand, there were ostensibly good grounds for upholding for the time being the old régime; and, while the world condoned such a policy in view of the provocation which had been received, the lines of the future might be laid more solidly than before upon race cleavage, with the ultimate object of Dutch predominance not in the Transvaal only, but throughout South Africa. The second alternative was taken by those who held the reins of power.

The parting of the ways.

The policy of the Boer Government.

Many months followed of tedious correspondence between England and South Africa, the details of which need not be recounted at length. The outstanding feature of the whole was that inside the South African Republic the Government policy was one of repression, not of conciliation, of keeping the Uitlanders outside the pale of citizenship instead of converting them into loyal and law-abiding citizens; while in its

outside dealings the Transvaal Government made constant attempts to ignore the London Convention, meeting with as many remonstrances from the British Government. On the 31st of December, 1896, the new British Agent at Pretoria, but lately arrived, reported, in accordance with instructions, upon the legislation of the Republic in 1896 as affecting the Uitlanders. He summed up that 'of the enactments of the year some are decidedly for the benefit of the Uitlander; some are specious, and *may* lead to an improvement in the condition of the foreigner; but all will depend upon the manner and spirit in which their provisions are executed; some can only be characterized as irritating and undesirable'.¹ Of the promised municipal law for Johannesburg he wrote in cautious terms. 'As it stands, I am told that it does not either meet the wants, or command the confidence of the population of Johannesburg'²; and when the law was published in its final form in September 1897, he saw no reason to revise his judgement. It was, in fact, worse than useless, the substantial power being placed in the hands of an insignificant Dutch minority and of the Government. A new Education law again did nothing to remove one of the main grievances of the Uitlanders, and emphasized the determination of the Government to proscribe as far as possible the English language. A Press law, an Aliens' Expulsion law, and an Aliens' Immigration law, all were directed against those who were not Boers. In some of their legislation the Government achieved the double object of injuring the Uitlanders and irritating the British Government by straining or breaking the London Convention, and in March 1897 Mr. Chamberlain set out in a despatch³ the various recent treaties and laws of the Republic in connexion with which the Convention had been infringed. In the meantime the Boer Government spent very large sums on arms and defences, and in January 1897

¹ C. 8423, April 1897, p. 96.

² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³ C. 8423, pp. 115-17.

PART II. sent in their claim for money compensation on account of the
 —◆— damage caused by the Raid.

*The Boer
 claim for
 compensation.*

This claim requires a few words of comment. The total amount was £1,677,938 3s. 3d., of which the sum of £677,938 3s. 3d. was for material damages, and one million for what were styled moral or intellectual damages, the whole being exclusive of any legitimate claims which might be put forward by private persons on their own account. The claim was preferred to the British Government, but lay against the British South Africa Company. The second item, for moral or intellectual damages, Mr. Chamberlain refused to present to the Company. The material damages were classed under nine heads. There were annuities, pensions, &c., to those who had suffered or their families, a large sum for expenditure for military and commando services, and a much larger sum—£462,120—as ‘compensation to be paid to the commandeered burghers for their services and the troubles and cares brought upon them’. The £462,120, it was subsequently ascertained, worked out at £30 a head to 15,404 Transvaal burghers who were said to have been under arms. The account also included £36,011 3s. 3d. for expenses of the Orange Free State. Mr. Chamberlain asked for further details of these material damages. The Transvaal Government thought that the particulars already given afforded ‘reasonable basis for consideration of the question’, but eventually, in November 1898, the fuller details were given. In May 1899, the Secretary of State proposed, on behalf of the Company, that the claims should be submitted to arbitration, and the South African War, which followed shortly afterwards, left the matter outstanding. The historical interest of this claim, and the only reason for recalling it, consists in the light which it throws upon the character of the Boer Government in the days of Kruger. The claim approximated to sordid and undignified burlesque. So far as it can be considered seriously, it was a bald pronouncement that the

outraged Republic intended to make the outrage a most paying concern, not only to the Government but also to the utmost possible number of the individual citizens, as well as to the neighbouring Dutch Republic. It contained a mixture of the Dutch instinct to ask for too much, as a basis for bargaining, and a want of that sense of proportion which is looked for in a civilized state. Lastly, there was in it a characteristic indifference to the possible effect of such an extravagant demand upon friendly relations with the British Government, and characteristic confidence as to the amount that England could be made to swallow.

Constantly to assert the claim to be an independent Republic, straining relations with Great Britain and *pari passu* consolidating race feeling in South Africa and anti-British feeling outside South Africa, may be taken to have been as a whole the policy of the Transvaal Government in the two years which followed the Raid. But it must be borne in mind that with this political policy was allied personal gain, and that the concessions and monopolies which weighed so heavily on the aliens in the Republic, enriched the Government clique for the time being. Against these conditions some stand was made among the burghers themselves, as when, at the beginning of 1897, the High Court of Justice came into collision with the Volksraad, and when later in the year an Industrial Commission of Enquiry, appointed by the Government, issued a singularly independent report, recommending reforms to lighten the burdens on the mining industry. But the outcome of the High Court Crisis was subordination of the Court to the Legislature and eventual dismissal of the Chief Justice; while the recommendations of the Industrial Commission, when handled by the Volksraad, were made in the main abortive. Yet no picture is wholly dark, and in the year 1897, when Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, it was not only at Johannesburg that the occasion was marked in the South African Republic.

*Public
policy and
private
gain.*

PART II. The Volksraad took official note of the Jubilee, the public offices were closed, and President Kruger sent his congratulations to the Queen

*The
Orange
Free State
in 1896-7.*

It has been seen that, when the Raid took place, the acting President of the Orange Free State called out his burghers, for, by the treaty of Potchefstroom in 1889, the two Boer republics were bound to mutual defence against unprovoked attack from outside. The inevitable result of Jameson's movement was to strengthen fellow feeling between these two kindred communities, and when shortly afterwards an election took place for the Presidency of the Free State, which Kruger had vacated, Steyn, another Dutch Afrikaner, was chosen as his successor by a large majority over Fraser, who stood for the broad peace-loving views which President Brand had upheld. The change of feeling was illustrated by the refusal of the legislature at Bloemfontein to accept a convention, which had just been negotiated, empowering the Government of the Cape Colony to construct new railways in the Orange Free State, and by the Free State Government taking into their own hands the existing railways, which had up to that date been made and administered by the Cape Government.

✓ The new President, like his predecessor, followed Kruger's lead, and the Dutch nationalist policy, which Kruger embodied, became predominant in the Free State. In 1897 Kruger paid a visit to Bloemfontein, and the Potchefstroom Treaty was renewed and amplified in a fresh agreement.

*The Cape
Colony in
1896-7.*

Immediately after the Raid Rhodes resigned the Premiership of the Cape Colony. He was succeeded by Sir John Gordon Sprigg, who had been Treasurer in his Cabinet, and who now became for the third time Premier of the Colony. Sprigg had first been called to office by Sir Bartle Frere in the difficult days of 1878, and once more he had a most difficult task. Condemnation of the Raid, of the Chartered Company, and of Rhodes was for the time widespread and predominant; and in May the House of Assembly appointed

a Select Committee to inquire into the circumstances of the Raid, so far as they affected the Colony. The Committee reported in July, and the majority report, condemning the Raid and censuring Rhodes, was adopted without debate or division upon the motion of Schreiner, who had been his Attorney-General and his close friend, and who in condemning his conduct yet gave him credit for motives that were not small or mean. Political feeling ran high in the Colony. Rhodes, who had attached Dutch support to himself, had by his latest action effectually alienated the Bond from British leading; and the antagonism grew stronger when in April 1897 he came back from examination before the South African Committee in London, and again took his seat in the House of Assembly. Schreiner was not a member of Sprigg's Ministry, and some of the British section, like Merriman, were in opposition. Merriman in 1897 moved a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry, which was only lost by the casting vote of the Speaker, but Sprigg held on and represented the Colony at the Diamond Jubilee and the Imperial Conference of 1897. That amid party strife and race bitterness, loyalty and good feeling were still not wanting in the Colony was shown by the fact that the House of Assembly, with only one dissentient, agreed to a contribution to the Royal Navy, while the Bond decided to send an address of congratulation to Queen Victoria.

Sir Hercules Robinson paid a short visit to England in the summer of 1896, and, returning as Lord Rosmead to South Africa, finally retired, full of years and honour, in April 1897. His successor was found in the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue in England, Alfred Milner, who had previously been Under-Secretary of Finance in Egypt, and who reached Capetown in May 1897, bringing with him a reputation for singular ability, high character, and broad liberal views. Still in early middle age, he approached South Africa and South African problems with a clean slate and

CH. II.



*Retirement
of Lord
Rosmead
and ap-
pointment
of Sir A.
Milner as
High Com-
missioner.*

PART II. a mind free from all local prejudice or preconceived bias. Already a new British Agent had been appointed to the South African Republic. This was Conyngham Greene, one of the younger members of the Imperial Diplomatic Service, who brought to South Africa, as Sir Alfred Milner brought, experience of political matters gained outside the immediate circle of the British Empire. He took up his duties at Pretoria on the 1st December, 1896.

Natal in 1897.

At the end of 1897, Zululand was incorporated with Natal by a Proclamation dated the 29th December, which followed upon a law passed for the purpose by the Natal Legislature. Two days previously, Amatongaland had been annexed to Zululand, and Natal thus held the whole eastern coast of South Africa from the Cape Colony to the Portuguese frontier, coming more than ever into touch or into conflict with the South African Republic, according as there might be peace or war. Natal has been one of the colonies in which the sugar industry has brought in its train indentured East Indian immigrants, and about this time began the movement to restrict this coloured immigration which gathered force in subsequent years.

The Matabele rising of 1896.

South Africa generally suffered much from rinderpest in the years 1896-7. In no part of the world are cattle of more universal value, in no part therefore is cattle disease more disastrous. Moving down from Central Africa, the disease appeared first in Rhodesia, before it spread further to the south; and in Rhodesia it was largely responsible for the dangerous native rising, which marked the early part of the year 1896. The Matabele campaign of 1893 had effectually broken Lobengula's power, and made an end of his finest regiments, but there had not been in any sense a complete and wholesale conquest of the country. There were thus large numbers of fighting men left, who had not taken part in the war, who felt the want of the one-man rule, which they had implicitly obeyed, who resented the payment

of indemnity in cattle which had been demanded by the Company after the war, on the ground that the cattle had been the property of the king, and whose pride was irritated by the arrogance of the native police. Then came a concurrence of conditions such as have often precluded a native rising in South Africa, a prolonged drought, multitudes of locusts, and above all the cattle plague, accompanied by the enforced slaughtering of cattle. The usual witch-doctor, or native seer, took up his parable against the white men, and the removal of the troops, who went south for the Raid, gave a favourable opportunity for action.

In the latter part of March 1896 the outbreak began with bloodshed and murder. The European settlers and prospectors fled for refuge, or were gathered by armed patrols into Buluwayo and two or three laagers at other points in the territory. For about a month Buluwayo was more or less in a state of siege, 4,000 white men and women being hemmed in by some 15,000 Matabele, and there was danger lest the settlement might be rushed by a combined attack from the natives who lay along the line of the Umgusa River on the northern side and those who held the Matoppo hills on the south. The main road to the south, with small forts along it, was kept open, but the rail-head at Mafeking was nearly 500 miles away, and ox transport had been killed out. It was an anxious and difficult time, but the men who held Buluwayo, Dutch as well as English, were equal to the emergency; and when, on the 25th of April, a small force, determined and well led, moved out and severely defeated the Matabele at Colenbranders' farm on the Umgusa River, about three and a half miles to the north-east of Buluwayo, the worst of the crisis was over.

As the result of the Jameson Raid, the British South Africa Company had to find a new Administrator for Matabeleland in place of Jameson, and found one among their own Directors in Lord Grey, who was in after years to carry his overseas

PART II. experience with singular success into Canada. He reached Buluwayo three days after the fight at the Umgusa River. Another result of the Raid, which has been already mentioned, was that the Imperial Government determined to lose no time in taking over from the Company the control of all the armed forces of every kind in Rhodesia. Sir Richard Martin, who had seen tough service in South Africa, was selected to be the commandant, and came to Buluwayo at the end of the third week in May. The news of the rising, however, was sufficiently serious to call for further measures. The Government resolved to send out some Imperial troops, and appointed Sir Frederick Carrington, rich in experience of South African fighting, to the supreme military command until the trouble was over. Meanwhile steps had been taken in the Cape Colony to send relief to the north, and there was a movement of armed men to and from Mafeking, which gave rise to Boer suspicions. The officer placed in charge was Major Plumer, whose name was later to become a household word in South African warfare. He collected a relief force of some 850 men, who came up to Buluwayo in the latter part of May. There was yet another little force which had been trying to make its way to Buluwayo, from the north-east, not from the south. Rhodes had gone to England immediately after the Raid, 'to face the music' as he termed it, and after but a few days' stay at home, had left again for Beira, the eastern entrance to Mashonaland. From Beira he went to Salisbury, the capital of Mashonaland, and when the Matabele trouble came he joined a small column of 150 men which in the early days of April, set out from Salisbury for Buluwayo, 300 miles away. They reached Gwelo rather over 100 miles distant from Buluwayo, but it was not until the 24th of May that they joined hands with a force sent out from Buluwayo to meet them. On the 1st of June Rhodes reached Buluwayo, and on the 3rd June Carrington came up, bringing as his chief staff officer Baden Powell, whose

name, like Plumer's, was hereafter to be in all men's mouths. The rebellion could now be effectively dealt with, and in a few weeks' time it resolved itself into troublesome warfare in the Matoppos hills. Plumer fought two hard fights there, among other early in July and early in August, the fight of the 5th of August being more or less decisive. Carrington built forts to encircle the recalcitrant natives, but though defeated, they would not come in. Force seemed of little avail, and Rhodes determined to use persuasion and inspire confidence. Towards the latter part of August he left the soldiers and took the command of his camp in advance of, and at a distance from, the natives' forces, for weeks he paraded with the suspicious and mutinous leaders and in October gained his way. They then laid down their arms; and Rhodes said the cause of the rebellion. 'We have no leader,' he said, 'and it is impossible for a nation to live without a leader.' In overthrowing Lobengula the English had taken away the chief which the natives knew, and as yet had not replaced it. Rhodes, in fact, taught whites as well as natives a lesson, and its last phase showed Rhodes at his best. Not an unscrupulous schemer, soiling his hands with wrongs against his neighbouring white State, but a man whose high courage and indomitable patience marked him out for leadership, who brought back peace and confidence among the natives.

Before, however, the Matabele trouble ended, Mashonaia and was in arms, and whereas in April Salisbury had sent help to Buluwayo, in June Buluwayo had to send help to Salisbury, which for about a month, from the 19th of June onwards, was in a state of laager and under martial law. The Mashonas had not the fine fighting qualities of the Matabele, and his later rising was therefore not so serious: moreover, the 380 regular troops under Colonel Alderson came through from Beira to Umtali in July, and in due course joined hands with the Salisbury garrison. Still there

C. II.

*Trouble in
Mashona-
land.*

PART II. was an outbreak of disturbances in most of the districts, and more than a year passed before Sir Richard Martin could report that the rebellion was finally stamped out.

So Rhodesia passed through its trial and went on its way. In October 1897 the railway reached Buluwayo and was formally opened at the beginning of November, while in the following year, under the Southern Rhodesia Order of Council, a Legislative Council was instituted for the territory, and an Imperial Resident Commissioner was appointed side by side with the Company's Administrator, the first holder of the office being Sir Marshall Clarke, who in Basutoland and Zululand had shown singular capacity for handling natives and native questions.

✓ *South
Africa in
1898.*

When the year 1898 opened, outside the South African Republic, there were signs of return to better and more neighbourly feeling. In December 1897 a Commission for revising the constitution of the Orange Free State recommended that naturalization should take effect after three years instead of five, and that a simple oath of allegiance to the Republic should suffice without being accompanied by renunciation of nationality. The liberal spirit shown in this report was in strong contrast to the exclusiveness of the Kruger régime in the sister republic. Sir Alfred Milner was present when the Volksraad was opened in 1898, and the Legislature with few dissentients ratified the South African Customs Union, to which Natal became a partner, in addition to the Free State, the Cape Colony, Basutoland, and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the Transvaal still standing sullenly aloof. Political changes took place in the Cape Colony. After the second reading of a redistribution bill had been carried in the House of Assembly, Schreiner moved and carried a vote of want of confidence in the Sprigg Ministry. A General Election followed, Rhodes taking the field on the Progressive side, but in his election speeches adhering to his old creed that English and Dutch should hold together. The

net result was a very narrow majority for the Bond party. When Parliament met in October 1898, Schreiner again carried a vote of want of confidence in Sprigg, and in turn formed a Ministry based on the Bond. A Redistribution Act was then passed by mutual consent, sixteen new members were added to the Lower House, and Schreiner's majority was increased. The Dutch were in the ascendancy, but a bill to make an annual contribution of £30,000 to the Royal Navy was carried in the Assembly without debate.

Sir Alfred Milner had for nearly a year studied conditions in South Africa far and near, reticent until he had gained first-hand knowledge, mastered the Dutch language, and gauged the diverse phases of public opinion. At the beginning of March 1898, at the Dutch centre of Graaff Reinet, where Dutchmen gathered to assure him, as against report to the contrary, of their loyalty to the Crown, he gave expression to his views. 'It is not any aggressiveness on the part of Her Majesty's Government, which now keeps up the spirit of unrest in South Africa. Not at all. It is the unprogressiveness, I will not say retrogressiveness, of the Government of the Transvaal, and its deep suspicion of the intentions of Great Britain, which causes it to devote its whole attention to imaginary external dangers, when every impartial observer can see perfectly well that the real dangers which threaten it are internal'; and he urged that the Dutch citizens of the Cape Colony should use all their influence to induce the Transvaal Government 'gradually to assimilate its institutions, and what is even more important than institutions, the temper and spirit of its administration, to those of the free communities of South Africa, such as this colony or the Orange Free State'.¹ These were the words of a friend of the South African Republic, if the Republic had only known its true friends. The man on the spot, the 'impartial observer', in

*Sir Alfred
Milner at
Graaff
Reinet,
March
1898.*

¹ This speech has been reprinted in *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 7-12.

PART II. plain speech told what all thinking men knew, that, if the Republic was to live and thrive, it must be assimilated to the other free communities of South Africa; that citizenship is no matter of bargain, but a condition of healthy life.

*The South
African
Republic in
1898.*

But the warning was unheeded, and the Dutch citizens of the Cape Colony were more attracted by Kruger as the Nationalist than repelled by Kruger as the despot; despot he was, having been re-elected as President at the beginning of 1898. Chief Justice Kotze, who had stood for judicial independence, was dismissed; and, as the year went on, the burdens laid on the mining industry were rather increased than diminished. A Government right to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the gross product of lands held under mynpachts or mining leases, which had not before been exercised, was now enforced; and, in the case of mining properties not held on such leases, a new tax of 5 per cent. was imposed upon profits. Monopolies, such as the dynamite monopoly, taxes, bad laws, sensible laws badly administered, as the Liquor law and the Native Pass law, all injured and irritated the Uitlander, wholly excluded from political power, having no voice in the management of the State. For the insults and injuries under which they smarted, the aliens in the Republic had largely blamed the Hollander and German advisers of the Government, foreigners like themselves; and when, in the spring of 1898, the Hollander State Secretary, Dr. Leyds, left for Europe, and was succeeded at the beginning of June by Reitz, the late President of the Orange Free State, the change was welcomed as an indication that Hollander influence was on the wane. The new appointment was very important and significant. The able man who had founded the Afrikaner Bond in the Cape Colony, and had afterwards presided over the sister Dutch Republic was chosen to be the principal adviser of the Transvaal Government. It was evidence that, while, so far as South Africa was British, the Transvaal stood for exclusiveness, so far as South Africa was

Dutch it stood for co-operation. All pointed to the growing power and solidity of the Dutch element in South Africa, to the increase of race antagonism, which Rhodes, in his earlier career, had done more than any man to obliterate, and by the one great mistake of his life, had done more than any man to revive. C II.

At the beginning of November 1898, Sir Alfred Milner left South Africa on a visit to England, and did not return till February 1899. In his absence his place as High Commissioner was filled in the ordinary course by the General commanding the troops. The General at this date was Sir William Butler, fine soldier and brilliant writer, to whose genius and 'great imaginative faculty' in the field of war Lord Wolseley, under whom he served, bore ample witness in *The Story of a Soldier's Life*.¹ Butler's Irish upbringing and sympathies seem, in spite of difference in religious creed, to have made him lean towards the Dutch nationalist point of view in South Africa. At any rate, he saw with different eyes to those of the High Commissioner for whom he was acting. While he was in charge there occurred one of those incidents which, though not very important in themselves, are, when viewed in the light of subsequent events, seen to have been the beginning of trouble, the outward sign of much below the surface. In a memorable telegram of the 4th of May, 1899, in which he summed up the position in South Africa at that date, Sir Alfred Milner wrote: 'The present crisis undoubtedly arises out of the Edgar incident. But that incident merely precipitated a struggle which was certain to come.'² Just after midnight on the 18th-19th December, 1898, a boilermaker at Johannesburg, an Englishman, Edgar by name, had a quarrel in the street, and knocked a man down. He went home, and shortly afterwards a Johannesburg policeman, acting without any warrant, forced his door open and shot him dead in the presence of his wife. As to whether

Sir
William
Butler.

The Edgar
case.

¹ 1903 ed., vol. ii, p. 202.

² C. 9345, June 1899, p. 210.

PART II. Edgar had or had not first struck the policeman there was conflicting evidence. The policeman, who ran away, was arrested and charged with murder. The public prosecutor released him on bail, the amount of which was quite inadequate to the gravity of the charge, and changed the count to that of culpable homicide. The State Attorney ordered the man to be rearrested, and eventually he was tried for culpable homicide on the 23rd of February and found Not Guilty, the presiding judge endorsing the verdict, and expressing a hope that the police under difficult circumstances would always know how to do their duty. From first to last there was a grave miscarriage of justice. The action of the public prosecutor in letting the policeman out on bail, and altering the murder charge, led to a public meeting of British subjects in the Market Square of Johannesburg on the 24th of December, and to presenting to the British vice-consul a petition to Queen Victoria in which, after noting the circumstances of the Edgar case, it was urged that the police at Johannesburg were appointed by the Government, not by the Municipality, that the petitioners had no voice in the government, that there was no longer any independent judiciary in the Republic to which they could appeal, that they were not allowed to arm themselves, and that their last resource was 'to fall back on our status as British subjects'.¹ The acting British Agent at Pretoria at the beginning of January, Conyngham Greene being absent at the time, refused to forward the petition, partly because the Transvaal Government were taking the matter up and had ordered the policeman to be rearrested, and partly because the petition had been prematurely published. His action was approved by Sir William Butler. The Transvaal Government on their side arrested, under a Public Meetings Act, the two leaders most responsible for the meeting of the 24th of December, who were the Vice-President and Secretary of the Transvaal

¹ C. 9345, p. 115.

branch of the South African League. This arrest led to a duly authorized indoor meeting of protest on the 14th of January, which was broken up by a gang of Boers; and the ultimate result was that at the end of March Sir Alfred Milner sent home a petition to Queen Victoria, purporting to be signed by 21,684 British subjects resident on the Witwatersrand.

CH. II.

The petition to the Queen of March 1899.

The Edgar incident was a case of an outrage on a white British subject, who was not a capitalist but a workman—a case not of unjust taxation but of life being taken without redress or the possibility of redress. The outrage appealed primarily to Englishmen, and to Englishmen of all classes. When Conyngham Greene visited Johannesburg a little later, about the end of March, a deputation of British working men from the Rand waited on him. 'The speakers instanced the killing of Edgar, a respectable man and well known to those present, as an example of the unwarrantable conduct of the police. . . . They stigmatized the verdict in the Edgar trial as a farce.'¹ British artisans were accustomed to law and order, to free expression of views at public meetings, to political rights. All were wanting in the Transvaal.

As an illustration of the treatment meted out to British subjects at Johannesburg, the Edgar petition referred to the prosecution of coloured British subjects by the police and their superiors. Following on previous cases of maltreatment, a night raid, accompanied by great brutality, had been made in October 1898 on men and women of this class, in which the prime mover was a Field-cornet of the name of Lombaard. Strong remonstrances were made to the Transvaal Government, but the outcome was much the same as in the Edgar case. Lombaard was suspended, an inquiry was held, the facts do not seem to have been seriously disputed, but he was reinstated.

Ill-treatment of coloured British subjects at Johannesburg.

The Edgar case had been taken up by the Transvaal branch

¹ C. 9345, p. 208.

PART II. of the South African League, who had also championed the maltreated 'Cape Boys', maintaining rightly or wrongly that, as regards the latter, colour prejudice was not alone to blame, but that 'the reason why Cape boys have been treated worse than raw Kaffirs is undoubtedly owing to their well-known and freely expressed loyalty to Her Majesty'.¹ This was no capitalist movement. On the contrary, the result of the proceedings of the League in the Edgar case was that the President, a mining engineer, lost his position with the principal mining company at Johannesburg, on the ground that it was not to the interests of the shareholders that the representatives of the Company should interfere in politics. The leaders of the League on the Rand, according to the testimony of the acting British Agent at Pretoria, were not capitalists, nor in the political service of capitalists, but professional men, 'fathers of families of the professional class, who desire to see the progress here which would hereafter render the Transvaal a fit field for the occupation of their sons'²—men, in short, who wished to find in the South African Republic not merely a field for making money but a permanent home for law-abiding citizens. 'The majority of the members of the League', said the Secretary in a statement of its aims and objects, 'are professional men in town, miners, workmen generally, storekeepers, and so on. . . . The majority of its members are men who are in a comparatively poor financial position, and who are active members of the League, because of their political principles. The financiers of the town, and the members of the old Reform Committee, have kept entirely aloof from the League since its inception.'³ The position on the Rand, in short, was shaping itself more and more clearly, not as a strife between an alien oligarchy of financiers and capitalists on the one hand and a Boer democracy on the other, but as an antagonism between men belonging to the

¹ C. 9345, p. 129.

³ Ibid., p. 128.

² Ibid., p. 136.

British middle and working classes on the one hand and a Boer oligarchy on the other.

But the capitalists, though as a rule holding aloof from politics, did not show themselves unmindful of the interests of the general body of Uitlanders. One of the greatest among many scandals in the South African Republic, supported by few among the burghers, except Kruger himself, was the dynamite monopoly. It was one of the greatest burdens upon the mining industry, the difference between the cost at which dynamite could be imported, exclusive of the Transvaal duty, and the cost which the mine-owners were compelled to pay under the monopoly, being estimated at £600,000 per annum. The original concession dated from 1887. In October 1893 the monopoly was nominally constituted a Government monopoly; but a concession to be sole agent for the Government was given for fifteen years to a partner of the first concessionaire, who was allowed to form a Company for the purpose, the South African Explosives Company. The terms on which the sole agency was granted were not complied with, but in the teeth of the Legislature, and notwithstanding the reports of Commissions, the Executive Government not only upheld the concession, but in December 1898 proposed an extension of the term for a further period of fifteen years. This abuse was specially dear to the President, who defended it on the loftiest grounds. Speaking at Heidelberg on the 17th of March, 1899, he somehow or other identified it with popular liberties. 'The Dynamite Factory was part of their independence. . . . The industry was as a newly born child, which could not be expected to get big all at once. A similar matter was their independence, which had only been established after years of strife.'¹ Other equally good but less interested judges did not share this public-spirited view. In January 1899 the circumstances of the case were summed up in a despatch

*The
Dynamite
Monopoly.*

¹ C. 9345, p. 194.

PART II. from Mr. Chamberlain, who was advised that the way in which the monopoly was worked made it a restraint of British trade in contravention of the 14th article of the London Convention; and in that same month the mine-owners offered to lend the Transvaal Government £600,000 in order to enable the Government to cancel the concession and appropriate the Company.

Negotiations between the capitalists and the Transvaal Government.

Arising out of this dynamite question negotiations were opened at the end of February, through the mediation of the original concessionaire, between representatives of the Transvaal Government, and the President of the Chamber of Mines at Johannesburg, who at the time was a Frenchman, with four other leading members of Mining Companies. Among other outstanding questions the negotiations included that of the franchise. On this question the capitalists spoke with no uncertain voice. They noted it as 'a vital point, upon which a permanent and favourable settlement must hinge',¹ and upon which the whole body of Uitlanders must be consulted. They submitted the proposals which were made on behalf of the Government to other leaders of the Uitlander body, and the latter drew up a memorandum which showed that the Government proposals were wholly inadequate, and suggested a return to the conditions which had prevailed before 1890, under which full citizenship could be obtained after five years' residence in the Republic. 'It is at least worthy of notice', wrote the High Commissioner, 'that at the outset, and in face of an offer which from the purely commercial and money-making point of view was very tempting, a heterogeneous body of Uitlanders have taken their stand on the necessity of genuine political reforms.'² The negotiations broke off, but there followed meetings of working-men along the Rand, which approved the stand that had been taken by men, some of whom were not

¹ C. 9345, p. 216.

² C. 9345, p. 183.

British, and all of whom were primarily concerned not with politics, but with making money.

CH. II.
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A counter-petition to that to Queen Victoria was drawn up and signed, purporting to be the expression of views of many thousands of aliens in the South African Republic, who had confidence in the existing Government; but its bona fides was much discredited. President Kruger claimed that the signatories were more numerous than those to the petition to the Queen. If this was so, and the signatures were genuine, he had no reason, as the High Commissioner pointed out, to fear the result of extending the franchise. The British petition had summed up the Uitlanders' wrongs, and begged Queen Victoria to extend her protection to her loyal subjects resident in the Transvaal, to cause an inquiry to be made into their grievances, and to take measures to secure reform and recognition of their rights as British subjects. The strain was constantly growing greater, and in anticipation of an early reply to the petition from the Imperial Government the High Commissioner on the 4th of May telegraphed in full his views of the situation, 'We have to deal', he said, 'with a popular movement of a similar kind to that of 1894 and 1895, before it was perverted and ruined by a conspiracy of which the great body of the Uitlanders were totally innocent. None of the grievances then complained of, and which then excited universal sympathy, have been remedied, and others have been added.' He argued that the position of the Uitlanders had been made infinitely worse by the lowering of the status of the Supreme Court, and gave the plain conclusion that, 'The political turmoil in the Transvaal Republic will never end till the permanent Uitlander population is admitted to a share in the government, and while that turmoil lasts there will be no tranquillity or adequate progress in Her Majesty's South African dominions.' For the Transvaal question was not a purely local one, but of vital interest to the British Government. 'The spectacle of thousands of British sub-

*Sir A.
Milner's
telegram of
4th May,
1899.*

PART II. —♦— jects, kept permanently in the position of Helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances, and calling vainly to Her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within the Queen's dominions.' 'Ineffectual nagging', as each succeeding grievance came up, might lead to war, but not to real improvement. The case for intervention was overwhelming, and the best proof of the power and the justice of the British Government 'would be to obtain for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal a fair share in the government of the country which owes everything to their exertions'.

In this great pronouncement, broad and far-seeing in a rare degree, one passage specially stands out. 'The relations between the British colonies and the two Republics are intimate to a degree which one must live in South Africa in order fully to realize. Socially, economically, ethnologically, they are all one country, the two principal white races are everywhere inextricably mixed up; it is absurd for either to dream of permanently subjugating the other. The only condition on which they can live in harmony and the country progress, is equality all round. South Africa can prosper under two, three, or six Governments, but not under two absolutely conflicting social and political systems, perfect equality of Dutch and British in the British colonies, side by side with permanent subjection of British to Dutch in one of the Republics. It is idle to talk of peace and unity under such a state of affairs.'¹ That South Africa is one country, where, though in one district or another Dutch or English predominate, the two white races are 'inextricably mixed up' to a greater degree, for instance, than French and English in Canada; that it is idle for either of the white races to dream of permanently subjugating the other, has after much tribulation been recognized. But, though it was true that the root

¹ C. 9345, pp. 209-12.

of the evil in South Africa was not so much multiplication of governments as conflicting social and political systems, yet the conflict of systems could not have grown up had the Government remained one, and that it had not remained one was due to British impolicy in the past. The long disastrous war which was drawing near, when these memorable words were written, was the direct outcome of division which should never have arisen, and at the stage to which race bitterness had come, it was the one and only method of restoring unity on the basis of equality all round.

The effect of the Raid, in the words of Sir Alfred Milner's telegram, had been 'to give the policy of leaving things alone a new lease of life, and with the old consequences'. This policy of leaving things alone, whereby grievances were not reduced but multiplied and magnified, had, as the telegram abundantly showed, the result among the Dutch population of South Africa outside the Transvaal of making the sense of race sympathy, which had been intensified by the Raid, grow into a sense of race power and a dream of race domination. The Dutchmen in the Cape Colony were, under the British flag, as free as any citizens in the wide world could be, and as against foreign nations outside South Africa they stood for the British flag. It was Hofmeyr who, at the first Colonial Conference in 1886, had made a motion in favour of closer union between the various parts of the Empire by means of an Imperial tariff of customs, the proceeds of which should be devoted to the general defence of the Empire. The Cape House of Assembly with its Bond majority had in the last few months voted without debate a contribution to the Royal Navy. But, side by side with what may be called external loyalty, inside South Africa the call of the race grew louder and louder. In South Africa the modern Mecca of the race was a Republic; and the traditional enemy and fancied oppressor of that Republic was England. The Dutch citizens of the Cape Colony knew

*The Dutch
feeling in
Cape
Colony*

PART II. that the English demand was that Englishmen in the Transvaal should be treated as Dutchmen were in the Cape Colony. They must have recognized and realized the justice of the contention, but they saw also that, if the claim was conceded, the Transvaal would be more British than Dutch, they had in their minds that the British had lately attempted to rush the Transvaal and had badly failed, and that the interests of Dutch nationality in South Africa demanded preferential treatment for the Dutch in the Transvaal.

It may be surmised that, so far as their views had crystallized, British citizens of Dutch descent in South Africa were willing and glad that England should keep the ring in South Africa, but were entirely averse to England coming into the ring herself, and that it more and more entered into their outlook that the equality of Dutchmen in a self-governing colony of Great Britain might profitably ally itself with the dominance of Dutchmen in the neighbouring Republic, so that, without raising any awkward question of the flag, the future of South Africa should primarily be for the Dutch race. Many went further: the first Congress of the Afrikaner Bond, before Hofmeyr took it in hand, pronounced 'The Bond means that the aim of our national development must be a United South Africa under its own flag', and Sir A. Milner noted in his telegram that, at the time when he telegraphed, 'a certain section of the Press, not in the Transvaal only, preaches openly and constantly the doctrine of a Republic embracing all South Africa, and supports it by menacing references to the armaments of the Transvaal, its alliance with the Orange Free State, and the active sympathy which in case of war it would receive from a section of Her Majesty's subjects.'

These views were toned down by wiser minds, but the strong race feeling remained, and it was the pronounced success of Dutch dominance in the South African Republic in its bald and aggressive injustice as contrasted with the

apparently very inadequate result of British justice and equality under which Dutchmen could secure a majority and say and think what they pleased, which made the position in 1899 so full of danger, and a continuance of the conditions no other than the road to ruin.

But it had become plain that the High Commissioner had made up his mind that the conditions should not continue, that British intervention was becoming not merely possible but probable, and that such intervention might well mean war. In any community the thinking men who desire war are very few. There were, and must have been, many sober-minded South African Dutchmen who reprobated the Kruger system, who recognized in principle the justice of the British case, and to whom, whatever their vague dreams of the future might have been, the prospect of a war in which their British citizenship would be arrayed against their Dutch sympathies, must have been wholly abhorrent. There must have been many again who, from the Dutch point of view alone, considered war to be inexpedient and fraught with possible disaster, who were not carried away with the idea that the Transvaal was invincible. All sorts of loyalty and disloyalty, right-mindedness and expediency combined to make at any rate the leaders of Dutch opinion in the Cape Colony, and to some extent also in the Orange Free State, anxious to find a compromise whereby the strain might be relieved and war prevented; and ever and again the Dutch love of a bargain and a profitable deal came to the front, as the troubled weeks went on.

Five days after the date of the High Commissioner's telegram—that telegram, it will be remembered, not having been yet given to the world—Hofmeyr suggested to Sir Alfred Milner that he should meet President Kruger on neutral ground at Bloemfontein. On the next day Schreiner, the Premier of the Cape, who, it would seem, had been in communication with President Steyn, brought a cautious invitation

*Hofmeyr
Proposes
meeting of
Milner and
Kruger.*

PART II. from the latter for such a meeting, and urged its acceptance.

—♦— The basis on which the meeting should take place was all-important, and the instructions of the Home Government were that it might be held in the hope of arriving 'at such an arrangement as Her Majesty's Government could accept, and recommend to the Uitlander population as a reasonable concession to their just demands, and a settlement of the difficulties which have threatened the good relations which Her Majesty's Government desire should constantly exist, between themselves and the government of the South African Republic'.¹ President Kruger in guarded terms agreed to the meeting 'provided that the independence of this Republic is not impugned'.² Milner and Chamberlain were agreed that in the forefront should be placed the question of the franchise for the Uitlanders, the grant to them at once of some substantial degree of representation: that in default of this concession full municipal rights for the Rand should be urged as an alternative. With this programme the High Commissioner left for Bloemfontein in the last days of May.

The Bloemfontein Conference.

The historic conference at Bloemfontein lasted from the 31st of May to the 5th of June. A substantial Blue Book records the details of the proceedings²: its outcome was negative in tangible results, for no settlement was arrived at; yet the meeting was one of supreme importance. It brought into sharp contrast the irreconcilable views—the broad view and the narrow view. The High Commissioner pressed for justice for the Uitlanders, because their case was just, because the interests of the South African Republic would be served by doing them justice, because thereby ill-feeling between the Boer and English Governments and peoples would be eradicated. He was not going to buy a settlement; he took the case on its merits, went to the root of the evil, and on grounds alike of expediency and of justice, urged that it should be once for all removed. It was the broad view, the

¹ C. 9345, pp. 240-1.

² C. 9404, July 1899.

view of the coming time. He pleaded in effect for peace and goodwill which could never be the fruit of injustice. As he told President Kruger in plain and simple words, he had come 'at a time of crisis in order to see if one big straightforward effort might not be made to avert a great disaster, such as an open breach between the Governments'.¹ On the other side was the grim tenacious Dutchman, to whom England was and had been from his boyhood the arch-enemy, to be fought with or to be outwitted, but always to be held at arm's length; who would not remedy injustice unless he was handsomely paid to do so, whose outlook on the future was one not of fusion of race but of extension of Dutch exclusiveness. To give as little as possible for as much as possible had been his inherited creed. Equality meant nothing to him except as between Dutchmen, and doggedly he took for his text the independence of the Republic, however much he was assured that there were no designs against that independence. Milner's proposal was that the full franchise should be given to all foreigners of good character and adequate means, who had been resident for five years in the Republic, declared their intention to reside permanently and took an oath to obey the law, undertake the obligations of citizenship, and defend the independence of the country: and that a substantial number of new constituencies should be created. As has already been told, before 1890 an alien could obtain the franchise in the South African Republic after five years. By a law of 1890, followed by later laws, the term had been extended to fourteen years; and various conditions had been attached which made it impossible as a matter of right ever to obtain full citizenship. The recent Franchise Memorandum supplied to the capitalists and handed by them to the Transvaal Government had suggested a return to the five years' term, and the cancelling of the legislation on the subject from 1890 onwards. Five years' residence was and is the con-

¹ C. 9404, p. 37.

PART II. dition of naturalization in the United Kingdom. For that term the High Commissioner contended. The President, as the discussion went on, noted that the enfranchised burghers numbered about 30,000, and that the new-comers might well be from 60,000 to 70,000 and swamp the Dutch citizens; but Milner asked only that the majority should have minority representation; he asked only for 'such a substantial measure, that in elections of members of the Volksraad the desires of the new industrial population should have reasonable consideration'.¹ Held to the point, the old Boer produced a Reform Bill of his own, a complicated measure, under which new-comers might be naturalized after two years' residence, and obtain the full franchise five years afterwards, while those who had resided in the Republic before 1890 might be naturalized in six months from the passing of the law, and obtain the full franchise in two years after naturalization, the form of oath, which had been one of the grievances, being at the same time assimilated to the oath which was taken in the Orange Free State. If this scheme was bona fide, it was an improvement on existing conditions; a seven years' residence, as a condition of citizenship, was in ordinary cases substituted for fourteen. But the fourteen years had been made absolutely meaningless by the conditions which had been attached, and there was danger that the same course might again be followed. Moreover, there was a wider gulf fixed between Kruger's and Milner's proposals than was represented by the mere difference between five and seven years. Milner was intent upon immediate admission to citizenship of residents who had already lived five years continuously in the Republic. Kruger was not prepared to give citizenship even to those who had been residents before 1890 until two and a half years had elapsed from the date when the new law should be passed. Further, what was vital in Milner's scheme was admission to full burghership on taking

¹ C. 9404, p. 19.

the oath of a citizen, so that a man could pass at once from one citizenship to another. The essence of Kruger's scheme was an interval during which a man would be a citizen of the Republic, but a *civis sine suffragio*. Under it a large body of men would have ceased to be British citizens without thereby obtaining the privileges of citizenship of the Republic. There would have been a period of probation, during which the condition of the *civis sine suffragio* would have been more helpless than that of the alien. The complement of Kruger's suffrage scheme was to give five members to the gold-fields instead of two, a proposal which was ridiculously inadequate. In short no immediate, substantial, and bona fide amendment of the status of the aliens would have resulted under Kruger's Bill, and Sir Alfred Milner would not accept it. To the alternative plan of giving local government to the Rand, the President was even more opposed than to extension of the franchise, and that proposal was not pressed. Two strong men had met, and for once the Englishman was not to be squeezed. They parted with all courtesy, but the parting scene was very characteristic. The President, as will be seen, had been very insistent on the subject of arbitration, and in taking leave he said that he should recommend his franchise proposal to the Volksraad and should then expect the High Commissioner to recommend arbitration to the British Government. He was game to the end in trying to do a deal, and at the end, as at the beginning, the British representative declined to lend himself to any bargain of the kind.

As has already been emphasized, the Transvaal Govern-

*Suzerainty
and Arbitration.*

PART II. Raid, had not been ready to barter away its rights. Great Britain was singularly fortunate in that the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time, a man of rare strength of will and trained in commercial life to know what bargaining meant, was the last man in the world to surrender any rightful British claim. Still, the Boers strained at the restrictions which held them in, and at this point and that enlarged their contentions. Especially they repudiated the existence of British suzerainty over the South African Republic, and they pressed for foreign arbitration on the points at issue between the two Governments, in either respect emphasizing the independence of their State.

The word suzerainty had been used in the Preamble of the Pretoria Convention, which accorded to the people of the Transvaal 'complete self-government subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty'. It did not appear in the London Convention, and the Boers contended that, the word being omitted, the thing had disappeared. Their contention was never admitted by the British Government, who argued that the articles of the London Convention had been substituted for the articles of the Pretoria Convention, but that from the original Preamble, which had not been repeated in the later document, was derived at once the independence of the Republic and the condition on which that independence was granted. As far as the particular term was concerned, the question, as Sir Alfred Milner wrote, was 'of etymological rather than of political interest'.¹ Its real importance lay in the extent to which Dutch repudiation of British right to interference might be carried; and the culminating point was reached when, on the 9th of May, 1899, precisely at the date when the Bloemfontein negotiations were being set on foot, Reitz wrote on behalf of the Transvaal Government that 'the now existing right of absolute self-government of this Republic is not derived from either the

¹ C. 9507, August 1899, p. 6.

Convention of 1881 or that of 1884, but simply and solely follows from the inherent right of this Republic as a sovereign international state'. To this uncompromising pronouncement Mr. Chamberlain replied in the following July that, in the opinion of the British Government, the contention was 'not warranted either by law or history, and is wholly inadmissible',¹ and that view was upheld to the end.

The London Convention, whether it kept alive suzerainty or not, contained in the fourth section, which provided that the foreign treaties of the Republic should be subject to British approval, a very definite restraint upon the foreign relations of the Transvaal, and among the various points which called for periodical remonstrance from Great Britain were alleged contraventions of this article. As has been seen,² it was Mr. Chamberlain's refusal to consider the withdrawal or modification of this article which put an end to the proposal that President Kruger should come to England for personal discussion after the Raid. In May 1897 the Boer Government proposed that the subjects of dispute between the two Governments should be submitted to neutral arbitration, the arbitrator to be named by the President of the Swiss Republic. This Mr. Chamberlain entirely declined. He would have no arbitration by a foreign state or any nominee of a foreign state. At the Bloemfontein Conference Kruger still pressed the matter, and tried to construe words used by Milner in the course of discussion into some kind of acquiescence. Milner's contention throughout had been that the most urgent need of all was prompt and substantial extension of the franchise. Without a settlement of this main issue, first and foremost, there could be no peace; if it was settled, a solution of other outstanding questions would be rendered far easier. Arbitration he was not authorized to discuss, but he gave as his personal view that, if the franchise question was first settled on a satisfactory basis, and provided that all

¹ C. 95:7, pp 32-3.

² Above, p. 41.

PART II. idea of foreign arbitration was abandoned as inadmissible, means might be found of settling points of difference which arose from time to time by reference to some kind of Arbitration Court. The President clearly appreciated the point that foreign arbitration would not be admitted, for towards the end of the conference, in the final memorandum which he handed to the High Commissioner, he referred to 'arbitration by other than Foreign Powers, on all points of future difference under the Convention'.¹ This was on the 5th of June. Four days later, immediately after he had returned to Pretoria, the demand for foreign arbitration was again put forward in a modified form, for on the 9th of June Reitz, the State Secretary, asked once more on behalf of his Government for 'arbitration on differences arising out of the varying interpretations, approved by the parties, of the terms of the London Convention',² and proposed an arbitration tribunal to which either Government should nominate an arbitrator, the Chief Justices of the Transvaal and Natal being suggested, while the two arbitrators should agree on a third person as President, who should not be the subject of either party. In sending home this proposal, Milner at once advised its rejection, and the British Government refused to comply with it as it stood, but coupled the refusal with the friendly assurance, 'If the President is prepared to agree to the exclusion of any foreign element in the settlement of such disputes, Her Majesty's Government would be willing to consider how far and by what method such questions of interpretation as have been above alluded to could be decided by some judicial authority, whose independence, impartiality, and capacity would be beyond and above all suspicion.'³ The despatch in which this decision was conveyed was dated the 27th of July. In little more than two months from this date the South African War began.

¹ C. 9404, July 1899, p. 59.

² C. 9518, August 1899, p. 3.

³ C. 9518, p. 11.

When Sir Alfred Milner telegraphed to the Secretary of State on the 10th of May, acquainting him of the intended Bloemfontein Conference, Mr. Chamberlain had already written a despatch, which bore the same date, answering the Uitlanders' petition. The Conference being arranged, the despatch was not communicated either to the Uitlanders or to the Government of the South African Republic until the meeting was over, though in the meantime the petitioners received a sympathetic assurance that their memorial was not being overlooked. The meeting being over, the despatch was made public in the course of June. Since the despatch of the 4th February, 1896, to which reference has already been made,¹ and which was written as soon as the more pressing questions raised by the Jameson Raid had been disposed of, no general review of the situation in the Transvaal had been formally made by the British Government, which, as Mr. Chamberlain now said, had refrained 'from any pressure on the Government of the South African Republic, except in cases in which there has been a distinct breach of the provisions of the Convention of 1884'. He now summed up the circumstances of the case fully and plainly, but in friendly and temperate terms. After recapitulation and analysis of the grievances which formed the basis of the Uitlanders' petition, he stated his conclusion that there were substantial grounds for the complaints, and that 'under present conditions, all of which have arisen since the Convention of 1884 was signed, the Uitlanders are now denied that equality of treatment, which that instrument was designed to secure for them'. He pointed out that the Queen's Government had been slow to move, owing to anxiety 'to extend every consideration to a weaker state, which in recent years has had just cause to complain of the action of British subjects'; but, in view of the position of Great Britain as the paramount power in South Africa and her duty to protect all British

CH. II.

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*Mr. Chamberlain's
 despatch of
 10th May.*

¹ Above, p. 39.

PART II. subjects living in foreign lands, the Government could not
 —♦— 'permanently ignore the exceptional and arbitrary treatment to which their fellow countrymen and others are exposed, and the absolute indifference of the Government of the Republic to the friendly representations which have been made to them on the subject'. The despatch concluded with the suggestion that the High Commissioner should meet the President at Pretoria for friendly discussion—a suggestion which, with the exception that the place of meeting was changed, was anticipated by the Bloemfontein Conference.¹ The British Government was now fully committed to obtaining redress for the Uitlanders.

*June and
July 1899.*

The High Commissioner and the President had met at Bloemfontein, as it proved, for the last time. President Kruger went back to Pretoria to be received with addresses, the keynote of which was preservation of the independence of the country, and to place before his legislature the franchise proposals which Sir Alfred Milner had refused to accept. The latter went back to Capetown, honoured in the eyes of the British population throughout South Africa, in that he had stood for an irreducible minimum of justice and would accept no less. There were meetings and counter-meetings, addresses on the one side and on the other. On the 10th of June the Uitlanders at Johannesburg held a meeting to endorse the stand which Milner had taken and to condemn the President's proposals as entirely inadequate. A feature of the meeting was a strong letter on the Uitlanders' side from a Dutch Afrikaner, the leading advocate at the Pretoria Bar, while one of the principal speakers was an American engineer. It was resolved to appoint delegates to confer with delegates from other representative meetings, and constitute a body representing Uitlander interests, the outcome of which was a short-lived Uitlander Council. Grateful reference too was made to the public expressions of

¹ C. 9345, June 1899, pp. 226-31.

sympathy which had been received from many communities in various parts of the British Empire and elsewhere. About a week later the Secretary of the Transvaal branch of the South African League wrote to the High Commissioner to emphasize the fact that there were many other grievances which called for redress in addition to the all-important matter of the franchise. Irritation at Johannesburg against the Boer Government had been increased by an incident which had occurred in the middle of May. The Boer Government suddenly trumpeted abroad that they had unearthed a new conspiracy in the town against the State, and proceeded to make various arrests, the whole matter subsequently turning out to be a pure fiction concocted by the Boer commissioner of police and his agent. How strong were the apprehensions of the future felt by substantial men on the Rand was shown by the fact that at the beginning of July the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce convened a meeting of merchants, which expressed approval of Milner's efforts to secure a peaceful settlement, and appointed a deputation to obtain an assurance from the Government of the Republic, that in the event of war the peaceful residents at Johannesburg might rely on the Geneva Convention, and that the forts which had been built to command the town should not be used to bombard it. They received a reply that the forts were built for the protection of peaceful inhabitants of the city and that the Government would not attack save in self-defence.

From the date when the Bloemfontein Conference ended the position was constantly more strained and more dangerous, and the leaders of the Dutch party in the Cape Colony knew it. They were at pains to try to keep the peace, to bring pressure to bear on the High Commissioner, and on the other hand, if possible, to induce the President to better his terms. An active intermediary too, though strong in sympathy with the Transvaal cause, was the Orange Free Stater, Mr. Abraham Fischer, who at the Conference had acted as interpreter between

PART II. the two protagonists, and after the Conference was in evidence both at Capetown and at Pretoria. Schreiner, the Premier of the Cape, within a few days of Milner's return from Bloemfontein, asked the latter to inform Mr. Chamberlain that he and his colleagues considered Kruger's reform proposals to be practical, reasonable, and a step in the right direction. A day or two later he and his ministers admitted that the proposals might be improved, but maintained that no state of things had so far arisen which would justify interference in the local affairs of the Transvaal. On the last day of June the leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape Colony, including Hofmeyr, wrote to the High Commissioner to plead for peace, noting the growing tension between the two white races. The next day Hofmeyr and Herrholdt, the Minister for Agriculture, set out for Bloemfontein and Pretoria to try and influence President Kruger. On the 12th of July the Capetown branch of the Afrikaner Bond, Hofmeyr's special organization, memorialized in favour of a compromise on the franchise question, and of submitting to arbitration such issues as arose out of the London Convention. On the other side a great public meeting was held at Capetown on the 28th of June to support the policy and strengthen the hands of the High Commissioner, and throughout South Africa, during these two months, meetings were held by men of British blood, protesting the justice of the Uitlander cause, and standing by the Queen's representative, who upheld it. Nor was the sympathy confined to unofficial bodies or to South Africa. In the latter part of July both houses of the Natal Legislature passed unanimous resolutions in support of the British policy, and at the very end of the month the two Houses of the Dominion of Canada took up the same tale, sympathetic with British subjects in the Transvaal who were refused such liberties as are a commonplace to white men living under the British flag. Not a few of the Uitlanders were Australians, and Australian sympathy and interest grew warm, the colony of Queensland

in the middle of July offering a contingent in the event of war. CH. II.

Though the Bloemfontein Conference had been inconclusive, the British Government and the High Commissioner were well content not to force the pace. They waited to see what action might be taken by the Transvaal Government; they let it be known that no franchise reform would be accepted which did not give substantial and immediate representation to the Uitlanders; and they gave time to the friends of the Transvaal in South Africa to induce the stubborn President to make concessions and end the strain. While the new Franchise Bill was in the balance, they urged that its provisions should be communicated to the British Government before they were passed into law, in order that that Government might have an opportunity of judging how far they might be accepted as a final settlement.

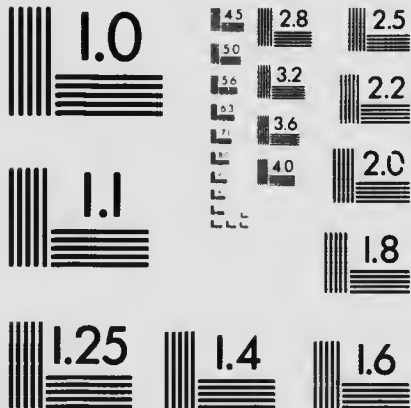
The attitude was a consistently friendly attitude; the object was to find a solution which would give contentment and peace, and the Transvaal Government had once more two alternatives presented to them: they had the option of treating Great Britain with friendly confidence, or on the other hand of holding her at arm's length. For the latter course they had the justification, such as it was, that the franchise question could plausibly be treated as a matter of internal concern, in regard to which Great Britain had no right of interference. In favour of the friendly course was the fact that at Bloemfontein the High Commissioner had once for all laid the cards on the table and stated in the plainest of plain English that the Government which he represented was concerned not to undermine but to strengthen the independence of the South African Republic. It was of no avail. The Boer Government was resolved to deal with England not as a friend but as a foe. Kruger brought the franchise question before the Volksraad immediately after his return from Bloemfontein. A draft law was laid before the Legislature, and provisionally accepted; but the temper of the Volksraad was shown in a proposal to

The Franchise law of July.



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PART II. meet the redistribution question by multiplying members all round, with the result of making the Dutch representation more preponderant than ever. The Volksraad was adjourned from the 15th of June to the 3rd of July in order to gather the views of the burghers at large, President Kruger before adjournment making the characteristic pronouncement that 'those foreigners who made a noise about anything should get nothing'.¹ On the 15th of June an enthusiastic meeting of sympathizers with the Government was held at Johannesburg, and on the 17th a great gathering, of which it is right to say the President disapproved, was held at Paardekraal. The speakers at this meeting included Joubert and Cronje, and the tone of the speeches was bellicose and anti-English. The Legislature resumed its sitting, Hofmeyr's visit to Pretoria, it will be remembered, taking place in these same early days of July, and by the 20th of July the Franchise Bill was passed, no opportunity having been previously given to the British Government to make suggestions as to its provisions. It was a distinct improvement upon the Bloemfontein proposals. The seven years were made retrospective, and the mining industry was given six members, including the constituency of Barberton. At first sight it seemed, especially at a distance in England, as though concessions had been made wide enough to bring settlement within easy reach. But the more the law was looked at, the less it seemed to satisfy the fundamental condition of giving to the Uitlanders immediate and substantial representation. It was not a simple piece of legislation, but complicated with requirements which demanded careful scrutiny. The Uitlanders, in a public meeting at Johannesburg held on the 26th of July, condemned it; and, writing on the same day to the Secretary of State, Milner pronounced that 'the Bill, as it stands, leaves it practically in the hands of the South African Republic to enfranchise or not enfranchise the Uitlanders, as it chooses'.²

¹ C. 9415, July 1899, p. 39.

² C. 9518, August 1899, p. 51.

In any case it had not conceded the irreducible minimum of five years, and the proportion of seats to be allotted to the gold-mining community was very small. Once more then, in a despatch of the 27th of July, a summary of which was telegraphed to Sir Alfred Milner, Mr. Chamberlain argued the wearisome case, and once more pleaded very patiently and earnestly for a final settlement, pointing out that 'this deplorable irritation between kindred people, whose common interests and neighbourhood would naturally make them friends, is due primarily to the fact that in the South African Republic alone of all the states of South Africa the Government has deliberately placed one of the two white races in a position of political inferiority to the other, and has adopted a policy of isolation in its internal concerns, which has been admitted by the present Prime Minister of the Cape Colony to be a source of danger to South Africa at large'.¹ He quoted the words in which, when the Convention of Pretoria was being negotiated, Kruger had given assurance that the two white races in the Transvaal would be in the future, as they had been in the past, on an equal footing in regard to burgher rights. He admitted that the new law was an advance upon the old proposals, but expressed a hope that the conditions which cumbered the grant of the franchise, the requirements as to registration and so forth, which might be used to take away with one hand what had been granted with the other, might be modified; that the seven years' limit might be lowered, as being higher than obtained elsewhere; and that the number of constituencies for the prospective new voters might be increased. He suggested that, as many points in the new law involved 'complicated details and questions of a technical nature', those points should be examined by delegates appointed on either side, who should report the results of their consultations, and make any suggestions arising out of them, to the Transvaal Government and the

CH. II.

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*Mr. Chamberlain's
despatch of
27th July.*

¹ C. 9518, pp. 7-12.

PART II. High Commissioner respectively, and that subsequently the President and the High Commissioner should meet again, and by personal conference endeavour to come to an agreement as to the action to be taken. In this same despatch was contained the assurance of willingness on the part of the British Government to meet as far as possible, consistently with the exclusion of foreign interference, the President's wish for arbitration.¹ The despatch was followed on the 31st of July by a telegram definitely authorizing Sir Alfred Milner to invite President Kruger to consent to the proposed joint inquiry, but before the despatch itself reached the hands of the Transvaal Government, the negotiations had taken a wholly different turn.

*August
1899. New
proposals by
the Trans-
vaal
Govern-
ment.*

August, then, opened with an invitation to the Transvaal Government to appoint delegates to discuss with delegates appointed by the High Commissioner, whether the Uitlanders would be given immediate and substantial representation by the new law, and if not, what alterations or additions might be required to secure that result. An interval of a fortnight followed, after which wholly new proposals emanated from the Boer side. In the first instance, the State Attorney negotiated with the British Agent at Pretoria, and then followed on the 19th of August a formal note from the Transvaal Government, supplemented by a second note on the 21st. The substance of the proposals was that, in lieu of the proposed joint inquiry, the five years' retrospective franchise should be conceded, if the general body of burghers should agree, and that eight new seats should be given to the Rand, making ten in all for the mining industry out of a total of thirty-six, an assurance being added that the representation of the gold-fields should at no time fall below one-fourth of the total number of members. It was intimated that the Transvaal Government would always be prepared to consider any friendly suggestions as to the details of the new law,

¹ See above, p. 72.

which should be made through the British Agent. In return for these concessions the British Government was to abstain in future from further interference in the internal concerns of the South African Republic ; it was not to insist any longer upon asserting the existence of British suzerainty over the Republic ; and it was to agree to arbitration, with the elimination of any foreign element other than the Orange Free State.

This offer, assuming that it were not nullified by attaching impossible conditions to the grant of the franchise, met the requirement that the Uitlanders should be given immediate and substantial representation. But there had been so many and such rapid changes in the Boer programme that each new phase found the other side more inclined to close scrutiny ; and in the present case what the State Secretary offered on behalf of the Transvaal Government fell somewhat short of the terms which the State Attorney had previously indicated ; while the second note of the State Secretary modified the first, converting, in the British Agent's words, proposals which had been of the nature of a friendly rapprochement into a Kaffir bargain. Writing on the 23rd of August, the High Commissioner said that he was entirely in the dark, and that the Home Government must be equally in the dark, as to the exact nature of the terms which were to be accepted at the price of expressly renouncing the right of interference in future in the internal affairs of the Republic, including the question of the political rights of the Uitlanders. He counselled careful examination of the new proposals ; and he urged that all outstanding questions should be settled at the same time. ' Nothing could be more deplorable than that, after the terrible strain of the last few months, a number of unsettled issues should remain between us and the Government of the South African Republic, and the diplomatic relations between us be liable to slip back into their old unsatisfactory condition.'¹ A similar view was taken by the

¹ C. 9521, September 1899, pp. 60-4.

PART II. Home Government, and on the 28th of August Mr. Chamberlain telegraphed the decision at which the British Ministers had arrived. Two days previously, at his home at Birmingham, he had used very plain language, afterwards much criticized by his political opponents, as to the evil which was being wrought by the long delay. 'The issues of peace and war are in the hands of President Kruger and his admirers.' 'The sands are running down in the glass.' The position was indeed becoming intolerable. How disastrous was prolongation of the crisis no one knew better than the High Commissioner, upon whom more than any man the burden fell; and on the last day of August he sent a telegram to the Secretary of State emphasizing the greatness of the tension, the extent of the distress.

Mr. Chamberlain's telegram of 28th August.

Mr. Chamberlain's telegram of the 28th of August¹ was described as, and was intended to be, a qualified acceptance of the Boer offer. Construing that offer in a friendly spirit, he assumed that the intention of the Republican Government was to grant to the Uitlanders immediate and substantial representation, and that conditions would not be attached which would impair the effect of the grant. On this assumption he stated that he did not appreciate the objection which had been taken to the proposed joint inquiry. Notwithstanding, he expressed the readiness of the British Government to accept as an alternative, that their Agent in the Transvaal, assisted by such other persons as the High Commissioner might appoint, should examine the details of the Bill when drafted; and pending such examination, and any suggestions that might be made as to the provisions of the Bill, he asked that it should not be laid before the Volksraad. Seeing that in previous measures the grant of the franchise had been complicated by attendant conditions, he pointed out that examination of the Bill would be made easier and shorter if all such conditions, touching registration, qualification, and

¹ C. 9521, pp. 49, 50.

behaviour, were now left out. As to the counter-demands of the Boers, he took the line that it was to be hoped that, with the settlement of the franchise question, the necessity for British intervention would disappear, but that Great Britain could not abandon the position which she held under the London Convention, nor debar herself from the ordinary right to protect her own subjects, which was common to all civilized peoples. On the suzerainty question he stood firm; while, in the matter of arbitration, he agreed that the form and scope of a tribunal of arbitration, from which foreigners and foreign influence should be excluded, might suitably be discussed, and suggested that the discussion should take place between the President and the High Commissioner at Capetown. Finally, he reminded the Transvaal Government that there were various outstanding matters to be settled, which would not be suitable for arbitration, but which might also be discussed between President Kruger and Sir Alfred Milner.

The telegram was communicated to the Boer Government, who lost no time in withdrawing their offer. On the 2nd of September Mr. Reitz wrote that, as the proposal of the Transvaal Government had not been accepted, it must be held to have lapsed. He controverted the statements made on the British side, and left the position as it was before the August negotiations had taken place. This brought a telegram from the Secretary of State under date of the 8th of September in very clear and measured terms. The Queen's Government were unable to accept any proposal which was made conditional upon recognizing the status of the South African Republic as a sovereign international state, for that contention had always been repudiated by Great Britain. They were still prepared to accept the five years' proposals which the Transvaal Government had made in August, on their merits and without the conditions attached to them, provided that inquiry, whether joint or unilateral, showed

*The Boers
withdraw
their offer.*

*Mr. Cham-
berlain's
telegram of
8th. Septem-
ber.*

PART II. 'that the new scheme of representation will not be encumbered
 ——— by conditions which will nullify the intention to give substantial and immediate representation to the Uitlanders'. The new members, it was assumed, would be permitted to use their own language in the Legislature. If the Transvaal Government agreed to a settlement on these terms, further intervention by Great Britain in order to secure redress of grievances would probably be rendered unnecessary, and the British Government would be ready to make immediate arrangements for another conference between the President and the High Commissioner, in order to discuss the details of the proposed Court of Arbitration and other matters. The telegram laid stress upon the danger of letting the existing crisis continue, and pressed for an immediate and definite reply. Should the reply be negative or inconclusive, the British Government reserved the right to reconsider the situation *de novo*, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement.¹ The telegram was concluded in entirely friendly terms; it expressed anxious hope that the Boer Government would accept the suggestions which it embodied, but it was at the same time very firm and serious in tone—an intimation that the sands in the glass had nearly run out. It was, in effect, the last plain overture for peace. The overture was not accepted. On the 15th of September there came an unsatisfactory reply which, among other points, strongly opposed the suggested use of English in the Volksraad by English-speaking members, although, when in August the State Attorney had discussed the situation with the British Agent, it had been understood that that concession would be readily made. On the 22nd of September, therefore, Mr. Chamberlain telegraphed that the situation must now be considered afresh, and that the results of such consideration would be communicated in a later despatch.

The offer made in the telegram not accepted by the Boers.

This can be taken as concluding the negotiations which

¹ C. 9521, pp. 64-5.

preceded and did not stave off the South African War. The promised further despatch was never sent, for the Boer ultimatum cut the knot, and words gave way to actions. The correspondence on the British side has been cited at some length, because party feeling in England seized on every point which gave an opening for criticism, and construed words and phrases with the bitterness which is the perquisite of political opponents or candid friends. War could no doubt have been avoided by the British Government had they refused to take up the Uitlanders' cause, and left their countrymen without help or redress. It might probably have been avoided, had the Uitlanders' cause been taken up but not substantially redressed, had the British Government been content with what would have looked like a settlement without being a settlement, had they been content with patching up for the moment, and leaving the evil to break out again in a more virulent form at a later date. But it was this patching-up process which had been the curse of South Africa; and the greatness of the crisis, when it came, was the measure of the mischief which had been done by not gripping the nettle in time. It was the duty of England to see that her subjects in the Transvaal were properly treated. It was her duty to uphold her treaty rights. The telegrams and despatches which have been summarized and quoted above prove that every effort was made, in friendliness and bona fides, to obtain a peaceful settlement, and it stands to the credit of the British Government as a whole, of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner in particular, that they insisted on looking facts in the face, and for once in the long pitiful record of British mismanagement of South Africa, quitted themselves like men, refusing to buy off the evil day at the expense of the coming generation.

It has been suggested above that a sober estimate of the Jameson Raid can best be formed by inverting in imagination the position of the rival races. The same process would

CH. II.

End of negotiations.
Policy of the British Government.

PART II. facilitate true views as to the necessity and the justice of the
—♦— South African War. Imagine President Kruger and the Transvaal Boers to have been British who, while their compatriots had been given complete equality in the Cape Colony by Dutchmen, excluded from all political privileges and all municipal rights in the Transvaal an equal or larger number of white men, the great majority of whom were Dutch, making them at the same time, by arbitrary and unfair taxation, practically pay the expenses of the State and enrich the personnel of the Government for the time being. Suppose that, for month after month and year after year, they had closed their ears to pleas and demands for justice, and had claimed, being probably a minority of the adult white men in the country, into which they had only come within living memory, to treat it, and all in it, as their exclusive property. If such a position had been taken up by Englishmen, but one answer would have been given, that it was untenable in equity and common sense, and that, if the governing oligarchy did not listen to reason and simply held that might is right, to force they had appealed and by force the issue must be decided.

In the bitterness which was called forth by the South African War it was contended that the war was a financiers' war, engineered by capitalists in order to make money. It has been shown above that the Uitlander movement in its later stages was mainly a movement of the middle and working classes, led by professional men, not by capitalists. War was contrary to the capitalists' interests. The more they answered to the caricatures which their enemies drew of them, the more they were inspired and guided by simple lust of gain, the more, according to the rules of common sense, they must have had to dread from and to lose by war. The Uitlander movement stands in line with every bona fide movement in history, which has originated in want of political freedom, and absence of common justice. That it was

mainly, though not exclusively, a British movement was due to the two simple facts, that the great majority of the Uitlanders were British subjects, and that Great Britain held a unique position in South Africa and in relation to the South African Republic.

Another and a plausible contention made by critics of the Government was that, with patience and in course of time, the bad conditions of the South African Republic would have become obsolete, that with the life of President Kruger the régime of President Kruger would have passed away, and a new age dawned in which liberty and justice for all white races would have come again. There is this much to be said for the contention, that one main difficulty of the situation lay in the fact that, while Great Britain was called upon to deal with what had become in President Kruger's hands something like a barbaric despotism, she was obliged to keep up the pretence that she was dealing with an ordinary civilized Government. This peculiar difficulty, which confronted British statesmen at the end of the nineteenth century, was the result of mistaken British dealings with the Boers in South Africa almost throughout that century. An untrained people, whose political understanding had been coloured by semi-civilized surroundings, could not be expected to evolve the conditions of enlightened liberty, and must have been expected, so far as they took guidance from outside, to be more or less guided by adventurers. To allow such things to last a little longer would not have been the path of wisdom. On the contrary they had already lasted too long. Again, it must be repeated that the damage to South Africa as a whole and more especially to the English in South Africa, lay in the illustration, which month after month was giving, of the success which attended government by force and aggressive injustice, as contrasted with the impotence which accompanied liberty and constitutional government of the British type. Because Kruger was successful he gathered

CII. II.

—♦—

PART II. race support to himself. Because opposition to him on constitutional British lines was ineffective, the Dutch population of South Africa looked more and more towards the Dutchman who personified strength, and less and less to British moderation which seemed to be synonymous with weakness. Continuance of the Kruger régime meant increase of race antagonism, accretion of support to the Boer cause, alienation of support from the British. Continuance meant that the Dutchmen drifted further apart from the English, and that the hearts of the British population—sorely tried by the Home Government in the past—sickened with delay.

Once more, the charge was constantly brought—in Parliament and out of it—against the men who stood for England, that the war was brought on by the manner of negotiations, by this phrase and that phrase, by overbearing or muddling diplomacy. Such charges are always made in England. They are part of the heavy price which we pay for Parliamentary institutions. But they are noticed here for this reason. What was chiefly complained of was plain speaking, as in the celebrated telegram from the High Commissioner of May 4, 1899, and too great readiness to cavil at the Boer offers. Now it was precisely plain speaking that was wanted in the first instance, and in the second a point of view which did not accord with that of the Boers. It is not possible to hold an Empire by glossing over facts, playing at peace and settlement, when all that is substantial is unrest. It is not possible to hold an Empire by refusing to listen to the call of race and assuming that because complainants are British they must be more wrong than right. Nor is it possible to hold an Empire on the lines of admitting the evils but refusing to apply adequate remedies. It was the supreme merit of the High Commissioner in South Africa for the time being that he insisted upon the facts being known by the whole world; and equally insisted that the evils must be

substantially remedied. It was also entirely to his credit and to the credit of Ministers in England that they refused to accommodate themselves to the familiar South African process of bargain. The conditions in the South African Republic, when tried by the ordinary rules of civilized races, were either right or wrong. Few, if any, except extreme partisans, maintained that they were right. If they were wrong, it was not a question of buying and selling, it was a question in the interests of all parties, including the Republic itself, of putting right what was wrong. This was the attitude taken up by Sir Alfred Milner at the Bloemfontein Conference, and afterwards more or less consistently maintained. There were definite wrongs to be righted, and they must be substantially righted. That was the brief of the British Government and their representative, and tried alike by the standard of public or private morality and by that of far-sighted political expediency, the case was unanswerable. Nor was the British Government to be blamed for insisting at the later stages of the negotiations upon a general settlement, not confined to the franchise question only. The crisis had gone on too long to admit of partial solution. It was necessary that the slate should be cleaned once for all, that no issue should be left outstanding, to raise again the intolerable bitterness which had poisoned the stream of South African history. Party feeling in England, Dutch love of bargaining in South Africa, obscured the plain vision of plain facts. One or two leading men there and here saw through the maze, and held unswervingly to the straight course. To them, when generations have grown up no longer embittered by memories of war, the tribute will be paid that they stood for the principles which alone could bring union and prosperity to South Africa.

The Boer Government, on their side, might have averted the war had they made simply and unconditionally the concessions which were asked from them, and they could have

The Boer policy.

PART II. made those concessions without the remotest danger to their independence, for no demand was made by Great Britain that the Uitlanders should have anything approaching a majority in the Volksraad. Did the leaders of the Boers want the war? The answer seems to be that they were simply guided by national instincts, and by the lessons which they had learnt from past dealings with the English. Past history had given them little cause to trust, or to love, or to respect the English. They had learnt to get something, by force or by deal; they had learnt that the English would do almost anything to avoid war; they knew that they had an asset of untold value on their side in party government in England. They had other assets. They had the control of great wealth, wealth in proportion to population, which perhaps could not be paralleled. This meant accumulation of immense material for war, for which again there was a more or less valid excuse in the not forgotten Jameson Raid. With the means came the backing. Around the Dutchmen who had the tradition of success behind them, and present resources such as had never been known before in South Africa, gathered the hopes and aspirations of the race, not perhaps crystallized into well-defined shapes, but more and more passing out of dream into substance, as a future seemed to be dawning when Dutch Republicanism might become dominant in South Africa. But this end might be achieved without war; and the past taught that in dealing with the English much might be obtained with little fighting or no fighting at all. So the double process went on of preparing for war on a great scale and making bids which varied in amount and kind, but none of which were adequate. The one substantial offer was the August offer, determined, it would seem, by news of unusual unanimity in England. For the moment, it may be conjectured, the Boers realized that the English were not likely to give way, and shrank from the consequences. It was for the moment only. The

offer was speedily modified, and, when an opening was given, it was wholly withdrawn. Thereafter it was little more than a question of date when war could be begun to the best advantage.

As on the eve of the War of American Independence Canada was left almost defenceless, largely owing to the desire of the Home Government to take no action which might alarm and inflame the recalcitrant colonies, and as in consequence, when war came, Canada was overrun up to the walls of Quebec, so in the months preceding the South African War the British Government was slow to prepare for war, lest war should be made a certainty instead of a probability. When war came, Natal was far better garrisoned than Canada in 1775, but not sufficiently held to prevent widespread invasion. This colony, with good reason, as past experience indicated and actual events proved, was apprehensive of the Boers, suspicious of their great and growing armaments. Before May ended, the High Commissioner wrote home that, owing to Boer preparations across the border, the scattered British settlers in the northern corner of Natal were growing anxious, and the Ministry was nervous at the prospect of war. He gave the Natal Ministers a promise that, in the event of invasion, the colony would be defended with the whole force of the Empire. Through June and July the anxiety and nervousness continued, but the Home Government held their hand. It was their duty not to provoke war. It was their duty to avoid war as long as possible, at any rate until they had behind them an overwhelming majority of British citizens convinced that no other issue was possible. As late as the 30th of June, in the City of London, the Leader of the Opposition pronounced: 'I can see nothing whatever in all that has occurred to justify warlike action or military preparation.' A week later in the House of Commons, on the 7th of July, Mr. Balfour stated that no contingency had arisen which in the opinion of the

CH. II.

Feeling in Natal.

PART II. Government necessitated a material increase to the forces in South Africa, but that in existing circumstances it was necessary to bring the existing forces up to a proper standard of efficiency and mobility. This was the very small beginning of preparation. Two companies of Royal Engineers and departmental corps were sent out with reserves of supplies and ammunition, the commanding officer at the Cape was instructed to complete transport arrangements, and some special service officers were despatched to South Africa, among them Baden Powell and Plumer, to watch with locally raised forces the frontiers of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Rhodesia. On the 12th of July it was announced in the House of Commons that three batteries of artillery were under orders for South Africa, that they were being sent primarily as reliefs, but, if necessity arose, might be used to supplement instead of relieving batteries on the spot. On the day before this statement was made came the first of many offers of help from overseas—the Queensland offer of 250 mounted infantry with machine guns. Before July ended, Reuter's Agency published a telegram that preparations were being made to send 10,000 men from India. It was at this date that the Government promised that in the event of war only white troops should be used. At the beginning of August the Natal Government were encouraged by the promise of reinforcements to the amount of at least 2,000 men. In the middle of that month Sir William Butler, who had never seen eye to eye with the Home Government or the High Commissioner, was replaced at the Cape by Sir F. Forestier Walker. The middle of August, too, found President Steyn asking the High Commissioner whether troops were to be placed on the Bethulie Bridge or elsewhere on the borders of the Orange Free State. Having received a reply to the effect that the rumour was unfounded, and that Sir A. Milner received many and more substantial reports of the importation of munitions of

*British
preparations for
war.*

war into the Free State, he disclaimed any special arming in the Republic, expressing an earnest desire for peace, but intimated that there was great anxiety on account of the extensive military preparations in England for South Africa. This was on the 16th of August. On the 28th he assured the Cape Ministers that there was no design or intention to take up arms in an offensive or aggressive manner against the British Government or a British colony, and that he would leave no means untouched to preserve peace.

In September the clouds became lower and more threatening. On the 6th of that month the Governor of Natal telegraphed that his Ministers believed that the Boers had made up their minds to war, and that the Orange Free State farmers, who pastured their sheep in the Klip River district of Natal and were wont to stay till October, were already leaving. Two days later a Cabinet Council in London settled the terms of the telegram which was sent on the same day, the 8th of September, making in effect a last firm offer for peace, and also decided to send an additional 10,000 men to South Africa, mainly from India and the Mediterranean. On the next day Mr. Chamberlain telegraphed to the Governor of Natal that orders had been given for the despatch of 5,700 men from India to Natal, in addition to two more battalions from England and three batteries of artillery. At this same date the Volksraad of the Transvaal passed a resolution regretting that armed troops were placed on the borders of the Republic, and declaring that, should war eventuate, the Transvaal would not be responsible. With the Indian contingent went Sir Archibald Hunter, and on the 16th of September Sir George White left England to take command of the Natal army as it would stand on the arrival of the reinforcements from India. On the 24th of September troops were moved up from Ladysmith to Glencoe, and four days later the Governor of Natal telegraphed that the Boers were massing on the northern and north-eastern frontier of the

PART II. colony. On the 19th of September the Loyal North
 —♦♦— Lancashire Regiment was sent up country to garrison
 Kimberley and hold the Orange River Bridge—the first
 forward movement that was made in the Cape Colony. The
 High Commissioner was careful at the same time to reassure
 the Orange Free State, intimating to President Steyn that
 the British Government looked to the Free State to preserve
 strict neutrality, and that he was prepared to give a formal
 assurance that in that case the integrity of the Republic
 would be strictly respected. Steyn's reply was to the effect
 that he viewed with regret and apprehension the northward
 despatch of the troops, which, following, as he said, on other
 military preparations near the Free State border, would not
 improbably be considered as a menace by the burghers of
 the Republic.

*Boer pre-
 parations.*

So far the measures taken by the British Government were
 such only as provided for bare defence. No orders had yet
 been given for mobilizing an Army Corps, or taking any step
 which indicated invasion or serious menace to the indepen-
 dence of the Republic. The Boer preparations had been
 notoriously on a far more pronounced scale. A protest from
 President Steyn in the last days of September against further
 movements or increase of British troops on or near the
 borders of either Republic, and a reference in his telegram to
 'the enormous and ever increasing military preparations'¹ of
 Great Britain, brought in October a reply to the effect that
 military preparations had been forced upon the British
 Government by the policy of the South African Republic,
 which had transformed the Transvaal into a permanent armed
 camp. This was hardly an over-statement of the case. The
 chairman of the Uitlander Council at Johannesburg on the
 25th of August estimated that 149,000 rifles had been brought
 into the country. The passage of arms and ammunition from

¹ For President Steyn's telegram, in which these words occur, see
 C. 9530, October 1899, p. 37, and C. 43, January 1900, p. 95.

the Cape Colony into the Free State led to an attack by the Opposition on the Cape Government, and a debate in the House of Assembly on the 28th of August. Earlier in the month public attention had been called to the importation of ammunition into the Transvaal by the detention of consignments at the Portuguese port of Lorenzo Marques. The record of the war—on the one hand the high quality and the vast quantity of the Boer munitions, on the other hand the facility with which in the early stages of the war British territory was invaded, while the two Republics were at the time wholly immune from British invasion—is conclusive proof as to which side had made the fuller and the more timely preparations.

The question is happily one of historical interest only. We have to remember that the Boers had derived from past events grounds for suspicion of the future; that, assuming war came, they had to defend their hearths and homes, relying, unless they could induce some continental nation to intervene, upon material which they had stored up before the war, without any likelihood of obtaining further supplies from overseas after fighting had actually begun. But, taking the actual facts of the case, coupled with the course of the negotiations, it is clear that the preparations on the Boer side were out of all proportion to those on the British side, and that the Transvaal demands approximated more and more to radical change in the relations between Great Britain and the Republic, while the British demands were consistently one and the same—that grievances should be promptly and substantially redressed, and that outstanding questions should be adjusted so as to bring back harmony in South Africa without any change in existing political relations. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the Boers prepared for offence as well as defence, that the English very slowly prepared for defence only, until war was practically upon them. In other words, that of the two parties the Boers

*Boer policy
and arm*

PART II. rather than the English were aggressors, is proved by ample evidence over and above the fact that they actually issued the ultimatum and began the war with invasion of British territory. This historical fact or inference can be stated without necessarily attaching to it condemnation. The Boers had a perfect right to challenge England, if they thought fit to do so and were prepared to take the consequences. They had a perfect right to think that the 'New or never' had come, when Dutch nationality might vindicate its prior right to South Africa, when Dutch Republicanism, which had seen such strenuous days, might achieve a final and lasting triumph. There was nothing unnatural or ignoble in a vision of Dutch supremacy or in trying to realize it. Englishmen can appreciate and sympathize with it as the outcome of race and history, and the more the past history is studied, the more will the Boer point of view be appreciated. That is one thing. It is another to read into the facts of 1899 a struggle for liberty against aggression, a last great effort of an oppressed or a threatened people against oppressors or would-be oppressors.

*Difficult
position of
Great
Britain.*

It has been said above that one great difficulty which beset Great Britain in negotiating with the Transvaal was that the negotiations had to proceed on the assumption that two civilized Powers were treating with one another, whereas dealings with President Kruger were really dealings with a semi-barbarous despot. Similarly the whole position in South Africa was made infinitely difficult for the English by the fact that, while they had to treat with the Boers in peace and in war as though they were treating with ordinary European communities or nations, the world at large, and many people in England itself, were trying the two contending parties by different standards. What was right for the Boers to do was wrong for the English, because the Boers were a peculiar people, with this, that, and the other to say for themselves. What was wrong for the Boers to do was none

the less most excusable, while for the English there was no excuse whatever. The great Power was wrong because it was great, the small Power was right because it was small. The Dutch view must be taken because it did not agree with the English view, and the English view must be discarded because it must necessarily be the view of a dominant and aggressive Power.

The sane sober view seems to be that the Transvaal stood for the old régime. Into that old régime came the new and up-to-date, attracted by gold. New wine was poured into old bottles, and the old bottles being of very tough substance did not burst for a long time. The old régime would not adjust itself to the new conditions. The traditional policy of the State had been isolation, and the men who built up the State on those lines were still, some of them, in control. They would not assimilate to the new. But what they would do, and what they could do, was to use the new conditions to aggrandize and strengthen the old, to keep what was narrow but to broaden it in the sense of extending it over a larger area. Transvaal isolation might be enlarged into Dutch domination in South Africa. On these lines the Boer cause went forward. How strong it was, how good were its prospects of success, events were to show. But it was not the cause which had the keeping of the future. Sir Alfred Milner had rightly said that it was absurd to think of either of the two white races in South Africa permanently subjugating the other. The British system stood for race equality among white men. This it was that constituted the unanswerable strength of the cause which ultimately prevailed.

It was inevitable that, as the months went on, both in England and in South Africa men's minds became more accustomed to the thought of war, and many were almost ready to welcome war in order to put an end to intolerable suspense. In the Transvaal there was nothing to calm or reassure the non-burgher residents. September opened with

*The true
view of the
contest.*

*The eve of
the war.*

*In the
Transvaal.*

PART II. the arrest for high treason of one newspaper editor at Johannesburg, the attempted arrest of another and of the chairman of the Uitlander Council. A large exodus of Uitlanders from Johannesburg and from the Republic followed. The tone of the Volksraad at the end of the first week of September contemplated war, the Government being queried, and in turn querying the High Commissioner, as to the alleged massing of British troops upon the borders of the Republic. Before the month ended the ultimatum was being drafted, quickened by the knowledge that in Natal a force had been moved up from Ladysmith to Glencoe, that reinforcements were on the sea, and that spring was coming on with green grass for the Boer ponies. At the end of September and beginning of October the burghers were called out, the Uitlanders crowded out of the State, gold which was being exported was seized by the Government: there was every sign of coming war. The Volksraad adjourned on the 2nd of October, the note of the speeches being that war was a certainty.

*In the
Cape
Colony.*

In the Cape Colony the Ministry tried to keep the peace and to hold the Orange Free State to peace. In the debate in the House of Assembly on the 28th of August, to which reference has already been made, the Premier, Schreiner, announced that he would do his very best 'to maintain for this colony the position of standing apart and aloof from the struggle, both with regard to its forces and with regard to its people'.¹ Notwithstanding these words he realized that, in the event of war, the Cape Colony, as an integral part of the British Empire, could not remain neutral; but he had strong assurance from President Steyn that there was no intention to attack a British colony; he discountenanced any step which might have the appearance of menacing the Republics, and with his colleagues, on the 21st of September, he appealed to the Home Government to deal with the situation in a spirit

¹ Cd. 43, January 1900, p. 29.

of magnanimous compromise as the only hope of averting war. But the time for compromise had passed, if it ever had been possible to effect a compromise, which would have been the basis of lasting settlement; and a petition to the Queen on the 28th of September from fifty-eight Afrikaner members of the Cape Parliament in favour of temporizing by reverting to the discarded Joint Commission of Inquiry, was balanced by a counterpetition from fifty-three Opposition members, strongly supporting the policy of the British Government.

The Orange Free State probably had it in its power to avert war, had its influence been used against President Kruger's policy, instead of supporting it. In the lengthy negotiations between Great Britain and the Transvaal it is very noticeable how the Free State was quoted on the British side, as illustrating, together with the Cape Colony, what was the policy which the British Government asked the Transvaal Government to adopt. Here was a Boer Republic, where there was political equality for the two races, and where no such difficulty arose as had arisen under the unequal political conditions which prevailed in the South African Republic. The British demand on the Transvaal was for less than the Orange Free State had always conceded, as it was also for less than was freely given in the Cape Colony. Had the Orange Free State been still led by Brand, it would probably never have thrown in its lot with President Kruger; but Brand's successors, Reitz and Steyn, had entangled their state in alliances with the neighbouring Republic; Reitz had become Kruger's State Secretary, Steyn followed Kruger's lead. Two views may be taken of the action of the Free State—one, that the Free State burghers, without any valid reason, and before any attack had been made either on the Transvaal or on their own State, joined in making war upon Great Britain and her possessions, although the British contention from first to last was simply for principles which they

*In the
Orange
Free State.*

PART II. themselves upheld; the other that the Free State burghers
 — • • — were chivalrous in liberal interpretation of their treaty engage-
 ments, and risked their all on behalf of the neighbouring
 Republic which they believed to be endangered. But, whichever
 view is taken, the participation of the Free State in the
 war is the strongest evidence that the war was in effect a race
 struggle, a great combined Dutch effort against the English
 as the paramount power in South Africa.

Correspondence between President Steyn and the High Commissioner.

It was in a sense appropriate, as it was significant, that the latest words in the expiring negotiations were not with the Transvaal but with the Free State. Mr. Chamberlain's telegram of the 22nd of September, intimating that the situation must now be considered afresh and that new proposals would be made, concluded the long series of despatches written for the Transvaal Government, though replies to the despatches continued to reach England after the war had begun. In the last days before the war the High Commissioner was busily engaged in exchanging telegrams with President Steyn. It has been seen that, in the middle of August, the President had asked whether any British troops were to be placed on the borders of the Free State, that he had disclaimed on his side any special preparations for war, and later had assured the Cape Government of his peaceful intentions. It has been seen too that when, in the latter part of September, a British regiment was sent to the Orange River and Kimberley, though the sending was accompanied by friendly assurance, he expressed regret that any such step had been taken. His attitude was that any movement of armed men, however few, in British territory in the direction of greater proximity to the Orange Free State might fairly be regarded as a menace—an attitude which would find, if desired, a *casus belli* in the remotest attempt at preparations for defence. The Free State Volksraad met in secret session in the fourth week of September, and the outcome was an instruction to the Government to do all in their power to preserve peace, coupled with

a pronouncement that, if war was now begun or occasioned by Her Majesty's Government against the South African Republic, it would morally be war against the whole white population of South Africa, and the Orange Free State would fulfil its treaty obligations to the South African Republic. A long telegram, already referred to and dated the 27th of September, was sent by the President to the High Commissioner, in which he intimated that the Free State was still anxious to work for peace, but that ignorance of the real extent of the British demands, and 'the enormous and ever increasing' British preparations for war, were obstacles in the way. At the time the Cape Colony was nearly defenceless, simply because it was desired not to give the Orange Free State any ground for alarm or pretext for war. Yet the President telegraphed as though thousands of British soldiers were ready to march on Bloemfontein, and on the 2nd of October called out his burghers, informing the High Commissioner that he did so in order to allay excitement. Then followed flight from the Free State of British subjects unwilling to fight against their country, but the interchange of telegrams between the President and the High Commissioner continued, and on the 4th of October Sir Alfred Milner made one last overture for peace, pointing out that invasion of British territory would close the door to the possibility of any pacific solution, and adding that he felt sure 'that any reasonable proposal, from whatever quarter proceeding, would be favourably considered by Her Majesty's Government, if it offered an immediate termination of present tension and a prospect of permanent tranquillity'.¹ Steyn, on his side, asked that the British troops in South Africa should be withdrawn from the borders of the Transvaal, and that as far as possible no more should be landed in South Africa, the answer to which was an offer, not accepted, that mutual assurances should be given by the British Government on the one side and the Govern-

¹ C. 9530, October 1899, p. 47.



PART II.
—♦—

ments of the Republics on the other, that pending negotiations neither party should commit any act of hostility against the other. Almost up to the day when the Boer ultimatum was finally presented, President Steyn maintained that the arming of the Free State burghers was not intended for any purpose of aggression against Her Majesty's dominions. Yet at the same time the terms of the ultimatum were being settled; invasion of British dominions from the Free State followed; the President justified participation of his State in the war by what he styled 'active commencement of hostilities' on the part of Great Britain against the South African Republic; and on the 14th of October he issued a Proclamation to the inhabitants of the Cape Colony to inform them that he had ordered his officers to cross the borders, 'with no other object than for the defence of my country and people, and for maintenance of our independence'.¹

*The Ulti-
matum.*

The telegraphic correspondence is instructive. Those who desire peace are careful not to exaggerate in treating with their adversaries, and not to make impossible demands. If the parties had been two rival nations in Europe, only one construction would or could have been put upon President Steyn's telegrams—that he was making a case for war. With good or bad cause, the two Republics had determined on war, and on the 9th of October, 1899, the Government of the South African Republic handed their ultimatum to the British Agent at Pretoria. The terms of the ultimatum were to the effect that the franchise question was one exclusively within the competence of the Government and Legislature of the South African Republic; that Great Britain by interfering in the matter had violated the terms of the Convention of London; that the latest intimation from the British Government, that they would formulate their own proposals, was a fresh violation of the Convention; that the increase in the strength of the British forces and placing them in the neighbourhood of

¹ See C. 9530, p. 69, and Cd. 43, p. 100.

the Transvaal was a threat against the independence of the Republic; that the position had become intolerable, and in the interests alike of the South African Republic and of South Africa generally assurances must be requested from the British Government. These assurances were that all points of difference should be settled by arbitration or in such friendly manner as the two Governments might agree; that the troops on the borders of the Republic should be instantly withdrawn; that all reinforcements which had arrived since the first of January should be removed from South Africa; and that the troops on the high seas should not be landed. An answer was requested in two days' time, and an unsatisfactory answer would be regarded as a formal declaration of war. The answer was not satisfactory. The British Agent was instructed to inform the Boer Government that their demands were impossible and to ask for his passport.

The ultimatum was from the South African Republic. President Steyn was formally asked whether he adhered to it or not, and replied that the conduct of the British Government had been such that the Orange Free State must abide by its agreements with the South African Republic. Thus there was war; and, before the battle-fields sent their lists of dead and wounded, the distress of the refugees who fled from the interior and crowded the ports, for whom the High Commissioner asked relief from the Lord Mayors of the great cities in the United Kingdom, told in advance the tale of war, bitterness, ruin, and misery.

CHAPTER III

THE WAR

PART I

BRITISH REVERSES

PART II. *Unique character and great importance of the South African War.* IN all history it would be difficult to find a parallel to the South African War, a war in which the two sides in numbers of fighting men were so unequal, and yet in which so many disadvantages attached to the side which was numerically stronger; a war in which the whole of one side consisted of mounted men. In the history of the British Empire the war stands out as unique in kind, and most far-reaching in results. In kind it resembled to some slight extent the War of American Independence. It was an overseas war, it partook of the nature of a civil war, it was long and wearisome, it was a war in great spaces, a war of incidents more than of pitched battles and elaborate campaigns. The words in which the *Annual Register* for 1777¹ describes the War of American Independence as 'a war of posts surprises and skirmishes, instead of a war of battles' might be applied to the South African War.

In results it was fruitful to a degree. It gathered together for the first time an army which represented more or less the whole British Empire, and it gave to the Overseas Dominions once for all the status which is due to sharing sacrifice and co-operating in risk and responsibility. In South Africa it was fought for, and it resulted in equality of the white races; it made, and nothing else could have made, Union possible. This war, therefore, from the point of view of the

¹ P. 20.

development of the British Empire, is one of singular interest, apart from the actual record of battles and marches. There were three epochs in the fighting. The first period was one of Boer invasion and British reverses. The second was one of British recovery and invasion. The third was a time of guerilla war.

CH. III.

At the beginning of every war there are numbers on either side, combatants and non-combatants alike, who have light-hearted confidence of victory. So it always has been, so it always will be. There were many among the Boers who looked to repeating former successes on a larger scale and driving the English into the sea. There were many in England who expected that, when England put forth her strength, Boer resistance would speedily collapse and there would be a triumphal march to Pretoria. But in May 1896 Mr. Chamberlain had given expression to the view of thinking men in England that a war in South Africa 'would be a long war, a bitter war, and a costly war'. So it proved to be, but longer and more costly than even the sanest thinkers had contemplated. It is easy now after the event to see how great were the difficulties with which Great Britain had to contend. The ill-feeling of continental nations, carefully fed through the Press from the Boer side, and combined, on the one hand, with honest sympathy for the weaker party, which Englishmen can well appreciate, on the other with long-standing jealousy, was so pronounced as to be dangerous. The seat of war was far from home. When it was reached, communications were most precarious; two or three single lines of rail ran through great areas; and even when those areas were in British territory, that territory, except in Natal, was tenanted by a disaffected population. The war, it was wisely decided, was to be carried through by white men only. No help therefore could come from the fine fighting native army in India, nor from South African peoples, such as the Basutos, who might have given a good account of themselves

*Difficulties
of Great
Britain.*

PART II. — against their hereditary foes, the Boers. The fighting, again, was against a people whose fathers and some of whom themselves had been British subjects, whose kinsfolk, many among them fellow combatants, were British subjects; who, in the event of British victory, would become British citizens, on a level with other British citizens in privileges and rights. It was therefore necessary to fight as with men who in a short time might be of the same household, and who must be left with as little bitterness as possible in their memories. Lastly the fighting was with men to whom, it must again be repeated, the world in general applied a somewhat different standard from that by which the English were tested, men who were citizen soldiers of very irregular type, not in all things conforming or expected to conform to the rigid rules of European warfare.

Numbers of the British and Boer forces respectively at the beginning of the war.

The immediate and obvious danger to England, when the Boer ultimatum was received, was the comparatively small number of fighting men in South Africa on the British side. The Army Corps which was destined for the war, under the command in chief of Sir Redvers Buller, was not mobilized until the 7th of October, and the whole of the 47,000 men, of which it was composed, did not reach South Africa until the beginning of December. A fortnight after the war began the regular British troops of all arms in South Africa did not exceed 22,000 men, and the number would have been smaller had the Boers issued their ultimatum a little earlier, or had the Indian Government been less prompt in sending their contingent. As it was, some of the troops from India did not reach Durban until late in October. The soldiers of the line were supplemented by local forces. In Natal there were volunteers and mounted police, and in addition an Uitlander regiment of 500 men, the Imperial Light Horse, whose hard fighting gave the lie to those who maligned the Uitlanders. The total British forces in Natal at the very beginning of the war numbered 15,811, of whom 13,030 were regular troops

and 2,781 local forces.¹ In the Cape Colony were the Cape Mounted Police, the Cape Mounted Rifles, and the nucleus of some thousands of volunteers; but, before war actually began, the neutral attitude of the Cape Government had militated against calling out men or making any preparations for defence. At Kimberley was half of a British regiment, which Sir Alfred Milner had insisted upon sending up in the third week of September; and town guards and local forces subsequently made up the garrison of that town to between 3,000 and 4,000 men. At the beginning of the war, in the Cape Colony 5,221 regular and 4,574 Colonial troops were under arms. In the north Baden Powell eventually collected in all about 1,000 men to garrison Mafeking, Plumer had about half that number on the southern border of Rhodesia and the northern border of the Transvaal, and a smaller body patrolled the railway through the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The total number of fighting men in this northern sphere, when war first broke out, was returned at 1,448. The English thus started in the war with 27,000 men in arms throughout South Africa. Against them, it is estimated that there were about 48,000 Boers under arms, or at the lowest estimate fully 40,000, more than half of whom were massed for invasion on the borders of Natal.²

Assuming that there were 27,000 men available on the British side against between 40,000 and 50,000 Boers, the disparity of numbers, though great, was not on the face of it overwhelming, if the smaller force was simply to hold out on the defensive until reinforcements came. But it was not

¹ The figures are taken from the official History of the War in South Africa.

² The official History of the War in South Africa says that about 48,000 burghers were under arms at the beginning of the war and that the invaders of Natal numbered 23,500. The German official account says that 50,000 men were ready on the Boer side at the beginning of the war, and in another place makes the probable number of 'Boer levies', exclusive of foreigners and Cape Colonists, about 40,000. The number of Boers on the Natal border in this account is given at 18,000.

PART II. a mere question of numbers. The Boers were fully prepared, they had, as soon appeared, the best and the newest guns, and plenty of them; they had great mobility, inherited knowledge of ways of warfare suited to the land, the sympathies of non-combatants outside the main centres of population, and most of all they had the inner circle. From Capetown to Mafeking by rail is a distance of 870 miles. To protect this long line was an impossibility, with the numbers which the English could command in the early stages of the war. All that could be done was to hold certain central points on the lines of communication, in addition to Kimberley and Mafeking.

*The Cape
Railways.*

Three trunk lines of railway, all single lines, ran from the coast of the Cape Colony to the interior, starting from Capetown, Port Elizabeth, and East London respectively. The westernmost railway, an all British line, ran from Capetown to Buluwayo, passing through Kimberley and Mafeking, and skirting, after it crossed the Orange River, the western borders of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic. It crossed the river a little to the east of Hopetown, 570 miles from Capetown. Seventy miles nearer to Capetown was De Aar Junction, whence a cross-line ran in a south-easterly direction, linking the western with the central trunk line. At these two points, the Orange River Railway Bridge and De Aar, small forces were stationed. The second railway, the central trunk line, ran from Port Elizabeth to Bloemfontein. It crossed the Orange River at Norval's Pont, 328 miles from Port Elizabeth, but, with the exception of a small police-guard, no attempt was made to hold this bridge, and the most advanced British post on this railway was 58 miles further south or south-west, at Naauwpoort, 270 miles from Port Elizabeth, where the cross-line from De Aar came in. This post at Naauwpoort covered a junction still further south, Rosmead Junction, where two alternative lines from Port Elizabeth converged, the eastern of the two lines having an outlet to the sea at Port Alfred in addition to Port Elizabeth;

and from Rosmead Junction a cross-line, similar to the De Aar-Naauwpoort line, ran eastward, linking the central trunk line to the third and easternmost trunk line at Stormberg, 221 miles from East London. This third trunk line ran from the coast at East London into the Orange Free State, crossing the Orange River at Bethulie Bridge, 289 miles from East London. Twenty-five miles farther on in the Orange Free State, at Springfontein Junction, it joined the central trunk line coming from Norval's Pont, Springfontein being 362 miles from Port Elizabeth, 314 from East London. From Springfontein one line only ran on to Bloemfontein. Bethulie Bridge, it will be remembered, had been the subject of inquiry by President Steyn in the month of August. He then asked whether it was true that British troops were to be placed there, and was told that the rumour was unfounded. No attempt was made to hold this bridge any more than Norval's Pont, a few policemen being the only guards in either case. There were no troops available for the purpose, though there might have been, had the Cape Government had the mind. Here the Orange River was the boundary between the Cape Colony and the Free State. At the Orange River Bridge, on the other hand, both banks of the river were in British territory, and it was all-important to hold this bridge, over which ran the main communication with Kimberley and the North. The points at the cross-lines too it was most important to try to hold, not merely because these cross-lines linked the whole railway system together, but also because, as a look at the map and a table of distances¹ will show, the route by rail from Capetown to the Orange River Bridge and all beyond it was far longer than that from either Port Elizabeth or East London.

In Natal the English had not to face the problem of great *The Natal Railways.*

¹ An excellent Table of Distances, from which the above figures have been taken, is given at p. 300 of vol. vi of *The Times History of the War in South Africa.*

PART II. spaces, but they had to face the brunt of Boer invasion in a mountainous country. Their headquarters were at Ladysmith, 190 miles from the sea at Durban, 119 miles from Pietermaritzburg, the seat of government. Ladysmith was the junction for the two lines which came in, one on the west and north-west from the Orange Free State, the other on the north and north-east from the Transvaal. The first of the two lines was about 60 miles long, from Ladysmith at one end, to Harrismith in the Orange Free State at the other, Ladysmith and Harrismith recalling by their names the old soldier Governor of the Cape, who proclaimed British sovereignty over the Orange River Territory, and fought the first stand-up fight between British and Boers at Boomplatz. It crossed the Drakensburg Mountains by Van Reenen's Pass. The main line from Durban to the Transvaal, after leaving Ladysmith, took a semi-circular course, running in a north-easterly direction as far as Glencoe, and then a little to the west of north, until it crossed the border at the extreme apex of the colony, about 116 miles distant from Ladysmith. Following it south, it tunnelled under Lang's Nek, with Majuba Hill on the western side, and reached Newcastle, the northernmost town in Natal, 79 miles from Ladysmith. Further south it came to Glencoe Junction, rather over 40 miles from Ladysmith, from which junction a short line ran out to the east for between five and six miles to Dundee in the neighbourhood of coal-fields. South of Glencoe the main line crossed the Biggarsberg Range, which runs right athwart the colony, and passed Elandslaagte Station, about 16 miles before reaching Ladysmith.

At or shortly after the beginning of the war there were, as has been seen, about 13,000 regular troops in Natal, in addition to the Natal local forces and the Imperial Light Horse. The officer in command in Natal, before Sir George White arrived, was General Penn Symons. His view had been that, when the reinforcements from India came in, Natal

could be held as far north as Newcastle; and, anticipating their arrival, on the 24th of September he moved up part of his small army from Ladysmith to the neighbourhood of Glencoe and Dundee. This forward movement was interpreted by the Boers as a menace, and quickened their preparations for war. The Natal Government, for political reasons, were naturally anxious that as little as possible of the colony should be abandoned to the enemy, and the coal which Dundee supplied was an additional reason for making a stand at that point. But the total number of defenders was small, over 40 miles separated the advanced detachment from the main body, and those 40 miles included the Biggarsberg Range, a mountain barrier between Glencoe on the north and Ladysmith on the south. With sound military judgement, Sir George White, who landed at Durban on the 7th of October, wished to recall the Glencoe force to Ladysmith, Sir Archibald Hunter, his chief of the staff, holding the same view; and it was only in deference to the strong wishes of the Natal Government, backed by General Symons's confidence in the Dundee position, that, as the move forward had been made, the newly arrived General consented not to reverse it. Thus, when the fighting actually began, there were rather over 4,000 troops on the Glencoe line with 18 guns, and rather over 8,000 at Ladysmith, with the remainder guarding the railway between Ladysmith and Maritzburg. Against them came on the Boer side over 20,000 men.

The first blow struck in the war was not in Natal, but far away in the west, where, on the line between Vryburg and Mafeking, at a place called Kraaipan, the Boers intercepted an armoured train which was at that time making its way north with two guns to Baden Powell at Mafeking some 40 miles away. This was on the 12th of October, the day after the time fixed in the Boer ultimatum had expired. On the same morning the Boer forces, gathered on the frontier of Natal, began their move under the leadership of Joubert, Commandant

CH. III.

The military position in Natal.

War begins.

PART II. General of the South African Republic. Piet Joubert, of Huguenot descent, was a fighting Boer of the old school. Next to Kruger he was the most prominent fighter in the Republic, and in war and peace had taken a leading part in shaping its history. In his boyhood, one of the original Voortrekkers from the Cape Colony, he had stood out in strong opposition to the first British annexation of the Transvaal, and had been with Kruger a member of the Triumvirate who raised the revolt in December 1880 and secured the Convention of Pretoria. A pronounced and unswerving upholder of Boer independence, he was yet of broader and kindlier views than those which Paul Kruger embodied; in internal politics he was a leader on the Progressive side, and in 1892 would have been elected President instead of Kruger if the election had been fairly fought, and not manipulated by Kruger with characteristic absence of scruple. Joubert now came to the war, far advanced in years, more skilled for defence than for offence, more convinced of the righteousness of defending his country than of attacking his neighbours.

Boer invasion of Natal.

The main force, under his direct command, over 11,000 strong, came into Natal at the extreme north of the colony, and followed the railway line to the south. On the west, between nine and ten thousand Free Staters came over the mountains by different passes; and on the east, over against Dundee, beyond the Buffalo River, was a smaller body of Transvaalers belonging to the Utrecht and Vryheid districts, rather less than 3,000 in number, under Lukas Meyer.¹ Those of the Free Staters who came over the Drakensburg by the southernmost passes were soon in evidence to the patrols from Ladysmith, and threatened the railway further

¹ The official History of the War gives:

(a) Under personal orders of Joubert	11,300
(b) Free Staters	9,500
(c) Under Lukas Meyer	2,870
Total in round numbers	<u>23,500</u>

south. Once more Sir George White, on the 18th of October, wished to recall the Dundee force, and once more was persuaded by Symons to leave them where they stood. Very slowly the Boer lines closed round them. On the 15th of October the vanguard of Joubert's army, 4,000 men under Erasmus detached from the main body, reached Newcastle, and on the 18th were within striking distance of Dundee. By the 19th a separate small body, consisting mainly of Transvaal Boers, had pushed still further south and planted themselves at Elandslaagte Station, cutting the railway communication between Glencoe and Ladysmith. Meanwhile Lukas Meyer on the east, whose scouts had from the first been on the fringe of Symons's army, having been reinforced by Joubert, on the night of the 19th moved over the Buffalo River with 3,500 men and seven guns, marching direct for Dundee.

Symons was encamped in a hollow, surrounded by hills, the camp being rather under a mile to the west of Dundee, in the direction of Glencoe Junction. Erasmus was but seven miles away to the north; and, had Erasmus and Lukas Meyer attacked simultaneously, it must have gone hard with the English. As it was, Meyer's movement was unsupported by the other Boer force. As he advanced through the night, some of his men came across a British piquet of mounted infantry, who were keeping guard on the eastern road and who sent back word to the camp; otherwise the march was undisturbed, and when day broke on the 20th of October the Boers were found to have occupied two hills, almost due east of Dundee, about two miles distant from Dundee, and nearly three from the British camp. The higher of these hills was Talana Hill; due south of it was the other, Lennox Hill; and between the two hills ran the main road to the Buffalo River, upon which road, beyond the hills, the British piquet had been stationed. The Boers had dragged some of their guns up Talana Hill and began firing on their

PART II.
—♦—

enemies below. The British artillery lost no time in replying, and Symons ordered his infantry to storm the hill. Three regiments went forward, still in the early morning, following the course of a small stream, then under hot fire across an open space to a plantation, then again up an open slope to a wall which circled round the topmost ridges of the hill. There was no flank movement; it was a frontal attack, in the face of the Boer rifles, one of which mortally wounded the General, indifferent to cover while speeding the advance. Under cover of the wall the soldiers were given a long halt, gathering their energies for a final rush, while over their heads the British artillery plied the Boers who held the crest. At length the order was given to charge; and breaking over the wall, plunging across the last and deadliest danger zone, with Boer riflemen shooting them down in front, and British gunners in the distance mistaking friends for foes, but led by and following their officers with fearless courage, at the beginning of the afternoon the infantry took the hill. It was a victory won by hard fighting on traditional British lines, but at heavy cost, the loss of the General and many good officers and men; while two untoward incidents robbed it of its value. The Boers retreated from both hills, under the eyes of the British gunners, within close range; but, through some misunderstanding, the guns were silent, and where most loss could have been inflicted upon the enemy, no loss was suffered by them at all. The cavalry and mounted infantry too, who had been sent out on the northern side of Talana to wait a favourable occasion for striking the Boers in the flank or rear, were so handled that they not only missed their opportunity but, marching too far round the base of the hill, were in danger of being encompassed by the retreating Boers. The larger section of the small mounted force blundered north, were sighted by some men belonging to Erasmus's army, and after trying to defend themselves in some farm buildings, surrendered in the course of the after-

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noon. A smaller detachment broke away in the opposite direction, and by nightfall returned to the camp. In all the British casualties numbered 500 out of a force of rather more than 4,000 men. The Boer casualties were not half that number, though they had been driven from the field.

CH. III.



On the 21st October, the day following the fight at Talana, the troops from Ladysmith were engaged, their opponents being the advanced party of Boers who had come down to Elands-laagte Station. This party seems to have numbered not more than 1,000 or 1,200 men. They were under command of General Koch, one of the old Boer school, and consisted in the main of Johannesburg Boers, with a corps of Germans under Colonel Schiel, an artillery officer, some Hollanders, and a few men from the Free State. On the 20th they had been reconnoitred from Ladysmith; and very early on the 21st General French, who had but lately come up to Ladysmith, was sent out by Sir George White with a small force, consisting chiefly of mounted men, to drive them off, and reopen communication with the north. French found that the enemy were strongly posted, that they had two guns well placed and well served, and sent back for reinforcements. These were promptly forthcoming by rail and by road; and by the afternoon French was able to attack with some 3,500 men of all arms. Among them, conspicuous in the fighting, were the Imperial Light Horse, who in this, their first battle, were pitted against their special enemies, the Johannesburg Boers and the Hollanders. The Boers, in the early part of the day, were on both sides of the line, which at Elands-laagte runs more east than north; but when the serious fighting came they concentrated on their main position, a hilly ridge south of the railway, and running very roughly at right angles to it. This position the British infantry, under cover of their artillery, were to storm, one regiment attacking in front, two others attacking the left flank of the Boers at the southern end of the ridge which sloped towards the south.

Elands-laagte.

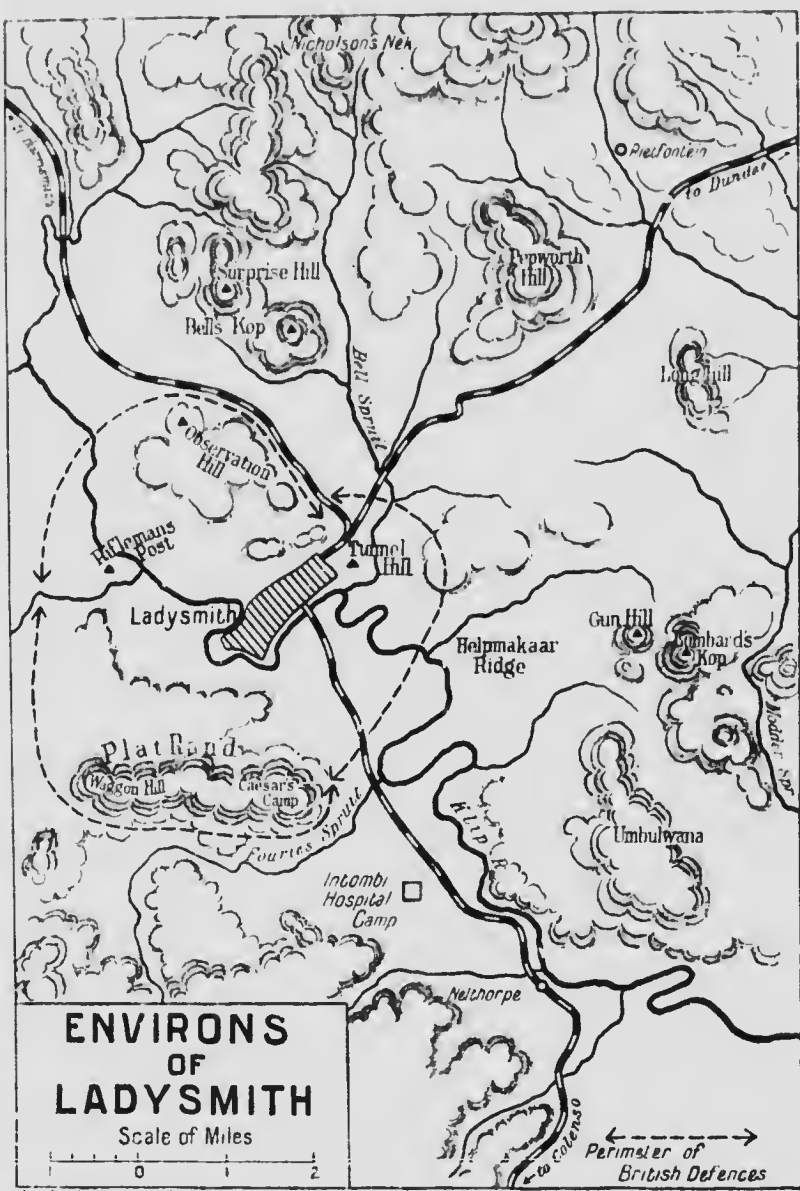
PART II. On this side the infantry were supported by mounted men, —♦— mainly the Imperial Light Horse; while in the opposite direction, on the extreme right of the Boer position, near Elandslaagte Station, was a detachment of cavalry ready to take up the pursuit if and when the infantry cleared the ridge. Sir George White, who came out from Ladysmith, left the ordering and conduct of the battle in General French's most capable hands. Colonel Ian Hamilton commanded the infantry regiments, the Devons, the Manchesters, and his own Gordon Highlanders. The afternoon was getting late before the hard fighting began. The battle was carried out as designed, but the flank attack became more or less the main attack, and the frontal advance ended on the flank, as the Boers turned to face the larger force coming up from the southern end of the ridge. The position was carried in a storm of rain: then followed a momentary Boer rally from an unseen quarter, accompanied by some loss of life. Then in the dusk the cavalry was let loose among the retreating marksmen, who fled from the hill, and the retreat became a rout. The victory was of a much more substantial kind than that of Talana. The British casualties were 263; the Boers lost 363, including nearly 200 prisoners. Their commander, the old General Koch, was mortally wounded and died at Ladysmith.

The retreat from Dundee.

The British troops were withdrawn from Elandslaagte immediately after the fight, and in two days' time it was reoccupied by some of the Free State forces. Meanwhile General Yule, who had succeeded General Symons in command at Dundee, soon found that his position was untenable without reinforcements from Ladysmith, which could not be spared, and that the only hope of safety lay in retreat. The one open outlet was to the south-east, on which side ran the road from Dundee to the village of Helpmakaar. By following this road for some distance and then turning west through the Biggarsberg Range, Lady-

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PART II. smith might be reached by a semicircular route of some
 —♦— sixty miles, making a wide sweep on the eastern side of the railway. Secrecy was imperative, if the retreat was to be unmolested. The camp was left standing, stores were abandoned, the dying General and the wounded were left: the citizens of Dundee, the enemy, and the British force itself, with the exception of a few leading officers, were in ignorance that retreat was intended until it was actually taking place. The column was well guided by the head of the Natal Police, Colonel Dartnell, the march was continued more or less night and day, and utterly worn out after a long night-march in pouring rain, the whole force reached Ladysmith in safety on the 26th of October. The latter part of the retreat might have been endangered by the Boers who were infesting the line at and below Elandslaagte and holding the hills on the western side of the line; but on the 24th White had moved out a small force and fought, with some loss, a long distance skirmish, near a farm called Rietfontein, about seven or eight miles from Ladysmith, which had the effect of preventing any attempt to intercept Yule's tired soldiers.

The skirmish at Rietfontein.

The Boers now closed in upon Ladysmith. Below Elandslaagte and below Rietfontein they came; and on Pepworth Hill, little more than four miles to the north-east of the town, they mounted a great gun, outranging the British artillery. On the western side the Free Staters were moving south, to complete the circle and cut the communication with Maritzburg. White had with him fully 12,000 good soldiers, and, as the Boers were widely spread, could strike at any particular point with greater numbers than could at once be brought against him. But he was placed in a hollow. The hills on all sides commanded the town, and screened the enemies behind them and their dispositions. He decided, however, not to remain inactive until the arrival of the Army Corps might relieve the pressure which was being concen-

trated on him, and planned a battle for daybreak on Monday, the 30th of October, the troops being moved out through the night. The main fight was to be on the eastern side of the railway to Glencoe, as it ran north-east, on which side were various points, such as Lombard's Kop, and, further north, Fongahar's Farm, whose names became associated with this memorable day. On this side, a particular hill, which was assumed to be on the left end of the semicircular Boer line, was to be attacked and taken by a flank movement to the right, which movement was to be followed by pressing, and if possible overwhelming, the Boer centre on and round Pepworth Hill. Meanwhile, on the western side of the railway, a small detachment was to move out, penetrating in the darkness of the night beyond the disjointed Boer lines, to a pass in the hills named Nicholson's Nek, about seven miles due north of Ladysmith. This column was intended at once to operate upon the right centre of the Boers, while the main attack was being pressed upon their left, and to hold the way open for British advance and pursuit. All went wrong, on both sides of the line. When daylight came the main attacking force had by some misunderstanding become divided. Then it was found that what had been taken to be the extreme end of the Boer left was in the middle of the Boer position, and that the British troops who were to storm it by a flank movement on the right, were themselves being attacked and outflanked on the right. The British line began by facing north; as the battle developed, they faced east. Instead of taking the offensive, they could hardly hold their ground; their guns were outranged by the heavy Boer artillery, behind them the town was threatened; and when mid-day came the army was withdrawn to Ladysmith, the retreat being covered by the artillery, served with splendid courage and effectiveness, and aided by heavy naval guns which, at Sir George White's earnest request, had been sent up from Durban, and arriving in the middle of the fight, proved

CH. III.

*The battle
of Mourn-
ful Mon-
day.*

PART II. a match for the great far-reaching cannon of the Boers,
 —♦— planted on the distant hills.

*Nicholson's
Nek.* The main battle had been a complete failure, but with no very great loss. Far worse was the fate of the detachment which had started in the middle of the night for Nicholson's Nek. It consisted of over 1,100 officers and men, the bulk of whom belonged to two infantry regiments, the Gloucesters and the Royal Irish Fusiliers. The advance was made without mishap up the valley of a small stream, the Bell Spruit, until the force was outside the semicircle of the Boer lines. It was then decided, as some time had been lost at the start, to turn sharp to the left and take up a position on high ground nearly two miles short of Nicholson's Nek, instead of pushing on to the Nek itself. In mounting the hill, which it was proposed to hold, some noise in the darkness, never fully explained, caused a momentary panic. The mules which carried the mountain battery and the ammunition broke loose, rushed back through the rear of the column, and could not be recovered. There was general confusion, after which, without their guns and without their reserves of ammunition, the men were set to defend the position as best they could. Messages were sent back to state what had occurred, but with daylight both communication and retreat were cut off. The stampede of the mules, and the noise which accompanied it, effectually alarmed the Boers, who, when day broke, began attacking the isolated British force. As in the main battle, so in this subsidiary fight, the English found themselves most strongly assailed from the direction where they were most vulnerable and least expected fighting. This was from the north, where broken ground sheltered an advance upon the more southerly parts of the hill which was being held. From this side the Boers attacked, and gradually drew in upon the flanks also. There were no guns, except one Maxim, to help the defence; ammunition was running short: the men were tired out with their night's work;

retreat had become impossible; the main army was too heavily engaged to send relief. Eventually a detached party, which had been nearly annihilated, raised the white flag; a general surrender followed, and over 900 officers and men were sent as prisoners to Pretoria. The fight in some respect resembled Majuba, although the main attack was made not on the most precipitous side, which was the south, but where the slopes were more gradual. The Boers gradually worked up against the British position, well and boldly led, and skilfully taking cover. Here it was that Christian De Wet, the celebrated Free State leader, first showed his fighting powers; while in the other battle Louis Botha came to the front, taking over command of the force which Lukas Meyer had previously held with indifferent success.

CH. III.

These two men, differing at almost every point, in social status, upbringing, outlook, character, military and civil qualities, though alike in being heart-whole supporters of the Boer cause, embodied the two diverse elements which gave strength to that cause; and their respective careers illustrate the way in which constant movement rather consolidated than counteracted the tie of race among the Boer population of South Africa. De Wet was the older man of the two. Born in 1854 in the south-eastern district of the Free State, son of a Field Cornet of Dewetsdorp, which was christened after his father, at the time of the Boer War of 1881 he was in the Transvaal ranks, serving with the Heidelberg Commando, and fought at Ingogo and Majuba. After the war he was in the Lydenburg district of the Transvaal, and represented that district in the Volksraad at Pretoria. Then he went back to his own State and represented De Wetsdorp in the Bloemfontein Legislature, but also owned a farm farther north in the Free State than his native district, near the railway north of Kroonstad, where his knowledge of the country bore abundant fruit in successful raids later in the

*De Wet
and Botha.*

PART II. war. He represented the strong, shrewd, stubborn, narrow-minded, country Boer.

Louis Botha was Natal born, in the Greytown district, born there in the year 1864, the son of a gentleman farmer. Thence he passed on to what was at the time the New Republic, afterwards the Vryheid district of the Transvaal, and now part of Natal. As a Transvaal citizen he represented, in the Volksraad and out of it, the Progressive section of the Boers: his views were not those of Kruger and his party: he stood for the more enlightened and educated section of the Boer community. It is very noticeable that time and circumstances to a large extent transposed the relative positions of the Transvaalers and the Free State Boers. The Transvaalers had been, and with some exceptions the older men remained, pre-eminently the Boers of the Back Blocks—the most remote, the least educated, the most restless and recalcitrant. The farmers of the Orange Free State had included the more settled and restful of the Dutchmen who had gone out from under British rule. But while the latter remained country farmers, the gold of the Transvaal, which caused all the upheaval of South Africa, brought modern conditions and modern views into the South African Republic to a greater extent than into the Free State, and thus in the Transvaal there grew up a younger generation of Dutchmen with wider outlook than was to be found in the purely agricultural and pastoral land south of the Vaal. Of this younger generation Louis Botha rose to be leader in peace as in war.

Boer advance into Southern Natal.

Ladysmith was now entirely surrounded. The last train which left for the south was on the 2nd of November, and it took with it General French, whose services were required by Sir Redvers Buller in the Cape Colony. Immediately after the fighting on the night of the 30th of October, Sir George White had sent down a detachment to Colenso, where the railway crossed the Tugela River 17 miles south

of Ladysmith, and on the night of the 2nd of November Colenso was abandoned, and the garrison of 1,200 men moved 25 miles farther down the line to Estcourt, Estcourt being $75\frac{1}{2}$ miles by rail from Maritzburg. For about a fortnight the Boers made no distinct advance below the line of the Tugela. Then Joubert, with rather more than 4,000 men, moved on. On the 14th of November Boer scouts were in evidence near Estcourt. On the next day an armoured train, patrolling the line north of Estcourt, was intercepted. Then the Boers reached the Mooi River, from 21 to 22 miles below Estcourt, and cut the communication between the British posts at Mooi River and Estcourt. From the Mooi River again they rode forward, till they were hardly more than 40 miles from Maritzburg, and Louis Botha, it is said, more enterprising than Joubert, was for marching on Maritzburg itself, which was practically undefended. Before this time, however, reinforcements had come in, and both at Estcourt and at Mooi River there were as many British troops as the whole number of Boers who were scouring the country. More and more regiments landed at Durban, and Joubert thought it time to turn. There was an inconclusive skirmish at Willow Grange, between the Mooi River and Estcourt; and gradually, having caused great confusion and alarm, having overrun the country and carried off the livestock, and having suffered little or no damage themselves at the hands of a much greater number of enemies strung out along the railway, the Boers regained Colenso, and on the 28th of November blew up the railway bridge over the Tugela.

For the first month of the war the main fighting was in Natal. Away in the west the record was, on the part of the Boers, one of skirmishing, raiding, breaking up the railway, and isolating Kimberley and Mafeking; on the part of the English, of gathering in any small parties which were outside these centres, and making, with no little success, small counter-attacks upon their enemies. Cronje commanded several

PART II.

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*The
 Western
 frontier.*

thousand Dutchmen who were intended to take Mafeking; but the first few weeks brought no success, and he went south to take a hand in bigger work, while the Boers who remained behind settled down to a tedious blockade. On the line north of Mafeking a British armoured train went up and down; and on the northern frontier of the Transvaal, Plumer, with a handful of men, faced a much larger number of Boers and kept them in fear of invasion. Further south, Kimberley gradually became more closely invested, but before October ended the garrison had made a successful sortie and inflicted considerable loss upon the besiegers. Within Kimberley was the man whom the Boers regarded as their arch-enemy, Cecil Rhodes, who had come up to the town at the last moment, before it was shut in. Kimberley, too, stood on ground which the Boers always held to have been filched from them for the sake of its mineral wealth. North of the Orange River, in short, they seem to have thought that they were in a special manner regaining their own, and were early, where they went, in proclaiming annexation. Invasion of the Cape Colony south of the Orange River was another matter. President Steyn, before the war, had been prolific of assurances to the Cape Government that he had no hostile intent against the colony, and moreover, in the early days of the war, the Free State Boers were suspicious of the Basutos, who, on this side, might, if not restrained by the English, have broken in upon their flank. But the commandos were ready to cross the Orange River, where the railways crossed it at Norval's Pont and Bethulie, as well as further east, where there was a road bridge at Aliwal North. In these border districts of the Cape Colony were numbers of Dutchmen ready to welcome the invaders and make common cause with them. The news of White's reverse on the 30th of October gave the small additional stimulus that was wanted, and November opened with the Free Staters crossing the river and breaking into the colony.

*The
 Northern
 frontier
 of the Cape
 Colony.*

By the way that they came in, over the Norval's Pont and Bethulie Bridges, it had been intended that Sir Redvers Buller and the Army Corps should march on Bloemfontein and Pretoria. Buller reached Capetown in advance of his troops, upon the 31st of October, the day after the disastrous fighting at Ladysmith, and for the next three weeks the news that came from Natal was constantly worse. As the different ships that carried the Army Corps reached South Africa, more and more regiments were sent on to Durban. For the time the proposed central advance was abandoned: the Corps was entirely broken up; and on the 22nd of November the Commander-in-Chief went himself to Natal.

CH. III.

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Arrival
of Sir
Redvers
Buller.

Before he left, he had arranged for three separate forces to operate in the Cape Colony, on the three lines of railway which have been described, one north, two south of the Orange River. On the west, Lord Methuen was to lead the strongest force, supposed to be adequate in numbers, from the Orange River along the western railway to relieve Kimberley. In the middle General French, with a small force, consisting largely of mounted men, was to cover the railway by which the Boers were advancing from Norval's Pont, operating from and covering Naauwpoort Junction. From that junction, it should be said, Buller had withdrawn the garrison, but after a short interval it was reoccupied. On the easternmost line, the line running from East London to Bethulie Bridge, General Gatacre was to make the best defence he could, with the remnant of the troops that had been originally intended to advance along this route. In this quarter Stormberg Junction had been evacuated at the same time as Naauwpoort, and, not having been reoccupied, passed into the hands of the Boers.

Military
dispositions
in the Cape
Colony.

Lord Methuen reached the Orange River on the 12th of November, and on the 21st moved north with over 9,000 fighting men. He had with him the Guards' Brigade. At a later stage the Highland Brigade joined him, but at the

Methuen's
advance.

PART II. outset they were watching the line of communications. His force also included, just after he had started, a small Naval Brigade, and among his very few mounted men was a band of New South Wales Lancers. From the Orange River to Kimberley along the railway line is a distance of 77 miles; 53 miles from the Orange River and 24 miles from Kimberley the line crosses the combined Riet and Modder Rivers. It seemed a comparatively easy march; but there was great lack of water along it, which told hardly on horses weak from their long sea-voyage; and the want of a strong force of cavalry and horse artillery was a great drawback to the little army. It prevented wide flanking movements, and almost entailed the necessity of frontal attacks.

Belmont. The first collision with the Boers was on the 23rd of November, near Belmont Station, between 21 and 22 miles beyond the Orange River. The railway runs north-east, and here the Boers held a line, or rather a double line, of low hills running roughly parallel to the railway. The British attack was more from west to east than from south to north. The hills were stormed in the early morning in the teeth of the Boers, and by 10 o'clock in the day the fighting was over, the British casualties being nearly three hundred. The British infantry carried all before them, the position was taken, the Boer losses were considerable; but beyond clearing away the immediate obstruction, little use could be made of the victory for want of mounted men and quick-moving guns. On the afternoon of the following day, the 24th, the troops moved on again, and early on the 25th there was another fight. The place was about ten or eleven miles north of Belmont, midway between two railway sidings, Graspan on the south, Enslin on the north, where the line began to run between broken country on both sides. The Boers this time held ridges and kopjes right athwart the railway, and the British attack was made on the end of their left flank, the troops coming up from the south and the south-east. Again

the hills were carried, with rather over 150 casualties, the Naval Brigade showing splendid courage and suffering very heavily. This time the cavalry and mounted men, in two small bodies, were sent out wide, on the east and west respectively, to harass the Boer retreat, but the numbers were too small and the horses too weak to effect any useful purpose; and on the west the detachment, having, like the cavalry at Talana, pushed right to the rear of the Boers, was nearly cut off.

So far the Boers had tried to stop the British advance by manning hills on the route. They were mainly Free Staters, men of the adjoining country; but among them were some Transvaal burghers, led by a man who showed conspicuous military capacity throughout the war, Delarey, like Joubert, of Huguenot ancestry. He had struck the first blow in the war, for it was he who cut off the armoured train at Kraaipan. At the time of the war he was well over fifty years of age. His home was in the Western Transvaal, and he represented Lichtenburg in the Volksraad of the South African Republic. Like Joubert, and like his younger colleague, Botha, he took the more Progressive side in the Legislature, but there was no more fearless or whole-hearted champion of Republican independence than this clean-handed, high-minded Transvaaler. In *The Times History of the War* he is well described as 'the Stonewall Jackson, as Botha was the Lee, of the Boer armies';¹ and the two men resembled the great Virginians in contributing to their cause not merely marked military ability, but untainted patriotism. His skill was in evidence when the next fighting came. This was at the Modder River—or rather, as the histories of the war point out, the Riet River.

On the 27th Methuen moved on for about 14 miles, until he was about six miles distant from the point where the railway crosses the river. It crosses it about half a mile short of Modder River Station, which is 24 miles distant from

*The battle
of Modder
River.*

¹ Vol. ii, p. 341.

PART II. Kimberley. Just above the railway bridge, which the Boers broke down, is the confluence of the Riet and the Modder. The Riet, coming up from the south and east, after running for a short distance to the north-east, makes a sharp bend to the north-west, so as to flow more or less in a semi-circle. At the point where it makes this sudden bend, and which is about two miles above the junction of the rivers, the Modder River, which comes twisting and turning from the east, is only about half a mile from the Riet, so that a peninsula is formed between the two streams. From the confluence the single river flows to the west for rather over a mile to the village of Rosmead on its northern bank. There is a dam on the river near the village, and lower down the river broadens and there is a ford. The railway coming up to the bridge across an open plain has a river in front, and a river behind, the Riet River, running in a semi-circle on its eastern side. This time, instead of defending high ground, the Boers held an unseen, from the bend of the Riet to the lower side of Rosmead, both banks of the river, together with trenches in front of the central part of the southern bank, the river running in a deep channel and giving ample cover and concealment to marksmen under its banks. Their artillery was behind them a little back from the northern bank of the river. Delarey was not the only Transvaal leader in the Boer ranks, for on the eve of the battle Cronje, who had come down from the outskirts of Mafeking and made his way through the Free State, bringing a strong contingent with him, took over command of the whole force. At daybreak on the 28th Methuen advanced and attacked with all his army, which, though small, largely outnumbered the Boers. The Guards Brigade marched on the right with their rear protected by the cavalry and on the left was the Ninth Brigade. They marched across the open, and about eight o'clock in the morning, coming within easy range of the Boer lines, were met with a storm of bullets, against which they had no cover. It had been

the Boers
Modder.
running
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contemplated that they could extend on the right and turn the Boer left, but the Riet River was in the way and could not be forded at this point. In short, when the attack was made, the strength of the Boers was unknown, their dispositions were unknown, and the course of the Riet River was unknown. On the right and in the centre the men lay exposed all day long, unable to move forward, but to some extent protected by the unremitting fire which the British artillery poured on the Boer lines. The extreme right of the line was facing east, to hold in check the Boers who in their turn were trying to outflank them on the other side of the river. The left of the line was held up in the same manner until midday. Then, on the extreme left, the Boers south of the river were driven out, and the Englishmen began to cross the river by the ford below Rosmead and along the walls of the dam. The crossing was helped by a new battery, which, by a killing forced march, bravely struggled up to the front in the middle of the battle, and shelled the Boers who were holding the northern bank in the neighbourhood of Rosmead. The English drove the Boers from Rosmead, and began pressing on to the Boer centre; but for want of sufficient numbers were beaten back, and before a new and combined attack could be concerted, night fell. Pole Carew, commanding the Ninth Brigade, held Rosmead through the night, and brought over the whole brigade to renew the attack in the morning; but when the morning came the Boers, men and guns, had disappeared and the position was empty. Thus the passage of the Modder was gained at the cost of nearly 500 casualties, among the wounded being Lord Methuen himself.

For the moment, though it was not known at the time, the way to Kimberley was more or less open, for Cronje had drawn off his men not north but south-east, to the Free State village of Jacobsdal, whence he had come up to the fight. But there was some very difficult country between the

CH. III.

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PART II. Modder River and Kimberley. Methuen's force had been in ^{it} tried. The three fights had reduced it by about a thousand men, and the further the march was continued the more danger there was of communication being cut behind. As a matter of fact, some days after the battle a raid was made on the railway at Enslin and on the troops which were there guarding the line. So far the march had been carried through, and the Boers had been beaten back, had suffered appreciable loss, and were considerably shaken. But it was clear that the difficulty of relieving Kimberley had been underestimated, and a halt was called for rest and for reinforcements, which included the Highland Brigade, moved up from the lines of communication, a cavalry regiment transferred from French's force, and a battery of Horse Artillery.

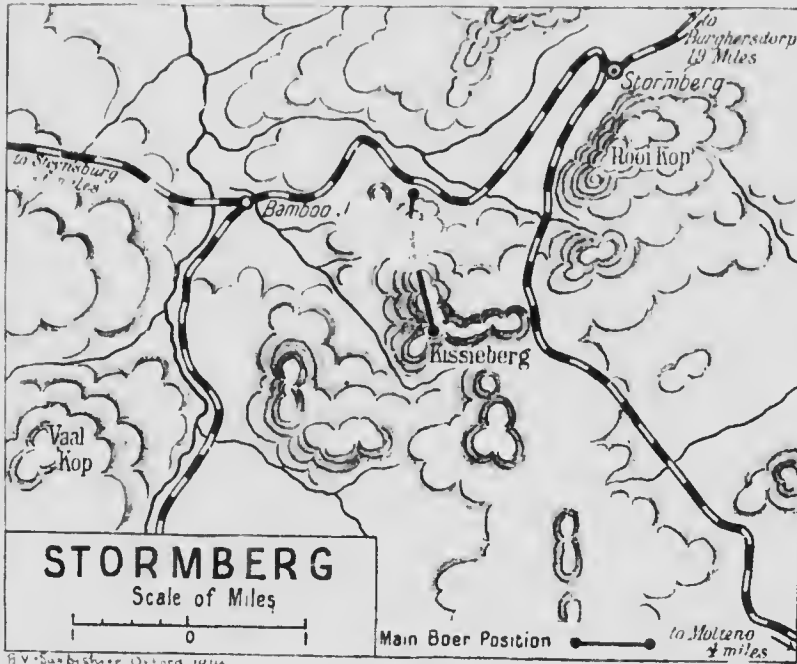
The beginning of December.

December, then, opened with Kimberley, Mafeking, and Ladysmith beleaguered, with Methuen at the Modder River preparing for a further move and another fight; with Buller in Natal concentrating a large force, in order to break the line of the Tugela and relieve Ladysmith; and with the Boers far down in the Cape Colony, faced at first by skeleton but afterwards by substantial forces, on the line of the Port Elizabeth-Norval's Pont Railway under General French, on the line of the East London-Bethulie Railway under General Gatacre. The month was not far advanced when a series of reverses befell the British arms in a single week.


Stormberg.

Stormberg Junction on the East London line, from which, as has been said, a cross-line ran westward to the central railway from Port Elizabeth, is just half-way between Queenstown and Bethulie Bridge. When, by Buller's instructions, the small British garrison at this point was withdrawn on the 3rd of November, Queenstown, 67 miles to the south, became the rallying-point of the British cause in the eastern districts of the Cape Colony, and here General Gatacre, who had landed at East London on the 16th of November, at once took up his command. The diversion of troops to Natal

had not merely broken up the Army Corps, but had broken up the units of which it consisted, and the separate forces now operating at different points on the British side were collected in more or less haphazard manner, as the transports reached South Africa. Gatacre's command suffered badly. At first he had among his infantry but one and a half battalions of the line, 1,500 in all, though this small number



was soon supplemented by a second battalion, the 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers, and later by others. On the other hand, he had a considerable number of fighting Cape Colonists, who grew in numbers and efficiency as time went on. Before November ended, he had moved forward along the railway to Putterskraal and Sterkstroom, Sterkstroom being 32 miles from Stormberg and rather farther from Queenstown, and Putterskraal being south of Sterkstroom,

PART II.  six miles nearer Queenstown. He had also thrown forward an advance party beyond Sterkstroom to Molteno, which was only ten or eleven miles short of Stormberg. The Boers had moved down very slowly under Commandant Olivier, and had only occupied Stormberg on the 25th of November. But it was in this part of the Colony that rebellion was most rife and the contagion most likely to spread. Here, therefore, it was specially desirable to strike a blow and stem invasion. Buller, away in Natal, when consulted on the telegraph by Gatacre as to the best mode of dealing with the enemy, had asked 'Cannot you close with him?' and Gatacre, a brave, untiring man, resolved to close. On the 9th of December, being a Saturday, he put his men on the train at Putterskraal, the slow process of entraining lasting from midday to early evening, and brought them up to Molteno. Thence, about nine o'clock at night, he led them out for a night attack upon the Boer position at Stormberg. They numbered about 3,000 men in all, of whom 1,700 were infantry, the 2nd Irish Rifles and the 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers. Twelve guns went with the force. The men had been fed before they started in the train, and took with them rations, but they had had a long tiring afternoon in the railway trucks, following upon heavy work in the morning.

The main line, as it comes up towards Stormberg from the south, crosses a Nek and enters a valley running for about two miles from south-west to north-east, with a line of hills on either side and high ground also at either end. The railway skirts the inside of the eastern line of hills, and Stormberg is at the top of this enclosed valley. From the junction the cross-line to Steynsburg and Rosmead Junction on the Port Elizabeth line runs out to the west through a gap in the hills, and from this cross-line another subsidiary line, leading to some collieries, diverges to the south. Between the collieries' line and the outer side of the western line of hills the action took place. The Boers were encamped in the

valley, and were by way of keeping watch on the hills which encircled it, but Gatacre's move seems to have taken them by surprise. He had intended to force the Nek right in front of him, but information which he received to the effect that it was strongly held determined him to try a flank attack from the west against the outer face of the western line of hills, towards their southern end. The hills were known as the Kissieberg. There had been no thorough reconnoissance of the Boer position, and the march was left in the hands of guides. A march of nine miles had been contemplated; the distance was really ten. The direction was north-west towards Steynsburg up to a certain point, at which the column was to turn north and east and advance directly on the hill. In the darkness the guides passed the turning-point, and led the men round an outer instead of an inner arc, with the result that from first to last the distance traversed was thirteen miles. There was an hour's rest from 1 to 2 in the morning, and just before day was breaking the point was reached whence Gatacre had intended to attack; but it was not recognized, and the guides led the tired men northwards along and under the line of hills towards their northern instead of their southern end. As day broke, the Boer sentries sighted them, the Boers manned the length of the hill, and fired on the English below. By this time the head of the column was near the gap at the northern end of the ridge, and under the General's personal direction the men were in a fair way to seize the high ground and make good their position; the rest of the troops, turning at right angles to the line of march, tried to storm the hill at the points to which they had come, when discovered by the Boers. Some nearly reached the top, most were held up midway by the steep ascent and their utter fatigue. Then the companies who were farthest south were ordered by their commanding officer to retire, and this compromised the chances of those who remained. Meanwhile the men at the northern end, who were most nearly carrying their part of

PART II.

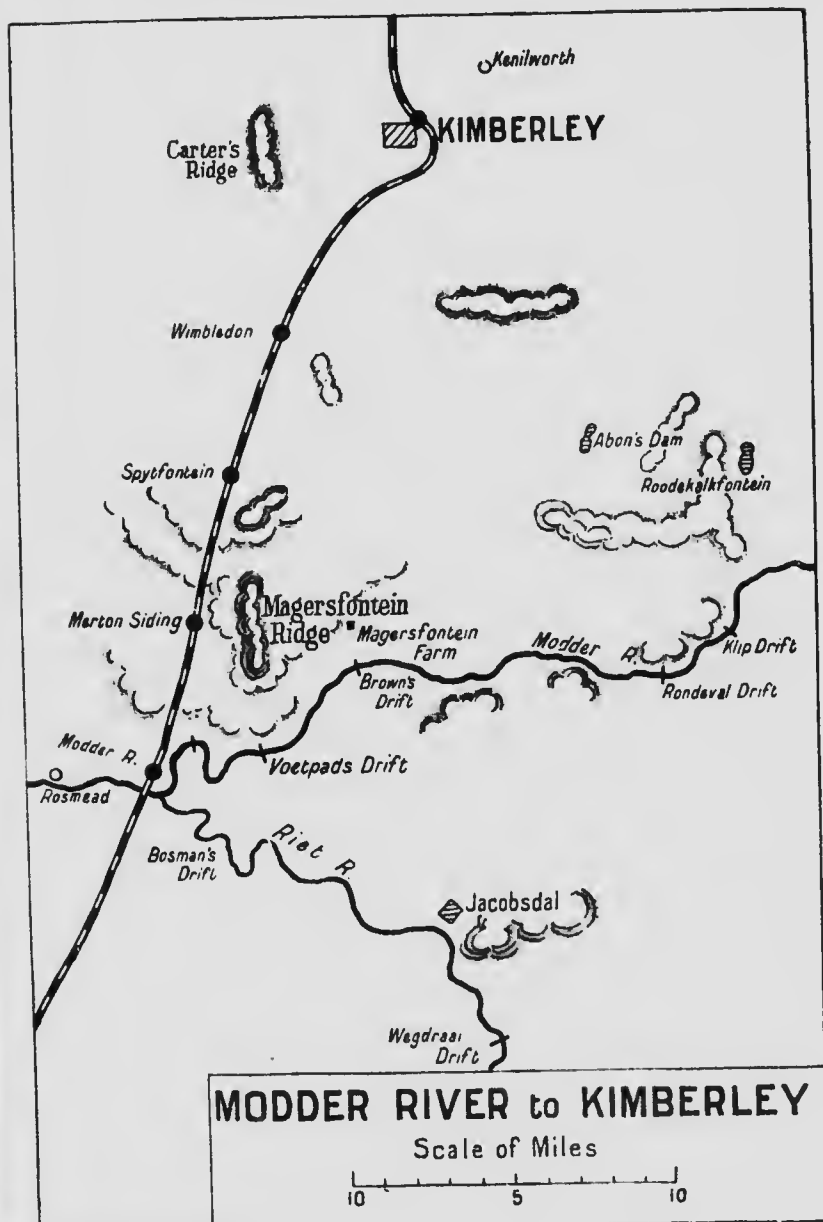
- ♦♦ -

the hill, were shelled from behind by their own artillery, and it all ended in utter confusion. The soldiers were worn out: they went to sleep on the hill and in the valley. Covered by the guns and by the mounted men, the majority dribbled back in the direction from which they had come, but a large number were simply overlooked and left behind, and from sheer exhaustion passed quietly into the hands of the Boers. One gun was bogged and lost on coming into action, another was lost on the retreat. Eventually the broken force reached Molteno again, the casualties having numbered 696, including 561 unwounded prisoners. The loss should have been far greater, if the Boers had been well handled. They were taken unawares, their shooting was bad, they made no attempt at a vigorous counter-attack. A strong detachment of five to six hundred Boers, who had been sent out to the west on the preceding day for a purpose unconnected with the fight, and who were excellently placed for intercepting the British retreat, proved ineffective and were shelled off by the British artillery.

The verdict which has been passed upon this unfortunate enterprise is that there was at once mismanagement and bad luck. The men were not in good condition, they were new to the work and new to each other, they were set to fight when tired out. The ground had not been reconnoitred, sufficient safeguards had not been taken, a night is always dangerous. The outcome was disaster, but it did not involve loss of ground which had been previously gained, and Gatacre held his own at Sterkstroom, until brighter times came and a general advance.

*Magers
fontein.*

It was at midday on Sunday, the 10th, that the troops trailed back into Molteno, and it was on the afternoon of this same Sunday that Methuen at Modder River, having rested his men, received strong reinforcements, and completed a deviation bridge over the river for the railway, was beginning his next move. He now commanded 15,000 men,



MODDER RIVER to KIMBERLEY
Scale of Miles

H.V. Sandhurst, Oxford, 1914

PART II. including some of the finest regiments in the British army. On the other hand the Boers, again in front of him, had been strongly reinforced, and President Steyn had come down among them to put new heart into the Free State contingent. The total numbers on the Boer side at this date under Cronje's command seem to have numbered about 6,000.¹ Delarey was again responsible for making a stand and for the choice of the position which it was determined to hold. From the Modder River the railway runs slightly east of north for rather over ten miles to Spytfontein; there is an intermediate siding, Merton Siding, about six miles from the Modder River, $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Modder River Station. Just north of Merton Siding and on the left, the western side of the line, a hill marks the beginning of a somewhat irregular and disjointed line of high ground, or rather series of small hills with gaps between them, running diagonally from north-west to south-east across the railway and on to the Modder River, but dying away as it approaches the river. This line makes in some sort the base of a triangle, of which the sides are the railway and the river: but the base extends beyond the railway. The whole line of hills is at least nine miles long, and about the middle of it there is a hill rather higher than the others, which is Magersfontein. The Boers determined to hold this line of hills, and to dig and man unseen trenches on the level ground in front of them, just as they had dug them in front of the Riet or Modder River. The trenches were in front of Magersfontein itself, and the part of the line to the north of it, but were not completed for the three miles between Magersfontein and the river. They were about 150 yards in front of the higher ground, very carefully concealed. The Boer lines extended for the whole length of

¹ The German official account (vol. i, p. 87) states that 'Cronje had from 8,000 to 9,000 men, and about 12 guns at his disposal', but a mean of the different estimates gives about 6,000, which the German account (p. 110) seems to make the number of Boers who actually took part in the fighting.

the high ground, and on the extreme left a party was thrown across the Modder River to its southern bank.

Methuen did not feel able to make a wide flanking movement on east or west, leaving the railway and his communications, and once more laid his plans for a direct attack. The centre point was Magersfontein, to be attacked and carried at its southern or south-eastern end. From where he was encamped at the Modder River, a plain sloped up towards the north-east for five or six miles to Magersfontein—an open plain, but with bush and prickly scrub upon it near the foot of the hills. The advance, being entirely exposed, was to be made under cover of night, the troops starting from behind some high ground isolated in the middle of the plain. The Highland Brigade was to storm the hill, the Guards were to come behind and on their right. Some few troops were to watch the line of the Modder River, lest the Boers should push forward on this flank, and the Ninth Brigade were to demonstrate northwards along the course of the railway. On the Sunday afternoon the artillery moved out into the middle of the plain and shelled the hills. Little or no damage, it would seem, was done; the Boers were safe in their trenches, and the artillery fire put them on the alert for what was to follow. Half an hour after midnight the Highlanders, already out in the plain, started, some 3,400 men, at about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles distance from Magersfontein: their brigadier leading them, Wauchope, a typical Scotch soldier, bravest of the brave. They started in thick darkness and pouring rain, with a thunderstorm gathering. Slowly and in close formation they moved, lest they should lose their way and one another: nearer and nearer to the hill they came, the lightning only relieving the gloom. About a quarter of a mile from where the Boers lay, they were about to take open order: the movement was slightly delayed, owing to the men of the leading regiment, the Black Watch, being entangled in the thick undergrowth: and, before they could be extended, just as

PART II. dawn was beginning to break, the Boers, nearer to them than had been thought by 150 yards, fired point blank into the masses. Wauchope went on in front of his men and was killed: his soldiers, in confusion, fought and fell and struggled on here and there. A small party made their way into the gap between the southern end of Magersfontein and the adjoining high ground, and, having overpowered a group of Scandinavians fighting on the Boer side, would have taken the hill in the rear had not Cronje himself and a small party, coming along the line, happened to meet them and drive them back. Full daylight came, the British artillery were brought into action and to some extent protected the Highlanders, who took what cover they might by lying down, but were unable to advance: the Guards came on and held up the battle on the right; on the right the mounted men fought hard, and an attempted counter-attack by the Boers along the Modder River was effectually held in check by the Yorkshire Light Infantry; but, as at the Modder River fight, so here again hour after hour passed without gaining ground; and when in the early afternoon the overstrained Highlanders began to retreat, the backward movement proved almost as deadly as the advance. Fighting of one kind and another went on all day long; and when night fell some of the Guards still held their ground. It was not until the afternoon of the 12th of December, the day after the battle, that the field was finally abandoned. The British casualties on this memorable day numbered 948, 210 of whom were killed. The Boer casualties were little more than a quarter of that number. The great bulk of the losses was in the Highland Brigade, for nearly all the killed, and considerably more than half the wounded, were Highlanders, the Black Watch suffering most severely. It was one of the dark days of Scotland, a day of bitterness and sorrow. The German criticism on the battle is that 'the British advanced in a somewhat aimless manner and with no unity of action; a portion only of their forces

was employed, and that by driblets; there was no formation in depth, no reserves, nowhere the firm resolve to conquer somewhere. Without waiting to acquire the superiority in fire, the troops were flung against the Boers'.¹ This is expert criticism. To a layman reading the story of the war it seems curious that so much reliance was placed in these early days of the fighting upon proverbially risky night attacks. They failed at Nicholson's Nek, at Stormberg, and now for the third time at Magersfontein. It is somewhat difficult to understand, too, why, having been so lately entrapped at the Modder River by sunken trenches, the force was again entrapped in the same way, though here the hill behind suggested where the defence was most likely to be. But, when all is told, it is a story of men fighting on new lines in a strange land against enemies trained to take cover and trained to shoot. The experience was sad enough, but the disaster amounted to no more than an ambush on a large scale; and Methuen, like Gatacre, was not driven to retreat but entrenched himself strongly at Modder River.

It has been seen that in the early days of November Ladysmith was completely invested. The Boers held an outer circle round it of some 36 miles, the dominant points in which were in some cases hardly more than four miles from the centre of the town. On the north they held Pepworth Hill at this distance, on the east Lombards Kop and Umbulwana, and similar positions on the other sides. The Transvaalers were mainly on the east; elsewhere Free State burghers for the most part kept the lines. White held an inner circle about 14 miles in circumference. There was open ground on the south-east, along the course of the Klip River. Here the railway came in from Colenso and Maritzburg; and in this direction Joubert with kindly generosity had agreed to the formation of a neutral camp for the sick and wounded and for non-combatants. At all other points there were hills to hold;

*Ladysmith
in Novem-
ber and
early De-
cember.*

¹ Vol. i, p. 121.

PART II. on the south, Wagon Hill and Caesar's Camp. The British garrison numbered over 13,000 effective troops with 51 guns; and, with the prospect of early relief, there was at the beginning of the siege no great cause for anxiety. On the 3rd of November the cavalry made a reconnaissance towards the south, to no great purpose: on the 9th of November the Boers made an unsuccessful attack on Caesar's Camp. Then came an interval of inaction, accounted for on the Boer side by the fact that Joubert and Botha were overrunning the country further south, until the night of the 7th of December, when, in strong contrast to the failure of most night enterprises in the early stages of this war, Sir Archibald Hunter led out some 650 men and blew up two Boer guns on Gun Hill, as it was thenceforward named, near Lombard's Kop, to the north-east of the town. Three nights later another gun on a hill, christened Surprise Hill, on the north-western side, was similarly destroyed, but this time there was delay on the hill owing to defective fuses, and the attacking party suffered as they left the hill.

*Sir R.
Buller in
Natal.*

The Boers had their hands full. They had to watch a great circle that hemmed in a strong garrison, and they had to face a constantly growing British force which was gathering south of the Tugela. Buller had reached Durban on the 25th of November, and on the 6th of December was at Frere, the station next to and five miles south of Chieveley, which again is seven miles south of Colenso. At Colenso, which stands on the southern bank of the Tugela, the railway crosses the river, and runs for 17 miles into Ladysmith.

Between the 12th and the 14th of December Buller concentrated his troops in a camp to the north-west of Chieveley, his fighting strength being fully 18,000 men. Against him on the other side of the Tugela, not much more than four miles away, Louis Botha commanded some 6,000 to 7,000 Boers, the total number of Boers in Natal at this date to hold in the garrison of Ladysmith and block the relieving force

being about 20,000. Buller's and White's armies, therefore, taken together, largely outnumbered the Boers, and Buller's artillery was greatly superior, alike in quantity and in quality, to the guns which Botha had at his disposal, the heavy Boer cannon being mounted round Ladysmith. On the other hand, the Boers, quick and mobile, could reinforce one another speedily and easily at any point, and the lie of the land was as favourable to the marksman, the hunter soldier, as it was unfavourable to an army trained for a European battlefield.

The Tugela River, from its source to its junction with the Buffalo, flows right across Natal, as Natal was, before Zululand was incorporated in the colony. It flows from west to east, but with a most winding course, nowhere more tortuous than in the neighbourhood of Colenso. A little west of Colenso it takes an abrupt turn to the north-west, but soon turns south-east and south again, forming a complete loop. About a mile further east, in a direct line, it makes a second loop, almost parallel to the first. In this second loop is Colenso; through it runs the railway, the railway bridge being three or four hundred yards north of Colenso station, crossing the river at the top of the loop, whereas the road bridge is on the west of the loop; the road across the Tugela is therefore at right angles to the railway. Having completed this second loop, the river flows away for a long distance to the north and north-west before it turns east again, so that east of Colenso the country south of the Tugela extends far north of the northern bank at Colenso and in the loops. South of the Tugela, along the railway and to the west of the railway, the ground is open and slopes down to the river-bank: east of the railway, the side on which the river breaks away to the north, there is wooded and broken ground culminating in hills, the nearest hill to the railway being Hlangwhane, over 500 feet high. At this point the high ground, which elsewhere is north of the river, reappears south of it, the river having made its way between

PART II. the hills. Hlangwhane is, in fact, the eastern end of a semi-circle of hills which faces Colenso on the north of the Tugela, the western end of the arc coming down to, but not crossing, the river some distance higher up than and to the west of the loops. Thus the railway crossing the river comes out into a hill-girt semicircle, and running down this semicircle from north to south at right angles to the river is a row of small hills, which were called the Colenso Kopjes, and which Buller described as four in number, one behind the other, and each one, as it is farther from the river, higher and longer than the one in front. Of these kopjes the one nearest the river, close to the railway bridge on its eastern side, was known as Fort Wylie. The northern bank of the river at Colenso and west of Colenso is higher than and commands the southern bank. Thus an attempt to carry the line of the river in the neighbourhood of Colenso, on the west or in the centre, involved crossing open ground, attacking a higher bank, where the loops of the river would bring the fire on the flanks as well as in front, facing at Colenso itself the perpendicular line of hills which ended in Fort Wylie, and coming out into an amphitheatre surrounded by a ring of hills. An attempt to carry it on the east necessitated taking and holding the dominant height of Hlangwhane Hill. The position was by nature enormously strong for a blocking force to hold, and skill had made it stronger. The Boers formed their lines along the northern side of the river; Fort Wylie and the kopjes behind it were trenched for guns and men; and Hlangwhane was held by 800 burghers. This hill was, as after events were to prove—and as before the events the map seemed to show to the unexpert eye—the key of the whole position. The river cut it off from the main lines, and yet it commanded the main lines. The Boers did not like its isolation, and when they heard that the British troops had moved up to Chieveley they abandoned it on the night of the 13th, but were persuaded by their leaders to occupy it again

PART II. ON the night of the 14th. They had hardly gone back to the hill before Buller's men moved out for the battle of Colenso.

Buller had laid his plans not to force the passage at Colenso, but to cross the river higher up at a considerable distance to the west; and it was in this direction that White felt he was able to co-operate with him. The views of the Boers on the reverse at Scurberg and Magersfontein made him change his mind. A movement on either east or west seemed likely to interrupt Buller's communications with southern Natal, and embolden the Boers to attack them, while he was moving round. Accordingly he decided to strike straight in front of where he was. The river was to be crossed at two points—on the west of the railway, where there was a drift, Bridge Drift, about a mile west of the two loops which have already been noticed, and straight along the railway to Colenso and its bridges, that is right into the second loop. The western crossing having been made, the troops at this point were to work down the northern bank of the river to support the main crossing at Colenso. Meanwhile on the east, well out on the right of the railway, the mounted men were to attack and if possible gain a footing on, Hlangwani Hill, to prevent the Boers from concentrating their resistance against the main army.

To the layman who studies the records of the campaign in the early months of the South African War, the Boers seem to give the impression that the British command was open to their enemies and perpetually taken in. Sir Redvers Buller did in former days know South Africa and the Boers well. At Colenso the Boers were met by a man of real military genius in Louis Botha. On their side there seems to have been accurate anticipation of when and where the attack would be made, coupled with complete secrecy as to the way in which it should be met. On the British side there seems to have been a constant and open knowledge

and a strange failure to conceal their intentions. 'Two days' bombardment heralded the coming fight. There was practically no answer from any that answered. Hence it was inferred that the Boer lines might have been evacuated or were but feebly held, whereas after the battle Buller estimated that he was opposed by 20,000 men, three times the number that he had originally estimated. It must have been difficult to reconnoitre the Boer positions, and it is surely to be regretted that the reconnaissance was not more thoroughly done.

The Boer attack on the 15th of December. As a matter of fact, it took place on the 15th, and the Ladysmith garrison only became aware of it on the 16th. In the early morning the great force of Boers again bombarded the Boer lines, and the main force of the British moved on in the directions assigned to them. The main attack was entrusted to General Hart and the Irish Brigade, who were to cross at Bridle Drift. They were the first on whom the Boers opened fire, about 6 o'clock in the morning. They were advancing in close order: the map on which they were working was inaccurate, and their Kaffir guide led them not to the drift, which was clear of the loops, but into the very loop itself. They made their way right up it, but there was a crossing, and they were helpless under short range fire from the Boers in their shelters on the further bank of the river that circled round the attacking force. The close firing began on this side about 6.30, and about 8 o'clock, by Buller's personal order, the troops began to retire. They were gradually brought off through the morning, having suffered over 500 casualties, and having left some of their numbers behind still holding the end of the loop. One part of the general plan was thus entirely miscarried. Simultaneously with the advance on the left the central advance was being made, and here two batteries of field artillery, which were to support the infantry, moved on in front of the main force. Hearing the Boer guns open on the Irish Brigade, the officer commanding

PART II.



these batteries, Colonel Long, pushed forward beyond the infantry, unmolested by fire from the enemy, until he was only 1,000 yards from the river, in order to open fire upon the Boer lines, without knowledge, it would seem, that these lines were not merely on the hills, but nearer to hand, along the northern bank of the river.¹ He had gone considerably beyond the point where it had been intended that the guns should halt, and in a moment a terrible fire was poured upon the batteries from the other side of the river. The ground was staunchly held; the men who were not shot down worked the guns until ammunition was running short, when the survivors took refuge in a little dip behind the guns, until fresh ammunition could be brought up or support given. Twelve guns, intended to cover the crossing of the river, were thus for the time out of action and in a death-trap; this incident decided the fate of the day. The central attack had not yet been made, the infantry were not yet in action, but Buller decided against further effort to carry through the enterprise, and fighting resolved itself into attempts to bring back the guns. The infantry moved forward; the foremost men made their way to Colenso and held the station: others came up alongside of the guns. One attempt and another was made to bring back the guns: two were retrieved with loss of life, including the life of Lord Roberts's only son. Ten were still left when, thinking that all the gunners had been killed, Sir Redvers Buller about 11 o'clock in the morning decided to abandon them and to draw back the whole army. With the guns the survivors of those who had manned them and some of the infantry in the zone of fire

¹ Long's own account written on March 15, 1900, will be found in Appendix 51 in Cd. 1792, 1903, p. 34¹. (The Royal Commission on the War in South Africa, Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence.) He says that he wished to select a position between 2,000 and 2,500 yards from the enemy, 'but the light was deceptive and I got a bit closer than I intended,' 1,700 yards from his objective, 1,000 from the river, 1,250 from Fort Wylie which he did not know was held by the Boers.

fell into the Boers' hands. The attack on Hlangwhane had also come to nothing, the mounted brigade being too weak in numbers to achieve any substantial result. The whole outcome of the morning's work was complete failure, British casualties amounting in all to over 1,100 men, and such a loss of artillery as has rarely befallen the British army. The guns could not be taken by the Boers as long as they were covered by British guns and soldiers, and might eventually have been brought back when night time came. There were men all the time waiting to serve them again, if ammunition had been brought; and, had Buller known the facts of the case, it must be presumed that he would never have let them pass out of British keeping. What had happened was that an attack had been made upon an almost impossible position: the defenders had been fully prepared: the assailants had been taken by surprise: the plan had not been based on accurate knowledge: and in the case of the artillery instructions had been misunderstood or not carried out. Everything had miscarried: no attempt was made to retrieve or even to hold fast. The net result was grave and humiliating failure, with no compensation in the shape of loss to the enemy, for the Boer casualties were a negligible quantity.

Personally fearless in a rare degree, as he had shown himself once more in this battle, where he exposed himself amid shot and shell and was slightly wounded, Sir Redvers Buller was tender of others' lives, and worn and discouraged by the reverse, on the day after the battle he sent to White a message, much criticized afterwards, contemplating the possibility of the surrender of Ladysmith and with the generous intent of shifting from White to himself the responsibility in the event of surrender. Desponding too were the messages which he sent to the Home Government. But that was not the mood of the men who held Ladysmith. Nor were the Ministers at home, or the people behind them, minded to acquiesce in failure. The week which ended with Colenso

*The Black
Week.*

PART II. was well christened the Black Week. It brought sadness, disappointment, and momentary despondency. Such disasters as had happened, though not great, either individually or collectively, had not been known for many long years past, and a sense of crisis oppressed the nation. It oppressed but at the same time it brought new strength. The bitter rejoicing of the greater continental peoples, showing openly their delight at British misfortunes, made Englishmen all over the world more at one: classes forgot for the moment their feuds; common trouble called out the healthy instinct of citizenship and community of race. The sense of defeat brought new determination and new effort. In South Africa the Loyalists enrolled plentifully. In England militia, volunteers, yeomanry were eager in offering for service; and the call of race came with potent force from beyond the seas. Australians and Canadians had already served for the Empire beyond their own borders at Suakin and in the Nile Campaign: plentiful offers of Australian troops, it has been seen, had been made before the war broke out; and between the beginning of the war and the end of 1899 some 2,500 men from the Overseas Dominions, accepted by the Imperial Government out of many more that had been offered, were landed and serving in South Africa, Australia sending fully 1,200 men, New Zealand over 200 mounted rifles, and Canada a regiment 1,000 strong. The news of the reverses led at once to renewed offers, New Zealand immediately preparing a second contingent. The day after the battle of Colenso Buller asked for 8,000 irregular mounted infantry, and the value of men who had been bred in the great spaces of the British colonies was appreciated as had not been the case before. Before the war was over, some 30,000 men from the British possessions overseas outside South Africa, including white contingents from India and Ceylon, had taken part in it, and the Black Week was responsible, for the first time in British history, for calling together under arms,

not as a political demonstration without adequate necessity, but as a needed common effort for a common whole, white British citizens of the whole Empire. Nor was this all: behind the white citizens were coloured subjects of the King trained and anxious to fight. The war was a white man's war: their services were not utilized: but the fact stood out that danger from outside revealed actual or potential strength within.

The British Government acted promptly and firmly. On the second day after Colenso, Lord Roberts was offered and accepted the command in chief in South Africa, with Lord Kitchener as chief of the staff. Buller was left with the sole charge of the Natal army and the task of relieving Ladysmith, which was to be relieved. A fifth division was already due in South Africa and would be at his disposal, a sixth and seventh had been ordered, the latter after the news of Magersfontein; and yet further reinforcements were put in train. Two days before Christmas Lord Roberts left England; Kitchener joined him at Gibraltar; and meanwhile Buller signalled to White assurance that a second attempt would be made to relieve Ladysmith. Thus the year 1899 went out for England in sadness and anxiety, but not without hope of a better time to come.

Through the bad month of December there was one area in the field of war where the English more than held their own. This was on the central railway from Port Elizabeth to Norval's Pont, where General French was in command. The Boers seized Norval's Pont on the 1st of November; and, moving southward very slowly, occupied the little town of Colesberg, President Kruger's birthplace, on the 14th. On the evening of the 18th French left Capetown for the front, travelling by De Aar Junction on the western line. Naauwpoort junction on the central line, from which the British garrison had been withdrawn on the 3rd of November, was, by Buller's directions, reoccupied on the 19th, and

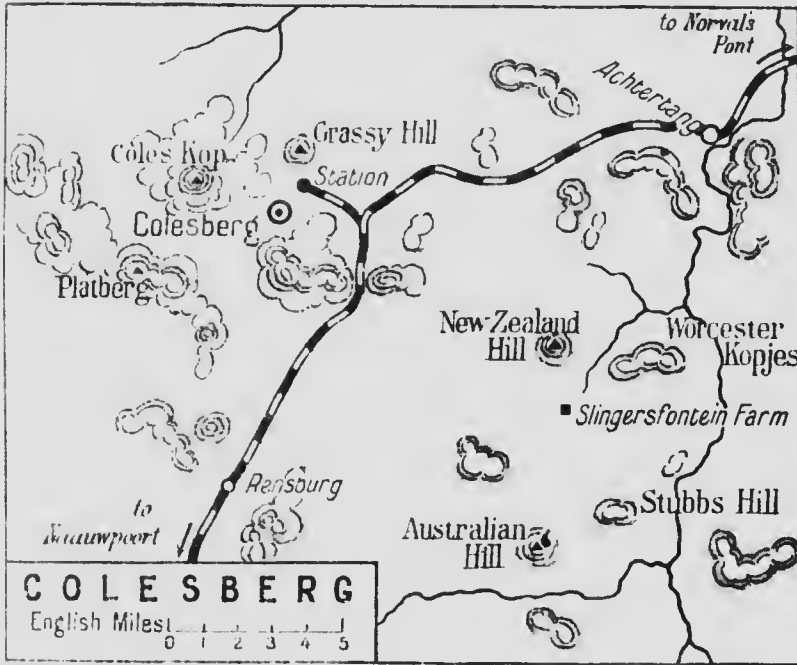
CH. III.

*Lord
Roberts.**The Coles-
berg Cam-
paign.*

PART II. French made it his base. He had at the outset of the campaign less than 2,000 men, but a large proportion were mounted, and Australians and New Zealanders came in, well fitted for the kind of work in hand. Buller had advised a 'policy of worry', and that policy was most effectively carried out. By perpetual pin-pricks and constant movement the Boer advance was steadily converted into a Boer retreat. By rail the distance from Naauwpoort to Norval's Pont is 59 miles, rather less than the distance from London to Oxford, and from Naauwpoort to Colesberg Junction 36 miles, the same distance as from London to Reading, Colesberg lying two miles west of the junction on a little branch line. Half-way between Naauwpoort and Colesberg, 16 or 17 miles to the north of Naauwpoort, is Arundel Siding, and the next station beyond Arundel in the Colesberg direction is Rensburg. When French began his operations the Boers, who were led by Commandant Schoeman, held high ground on the northern side of Arundel. On the 29th of November it was found that they had evacuated this position, and on the 7th of December the English, who by this time had received some reinforcements, occupied Arundel, the Boers holding Rensburg, and a row of hills which ran in a southerly direction from Rensburg down the eastern side of the railway. Covering with his mobile force a large extent of country, and perpetually menacing this point and that, the British General kept his enemies in a perpetual state of nervousness, lest they should be cut off. There was a successful skirmish on the 13th of December. On the 17th French moved his headquarters up to Arundel. On the 29th the Boers retreated from Rensburg, to which on the next day French transferred his quarters, and at once set about attacking the Boer positions at Colesberg.

French threatens Colesberg. Colesberg lies in a hollow, in a parallelogram of hills. On the northern side there is more open ground than elsewhere, and on this side a road runs a little east of north to the

Colesberg Road Bridge over the Orange River, while another road and the railway run a little north of east to Norval's Pont. Rather more than a mile from the outside face of the line of hills which shut in Colesberg on the west, stands Coleskop, an isolated precipitous hill, 600 feet high. On the last night of the year, and in the early morning of New Year's Day, French threw a large proportion of his troops on to the west and north-west of the town, and made good his



The map is by the author, Oxford 1914

footing on the hills, turning the Boer right but not able to drive it back far enough to gain command of the roads and railway which gave communication with the Orange River. At daybreak on the 4th of January the Boers tried a counter-stroke and made a determined attack on the British left, but failed with a loss of 90 killed and wounded and 40 prisoners. This British success was followed by a mishap. The key to the whole Boer position was a hill, to the north of Colesberg,

The mishap to the Suffolks.

PART II. in the fork between the road to Colesberg Road Bridge and
 —♦♦— that to Norval's Pont, called Grassy Hill, or, after the event, Suffolk Hill. On the night of the 5th of January the Colonel of the Suffolk Regiment led out 300 of his men to surprise and take this hill, which he supposed to be weakly held, if not unoccupied. The Boers seem to have been prepared for the attack. Just as the Suffolks reached the top, they were met with a heavy fire: confusion ensued: an order was given to retire under cover: some retired: some still tried to hold the crest of the hill: Colonel was killed, and the casualties amounted to nearly half of the attacking force. This was a set-back, but French held his ground, south-west and north-west of Colesberg. On the 12th of January a fifteen-pounder gun was dragged up to the top of Coleskop—followed later by a second gun—and its fire harried the Boer encampment, the case of Ladysmith being reversed. Reinforcements kept coming in on both sides, and south of the town the line of fighting was prolonged far to the east. On this side, near Slingersfontein Farm, there was a Boer attack on the British right on the 15th of January, nearly successful but eventually repulsed with great gallantry by the New Zealanders. This was directed by Delarey, who had come down to check French's advance, as he had previously checked Methuen's. About the same date General Clements joined the British force, which grew greatly in numbers, so that by the end of the month French had some 10,000 men under his command, the Boers being correspondingly strengthened. The whole scene had become transformed into war on a considerable scale, with the leaders manœuvring against each other, and French was again demonstrating against the Boer right, when on the 29th of January he was recalled to Capetown. On the 6th of February he handed over the command, in which he had proved so successful, to General Clements.

The situation at the beginning of 1900.

We must now go back to the first days of January. When the year 1900 opened the Boers were not merely besieging

Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking. They had not only won considerable successes and inflicted serious loss. They had not only invaded and overrun a great extent of British territory. They had either openly and avowedly annexed British territory, or were in effect dealing with the Boer territory and the British subjects in it as Boer subjects or citizens. Nor was this confined to the inland districts of Natal or to the regions north of the Orange River, Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, which the Dutchmen looked on as their rightful heritage, of which they held that they had been despoiled by force or guile. South of the Orange River, into the old Cape Colony, they brought, with invasion, commandeering and annexation or its concomitants. 'The procedure is as follows,' wrote the High Commissioner on the 16th of January, 1900, in reference to these districts, 'A commando enters, the Orange Free State flag is hoisted, a meeting is held in the Court-house or Market-place, and a Proclamation is read annexing the district. The Commandant then makes a speech, in which he explains that the people must now obey the Free State laws generally, though they are at present under martial law. A local landdrost is appointed, and loyal subjects are given a few days or hours in which to quit, or be compelled to serve against their country. In either case they lose their property to a greater or less extent. If they elect to quit, they are often robbed before starting or on the journey; if they stay, their property and themselves are commandeered.'¹ It is true that, in answer to remonstrances from Schreiner, the Premier of the Cape Colony, President Steyn declared on the 19th of November, 1899, that 'those portions of the Colony occupied by our burgher forces have not been declared Free State territory', and sent as evidence the proclamation issued by Commandant Grobler on occupying Colesberg.² But, even if there was no formal annexation, or if one commander or

¹ Cd. 264, July 1900, p. 5.² Cd. 43, January 1900, pp. 217-19.

PART II. another annexed without the authority of his Government,¹
 ————— the outcome in all cases was that where the Boers occupied British territory, and while they occupied it, that territory was treated as Boer territory, and the dwellers in it as subject to Boer rule. The occupation of Colesberg on the 14th of November was followed on the next day by the formation of a commandeering committee, and 'forage, supplies of food and clothing, and men were commandeered'.² In the words in which on the 11th of March, 1900, Lord Salisbury rejected the two Presidents' overtures for peace, 'The Republics claimed to treat the inhabitants of extensive portions of Her Majesty's dominions, as if those dominions had been annexed to one or other of them.'³

*The rebels
 in the
 British
 colonies.*

The Boers' action in the matter was very intelligible. The object was to bring into their ranks the largest possible number of Dutchmen in the British colonies, to give them the cloak for rebellion which the semblance or the reality of compulsion afforded. Not much compulsion was needed. 'There is no doubt', wrote Lord Milner in the despatch already quoted, 'that the annexation and the commandeering were devices resorted to by the invaders at the suggestion of the colonists who wished to join them, but, for fear of possible consequences, did not like to do so without some sort of excuse.'⁴ Disloyalty was rife in the border districts. Except among a small minority, the call of race was stronger than the bond of allegiance. 'Within a space of less than three weeks from the occupation of Colesberg, no less than five great districts—those of Colesberg, Albert, Aliwal North, Barkly East, and Wodehouse—had gone over without hesitation and, so to speak, bodily to the enemy. Through-

¹ As to whether and how far actual annexation took place see Lord Milner's despatches of April 25, 1900, and June 6, 1900, Cd. 261, July 1900, pp. 95 &c., 160 &c.

² Cd. 420, December 1900, pp. 48-50.

³ Cd. 35, March 1900, p. 3.

⁴ Despatch of January 16, 1900, Cd. 264, p. 2.

out that region the landdrosts of the Orange Free State had established their authority, and everywhere, in the expressive words of a magistrate, British loyalists were "being hunted out of town after town like sheep".¹

What had the rebels to say for themselves? Before the war broke out, an appeal signed by Viljoen, one of the Boer leaders, had been widely circulated among the Dutch population of the Cape Colony. It recalled whatever might embitter them against Great Britain, the old story of Schlachters' Nek, the annexation of Natal and the Diamond Fields. It cleverly countered the patent fact that Dutchmen under British rule enjoyed the fullest possible measure of freedom, by asserting that 'owing to the existence of the two independent Afrikaner Republics, the Afrikaner in the English colonies is still recognized and tolerated', that the destruction of the Republics would involve the destruction of the Afrikaner nation, and bring upon them the plague and pressure of 'England's iron yoke'.² When war came, manifestoes from Steyn and others of the Boer leaders drew a lurid picture of England's wicked past and baleful designs for the future. Speeches and writings of prominent British subjects of British birth, alike in England and in South Africa, referred to the war as if the fault was wholly on the British side. Can it be wondered at if the colonial rebels took the view of themselves which Mr. Merriman, then Treasurer in the Schreiner Ministry, took of them, that they were 'a number of men, who have, at worst, taken up arms in what they, however erroneously, considered to be a righteous war, a war in which they joined the Queen's enemies to resist what prominent men both here and in England have repeatedly spoken of as "a crime"; or if they shared the still stronger view of Mr. Merriman's Dutch

¹ Despatch of January 16, 1900, Cd. 264, p. 5. As to the extent to which rebellion spread see Cd. 420, December 1900, pp. 26-73; and as to how far it was voluntary see Lord Milner's despatch of September 5, 1900, Cd. 420, pp. 79-87.

² Cd. 43, pp. 102-3.

PART II. —◆— colleague, Mr. Te Water, also a Minister of the Crown, that they had taken arms 'after vainly endeavouring by all possible constitutional means to prevent what they, in common with the rest of the civilized world, believed to be an unjust and infamous war against their kinsmen'.¹

There was more excuse for them than for 'the rest of the civilized world'; but the fact has already been emphasized that in this war the English were tried by one standard, the Boers by another; that the ordinary rules which govern nations in peace and war were not held to be applicable to the Boers and to those who threw in their lot with them. This is illustrated by the position which was taken up with regard to the rebels by the Presidents of the two Republics. Presidents Kruger and Steyn learnt that some of these men had been arrested on the charge of high treason, and in January 1900 they intimated to the British Government that 'as those persons of the colonies named, who have joined us in the conflict, are considered and treated by us as citizens of the State, among the forces of which they are found, we claim that they shall be treated as prisoners of war like our old citizens'.² Otherwise they threatened reprisals. This naïve pronouncement was simply a declaration that ordinary rules did not apply in South Africa. There was some similar confusion of thought among the members of Mr. Schreiner's Ministry, when considering the question of the treatment of the rebels. Lord Durham's policy in dealing with the Canadian rebels after the rising of 1837 was adduced as a parallel, justifying a general amnesty with the exception of the ringleaders, as though the case of men who neither had nor pretended to have any grievance against their Government, but who on grounds of race sympathy joined foreign armies which were attacking that Government, had anything in common with an

¹ Opinions written on the amnesty question in May 1900, and published in Cd. 264, July 1900, pp. 41-2.

² Cd. 261, July 1900, p. 5.

internal rising based on constitutional grievances. Another side of these same views, as illustrated at public meetings held by sympathizers with the Boers in the Cape Colony, was that the British Government, by being at war, had violated the principles of responsible government, in that the Cape Ministry were not in favour of the war. The plain facts of the case were that England had not declared war on the Boers, but the Boers on England, and that week after week of war brought accumulating evidence of enormous preparations on the side of the Boers, clear proof that, in Lord Wolseley's words, 'it was quite evident that Mr. Kruger was determined to make war.'¹ But England was England, and the Boers were the Boers. Therefore, whatever England did was wrong, and whatever the Boers did was right. And England had only to thank herself for this. It was the result of her shifty record in South Africa in the years gone by.

It was a bad time—the early months of the war—in the Cape Colony, for the High Commissioner, the Cape Ministry, for all in authority, and all loyal subjects of the British Crown. On the 16th of October martial law was proclaimed north of the Orange River, as the day before it had been proclaimed in the upper parts of Natal. From time to time the area was extended. On the same 16th of October the volunteer corps of the Colony were called out for the defence of their respective districts. Early in November the defence forces of the Cape, the Cape Police and the Cape Mounted Rifles, were placed under the control of the Commander-in-Chief. In the middle of December fresh local forces were raised. Before the end of the year 2,100 mounted and 4,300 unmounted irregular troops were under arms—exclusive of the beleaguered garrisons. Gradually more and more loyal colonists were enrolled in one body or another: a railway pioneer force was formed: when Lord Roberts reached

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa, Cd. 1790, 1903: Minutes of Evidence, p. 363.

PART II. South Africa he constituted a separate colonial division under General Brabant, a Cape Colonist of long and high standing; and at the end of the war it was computed that more than 52,000 men all told had been raised in South Africa to serve in the war. Meanwhile, on the 23rd of November the High Commissioner published a proclamation in English and Dutch to counteract the charges which had been made far and wide against the British cause, and told the people of South Africa what time has proved to be the truth, that 'The British Government desires the greatest amount of freedom and self-government for Dutch and British alike, throughout South Africa. Its object is the extension of freedom and self-government, not their curtailment'.¹

Sunnyside. The colonial rebels had a slight set-back at the beginning of the year 1900. The Riet River, after its junction with the Modder, flows west to join the Vaal. Below this second confluence, and above the confluence of the Vaal and the Orange River, on the southern bank of the Vaal, is the little town of Douglas in the Herbert district of the Cape Colony. On the 15th of November the Free Staters had invaded Douglas; rebellion was rife in the district, and a camp of some 180 rebels had gathered at Sunnyside Farm, 30 miles north-west of Belmont Station, in the direction in which Douglas lay. This gathering, which might have become a nucleus for annoying Methuen's communications, it was decided to disperse, and at the same time to relieve the loyal residents at Douglas, few among many.² After feinting a move in the opposite direction, on the Free State side of the railway, and taking every care to disguise his real aim,

¹ Cd. 43, January 1900, pp. 275-6.

² The Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate of the Herbert district, writing in 1900, reported that 90 per cent. of the population joined the enemy, 6 per cent. left the district, 4 per cent. remained. He also stated that Douglas had been invaded by the Boers on the 15th November. The ordinary accounts say that the Boers had left the district alone till the year was nearly ending. See Cd. 420, December 1900, pp. 65-7.

Colonel Pilcher set out from Belmont on the 31st of December with a small picked force, consisting largely of Queenslanders and Canadians. On the morning of the New Year he surprised the rebel laager, killing 14 and taking 38 prisoners. The next day he pushed on to Douglas, which the rebels had evacuated, and brought back in safety to Belmont a number of loyalist refugees. Douglas was not permanently reoccupied by the English until the middle of the following May.

Against this success had to be set the capture of Kuruman. *Kuruman.* The old mission-station, isolated in the far west, had been bravely held: 35 Cape Police, with 33 civilians, constituted the fighting force, who, behind improvised defences and tiny redoubts, kept the Boers at bay. They were first attacked by greatly superior numbers on the 12th of November. After a while the Boers drew off, but came back on the 5th of December in more overwhelming strength than before. The little garrison was gradually driven from one point and another, until on New Year's Day the last redoubt was lost, and nothing was left for it but to surrender.

The sieges of Tloiting and Kimberley ran their weary *Mafeking.* course. Baden Powell held a circle round Mafeking of more than seven miles, and he held it with less than 1,200 men, of whom over 400 were civilians. But the town was well provisioned, the commander was unflinching in spirit and inexhaustible in resource; the Boers were incredibly supine. On the 27th of October the garrison stormed by night a Boer trench on the racecourse east of the town; and four days later, on the 31st, repulsed a Boer attack on an isolated outpost at Cannon Kopje, lying one mile away on the south-east. Nearly two months passed, and then the defenders had a black day. On the 26th of December 260 men were sent out, supported by an armoured train, to storm a Boer fort at Game Tree Hill, a little to the west of north from

PART II. Mafeking. The fort was found to be far stronger than had been anticipated; there was some slight miscarriage in the plan of attack; and the attempt, forced home with desperate courage, failed, costing the lives of some of the best fighting men and 50 casualties in all. But in January 1900 the Boers were no nearer to taking Mafeking than they had been at the beginning of the war, and the investing force under Commandant Snyman was little better than a corps of observation.

Kimberley. Kimberley too, when the year opened, was safe, but Kimberley was anxious. Here were many thousands of non-combatants to be defended and fed, and at most there were only between 4,000 and 5,000 armed men to defend them, guarding a circuit of some ten miles. Not more than one-eighth of the force consisted of regular soldiers, principally men of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, sent up, as has been seen,¹ shortly before the beginning of the war. The rest included Cape Police, volunteer corps, and local levies such as the Kimberley Light Horse and the Town Guard. From first to last there was no Boer attack on the town; the Boers contented themselves with shelling it, while the garrison more than once took the offensive. When Methuen had decided to start from the Orange River on the 21st of November, a message was sent to Kimberley that he hoped to reach that place on the 26th—an anticipation singularly falsified by events. To facilitate his movements the garrison of Kimberley made a successful demonstration against the Boers to the west and south-west of the town on the 25th of November. On the 28th they made another sortie in much the same direction with less success, losing, among others Colonel Scott Turner, who up to the day of his death had been conspicuous among the defenders. The command of the whole garrison was in the very capable hands of Colonel Kekewich, Colonel of the Loyal North

¹ See above, p. 94

Lancashires, who had originally been sent up in September on special service to Kimberley to report upon the ways and means of defence. His post was one of unusual difficulty, owing to the fact that Rhodes was in the town. Rhodes embodied and inspired civilian energy, but he was also the leader and spokesman of civilian discontent. He gave to the defence of Kimberley and to the care of its population in fullest measure his great influence and the resources at his command. The de Beers Company, his own special child, manufactured ammunition, and on the 19th of January its chief engineer, Labram, afterwards killed in the siege, turned out a great gun, christened 'Long Cecil', to reply effectively to the Boer artillery. On the other hand, Rhodes was the cause of divided authority, when all should have been un murmuringly one. When from the Modder River, early in December, Methuen let Kimberley know that after relief—then counted near—the civilian population would be removed for the time being, Rhodes was the mouthpiece of complaint against the decision; and the querulous calls for aid, which preceded the final deliverance, pointed to inability or unwillingness to recognize military necessities, or to look beyond the immediate horizon of Kimberley and its mines.

But in the month of January the main sphere of action was Natal. Disheartened by the reverse at Colenso, Buller remained inactive. He left one part of his troops at Chieveley, and drew off the others to Frere, where water was more plentiful, and which he made his head-quarters. His inaction was unfortunate. 'The great disadvantage', says the German official account of the war, 'lay in the fact that the withdrawal of the troops, and the postponement of any further decisive action, gave to the failure at Colenso an altogether exaggerated importance.'¹ The Boers too remained inactive, until the news of further British reinforce-

Lady-smith.

¹ Vol. II, p. 64.

PART II.



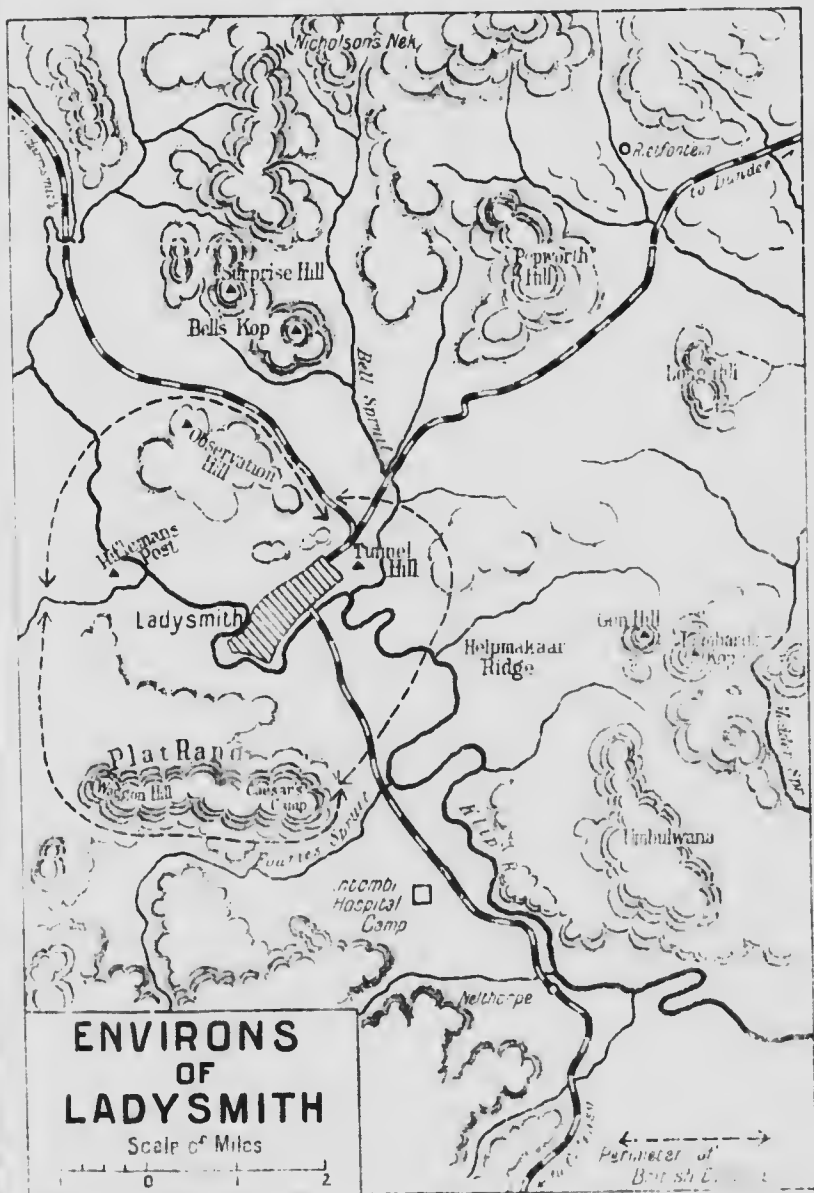
ments pouring in stirred them to some effort before it might be too late. The southern side of the defences of Ladysmith, and the most vulnerable, was the ridge known as the Platrand, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long from east to west. The eastern part was called Caesar's Camp, the western Wagon Hill, and between them was a Neck or dip in the ridge. Caesar's Camp, from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles long, was much longer and broader than Wagon Hill, and flat-topped, except that the inner crest towards Ladysmith was slightly higher than the outer southern crest. Wagon Hill was smaller, higher, and more broken than Caesar's Camp. Its extreme western end, Wagon Point, was beyond a second little dip in the hill. The key of Wagon Hill was at its highest point, just east of the dip down to Wagon Point, and here there was a small fort manned by the Imperial Light Horse. To hold the whole Platrand there were about 1,000 men available, including reserves, and they were under the command of Ian Hamilton, whose leadership, courage, and resource were to be brilliantly proved in the coming fight.

*The fight
on the 6th
of January.*

The Boers held one of their War Councils, and determined to try to storm the Platrand under cover of night, the time fixed being the early hours of the 6th of January. There was to be a feint of attack against the whole circle of the Ladysmith defences: a serious attempt, which cost some Boer lives, was made against the British post on Observation Hill to the north of the town; but the Platrand was the main objective, and to take it 4,000 Boers were told off, 2,000 Transvaalers for Caesar's Camp, 2,000 Free Staters for Wagon Hill, this number including both the actual storming parties and their supports. Caesar's Camp was held by the Manchester Regiment. The main defences were ranged along the inner crest; in front of them, towards the south, piquets were distributed in small parties, under cover of rough defences. The eastern part of Wagon Hill, the part nearest to Caesar's Camp, was held by men of the 60th

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PART II. Rifles, while the Imperial Light Horse were in charge of the western parts, including Wagon Point. On the night in question there was on Wagon Point a mixed body of men, few in all, including engineers, sailors, and some Gordon Highlanders, who had been working through the earlier hours of the night on an emplacement for one of the heavy naval guns, which was being brought up but was not yet at the top of the hill. The main body of the Gordon Highlanders was in reserve at the foot of the Platrand. In the darkness the Boers climbed, and the first alarm and first firing took place about a quarter to 3 in the morning on Wagon Hill, when they had reached the Nek between Wagon Hill and Wagon Point. There was fighting at the closest quarters, desperate and confused, friend and foe being intermixed in the darkness. The Boers tried to overpower the little post held by the Imperial Light Horse and the mixed party in the gun-pits on Wagon Point. They were among the boulders on and around the hill, but the English were not driven off it; it was a kind of stalemate. Almost simultaneously the Transvaalers attacked Caesar's Hill; the main attack was from the south, but a party worked round the south-eastern end of the hill, outflanked the Manchester piquets, annihilated one party, and threatened the whole position. But the Manchester men held their ground grimly; the Gordon Highlanders came up to support them; with break of day a British battery came into action on the lower ground behind Caesar's Camp, and, regardless of the fire from the great Boer guns on Bulwana, shelled the Boers with unerring accuracy, driving them over and behind the southern crest. They were still on the hill, but their attack had failed and was not renewed. To Wagon Hill, too, daylight brought the help of a sister battery, whose fire kept back the Boers from the western end of Wagon Point, and prevented them from outflanking the hard-pressed defenders of the hill. The Dutchmen on this side were finely led by De Villiers, one of

the old fighting Boers tried in former wars; he was not content merely to hold his ground until nightfall made retreat easy; and his leadership inspired his countrymen. There was a lull in the fighting about 11 o'clock in the morning, noon passed, the tired men on Wagon Point had somewhat relaxed their strain, when a little before 1 o'clock a band of resolute Free Staters rushed the top of the knoll and were into the British positions. The men gave way for the moment, but the officers brought them back. Ian Hamilton, then on the spot, fought almost hand to hand; good lives were lost, but the hill was saved. Once again there was stalemate, and the afternoon went on.

Sir George White at Ladysmith had followed the course of the fighting with anxious care, sending from time to time reinforcements to the fighting line. Unwilling to leave the Boers clinging to the crest till night-time, he sent three companies of the Devon Regiment, under 200 men, with orders to Hamilton to clear the hill. There was a small space of more or less clear ground between the two lines of combatants, which had proved a death-trap already to man after man. This must be crossed, if the Boers were to be dislodged. Major Park, commanding the Devons, took counsel with Hamilton, and led his men to the charge. A storm had come on, and about 5.30 in the afternoon, amid thunder and lightning, the West-country men swept across the 130 yards which formed the zone of fire and thrust the Boers from the crest. They lost in doing so 40 of their small number, and, as they drove their enemies down the southern side, they lost more, for, brave and determined to the last, the Dutchmen clung tenaciously to the hillside, while their supports below poured volleys on the English.

But now the whole length of the Platrand was clear, and the Boers suffered heavily in retreat, exposed to the full fire of the men on the hill. What their actual losses were is

PART II. matter of conjecture,¹ but the day was counted among them
 a day of disaster, though assuredly it was a day when some, at any rate, of their number had been unflinchingly staunch and brave; some, but not all; the reserves had shown little disposition to reinforce the storming parties, and contented themselves with firing from a safe distance. It was the Boer habit and policy not to risk life unavoidably, and it is the drawback of citizen soldiers that on occasion they judge for themselves whether the game is worth the candle. As in October 1812 the American Militia across the Niagara River looked on, while their comrades were driven from Queenston Heights, so the stormers of the Platrand were not given the support which would have enabled them to drive their attack home and carry the position.

On the British side sixteen hours' hard fighting, during which White's heliograms, repeated by Buller, held England in breathless anxiety, saved Ladysmith at the cost of 424 casualties to its half-fed, hard-worked garrison, and proved once more, if proof were needed, how resolute and enduring are British soldiers.

*Buller's
 move to
 Springfield
 and Pot-
 gieter's
 Drill.*

While the fight went on, the troops at Chieveley made a demonstration against the Boer lines at Colenso. When it was over, Buller began his next move. It was time. Sickness was increasing in Ladysmith and want of food. White's force was becoming less and less able to co-operate in any plan of relief. On the other hand the Fifth Division, with the exception of two battalions landed in the Cape Colony, had reached Natal, and with them Sir Charles Warren, who had in 1884 cleared the Boer freebooters out of Bechuanaland, and whose high reputation had been made in South Africa. The division


¹ The official History of the War (vol. ii, p. 571) says that, according to 'a well informed Transvaaler' 184 Boers were killed and 380 wounded, and that 'it is certain that from 500-700 Boers fell'. Mr. Amery, in *The Times History of the War*, says that the Boer official return of casualties was 64 killed or died of wounds, 119 wounded, and that probably the casualties were 220 to 250.

was concentrated at Estcourt on the 7th of January. On the 9th it was moved to Frere. On the 8th and 9th Buller gave his orders; and on the 10th, the day on which Lord Roberts reached Capetown, began the first movement in what has been called the Spion Kop Campaign. Buller reverted to his original plan for crossing the river and forcing the Boer lines higher up than and westward of Colenso, and the forces at his command seemed to be ample for the purpose, for he had now available in Natal some 30,000 men.¹

Sixteen miles west of Colenso, higher up the Tugela, is the ford or crossing known as Potgieter's Drift. Its distance from Frere is a little under 24 miles, and on the way, 16 miles from Frere, is Springfield, near the little Tugela, a feeder of the main river. Leaving a containing force under General Barton in front of Colenso, Buller moved 23,000 men from Chieveley and Frere to Springfield and Potgieters. The start was good. Lord Dundonald, who commanded the mounted troops, early in the afternoon of the first day—the 10th—reached Springfield, secured the bridge over the little Tugela, and, pressing forward on his own initiative, by nightfall occupied Spearman's Hill, a hill which overlooked and commanded Potgieter's Drift, and the western part of which was given the name of Mount Alice.² The next morning the ferry-boat on the

¹ Lord Kitchener in his evidence before the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa [Minutes of Evidence, vol. 1, Cd. 1790, 1903, p. 7] says that when Lord Roberts and he landed there were on paper approximately 94,600 men in South Africa, of whom 51,500 were in Natal with Sir R. Buller. Including in this number the garrison of Ladysmith, and allowing for troops on the lines of communications, Buller must have had about 30,000 available. On the other hand, on the 6th of February, 1900 [South Africa Despatches, vol. i, Cd. 457, 1901, p. 7], Lord Roberts informed the War Office that the effective fighting strength in Natal on 31st January, 1900, exclusive of Royal Engineers, Army Service Corps, &c., was approximately 34,830, of whom 9,780 were in Ladysmith. The difference in the figures is not accounted for by the losses at Spion Kop and Vaal Krantz.

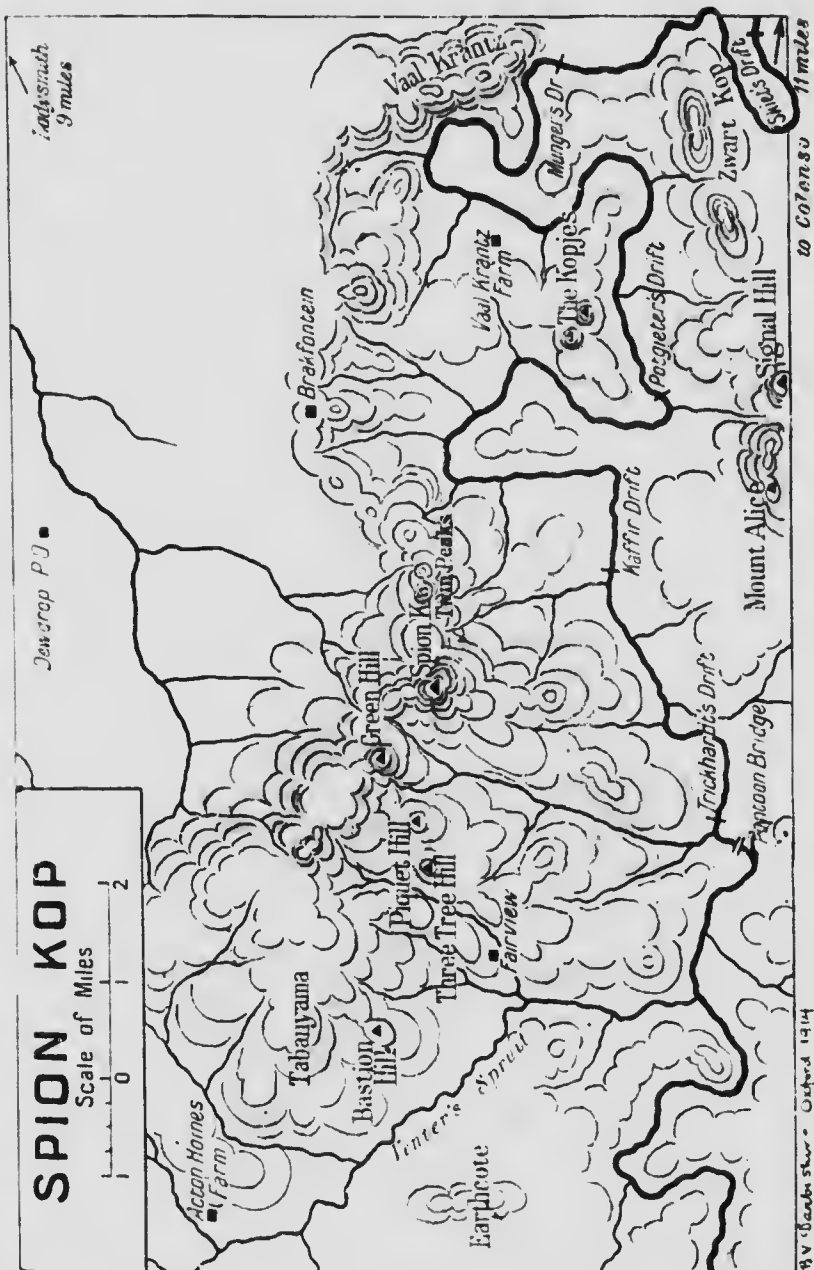
² Buller stated in his despatch (Spion Kop despatches, Cd. 368, 1902, p. 5) that the mounted troops seized Spearman's Hill on the 11th, but there seems no doubt that Dundonald was there the night before.

PART II.  opposite side of the river was brought over under fire to the southern bank, and on the 12th Lyttelton's Brigade was in position, in command of the drift. The movement of the main army, however, was very slow. There had been torrents of rain on the 9th: the brooks were nearly impassable: the mud clogged the heavy guns and the transport. The better part of six days in all was spent in the preliminary move, and those days were turned to good account by the Boers, who on the other side of the river came west parallel to the British advance, dug trenches, and formed their lines. Lord Roberts had foreseen this, counselling speedy movement, when the move began, and the distances were so short that it is not easy to understand why in spite of bad weather forced marches might not have been made and some sort of surprise attempted.¹ It was not, it would seem, Buller's way. Generous, fearless, and kindly, he kept from first to last the trust and love of his men: he took reverses as they came: his own personal courage had been conspicuously proved in many fights: but as a General he seems to have resembled the Parliamentary leader Essex, as described in Carlyle's *Oliver Cromwell*. He was a 'slow-going . . . somewhat elephantine man'. Nor was his tardiness of movement compensated for by corresponding firmness of purpose.

Geography round Spion Kop. The lie of the land in the region of Potgieter's Drift is, in some respects, not unlike that in the neighbourhood of Colenso. Spearman's Hill, like Hlangwane Hill, on the southern bank of the river, is higher than and dominates the northern bank. The English had therefore secured a considerable initial advantage by occupying Spearman's Hill. Below it the river forms two loops, each running north much as at Colenso; and

Buller also stated that on the 13th all the troops were at Springfield and Spearman's Hill, but apparently the transport had not all come up.

¹ The German comment is: 'The army had taken five full days to complete a march of about 22 miles. . . . As a matter of course there could be no further thought of a surprise of the Boers, on which the whole project was based.' (Vol. ii, p. 86.)



R.V. Glendon - Oxford 1914

PART II. between the two loops is Potgieter's Drift. Below the lower or eastern loop is another drift, *Skiets-Drift*, which is commanded from the west by a hill on the southern side of the river, *Zwart Kop*. On the northern bank of the river, over against *Skiets-Drift*, there is a high hill or bank of hills, *Doorn Kop* or *Doornkloof*, which may be taken for the present purpose as the eastern end of a kind of amphitheatre of hills. This line of hills, circling round on the north of the river, drops down over against Potgieter's Drift to a low ridge called *Brakfontein*, to which a bare plateau slopes upwards from the drift, and over which runs one way to *Ladysmith*, by this direct route only 18 miles distant. The drift, as has been said, is between the two loops of the river. The eastern side and the top of the lower loop is lined by a ridge, which is a more or less isolated spur of the arc of hills, and is known as *Vaal Krantz*. The *Brakfontein Ridge*, opposite Potgieter's, circles round to the south-west and rises into a height, which makes a kind of sister buttress to *Doornkop*: this is *Spion Kop*, the outlook mountain, from which the Boer voortrekkers of old days looked down on *Natal*. It stands up steep and massive above the other hills, 1,470 feet above the river, about two miles long, very roughly triangular in shape, with the base pointing south, towards the upper of the two loops in the *Tugela*. Its eastern end is flanked by two twin peaks, from one to two miles distant from the summit. From the twin peaks to *Doornkop* the arc of hills is about ten miles in length.

Spion Kop has so far been taken as the western buttress of a semicircle of hills in which the connecting link is *Brakfontein*. Let us now look at it on its other side, the western and north-western side, on which it is linked on to the line of hills known as *Tabanyama* or *Rangeworthy Hills*. Here is Sir Charles Warren's description: '*Spion Kop* and the *Rangeworthy Hills* are the commencement of the *Drakensberg Mountains*. Commencing at Potgieter's Drift, these hills first run south-westerly, culminating in *Spion Kop*, which

stands out as the salient of a position, overlooking the Tugela at a distance of about three miles. Then, with a break, they run, north-westerly, for about ten miles as the Rangeworthy Hills, till they become absorbed in the Drakensberg Mountains. . . . The Spion Kop range is separated from the Rangeworthy Hills by a broad gully running from north to south. It commences at a neck (800 feet above the Tugela), the point of junction of the two ranges connecting the northern point of Spion Kop (550 feet above the Neck) to Green Hill (450 feet above the Neck). Green Hill is the south-easterly point of the Boer position on the Rangeworthy Hills.¹ Tabanyama is, in short, a spur of the Drakensberg, running from north-west to south-east. The ground falls to a Nek between it and Spion Kop, just as on the other side it falls away in a south-west and north-east direction to Brakfontein. Spion Kop is therefore in a great angle of the line of hills. Over the Nek, between Tabanyama and Spion Kop, runs another road to Ladysmith, which is 22 miles distant from the Tugela by this route. The road leaves the Tugela at Trickhardt's Drift five miles higher up than Potgieter's Drift; it passes near Fairview Farm; high up the slope of the Nek it leaves on the left a rise called Three Tree Hill, and, crossing over the Nek, eventually joins the road from Potgieter's at or near Dewdrop, about nine miles from Ladysmith. Near this point yet another road comes in. This third road has come round behind the north-western end of Tabanyama by Acton Homes, and by this route the distance to be traversed from the Tugela to Ladysmith by the British troops would have been about 30 miles. To strike this last road direct from Trickhardt's Drift the course of a small tributary of the Tugela, named Venter's Spruit, flowing from north-west to south-east, would very roughly be followed, past a southern spur of Tabanyama, which was given the name of Bastion Hill.

¹ See Appendix M, Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa. Cd. 1791, 1903, pp. 645 and 651.



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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PART II.

—→
*Buller
 sends
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 cross at
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 hardt's
 Drift.*

Buller on the 12th had surveyed the lie of the land from Spearman's Hill. The way over the Brakfontein Ridge seemed too exposed to be forced by a purely frontal attack, and he determined to try and turn the Boer position by sending a force across the river at Trickhardt's Drift and west of Spion Kop, while the rest of the army threatened the enemy in front of Potgieter's, and possibly crossed also at Skiets Drift. On the 15th Warren reconnoitred Trickhardt's Drift. On that day Buller gave him secret orders, and again a good start was made. On the evening of the 16th Warren left Springfield, and, marching by night, in the very early hours of the 17th brought his men to Trickhardt's, where the mounted troops met him. The whole force under his command numbered 15,000, nearly two-thirds of Buller's army. Simultaneously heavy guns were mounted on Spearman's Hill, part of Lyttelton's Brigade was thrown across the river at Potgieter's to hold some kopjes on the northern bank of the river, and Zwart Kop, commanding Skiets Drift, was occupied.

*Divided
 authority.*

In all the story of the South African War there is no chapter so confused and hard to follow as that in which Spion Kop is the central feature. The history is as difficult to understand as the geography, and endless controversy has gathered round it. It must be borne in mind, on the one hand, that the distances were not great, and that it would seem to have been perfectly easy for the Commander-in-Chief, had he so desired, to keep all the threads of the whole movement in his own hands. On the other hand, Sir Charles Warren was an officer of tried experience, especially in South Africa, and of very high standing. It had been intended that he should take over charge of Methuen's force; in other words, be placed in a position of more or less independent responsibility; and, being sent on to Natal to work directly under Sir Redvers Buller's orders, he had only in the last few days come up to the front. The two Generals, therefore, were new to collabora-

tion with each other in the war, and it was not unnatural that Buller, having devised a general plan, and acquainted Warren with it, should give the latter wide discretion in its execution. But, as the days went on, they brought with them all the evils of divided authority, spasmodic interference, and confusion of purpose, aggravated by absence of accurate knowledge either of the numbers fighting in the enemy's ranks, or of the topography of a most difficult country. Speed, a single definite plan, and undivided control were essential to success. All were wanting, and the inevitable result was failure. Buller considered that the chance was lost through Sir Charles Warren's slowness.¹ Lord Roberts, with special reference to Spion Kop, censured 'the disinclination of the officer in supreme command to assert his authority and see that what he thought best was done'.¹ The German criticism runs: 'Beginning with Buller, every higher commander transferred in this sort of way the carrying out of an enterprise, and with that the responsibility, on to the shoulders of his next junior.'² It is at least clear that Sir Charles Warren was not left free to act as he thought best, that he was hampered by the proximity and constant interference of his superior officer, and that whether his own views were right or wrong, whether his leading were faulty or not, he was not, as a matter of fact, given a fair chance to work out his own failure or his own success.³

The river at Trickhardt's Drift is 80 yards wide with high banks. During the 17th and 18th pontoons were thrown across it, and the force was brought over. Buller's advice to Warren had been constantly to throw forward his left and refuse his right; in other words, constantly to move round

*Warren's
movements.*

¹ Spion Kop despatches, Cd. 968, 1902, pp. 17, 5.

² Vol. ii, p. 117.

Reference should be made to Sir Charles Warren's very able statement in reply to Sir R. Buller's criticisms in the Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa, Cd. 1791, 1903, App. M, pp. 644-54.

PART II. on the north-west, so as to gain what Buller called the 'open plain north of Spion Kop'—an open plain which hardly seems to have existed. Accordingly Dundonald and his mounted men pushed forward in a north-westerly direction, along the line of the Venters Spruit, towards the third of the roads to Ladysmith which have been noticed, and on the 18th, about two miles west of Acton Homes, surprised a party of Boers, inflicting some 50 casualties. It looked as if a passage could be forced in this direction. But Dundonald's message to Warren gave the latter the impression that the mounted troops were in difficulties and needed assistance. Warren resented having been, as he thought, prematurely committed: all advance by the Acton Homes route was stopped, and there was a beginning of friction and misunderstanding. Warren set his face against this outer circle route because of the wider circuit and the time which would be taken in following it, because to take it meant in his opinion abandoning co-operation with Buller's force, contrary to Buller's instructions, and because he held that no advance could be made on this line without first securing the hills north, east, and west. Buller seems to have shared the view that the only practical route for Warren's force was by the central, the Fairview road; but to make this road available either Tabanyama on the left or Spion Kop on the right must be secured. Warren first tried on the left, still in consonance with Buller's general view. On the 20th much progress was made. An advance was made to Three Tree Hill along the line of the road rising upwards to the Nek, the whole of the southern crest of Tabanyama was taken, and the mounted troops cleverly lodged themselves on the outlying southern spur of Tabanyama, Bastion Hill. But now it was found that the southern crest of Tabanyama was commanded by the northern crest, and the northern crest was held by the Boers in force; an attack upon them in front across an open plateau was deemed too expensive of men's lives: on the 21st an attempt was

made to outflank them by pushing forward the British left from Bastion Hill, but the attempt failed. So far there had been in all about 300 British casualties, and the main Boer lines were still untouched, growing stronger day by day.

Buller, uneasy at the want of progress, dissatisfied with Warren's dispositions of his troops, near enough constantly to intervene, but not taking the command into his own hands, came over three days running to confer with Warren, and urge either immediate action or retreat. Warren was reinforced by some howitzers and a fresh infantry brigade, commanded by Talbot Coke, and, after consulting with his officers, decided to attack on the right and to attempt to take and hold Spion Kop. Buller seems to have acquiesced, though his constant preference was for movement on the left, and he designated General Woodgate to lead the enterprise with men chosen mainly from Woodgate's own Lancashire Brigade. Warren had meanwhile divided his force into two subordinate commands, the left attack and left flank being entrusted to General Clery, and the right attack and right flank to General Talbot Coke. Talbot Coke was therefore in general charge of the Spion Kop operations, though the conduct of the actual attack was delegated to Woodgate, and on the night of the 23rd of January the attempt was made.

About 8.30 on that evening Woodgate led out between *Spion Kop* 1,500 and 2,000 men. The main body, equivalent to two battalions, consisted of men from three Lancashire regiments. With them were half a company of Royal Engineers and 180 men of the Natal irregular force, known, from the fine soldier who commanded them, as Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry. The way taken was by a gulley, which led straight up north from Trickhardt's Drift to the south-western angle of Spion Kop, where the steep hill rose in successive terraces. Thorneycroft led the way in the darkness: a little before dawn a Boer piquet was surprised and driven off; and at 4 o'clock in the morning the top of the hill was gained. There was thick

PART II. mist over the hill, and in the mist the men worked as best
—♦— they could at entrenchments, scraping with little effect among boulders and in the stony ground. The main trench faced north, in the direction from which attack was expected, with small protecting angles on east and west. As the mist rose, it was found that the entrenchment did not command the hill; that, while it was itself exposed to distant fire, in front of it there was a steep dip in the ground for 200 yards or less down to the northern crest, and that, unless that crest was held, the Boers could creep up under cover. Piquets were therefore thrown out in advance towards the northern edge. The English had not been long on the hill before Boer firing began, but a little after 7 in the morning Woodgate sent a report to Warren which showed no uneasiness. The trying time then came; cannon and rifles from the Boer positions on the north-west and north of Spion Kop concentrated their fire on the hill; fire came from the Twin Peaks on the east; while near the actual summit a party of Boers established themselves on a kopje on the north-east, and from about 400 yards' distance harried the right flank of the English. Meanwhile Boer after Boer was creeping up the hill; soon after 8 o'clock some were within fifty yards of the main trench; half an hour later Woodgate was mortally wounded: and the next senior officer signalled a message to Warren asking for reinforcements—a message which in transmission was exaggerated to the effect that without reinforcements all was lost. As soon as Woodgate and his men had reached the top, Warren's guns opened on the Boer lines, so far as those lines were within reach of fire. The western side of Spion Kop was thus kept clear from the Boers, and the eastern part of the plateau as well as the southern slope was commanded by the heavy guns beyond the river at Mount Alice and Spearman's Hill. The English could thus bring up their reinforcements unmolested, and it was only on the north, north-west, and north-east that the Boers could attack.

But there was no respite from pressure on this side. For some unexplained reason, Warren's main force seems to have remained more or less passive the whole day long, making little or no effort by demonstration or forced attack on the Boers in front of them to effect a diversion, and all day long the defenders of the hill, reinforced from time to time, were—except for one movement which will be noticed directly—left to play their hand alone. Reinforcements were constantly needed, for, as the men were killed or disabled, and as the Boer attack developed, more than the original number were required to hold the hill, and yet each addition to the number added to overcrowding and to loss of life. The want of water was great; arrangements were made on the slopes of the hill for bringing up water, food, ammunition, and all the other necessary adjuncts to a battle, but little could be taken through into the actual fighting line.¹ The signalling seems to have been broken down, messages went up and down the hill, and by the time they reached their destination the conditions had changed. Thus at Warren's head-quarters there was no adequate appreciation of how the fight was going, and what at any given time was the most imminent need. Worst of all there was more confusion of authority and control than has been read of in connexion with any other battlefield. Woodgate was killed. Woodgate's superior officer, Talbot Coke, was through most of the day on the hill, but not in the actual battle on the summit. In the middle of the day Buller telegraphed to Warren pressing the necessity of putting 'a really good hard fighting man' in command on the summit, and suggested Thorneycroft, who through the day magnificently upheld his reputation as a hard

¹ On the other hand Sir Charles Warren's statement printed in the Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa (Cd. 1791, 1903, pp. 644-54, App. M) does not bear out the usually received accounts of the great distress among the British troops on Spion Kop. Thus he says (p. 652), 'At 5 p.m. nearly all the 11th Brigade who had gone up during the night had come down for water and food.'

PART II. fighting man. Warren accordingly gave Thorneycroft the command on the top, but Coke seems not to have known of it, nor did some of the other senior officers. From first to last there was an isolated shambles on the hill-top, into which enduring English soldiers poured to fill the places of the slain, and to die themselves.

Amid this confusion the story seems to run as follows. Warren answered the message that without reinforcements the hill would be lost to the effect that reinforcements were on their way and that the hill must be held. This was just before 10 o'clock in the day. At the same time he signalled to Lyttelton to give him help, Lyttelton having from early morning demonstrated in front of his own position in order to divert the Boers' attention. About noon the reinforcements which had already been provided were coming into the fight, some of a Colonial Corps, the Imperial Light Infantry, and some of the Middlesex Regiment. They came none too soon. Under the merciless fire, with little or no cover, tired, craving for water under the hot sun, the soldiers were sorely tried. As the morning went on, the advanced piquets had been driven back from the northern edge, except on the left, where some held their ground to the end. Before 1 o'clock Talbot Coke was on the hill a little below the summit, and sent a message to Warren that the men on the top were holding out well, but that it was overcrowded and he was checking the flow of reinforcements. Immediately afterwards came a crisis. Some of the soldiers in an exposed trench on the right could endure no more, and surrendered to the number of 170. A general surrender was threatened, but was checked promptly and fearlessly by Thorneycroft, who drew off the men from the main trench to the cover of some rocks behind. A fresh company of the Middlesex Regiment came up; he led his men out again, regained the trench, and beat back the Boers. At half-past 2 he wrote to Warren, telling him how matters stood and how severe was

the strain; Coke, through whom the message passed, added some reassuring words: but nearly two hours passed before Warren received it, and by this time Lyttelton had done something to try and ease the position.

On receiving Warren's message, and a yet more urgent appeal from some one unknown on the hill, Lyttelton sent out two of his regiments, one, the Scottish Rifles, to join in the fight on Spion Kop, the other, the 3rd battalion of the King's Royal Rifles, to move against and threaten the Twin Peaks, from which the Boers were firing on to Spion Kop, though the guns on Mount Alice cut them off from moving nearer. Finding their way across the Tugela by a ford between Potgieter's and Trickhardt's the Scottish Rifles, with whom were two squadrons of Bethune's Mounted Infantry, reached Spion Kop, climbed the hill, and about 4 in the afternoon went into the fight. The other regiment did more than threaten and demonstrate. Well and skilfully led in two parties, by 5.15 they carried the Twin Peaks and drove the Boers who had held the ground to spread confusion and dismay among their comrades. This was the one piece of good work during the day apart from the main grim and ghastly fight. It relieved the pressure on the right, it helped to unbalance the whole Boer forces and incline them to retreat. It was a swift movement contrasting with much inaction. The regiment was recalled as being too far out to be supported, and returned at nightfall; but here again a layman wonders whether some risk might not have been incurred, and an effort made to hold the ground through the night, a vantage-ground for a further stroke on the following day. The retirement may well have contributed to the abandonment of Spion Kop.¹

The afternoon went on to evening, and the slaughter went on, till at about 7 o'clock night began to bring a respite.

¹ This was Sir Charles Warren's view. See his statement (referred to above p. 173, n. 3), p. 653.

PART II.



Towards 6 o'clock Coke wrote to Warren to emphasize how sore was the fight, to ascertain what was proposed for the morrow, for a second day like the one now drawing to its close could not be undergone. A little later, at 6.30 or 7, Thorneycroft wrote in urgent terms, his message being received by Warren at half-past 8. Warren was preparing to send guns up the hill, and abandonment had never entered into his calculations, for spasmodic messages, which came at long intervals and varied in their purport, could give no adequate picture of the tragedy on the hill. Accordingly, a little after 9, he ordered Coke down to confer with him—a lengthy business, for in the darkness Coke could not find his General for hours. But now the night was going on, and Thorneycroft had to face the prospect of another day, with no instructions, and as yet no assurance of effective support and relief. It was due to him more than any man that the hill had been held so long: he deemed the cost too expensive to be repeated, as—in absence of knowledge of Warren's intentions—he thought it must be repeated, when the sun rose again; and at 10 o'clock he ordered the men from the hill, receiving, shortly after the retreat had begun, a message from Warren asking for his views. As the men stumbled down the congested path they passed the point on the hillside where Coke had taken up his position in the daytime, and where his Brigade Major was still stationed, though asleep. The Brigade Major woke up, protested vigorously against the withdrawal in the absence of higher authority, and held back on his own responsibility some of the troops, but Thorneycroft went on. At the foot of the hill he met a mountain battery and a working party of Royal Engineers being sent up to make ready for the coming day. It was too late, or thought too late, to counter-order the retreat, and by the next morning the hill was completely abandoned. It had been abandoned by Dutchmen as well as English; for, when darkness came, the Boers slipped away one by one, and only

The hill evacuated.

the foresight and determination of Louis Botha, throughout the whole operations the life and soul of the Boer resistance, brought back some 450 marksmen at break of day to find the plateau tenanted by dead bodies.

Lord Roberts severely censured Thorneycroft's action in withdrawing from Spion Kop as 'the unwarrantable and needless assumption of authority by a subordinate officer'.¹ Thorneycroft had been placed to hold the hill. There is a consensus of opinion that it was his duty to hold it, until either dead or ordered down: and the fact that the Boers left the hill proves that he was wrong in leaving it. On the other hand he had asked for instructions, but not received them: he had no cognizance of any measures for relieving the strain on the morrow: he must have been tried, as few fighting men have been tried, by heat, thirst, fatigue, and perpetual slaughter of good English soldiers placed in his charge: his own leadership throughout the day was beyond all praise; and if he made a mistake, it is difficult to imagine circumstances which lent themselves better to an error of judgement.

The number of English soldiers who took Spion Kop in the first instance was under 2,000. By the close of the day, including reserves not yet put into the fighting line, the total sent up reached 4,500. The casualties were over 1,000, 23 per cent. of the final total and equivalent to more than half of the original number. The whole operations of these days cost 1,733 British casualties. The story soon came to an end. Warren, taken by surprise by Thorneycroft's withdrawal, communicated with Buller. Buller came over in the morning and took command, and by the early morning of the 27th the whole army was brought back to the southern bank of the Tugela, with the exception of the men who held the Kopjes in front of Potgieter's Drift.

Buller had already another plan, which, he thought, would give him the key to Ladysmith. This plan was to seize the

*British
retreat.*

*Vaa!
Krantz.*

¹ Spion Kop Despatches, p. 5.

PART II. Vaal Krantz Ridge, which, as has been said, stretched along the eastern side of the lower loop of the Tugela. If artillery could be well planted on this ridge, it was thought that it would command the Brakfontein slopes and open the way to the beleaguered town. There was yet another road than those which have been mentioned, which left the Tugela at Skiets Drift, and ran between Vaal Krantz on the left and Doornkop on the right. This road might be made available if the plan succeeded. The reverse at Spion Kop had greatly accentuated the seriousness of the position. Disease and death were rife in Ladysmith, and hope deferred made the heart sick. Messages were telegraphed and signalled to and from White, to and from Lord Roberts at Capetown, to and from the War Office at home. White and the home authorities hinted at the last desperate expedient of the Ladysmith garrison trying to cut their way out and join Buller. Buller and Roberts alike dissented. Roberts counselled that, unless Buller was confident of success, he should not make any further strong move, until Roberts himself had relieved the situation by invasion of the Free State. Buller thought that Roberts's contemplated movement would not be in time materially to lighten the strain in Natal, that, if Ladysmith was to be saved, he himself must continue to act on the offensive. Both he and White considered that the Boers had been shaken by the recent fighting, and White, setting great store, as Warren emphatically set store, on the demoralizing effect of British artillery fire, favoured continuous bombardment of the Boer lines, approach by sapping if necessary, and breaking through step by step. Eventually Buller decided on his Vaal Krantz scheme, and inspired Roberts with confident hope of its success.

There was a pontoon bridge over the river at or near Potgieter's Drift between the two loops, and a second bridge had been constructed over the western side of the lower loop, so that troops within the lower loop could cross out of and

re-cross into it on that side, the side adjoining Potgieter's. Vaal Krantz was outside the lower loop on the opposite eastern side, with which there was so far no connexion. The object was to occupy Vaal Krantz, and the scheme was as follows. Guns and an infantry brigade were to advance straight in front of Potgieter's and direct towards Brakfontein, as though a determined frontal attack was to be made upon the main Boer position: troops were to be massed inside the loop as though to cross the river on the left of the loop by the second pontoon bridge and join in the advance on Brakfontein. But, while this feigned attack was being carried out, a third bridge was to be constructed in the opposite direction, on the right, across the eastern side of the loop, leading towards the southern end of Vaal Krantz. By this bridge sufficient men were to be thrown across the river to take the hill, and, supporting them, other troops were to secure the further right by clearing the slopes of the great hill of Doornkop which towered above Vaal Krantz on the east, and by seizing another hill—Green Hill—further on in the same direction, that is immediately on the east of Vaal Krantz, under which the road from Skiets Drift ran. In other words, both sides of that road were as far as possible to be cleared, and the guns to be established on Vaal Krantz were to make the Brakfontein lines untenable.

Heavy cannon were dragged up Zwartkop, dominating the scene of the coming fight. On the 5th of February, none too early in the morning, infantry and gunners moved out for the feint against Brakfontein; the demonstration served well as a demonstration, though it seems to have been of somewhat doubtful value; while it went on, the new bridge was cleverly and quickly constructed, the demonstrating troops were then brought off, and with some unnecessary delay the first two regiments detailed for the crossing went over the new bridge, and moving at first up and along the river bank, then turned inland, and in the face of heavy fire stormed

PART II. Vaal Krantz. But meanwhile Buller countermanded the further movement to the right which was to have resulted in taking Green Hill, and at the very outset the enterprise became half-hearted. Here, as elsewhere, all depended on swift, definite, and determined movement, and here, even more than elsewhere, the very opposite was in evidence. The position at and near Vaal Krantz was at first very weakly held on the Boer side, Viljoen with his Johannesburg commando—good fighting men but few in numbers—being in charge. But as the English delayed, the Boers multiplied; a great gun was brought up Doorn Kop, and all the right of the attacking force was enfiladed, over and above the main obstruction in front. Vaal Krantz, when occupied, proved like Spion Kop to be an exposed hill-top, of little use for artillery because it was commanded by the hills immediately in front of its northern end: the English troops held it, but held it with difficulty, and the sun went down on an effort which had been more or less wasted, partly because half the enterprise, the attack on Green Hill, had not been attempted. On the 6th Buller consulted Roberts, saying in effect that he could push his way through, though at the loss of 2,000 or 3,000 men, to which the unhesitating reply was that the attack should be pressed home; there was a counter-attack by the Boers on Vaal Krantz, behind a screen of burning grass, which was beaten off; the pontoon bridge was moved a little higher up the loop and nearer Vaal Krantz, to facilitate retirement if necessary: and a fresh brigade relieved the men who were holding the hill; but the whole day passed and not the slightest progress was made. Nothing was done on the next day, the 7th, and on the night of the 7th the whole force was withdrawn. Buller, having taken counsel with his divisional commanders, had decided to abandon all operations on the Upper Tugela, and returning to the outskirts of Colenso to attack Hlangwane Hill. On the 11th of February the army was back in the Chieveley lines, where General

Barton had in the interval done what could be done by demonstration of attack to keep an appreciable number of the enemy tied to Colenso. CH. III.

The Vaal Krantz fiasco cost 333 casualties, all for nothing. It was a most feeble and unsatisfactory performance, a half-hearted ending to a little campaign, which had been full of promise and broke down completely. The German view is that the river should have been crossed at several points, and from all of these determined attacks should have been made so as to prevent any concentration of the Boer forces against the principal point of attack.¹ It is very difficult to imagine that at any point, if there had been some little secrecy, a moderate amount of promptness, concentration of men and guns under a strong will with a well-defined purpose, and one combined effort of the whole available force, the Boer lines could not have been pierced. The Boers were always given time to reinforce each threatened point and to strengthen their defences, and they were taught the lesson that, if they stood their ground long enough, the English commanders would call off their men. They suffered some loss in the fighting, but it was small compared with the two thousand British casualties, and at the end of the better part of a month's operations on the Upper Tugela they were still starving Ladysmith and held the field.

¹ Vol. ii, pp. 207-8.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR

PART II

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

*Roberts
and
Kitchener.* PART II. BULLER and Warren were men of tried experience in South Africa; but since they had known South Africa and the Boers there had been great changes. Armed with the latest weapons, having dovetailed up-to-date military experience from the continent of Europe into their own approved methods of fighting, the Boers, especially in difficult country like Natal, were formidable in the extreme; and it may be questioned whether men who had known them in the days of old-time warfare, before the gold of the Rand had wrought transformation, were as well equipped for dealing with the South African problem as soldiers who were new to South Africa, but both of whom had in independent commands handled armies in wild countries under burning suns, and one of whom, Lord Kitchener, had but lately ended a campaign. Much water had run under the bridge since Lord Roberts reached Capetown in 1881, only to learn that an armistice had been concluded after Majuba and to come straight home again. The evil day had been postponed, with the result that a small task had grown to be one of infinite difficulty. He was called to face it at the age of 68, with forty-one years of Indian Service behind him, and stricken by the loss of his only son. His Chief of the Staff was not yet 50, fresh from the reconquest of the Sudan, a triumph of organizing capacity. The two men supplemented each other in a singular degree. Behind the personal leadership and rare military insight of the older man was the administrative strength, energy, and tenacity of the younger. They were sent at a time of crisis to redress the balance, and they brought England to her own again.

They landed in South Africa on the 10th of January, and the Sixth Division under General Kelly Kenny landed about the same date. Kelly Kenny was sent up to Naauwpoort, with orders to clear the cross-line eastward from Rosmead Junction, and thereby strengthen Gatacre's position. Reinforcements were sent to French in front of Colesberg. It looked as though the advance to the north was to be made through the centre of the Cape Colony and over the Orange River by Norval's Pont and Bethulie Bridges. That was the way by which Buller was to have gone, had not Ladysmith called him to Natal, and the advance was to have been made in parallel columns. But, as Lord Roberts has told us in his evidence before the Royal Commission on the South African War, he had decided before he left England to strike with one undivided force into the Free State from the western line, because on this line alone a railway bridge over the Orange River was in British keeping, because thus alone the relief of Kimberley could effectually be secured, and if Kimberley fell, Mafeking must fall also; and lastly, because by taking the western side and not the centre, the Boer forces could be dealt with in detail, and Cronje's army, the westernmost of the Boer armies, be defeated before it could be reinforced. Roberts's plan of campaign involved leaving the railway and marching across the veldt to Bloemfontein, but at least the country was open; there were no mountain barriers, such as obstructed Buller in Natal. 'He was wise in his decision to march over the unbroken plains.'¹ He had intended by his cross-march to reach the central railway low down in the Free State, near Springfontein Junction, immediately behind the Boer forces which were invading the Cape Colony; but the messages from Kimberley grew more urgent. On the 7th of February a 'Long Tom', badly wounded in Natal by one of the night sorties from Ladysmith and now convalescent

CH. IV.

*Roberts's
plans.*

¹ De Wet's *Three Years' War* (Constable, 1902), p. 41. De Wet, however, would have us believe that General Delarey's successful opposition in the Colesberg district had prevented Lord Roberts crossing at Norval's Pont and forced him to take the Modder River route.

PART II. after a stay in the Transvaal repairing shops, made its appearance in the besieging lines and added to the nervousness of the besieged. The civilians clamoured for relief and hinted at surrender. The Commander-in-Chief therefore decided to strike farther north and at once ensure the safety of the town. He had in his mind, too, to follow the Modder River up in its eastward course, when making for Bloemfontein, and thereby to provide his army with an adequate water-supply.

By the end of January the Seventh Division under General Tucker had landed, and a week later Lord Roberts went to the front. The importance of Kimberley necessitated a start before all the military preparations had been completed, but in four weeks or a little less much had been done. Kitchener's hand had made itself felt in recasting, organizing, urging forward the work of transport and supplies. Sir William Nicholson and many other able officers seconded his efforts. The young French-Canadian, Girouard, who had proved his engineering capacity in the Sudan, and who was already in South Africa as military director of railways, was indefatigable in providing means to concentrate men, animals, arms, and stores. The cross-line from Naauwport to De Aar enabled Kelly Kenny's men and a large part of French's force to be brought westward, and by the end of the first week of February, or a day or two later, an army of some 40,000 fighting men, including Methuen's force, was on the western railway from the Orange River Bridge to the Modder River Camp, mainly at Graspan, Belmont, and the Modder River. Every effort had been made to procure the greatest possible number of mounted men, and a cavalry division had been formed under General French, to consist of three cavalry brigades and two brigades of mounted infantry, though many of the mounted men were new to the saddle and not yet trained for their work. Three divisions of infantry—the Sixth, the Seventh, and a Ninth Division, made up mainly out of troops from the line of communications, together with the Highland Brigade—were told off for the movement in hand. With it all, there had been

a wholesome secrecy as to the real objective, which misled the Boers. Up till the 8th of February the Boer army in the neighbourhood of Colesberg was still being reinforced under the impression that there was the point of danger, and the main bulk of French's force was drawn off unknown to the enemy.

Cronje, too, at Magersfontein did not realize what was taking place. His long experience of successful fighting with the English had led him with some reason to have a poor opinion of their brains and a still poorer opinion of their activity, and he seems in turn to have developed for his own part no little stupidity and considerable inertness. He scouted the idea of being outflanked. 'The English do not make turning movements,' was his contemptuous comment. 'They never leave the railway because they cannot march. Let them come by Jacobsdal; we ask nothing better.'¹ If, however, there was going to be any outflanking, he looked for it from the west, not from the east, because the latest English move had been on the western side. Rather less than twenty miles below the junction of the Riet and the Modder, southwest of Kimberley, due west of Magersfontein, the road from Kimberley to Douglas crosses the Riet River at Koedoesberg Drift. This was the route by which Boer emissaries and fighting men found their way to stir and stiffen up the rebels in the Herbert district on the western side of Methuen's line of communications, now become more important than ever. Lord Roberts ordered Methuen to send a force to the drift, to clear out any enemies in the neighbourhood, and to build a small fort to hold the passage of the river. The officer detached for the purpose was General Hector Macdonald, who had lately proved his fighting worth at Omdurman, and had succeeded Wauchope in command of the Highland Brigade. On the 4th of February he started with his brigade,

*Koedoes-
berg.*

¹ The words of Cronje and De Wet, according to Count Sternberg in *My Experiences of the Boer War*, translation 1901, p. 114, quoted in the official *History of the War in South Africa*, vol. ii, p. 1. But De Wet, according to his own account, had no sympathy with Cronje's stubborn views.

PART II. two squadrons of Lancers, and a battery of artillery, camped for the night on the way, reached the drift on the 5th, and fixed his head-quarters on the southern bank of the river, but placed outposts on the northern bank, where the hill Koedoesberg commands the drift at about 1,200 yards from the north-west. At daybreak on the 6th a beginning was made of the intended fort on the northern bank of the river. Meanwhile, news of Macdonald's march had reached Cronje, who sent De Wet with some 350 Boers to molest or drive out the intruders. De Wet established himself on the northern part of the Koedoesberg Hill, while the English held the southern part, and there was some fighting on the 6th between the two parties on the hill. The Boers were reinforced, and on the night of the 6th brought a gun up the hill. On the 7th they tried to cross the river lower down than the main drift, and turn Macdonald's left flank, but did not succeed; and in the afternoon a cavalry brigade under General Babington, with two batteries of horse artillery, sent out in response to Macdonald's request for reinforcements, appeared on the scene. The Boers might well have been intercepted, but the cavalry was slow, and there was want of concert between the two British forces. The end of it was that by the morning of the 8th the Boers had disappeared, and on the same evening, in obedience to orders received, the British troops withdrew also. The casualties had been small, but, as usual, larger on the British than on the Boer side.¹

*The start
for the
flank move-
ment.*

On the 6th of February Lord Roberts left Capetown to join his army.² On the 11th the long-contemplated movement began, a movement of over 30,000 effective soldiers. About ten miles east of Graspan Station, and four miles

¹ De Wet begins his account of this Koedoesberg expedition in *Three Years' War*, pp. 41-2, with the following: 'On the 11th of February, 1905, a strong contingent of mounted troops under General French, issued from the camps at Modder River and Koedoesberg. This latter was a kop on the Riet River about twelve miles to the east of their main camp.' The quotation is given as an extraordinary instance of inaccuracy and confusion by the writer or translator.

² The ordinary accounts say that Lord Roberts reached Modder River on the 8th of February, but in his evidence before the War Commission the 10th is given as the date.

within the borders of the Orange Free State, was the rendezvous and starting-point, Ramdam, a farm well supplied with water. From Ramdam a wide flanking march was to be made, first in an easterly, then in a northerly direction, so as to pass to the east of Cronje's position at Magersfontein, cut his communications, and relieve Kimberley. The Cavalry Division was to lead, specially charged with the relief of Kimberley; the Infantry Divisions were to follow one after another, giving continuous impetus and support. There were two rivers to be crossed, the Riet and the Modder, high-banked rivers, over which guns and wagons could only be brought at the drifts, and between the Riet and the Modder were 20 to 25 miles of bare, burnt up, nearly waterless plain, to be traversed at the hottest time of the year, by men and horses, many of them lately landed, and in no condition to stand the summer heat of the South African veldt.

In the very early morning of the 11th French led out his horsemen from Modder River, and rode south for some 20 miles to Ramdam; there he was met by the Seventh Infantry Division who came from Graspan, while the Sixth Division was moved down by rail from Modder River to Graspan, to replace the Seventh. But part of French's own division was wanting. The Carabineers and most of the mounted infantry under Colonel Haunay, who had started from Orange River, on the evening of the 9th, to join their division at Ramdam, had more or less to fight their way across country against Boers of the south-western corner of the Orange Free State, and failed to reach Ramdam at the time appointed. French did not wait for them. Before daybreak on the 12th he rode east for the fords of the Riet. The nearest ford was Waterval, in a direct line only nine miles from Ramdam. Here the river in its upward course curves to the south-east, and five miles up stream from Waterval is De Kiel's Drift. Cronje had noted the southward march of French and his men from Modder River on the 11th, and under the general impression that they might be up to

CF. IV.

*French
occupies De
Kiel's
Drift.*

PART II. mischief, but with no suspicion of what was actually intended, and with a profound contempt for British soldiery, he sent out De Wet with 450 men and two guns to drive them back. They are 'only cavalry', was his remark to the Austrian Count Sternberg, 'whom we shoot and capture'.¹ De Wet took up a position commanding Waterval Drift. French, as he came up, feinted an advance upon this drift, and, holding De Wet there, secured the passage of the river at De Kiel's Drift. De Wet then withdrew from the other ford, and both the drifts were clear for the passage of the army. It will be noted that the movement of troops due south from Modder River, and then the advance due east, misled the Boers and increased Cronje's sense of security in his Magersfontein lines. The impression seems to have been that the English were contemplating an advance—possibly no more than a cavalry raid—towards the south-east of the Free State in the direction of Koffyfontein and Fauresmith, and this impression apparently determined De Wet's own movements, for he moved round and took up a position behind the English to the east and south-east, well chosen to block any advance in that direction, or to attack a convoy and rear-guard, but useless for holding back a northern movement. There he remained for two to three days, despatching a few of his men to follow the onward British move, and sending messages to wake up the confident and sluggish Cronje. Very shortly the whole British army was to have cause to regret that their scouts had failed to keep in touch with him.

*From the
Riet to the
Modder.*

The Riet had been reached in the forenoon of the 12th, and French had contemplated a few hours rest and then further advance. But the crossing of the river was a lengthy process. No water could be found in the direction of the Modder, no suitable place for a halt in the burning waste. The rest of the day and the night were spent by the Riet, and the morning was far gone on the 13th, and the sun high, when the horsemen moved on again. The Seventh Division

¹ Count Sternberg's *My Experiences of the Boer War*, p. 159.

had followed close on their tracks on the 12th to De Kiel's Drift, and, before they left on the 13th, Lord Roberts himself came to speed them on their way. They rode over the plain, dogged on the right by a party of Boers. A well was found on the march, but there was no time to water the horses. The sun poured down: horses died: men drooped: still they went on. They came in view of the line of the Modder River. Here again there was a choice of fords, on the west Rondeval, three miles east of Rondeval, at a point where the river makes a wide curve to the north, Klip Drift, and eight miles again further east in a direct line, where the curve comes down again, Klip Kraal Drift. Once more French outmanœuvred the Boers. Giving an easterly turn to the right of his long line, he moved in the direction of the easternmost drift, Klip Kraal. To forestall him, the Boers, now increased in numbers, galloped for the drift and crossed by it, having thereby a long semicircle between them and the lower drifts. Meanwhile, French's left with little difficulty forced the crossing at Klip Drift and Rondeval, killed, caught, or drove off the few Boers holding the kopjes on the northern bank, and captured a store of welcome supplies. The time was about 5 in the afternoon, and through the evening, exhausted and half-dead, when they had not already fallen in their traces, the horses brought guns and stores and men across the river.

*French
seizes the
Modder
Drifts.*

French was now abreast of Cronje's main position. On this same day Cronje had sent out 800 men to withstand him, but still remained himself unmoving in his lines. But before the last stage to Kimberley could be accomplished, some rest for the animals was needed, and a strong infantry force must be planted on the Modder.

All day on the 13th the Seventh Division halted at De Kiel's Drift, while guns and stores were being brought over the river, and meanwhile the Sixth Division came up abreast of them to Waterval, the Ninth Division in turn moving from the railway to Ramdam. Anxious to spare the infantry as much as possible of the desert march, Lord Roberts determined to

*The Sixth
Division
joins
French.*

PART II. move them along the northerly course of the Riet downstream as far as Wegdraai Drift, in a direct line nine or ten miles from Waterval. The Sixth Division, therefore, being at the lower drift of Waterval, now took up the running, the men having been longer in South Africa than their comrades of the Seventh Division, and being in better marching condition. With them and their commander, General Kelly Kenny, went the Chief of the Staff, Lord Kitchener. Marching by night, they reached Wegdraai in the forenoon of the 14th, and late in the same day, being called on for a special effort, they pushed forward across the veldt straight for the Modder Drifts, and joined French at 1 o'clock in the morning of the 15th, having marched 27 miles in 23 hours.

*Kimberley
relieved.*

The 15th of February was a fateful day: Early in the morning Kelly Kenny's men crossed over the river and took charge of French's positions on the northern bank. The drifts being safe, and his tired horses having had some rest, French now moved off from Klip Drift for Kimberley, less than 20 miles distant. Two nights and a day, however, had been given to the Boers to gather in front of him, and about three miles north of the Modder they held, some 900 in number, two lines of kopje running north-east and north-west respectively, converging to each other within a distance of two-thirds of a mile, and linked by a low Nek. Starting under cover up the river in a north-easterly direction, French turned sharp to the north-west, and, supported by Kelly Kenny's field guns on high ground behind, charged for the Nek. Moving at speed in open order, on a broad front, the horsemen under heavy fire swept over the Nek, straight through the centre of the Boer lines, riding down obstruction. Daring and conspicuously successful, for the losses were almost negligible, this move of the cavalry leader has been characterized by British military authorities as 'the most brilliant stroke of the whole war',¹ by German, as 'one of the

¹ History of the War in South Africa, vol. ii, p. 36.

most remarkable phenomena of the war'.¹ The way to Kimberley was now open, for the besiegers had withdrawn from the southern side of the town, and on the way, seven miles from Klip Drift, at Abon's Dam, water was available. As evening fell, the cavalry reached the outskirts of the city and Kimberley was relieved.

Further back all along the line much was happening. On the 14th the Seventh Division, which since the 12th had been holding De Kiel's Drift for the passage of the supply wagons, moved down the Riet to Waterval, and on the night of the 14th followed the Sixth Division to Wegdraai, arriving there at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 15th, almost precisely the same time at which the Sixth Division reached the Modder Drifts. With this division came the Commander-in-Chief. In the course of the 15th one brigade was sent to occupy Jacobsdal, four miles north-west of Wegdraai, which had already been entered and reconnoitred by the mounted men of the Sixth Division on the previous day. There was some fighting, but the village was taken and held, and now direct communication could be opened with Methuen hardly ten miles distant in his camp at Modder River. On the 14th the Ninth Division reached Waterval from Ramdam, and at noon on the 15th they too came up to Wegdraai.

Before he left Waterval on the 14th, Lord Roberts had ordered that all wagons which had not crossed the river should be sent back to Ramdam. There was some confusion and the order was not delivered, but the Commander-in-Chief went forward under the impression that by the time that the main bodies of infantry left the drifts of the Riet, there would be no convoy behind in need of protection. This was not the case. On the 15th a large number of wagons, which had been brought over the river, it is true, were concentrated on the right bank at Waterval Drift, and there was only a weak rear-guard to protect them. De Wet saw his opportunity, and, having given no sign of hostile vitality since the 12th, he now

De Wet captures a convoy at Waterval.

¹ German official account of the War in South Africa, i. 147.

PART II. emerged from his hiding-place, came across the river from the south-east, took up a position in some kopjes east of the convoy laager, fired on it and on its protectors, killed or stampeded a large number of the oxen, sent the native drivers flying, and brought everything else to a standstill. The rear-guard held their ground, but could not drive him off. Lord Roberts sent back troops from Wegdraai from the Seventh Division. General Tucker came back himself, and in the evening reported that he could not bring the convoy off without further reinforcements. The choice lay between rescuing the stores but delaying the whole movement of the army, and abandoning the stores but avoiding delay. Lord Roberts took the second, the bolder course: he ordered the fighting men to come on, having destroyed all the stores that could not be brought off. There was not time to effect wholesale destruction, and loss to the amount of 176 wagonloads of provisions was the result of De Wet's enterprise. At the same time another small convoy was intercepted between Ramdam and Waterval, and an outpost on the line of the cavalry march was cut off. Very great damage was done, but in the meantime the clever Dutchman was letting time pass, which might have been spent in averting a disaster to his own people far outweighing the loss of a convoy.

Cronje
moves.

Cronje persisted too long in his imperturbable contempt for British tactics. He held to his view that Lord Roberts was making a demonstration only, and that, when the real attack came, it would be hurled once more direct against the Magersfontein lines, now better prepared than ever to repel an enemy. He had sent out detachments of men to intercept the British cavalry, with the result which has been seen, but he kept his main force by the trenches which they had manned so long. His own head-quarters were at Brown's Drift on the Modder, between two and three miles east of Magersfontein; and on the night of the 14th, whether from growing uneasiness or for some other unknown reason, he shifted his laager still further east for $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to a point where he was

little more than six miles distant from the British troops holding Rondevaal Drift. On the 15th he learnt that the infantry were at the drift, and the crisis dawned upon him. The cavalry were on the north, in the direction of his own Transvaal, the infantry were athwart the route to Bloemfontein. At length he realized that it was time to start—to start with his wagons, his women-folk, and all the encumbrances that had gathered round a long stationary camp. Not a few of his men had already been sent out to stem the new invasion: not all of those that were left went with him: but the main part of the force on the night of the 15th trekked east on the northern side of the Modder River, and, when day broke on the 16th, had well-nigh slipped by Kelly Kenny and the Sixth Division, undetected and unharmed.

CH. IV.

It must be borne in mind that, as the Boers were mystified by the movements of Lord Roberts's army, so the English commanders were in the dark as to the Boer movements. The first main object was the complete deliverance of Kimberley. For this purpose the road, which French had opened, must be kept open until the direct route by the railway was assured; and French himself had to clear away any Boers who might still be hanging around the town. In the second place the loss of the convoy made it imperative to open and keep open communication from Jacobsdal, where in the early morning of the 16th Lord Roberts established his head-quarters, with the railway at Modder River Camp, and still more with the station south of it, Honey Nest Kloof, from which supplies were to be drawn. Thus, when the morning of the 16th of February dawned, it was intended that all British effort should be directed to the north and the west, not to the east.

British movements on the 16th.

To the north of Kimberley French moved out with the greater part of his men along the line of the railway, towards Dronfield Station, eight miles from Kimberley, and Macfarlane Siding four miles further on, to drive off parties of Boers, with some of whom a detachment of the Kimberley garrison

French at Dronfield.

PART II

—♦—

had been in touch the night before, and in the hope of securing the great gun which had frightened the townspeople. All through a very hot day he and his tired men and horses circled round and fought with comparatively few very stubborn Dutchmen, notably a party of Griqualand rebels, the main scene of the fighting being the Dronfield Ridge, high ground on the east of the line, which runs more or less parallel to the railway and closes in upon it south of Dronfield Station, about six miles north of Kimberley. The net result of the day's work was to drive back the Boers for a radius of ten miles or more, but the gun was not captured, no substantial success was achieved, and night found the force back again at Kimberley, with men and horses entirely used up.

Meanwhile Kelly Kenny at the Modder Drifts was concerned to make an end of the Boer force facing him on the north, through whom French had broken on the previous day, but who had gathered again across the road to Kimberley. This was the task which one of his brigades, Knox's brigade, was setting out to accomplish in the early morning of the 16th. With them were Hannay and his mounted men, who having, as has been seen, reached Ramdam too late to take part in French's march, had come on with the Sixth Division.

*Cronje's
retreat
discovered.*

As the horsemen reconnoitred, they saw on their right a cloud of dust, and from stragglers whom they picked up they learnt that Cronje's whole armed convoy was past them on the east. The order was given to follow, and all that day the mounted infantry and the four line regiments of Knox's brigade harried Cronje's rearguard, but could not stop his march. Along the northern bank of the river, for the most part, the fighting and the marching went on, though one regiment, the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, crossed and recrossed the river, and later in the day the mounted infantry was moved to the southern bank. Before they were brought over they had made an attempt, which failed, to wedge themselves between the position which the Boer rear were holding and the river, and when evening came the English were still

only on the outskirts of their slowly retreating foes. All this day the scene of action was the semicircle of the river, which has already been mentioned, between Klip Drift on the west and Klip Kraal Drift on the east, and towards evening Cronje's main force was near Klip Kraal Drift. He was in no great hurry. He had to cross the river at some point to take the road for Bloemfontein, and he had to cross when and where his wagons would not be under fire at the crossing. But his enemies were behind him, not in front: every mile was bringing him nearer to his friends, and bringing the English farther from theirs: he would cross in good time a little higher up: he rested his oxen and his horses: and under cover of night moved off again. By morning on the 17th the main body had passed Paardeberg Drift, which is in a direct line some six miles distant from Klip Kraal, and the oxen were outspanned near another ford, over four miles higher up in a direct line, Vendutie Drift. Here, after a rest, the crossing was to be made. Meanwhile two hundred wagons had already gone over the river at Paardeberg and made good their escape.

Kitchener, it will be remembered, was with the Sixth Division. If any pressure was needed to lose no moment in pursuit, he was the man to apply it. Lord Roberts, on hearing the news of Cronje's retreat, tried to communicate with French by signal, in the hope that the latter might be able to intercept Cronje; but it was from a special messenger sent by Kitchener that French first learnt the news at 10 o'clock at night, after he had come back into Kimberley from his long exhausting day at Dronfield. The men and the horses that had been with him through that day were worn out; but one brigade, Broadwood's brigade, had been kept on the southern side of Kimberley, reconnoitring; they and the Carabineers who were with them were in some sort available for immediate action, 1,500 men in all with twelve guns. They started in the night, and French himself followed before dawn, making, on Kitchener's suggestion, for Koodoos Drift, in a straight line $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Vendutie Drift, and seven miles above it

French intercepts the Boer retreat.

PART II. by the turning river. Over the veldt they rode for the better part of 26 miles, sniped at by some of the Boers who had been besieging Kimberley: when the forenoon was well advanced, they reached and surprised a Boer signalling-post at a well-watered farm Kameelfontein, six miles north-east of Vendutie Drift; their scouts detected Cronje's straggling laager: screened by high ground from their enemies' gaze, they seized a position which commanded the drift from a mile and a quarter away, and a little after 11 o'clock in the morning, as a move across the river was about to be made, British shells came dropping among the wagons. Cronje was headed off, but by a very small force, and through the rest of the day French and his men were hard put to it to hold their own against counter-attacks. They did so till in the evening the infantry came up again in the enemy's rear, and this rare feat of courage and endurance was the deciding factor in the success which followed later. 'The capture of Cronje was chiefly due to the ability with which the cavalry division was handled, and to the skill of its gallant and resolute commander.'¹

*Infantry
movements
on the 17th.*

Knox's brigade and the mounted infantry had camped on the night of the 16th, tired and scattered, a little short of Klip Kraal Drift, the infantry on the north side of the river, the mounted infantry, all or most of them, on the south. The other brigade of the Sixth Division, Stephenson's brigade, had been left in charge of Klip Drift, and in the course of the day had marched west to the farm on which Cronje had made his last head-quarters, and had there found a dépôt with a large and opportune stock of supplies left behind by the Boers. On the 17th, marching east along the southern bank of the Modder, they joined the sister brigade, which had taken up again the pursuit along the north of the river, but crossed to the southern bank between Klip Kraal Drift and Paardeberg. On the night of the 17th the reunited division encamped about two miles short of Paardeberg. In that same night the whole of another division came up, the Ninth Division under

¹ German official Account of the War in South Africa, i. 165.

General Colville. Through the greater part of the 16th Lord Roberts, still uncertain of the conditions against which he had to provide, was minded to move his available troops north rather than east, but messages from Kitchener decided him in the evening to launch all the men he could spare in pursuit of Cronje. Of the two brigades which formed the Ninth Division one was at Jacobsdal, the other, the Highland Brigade, at Wegdraai: the first, starting for Klip Drift on the night of the 16th, reached it early in the morning of the 17th; the Highland brigade on the same night marched to Klip Kraal Drift; and both brigades, moving on later in the day, on the night of the 17th, or early morning of the 18th, came up to the Sixth Division. When the day dawned, therefore, on the 18th, Cronje had to face two complete divisions of the British army, in addition to French's corps. He might have made his way out under cover of night, could he have brought himself to leave his wagons behind; some of his men took that course and left him: the rest dug themselves trenches along the river-bank, and waited with their leader to face the coming day.

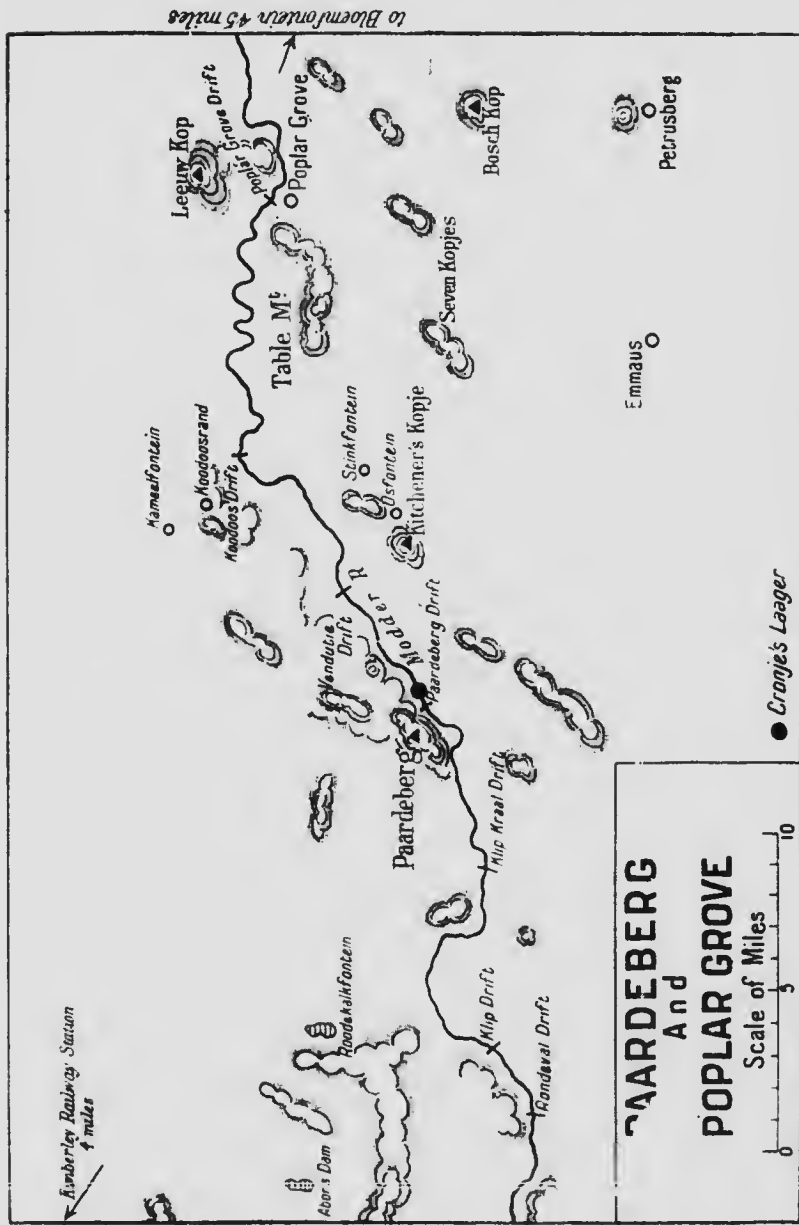
Though Kitchener was Chief of the Staff, in the absence of instructions from the Commander-in-Chief he had no authority over General Kelly Kenny and the other divisional commanders. In the course of the 17th the instructions came in the form of a letter from Lord Roberts to Kelly Kenny, which the latter most loyally accepted. 'Please consider that Lord Kitchener is with you for the purpose of communicating to you my orders, so that there may be no delay—such as references to and fro would entail.' On Kitchener therefore devolved the responsibility for the action to be taken on the 18th, and he had but one mind—to attack at once with all his force, and crush Cronje before he could break away or be relieved. There is a consensus of view that the decision was wholly sound, that if to strike hard and swiftly, even at great loss of life, is an assured principle of successful warfare, it was above all things necessary to inflict a crushing blow upon the Boers, to whom, with their comparatively scanty numbers and

*Kitchener
in com-
mand.*

PART II. —♦♦— their inherited defensive methods of fighting; heavy losses meant more than to European peoples familiar with the records of wholesale slaughter on many battlefields. But all the conditions militated against successful co-operation of the British forces. The commanders, the men, had only just come up, the evening before or throughout the night. They were not rested, they were new to the place, new to each other, scattered here and there, in more or less haphazard positions. There could have been little or no reconnoitring, there was no fully concerted plan, in which each commander knew exactly what part he was to play. Lord Kitchener himself had no organized staff to see that his orders were fully understood and duly carried out. Attached to a division, he became commander of an army which had not yet recovered its breath. Under these conditions the battle which the British General forced on, was necessarily fought in disjointed fashion, without the unity of action indispensable for success.

*The Battle
of Paarde-
berg.*

Vendutie Drift was the centre of the Boer position. Above and below it the Boers held strongly three miles of the river-bed and banks, and less continuously a longer distance. The river, replenished by recent rains, ran in a channel 50 or 60 yards wide, and 30 to 40 feet below the level of the plain. The northern bank was higher than the southern, and both banks were fringed with thorn-bush and scrub, and intersected by small transverse water-courses and tiny ravines. The largest of these dongas formed the lower or western end of the continuous Boer line on this northern side, the side on which the Boers had been held up, and where they made their main fortress. On the bank behind the actual drift were stacked their wagons with some rough defences outside them. For a long distance on the edge of the northern bank, for a shorter distance on the southern bank, a trench was scooped out, and rifle-pits were dug in the sides of the river and in the transverse hollows, the sunken river-bed being treated—as it was in the fight with Methuen at



PART II. Modder River—as a great natural fortification. The screen of trees and brushwood, the main river facing north and south, the dips in the ground facing east and west, at right angles to the main river, all made close attack singularly difficult and dangerous for an enemy advancing, as the advance had to be made, across bare and open ground. Four hundred Boers were posted on the southern side, and two little bridges were improvised at some distance from each other, to keep up connexion between this outlying body and the main force. On the southern side of the river, facing the drift at a distance of rather over two miles, a little to the east of south, a hill rose 300 feet above the surrounding plain. This hill became famous under the name of Kitchener's Kopje. East and north-east of it there was more high ground, and two farms, Osfontein, which was near the hill, and Stinkfontein further away.

The battle of the 18th was a confused battle and makes a confused story, of which only the barest outline can be given. Lord Kitchener's scheme was to hold the Boers in front, and to compress them by attacks from east and west—that is, downstream and upstream. The army, with the exception of French and his men, who were still quite isolated, was on the southern side of the river. Knox's brigade of the Sixth Division, with one regiment of the sister brigade, Stephenson's brigade, was to make a frontal attack. Hannay's mounted infantry, supported by the other regiments of Stephenson's brigade, was to attack downstream from the east; the Ninth Division was to attack upstream from the west. Knox's brigade did all that was expected from them; eventually they drove the Boers from the southern bank across the river. Hannay and his men crossed the river higher up than the Boer position and attacked downstream. Stephenson's men in the course of the day partly crossed the river in support of Hannay's movement, partly held the southern bank at this upper or eastern end of the battlefield.

At the other end Macdonald and his Highlanders first moved up the river parallel to it on the southern side, and then turned and faced it and its defenders—all these movements being under very heavy fire. The other brigade of the Ninth Division, Smith Dorrien's brigade, crossed the river to the northern bank, seized some high ground behind the river which more or less corresponded to Kitchener's Kopje on the other side, and tried to press up the river, but were checked by the fire from the large donga which has already been mentioned. None of these movements, except Knox's movement, met with appreciable success: they were all costly in casualties; they were carried out independently not in concert, without knowledge of the ground, or clear apprehension of the design, by troops who had had little rest or water; while, as the day went on, the various brigades and regiments became more and more intermixed.

Nor were Cronje's Boers the only enemies to be reckoned with. There were other disturbing factors. Comparatively early in the day, as Stephenson's troops were moving upstream to follow Hannay, they found themselves under fire from the opposite direction to Cronje's laager. The fire came from a party of Free State Boers, who had been fighting in Natal, had hurried across country to help their comrades, and had taken up their position on the high ground east of Kitchener's Kopje. British guns were turned on them and effectually checked their efforts, but meanwhile much time had been lost and the main attack became more spasmodic than ever. Later in the day there was another and more formidable diversion, led by none other than De Wet. Having secured the convoy on the Riet River, De Wet had gone to Koffyfontein, had been busy disposing of the convoy, collecting more burghers together and dividing them again, because an attack was still apprehended from the western railway into the south of the Free State. Finally riding off to Cronje's assistance through the night of the 17th, in the

PART II. —♦— afternoon of the 18th with 800 men, according to his own account, and two guns, but in fact it would seem with nearly double that number of men, he appeared on the scene while the battle was raging. British troops had occupied Kitchener's Kopje earlier in the day, but most of them had been gradually drawn off for service elsewhere, and the hill with the farm buildings at Osfontein was in charge of a small number of Kitchener's Horse, who appear to have been keeping but indifferent watch. De Wet, as always, saw with unerring instinct the weak point, attacked the hill, took its defenders prisoners, while some of his followers cleared out the men who were holding the farm-buildings, and about half-past 4 in the afternoon poured a busy fire on to the backs of the British troops, who were facing Cronje.

Before this took place the battle was nearly spent. All day long Kitchener pressed the attack, and all day long there was much the same story of isolated rushes. At one end, Hannay led a desperate forlorn hope, and nearly reached the Boer lines before he met inevitable death. At the other, Smith Dorrien's men, with some of Macdonald's who had crossed the river, tried yet again to drive in the Boer right, and yet again tried in vain, though under cover of night the donga which had baffled every British effort was evacuated by its defenders. The night went down with the troops in the main resting where they had fought, with De Wet not dislodged from the captured hill, and with a roll of 1,270 British casualties, including 300 killed. All the regiments had suffered, but most of all the Seaforth Highlanders, the West Ridings, and the Yorkshire regiment. The Boer losses were small in comparison, but the day's work was not to be measured simply by killed and wounded. Hammered and straitened as never before, Cronje and his men at the end of the day were in hopeless case. French could do little on this day beyond shelling the Boer laager. His own position was none too secure. Hard by him on the hill Koodoosrand, overlook-

ing Koodoos Drift, there was a Boer force in position, kept in check by a squadron of Lancers, who held the northern end of the hill. Late in the afternoon this danger was removed by the arrival of Gordon's brigade from Kimberley, some 750 men. They had made their way wearily, at hardly more than a foot's pace, across the veldt, and coming behind to the east of Koodoosrand, caused the Boers to leave the hill and made French's position comparatively safe.

On the 19th, the day after the battle, Lord Roberts came up in the forenoon from Jacobsdal, where he had been kept three days by a chill, and in the evening of that day more British artillery and a new infantry brigade, Chermiside's brigade of the Seventh Division, joined the army, the men having marched 30 miles on half rations in less than 20 hours. Meanwhile the Guards brigade, which had remained with Methuen, was brought forward to Klip Drift and Klip Kraal Drift, and on the 20th Methuen moved from Modder River into Kimberley.

The sequel of the battle of Paardeberg is soon told. Kitchener would have renewed the fight on the following day. Lord Roberts thought otherwise: the losses had been heavy, he had not too many men to spare: the field hospitals were overflowing. Cronje asked for an armistice but was refused: about a hundred of his men on the night after the battle stole out of the laager and joined De Wet. Round those who remained the cordon was drawn tighter: bombardment went on by day: sapping by night: nearer and nearer up and down stream the English drew to the Boers. The movement was not interrupted from outside. On the 21st De Wet was driven from his hill, leaving a few men behind him to be taken prisoners: on the 23rd, being now acting Commandant General of the Orange Free State, and having gathered a comparatively strong force at Poplar Grove, he attacked the British circle from the south-east, failed, and lost about a hundred men. On the night of the 24th he sent the daring Boer scout, Theron, to Cronje's laager to bid him cut his

CH. IV.

Lord Roberts comes to the front.

Surrender of Cronje

PART II. way out, but there was not heart for it. For the laager the days had gone on from bad to worse, and for the besiegers the water, tainted with dead horses from the Boer camp, sowed the seeds of enteric fever. On the 26th the Boers determined to surrender on the following day: before dawn on the 27th the Canadians in Smith Dorrien's brigade boldly carried their line within striking distance of the nearest Boer trench, and at 6 o'clock on the morning of the 27th, being the anniversary of Majuba day, the surrender took place, and nearly 4,000 unwounded fighting men became prisoners of war.

Paardeberg showed the strength and the weakness of the Boers in war. It would be difficult to parallel the skill, courage, and endurance which, in the bed of a river, held at bay for so long overwhelming numbers and overpowering artillery. It would be difficult to parallel the intense stupidity which led men into and kept them in a river-bed or the feebleness of the attempts to relieve them. The clue is to be found in the Dutch character as moulded by South Africa. That character was tenacious to the extent of greed, its strength had a countervailing weakness, its nobler elements had an alloy of what was mean. It is inconceivable that any Boer General could have had the heart to give up a convoy, as Roberts gave it up, in pursuance of a greater object. De Wet spent time in making and disposing of his rich capture. Cronje made his own wagons all in all, and the result was Paardeberg. Once caught at Paardeberg, first, reluctance to leave the wagons lost the owners of the wagons a sure prospect of escape; then, when all hope of saving the wagons had gone, the risk of trying to escape was accounted too great. Magnificent in holding out behind defences, supreme in endurance, Cronje's following yet wanted the last touch of courage which will take great risks. The same may be said of the would-be relievers; and they wanted too cohesion and discipline, which the life of a Dutch farmer in the great spaces of South Africa was not calculated to teach. The

commandos had been scattered by the advance of the British army, and disintegration for the time had set in. There were numbers of Boers within hail, and though many of them were at long distances, they could all have come up had they been so minded. Even as it was, some five thousand fighting men hurried up from various quarters, and hung round the outskirts of the English, buzzing like angry bees, but they did nothing beyond being a nuisance. Even after Roberts had disposed of his army in two circles round Cronje, an inner circle to keep Cronje in, and an outer circle to keep De Wet out, if all the detached bodies of Boers had come up to the firing of the guns, a concentrated, disciplined attack upon some particular point in the British line by several thousand determined and well-armed Dutchmen might have broken the ring; but the risk was great, and, being their own masters, they would not take it. They just fell short of being great fighters, even as De Wet, with all his brilliant enterprise and marvellous skill, fell short of being a great General.

Lord Roberts, while waiting for Cronje's surrender, had contemplated a swift move on Bloemfontein by French and his cavalry; but the condition of the horses made it impossible. They had not recovered, they never recovered, from the overwork, coupled with the want of sufficient food and water, which had been their lot from Ramdam to Kimberley and Paardeberg. To give them further rest, to bring up supplies, for Roberts was now about to cut loose from his communications with the western railway, to send back his wounded, and to make ready for a cross-country march, an interval was needed after Cronje's surrender, and it lasted till the 7th of March. Much meanwhile was taking place in other parts of the great area covered by the war, which will be told presently. Here it need only be said that on the 22nd of February, Kitchener had been sent round to confer with General Clements at Naauwpoort as to the coming movements, and with General Settle at De Aar Junction with

*After
Paarde-
berg.*

355A
355B

PART II: regard to the rebellion which had become acute in the west, the Prieska district of Cape Colony. He joined Lord Roberts again at Kimberley, where Roberts had gone on the 1st of March to consult with Methuen, who was to operate to the north while the main army moved east. On the day after the surrender, the troops were shifted from their positions round Vendutie Drift, away from the tainted part of the river and more in the direction of the coming march: the headquarters were fixed at Oosfontein on the east of Kitchener's Kopje: the various units were readjusted: reinforcements were brought up, notably on the 6th March the Guards brigade, no longer required to hold the lower drifts of the Modder: and on the evening of that day the Commander-in-Chief had under him for his advance on Bloemfontein 30,000 men with 116 guns. The weak point was still the condition of the cavalry and artillery horses. They had previously suffered from drought and heat: there had now been copious rains and the grass was beginning to grow; but the animals were past recovery, and the rains made traction all the heavier: the ground turned to bog, the dry water-courses into miniature torrents.

*Poplar
Grove.*

It is very difficult, in the case of the marches and of the fighting in South Africa, to give an approximate estimate of distances. The miles as the crow flies, as the roads run, and as the rivers bend, are very different: one end of a position on a modern battlefield may be many miles distant from the other end; in the case of an army marching on a given point with a widely extended front, one wing will probably cover many more miles than another. From Paardeberg to Bloemfontein may be taken very roughly to be a distance of some 60 miles, but the army started some miles east of Paardeberg and so much nearer to Bloemfontein. The direction of Bloemfontein from Paardeberg is a little to the south of east, whereas the upstream course of the Modder is a little to the north of east, but the first stage of the march

followed the Modder. North-east of Paardeberg Drift, at a distance which is given as 12 miles but is probably greater, is Poplar Grove Drift, near which was the farm of Poplar Grove, marked by its clump of poplar trees. Here De Wet had fixed his rallying-point; hence he had sallied forth for his abortive attempt to relieve Cronje, and here he decided to dispute the British advance on the Free State capital. President Steyn had come up to encourage the burghers, and on the morning of the 7th of March President Kruger came up too. The numbers on the Boer side at Poplar Grove are variously estimated at from 7,000 to 14,000; we may take perhaps the number given by the French friend of the Boers, Villebois de Mareuil, and count De Wet's following as 9,000 men. The length of the position held by De Wet is also differently given by different writers. He himself tells us that he had placed his men 'at various points along some twelve miles of the bank of the Modder River';¹ but his line was athwart not along the Modder, running north and south, not east and west. It seems to have extended continuously for at least nine miles, three north of the Modder, six south of it. North of the Modder the extreme right was safe on high ground, south of the Modder the extreme left was unsafe, in the open plain. Across this plain the outposts of the British army on the 6th of March were only about five miles distant from the Boers.

Lord Roberts's plan for the 7th was to send French and his horsemen by a detour of some 17 miles right round the Boer left in the plain, so as to take the whole Boer force in the rear and roll them up against and into the Modder, with the view of repeating Paardeberg. Kelly Kenny's tried, hard-fighting Sixth Division was to be the infantry force supporting the cavalry on the right, the other divisions were to make a parallel advance on both sides of the Modder. All was planned, the numbers were ample for the enveloping move-

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 69.

PART II. ment, but there was no life in the horses, and their want of
 —♦— spirit seems to have communicated itself to the commanders. The cavalry were too late to outflank, and followed slowly instead of intercepting. Indeed, so far from outflanking, they were themselves outflanked by a small party of Boers, brave and enterprising, who seized high ground on the right of the English advance and formed a most effective rearguard. The British infantry in their turn were slow and their Generals over-cautious. Meanwhile, with the one exception mentioned, all the Boers, deaf to the protests of their two Presidents, scampered off in all directions: one gun was taken north of the Modder, but no prisoners: and in the evening the English encamped at Poplar Grove after a singularly futile day, best summed up in Lord Roberts's own words: 'The Poplar Grove day was a most disappointing one to me, as I had quite calculated on cutting the enemy off from the Bloemfontein road, and forcing him to get entangled in the difficult drifts of the Modder.'¹ De Wet's comment was: 'It was fortunate for us that the advance of the English was not very rapid. Had it been so, everything must have fallen into their hands.'²

*After
 Poplar
 Grove.*

On the day after the battle, the 8th of March, Lord Kitchener had again to go back, personally to take in hand the troublesome Prieska rebellion. Roberts now decided to move his army forward in three columns. The left wing under French, with whom was Kelly Kenny, was still for some distance to follow the line of the Modder, the right under General Tucker was to march south-east on the village of Petrusberg, while between the two widely separated wings the Commander-in-Chief led a central column. The whole army was eventually to concentrate on the Bloemfontein-Cape Colony railway, nine miles or more south of Bloemfontein, the march being given a south-easterly trend, in order to open up railway connexion with the Cape Colony as

¹ Minutes of Evidence before the War Commission, Cd. 1790, 1903, p. 465.

² *Three Years' War*, p. 69.

soon as possible, to intercept further reinforcements for De Wet from the late invaders of the Colony, and most of all because the Boers, expecting the move on Bloemfontein to be from the north-west, the direct line from Poplar Grove, were fortifying a strong position at Spitz Kop, five or six miles north-west of the town. This had been De Wet's concern, who immediately after the stampede at Poplar Grove rode into Bloemfontein for the purpose. While he was absent, Delarey with a reinforcement of Transvaalers came up from the Colesberg lines, now being abandoned, and supervised a new position for blocking the advance of the English.

That advance began again on the night of the 8th and on the 9th; and the Boers looked for it in the direction which had hitherto been taken, that is along the line of the Modder. As only the left wing still for another stage kept in this direction, the fighting which followed devolved almost entirely upon that wing, and the brunt of it fell to the lot of the infantry. Fifteen miles or more to the east of Poplar Grove Drift is Ortel's Drift, a little short of the point where the Kaal Spruit, flowing from the south-east, enters the Modder. Slightly to the east of Ortel's Drift is Abraham's Kraal, described in De Wet's book as 'a farm belonging to Mr. Charles Ortel, some 18 miles from Poplar Grove'.¹ On the 9th the left column advanced some distance in the direction of Abraham's Kraal, but on the 10th, finding that the Boers were in force in their front, they bore away to the south-east, in order to outflank the Boer position. The Boers in turn moved south to meet them, and in Lord Roberts's words 'took up a fresh position on a ridge, about four miles long, running north and south across the road two miles east of Driefontein'.² This ridge or high ground, near Driefontein Farm, was divided into two main parts. The southern part was occupied by De Wet, who had come up again to the

CII. IV.

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Driefon-
tein.¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 69.² Minutes of Evidence before the War Commission, as above.

PART II. front from Bloemfontein, while Delarey held the northern part. As the left wing of the British army slanted to the south-east, it drew nearer to the central column, and the mounted men of the central column joined hands with French's cavalry and faced De Wet. French had gone on in this direction, and Kelly Kenny with his division was pitted against Delarey. If the march was not to be delayed and the general movement disorganized, the position had to be carried; and, as the afternoon came on, Kelly Kenny, left to his own discretion, ordered an attack, and with his Brigadier, General Stephenson, handled it with marked skill and resolution: the artillery well supported the infantry: the infantry were at their best. The hill was strongly defended: for, taking the whole position, the number of Boers engaged was estimated at some 6,000, and on the ridge held by Delarey was a detachment of Johannesburg Police, who gave a fine example of the value of disciplined armed men. The Welsh Regiment attacked in front, the Essex Regiment on the left, the Yorkshires on the right: the attack went forward: ground was gained: but the crest was still held by the enemy, and the evening was drawing on. The Buffs and Gloucesters were brought up to stiffen the frontal attack: the General threw every available man into the fighting line: and in good historic style the infantry cleared the hill. It was hard fighting while it lasted. There were 438 British casualties, the Welsh Regiment alone losing 140 officers and men. The official return of Boer losses was 7 killed and 18 wounded, but the English buried 102 Boer corpses on the hill.

*After
Driefon-
tein.*

The stand made by the Boers at Driefontein was in marked contrast to the flight from Poplar Grove: a few trained men had steadied the line. But after it was over there was no further serious resistance, especially as Roberts had not taken the direction in which preparations had been made to counter his advance. On the night of the battle the left and centre of the army were reunited. On the afternoon of the next

day the main body was at Aasvogel Kop, only 25 miles west of Bloemfontein, the line of the march following roughly the course of the Kaal Spruit, and Lord Roberts now issued a proclamation to the citizens of Bloemfontein warning them against armed resistance. On the 12th the force moved on again, and French was sent in front to strike the railway nearer to Bloemfontein than the point originally contemplated. In the evening the advance guard of the cavalry planted themselves right athwart the railway line, five miles south of the town, and in the night a daring officer of the Royal Engineers, Major Hunter Weston, with eight or ten men, rode round the town, blew up the line on the northern side, and imprisoned for British use a large amount of railway rolling stock. With the exception of a few strong leaders like De Wet, there was for the time no more fighting spirit in the Free State Boers. The President fled north: the commandos scattered: the peaceable citizens led by Fraser, who had consistently opposed Steyn's warlike and ambitious schemes, welcomed the English; and on the 13th, amid acclamation, Lord Roberts rode into Bloemfontein. Three days later a body of the Guards under Pole Carew, sent down south to clear the line, joined hands at Springfontein Junction with Gatacre's men coming up from the Colony, and direct communication with the south was secured.

*Lord
Roberts
enters
Bloem-
fontein.*

It has been seen that when on the 6th of February French finally left the lines before Colesberg, to lead—as he led with such conspicuous success—the cavalry division in Lord Roberts's army, General Clements took over charge of the Colesberg command. His duties were difficult, dangerous, and important in a high degree. He was above all things to cover Naauwpoort Junction and the cross-line which connected with De Aar; he was, while Roberts was striking, to prevent a counter-stroke by the Boer force at Colesberg, which might threaten Roberts's communications, and carry invasion deep down into the Colony at a time when the main

*General
Clements's
movements.*

PART II. British army was far away beyond the Orange River. For this task he had a much smaller number of men than French had commanded, and hardly any mounted troops, for the cavalry and the horsemen had been carried off for the ride to Kimberley. With his head-quarters at Rensburg he had to cover a front of 25 miles, with little more than 5,000 men. Against him was a still growing number of Boers, nearly 11,000 in all, and a leader in Delarey of marked ability. From the 6th to the 12th of February the Boers attacked. On the 9th the British right near Slingersfontein was hard pressed, and here a West Australian contingent showed their mettle. On the 10th the pressure was on the British left, north-west of Colesberg. On the 12th both flanks were vigorously attacked. On the right, 400 men of the Worcestershire Regiment, posted on some kopjes three miles east of Slingersfontein, were hard put to it to hold their ground against an encircling Boer force, but held it with marked courage and determination. At the other end of the line, on the extreme left, the position was saved by a company of the Wiltshires and some hard-fighting Victorians and South Australians, soldiers from the Southern Seas seen at their very best. But the result of the fighting at this end of the line was that the British left was more or less forced. It was evident that the whole long extended line was in danger of being enveloped by superior numbers, and on that same night the gun was brought down from Coleskop and Clements drew in his army from all points to Rensburg. Nor did he stay there. On the following night, the night of February 13-14, he fell back still further to Arundel. The retreat from the Colesberg positions to Rensburg was made without mishap; but on the second night, in the retreat from Rensburg to Arundel, owing to the fact that an earlier start was made than had been originally ordered, and through some omission to communicate the change of plan, two companies of the Wiltshire Regiment, which were on outpost

duty, were left behind and intercepted. They numbered 151 men, and before they surrendered they had lost 38 per cent. of their number in killed and wounded. Thus the 14th of February found the English back at the point which French, when moving north, had occupied in the early days of December. It was for the Boers now or never strongly and boldly to drive them back further, and taking risk to strike a blow at the vitals of the Cape Colony. But nothing happened; and in a day or two all danger had passed away. Roberts's move recalled the invaders to look after their own homes, and once more a British advance began. On the 20th Roberts ordered Clements to press forward, and on that day he began to attack. On the 22nd he was reinforced by Cape volunteers and Australians, largely adding to his mounted men. With between six and seven thousand men under him he advanced on the 24th, on the 27th he was back at Rensburg, and on the 28th reached Colesberg, which had for so long been nearly but not quite within reach. Roberts had meanwhile counter-ordered his previous instructions and warned Clements to run no risk; his northern advance therefore was designedly slow. Kitchener too had visited him at Arundel on the 26th, with the result that in all things he conformed his movement entirely to the plans and wishes of the Commander-in-Chief. On the 7th and 8th of March he was hard by Norval's Poot, where the Boers had destroyed the railway bridge over the river, and a week later he was bringing his troops across from the Cape Colony into the Free State.

After the repulse at Stormberg, Gatacre remained more or less passive at Sterkstroom, waiting for the turn of the tide, and the Boers at Stormberg remained more or less passive in front of him in their Stormberg positions. He had rather over 5,000 men under his direct command; and after Roberts had reached South Africa, and organized the Colonial Division, the charge of which was given to General Brabant, that division too was nominally under Gatacre's orders, though

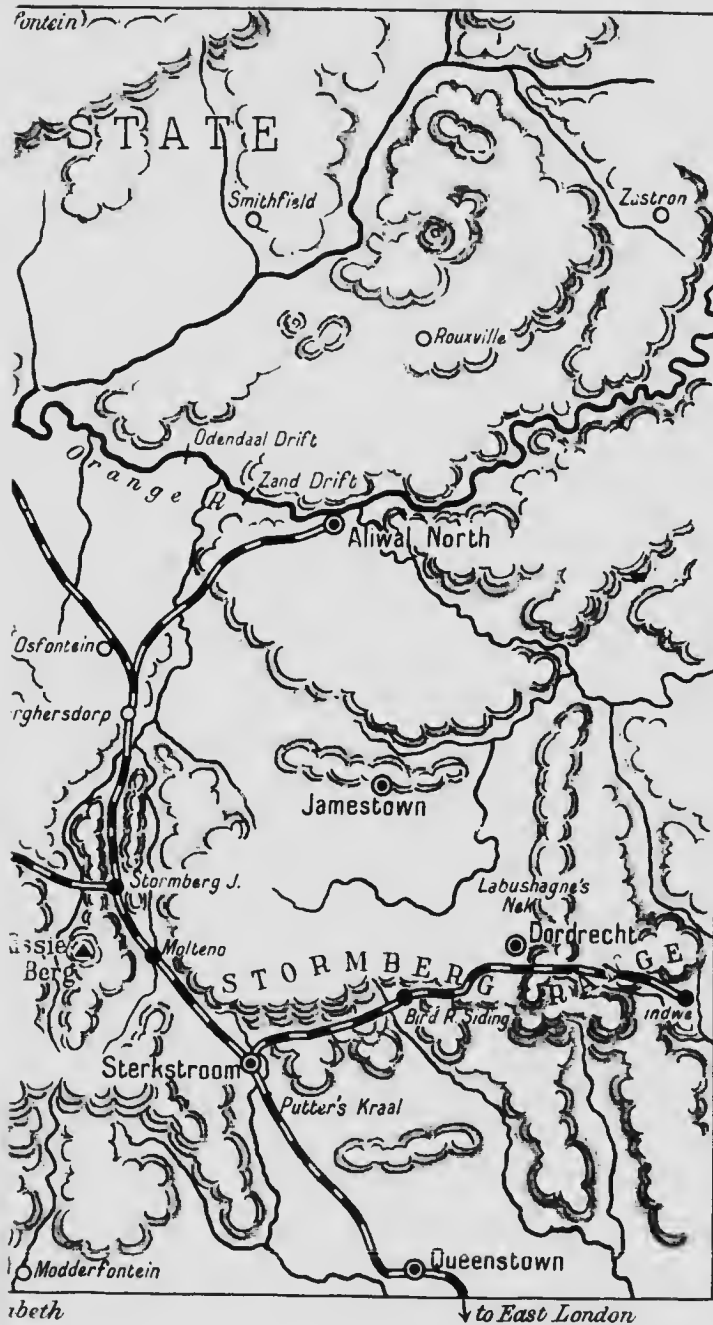
CH. IV.



*Gatacre
and
Brabant.*

PART II. Brabant in the main acted independently. The Colonial Division covered Gatacre's right flank on the cross-railway which runs east from Sterkstroom to Indwe. It was not till the 16th of February that Brabant moved east, and after a small action at Bird River Siding on the 17th of February, occupied Dordrecht a little north of the line. His own division so far only numbered 1,600 men, and a fortnight passed before, with the help of a regiment lent by Gatacre, he was able to move on, and drive the Boers from Labuschagne's Nek, six miles north of Dordrecht. The Boers were by this time here as elsewhere on the rim. Brabant pressed on to Jamestown; and on the 11th of March he secured the road bridge over the Orange River at Aliwal North, forestalling its destruction by the Boers, and his men cleared out the rebels for the time being in the north-eastern district of the Cape Colony.

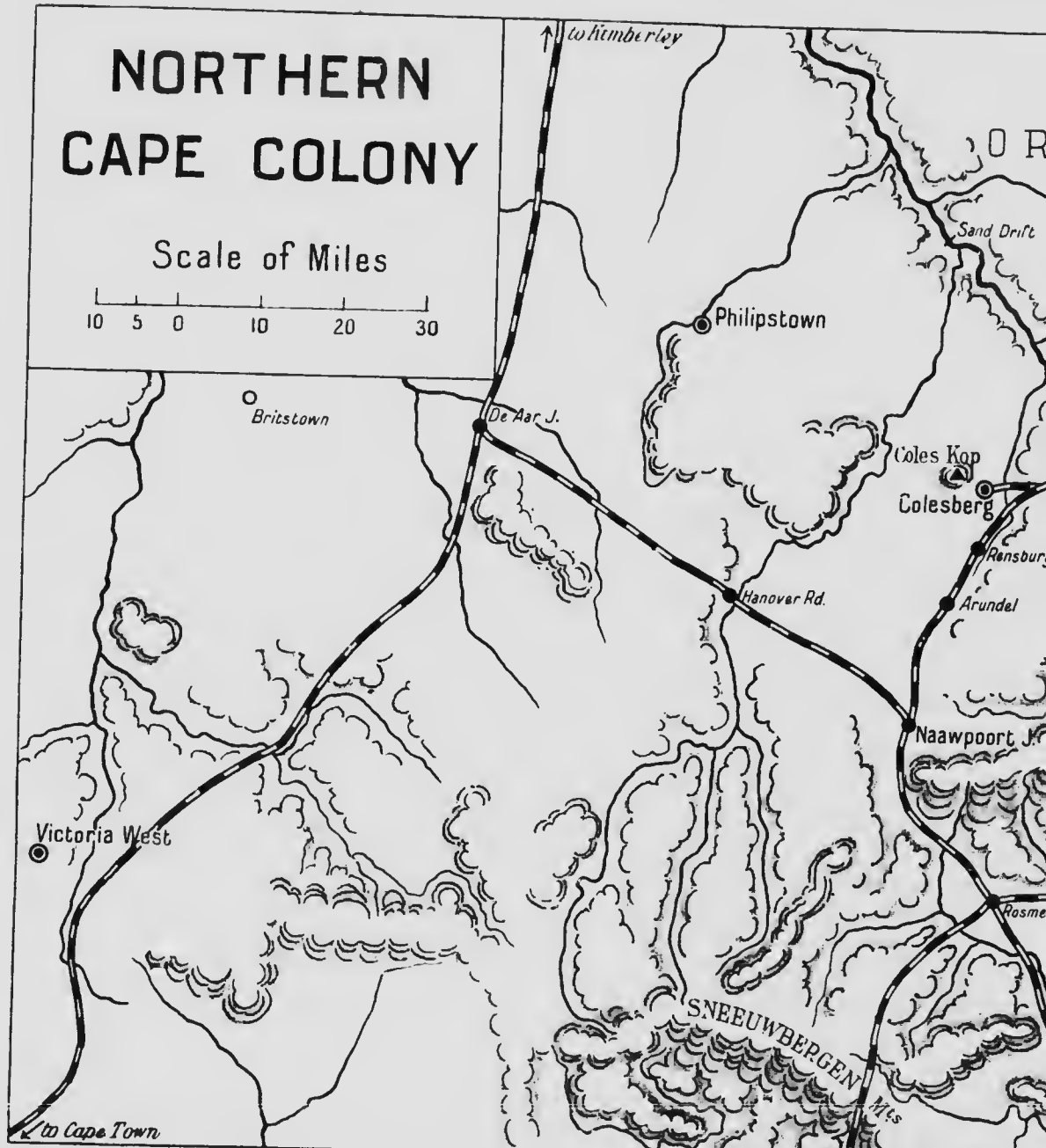
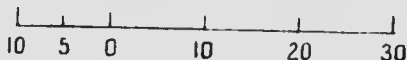
Gatacre meanwhile reconnoitred Stormberg on the 23rd of February, losing a very gallant leader of scouts, Captain de Montmorency. On the 5th of March he found that the Boers were retreating, on the 6th he entered Stormberg, on the 8th Burghersdorp. On the 9th his advance guard was at Osfontein, 12 miles north of Burghersdorp, and 30 miles or more from Bethulie. A party of 30 scouts, riding on boldly, were within sight of Bethulie Bridge at dawn on the 10th, were spectators of the blowing up of the railway bridge by the Boers, and in the dusk of that day saved the road bridge from a similar fate by opening fire and bluffing their foes. The next day the mounted infantry came up: on the 12th the infantry began to come: on the night of the 12th and 13th the dynamite charges and connecting fuses which the Dutchmen had placed on the bridge were removed by two young officers, Popham and Grant, who gallantly ventured their lives for the safety of the bridge; and this important point of access to the Orange Free State was duly secured. On the 15th Gatacre crossed the river and occupied Bethulie, and on that same day a few of his men followed the railway for 30 miles



To face p. 218

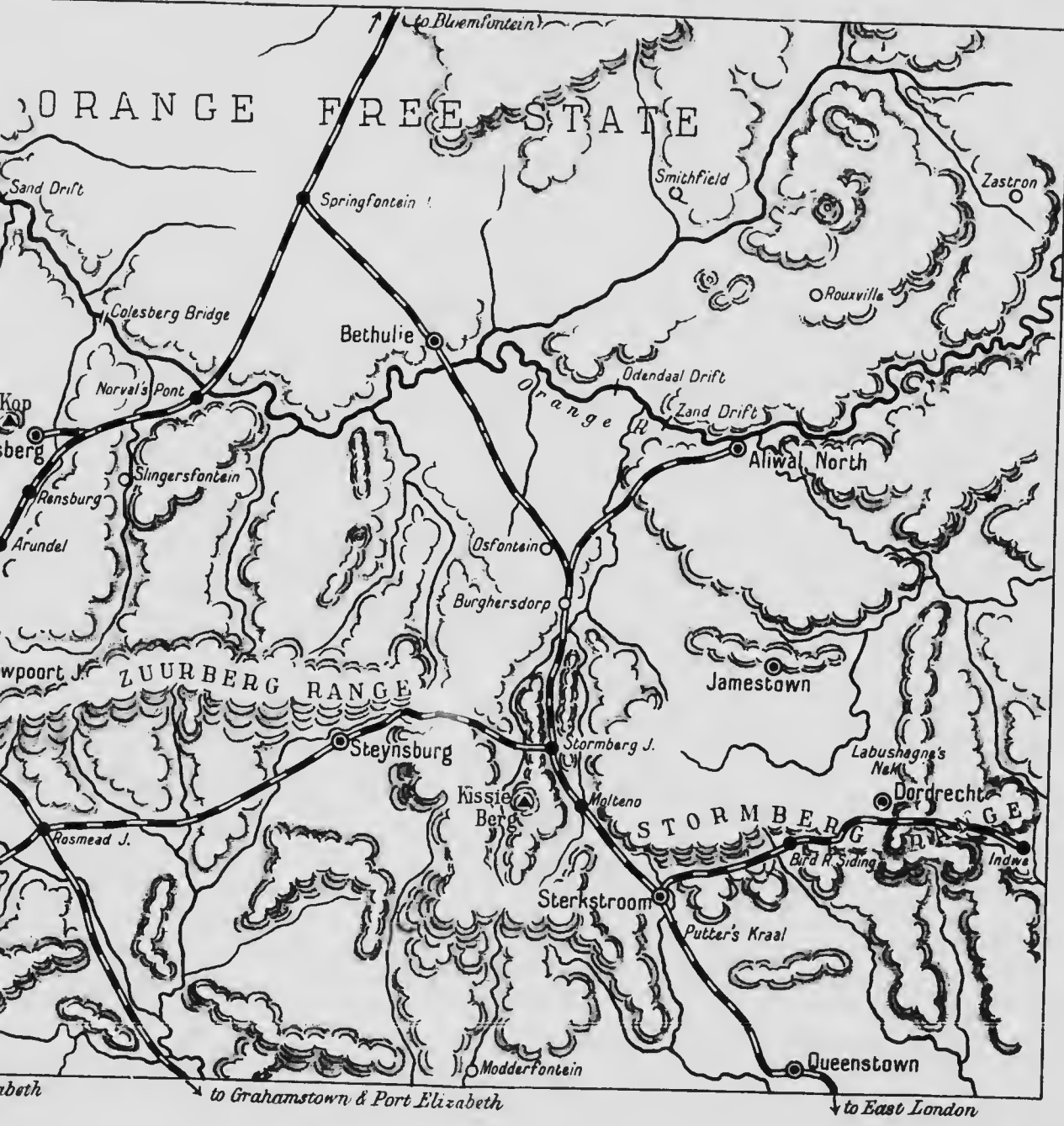
NORTHERN CAPE COLONY

Scale of Miles



B V. Garbshire, Oxford, 1944

to Graaff Reinet and Port Elizabeth



To face p. 218



to Springfontein Junction, and captured at the station a couple of engines and some military trucks. CH. IV.
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The High Commissioner had, with good reason, been anxious as to the encouragement which would be given to rebellion in the Cape Colony by the withdrawal of the British troops to the north; but at a time of great crisis risk was inevitable, and Lord Roberts was determined to concentrate his energies and his men upon the relief of Kimberley and the advance into the Free State, trusting, and, as events proved, rightly trusting, to the effect which success in the main movement would produce throughout the whole of South Africa. Meanwhile, however, in the thinly populated, more or less desert country of the west, rebellion grew apace; and while Roberts was moving forward and achieving success, behind him, at some points near enough to the main railway to threaten considerable disaster, armed bodies of Dutchmen were annexing territory, calling out their race kinsmen, terrorizing the very small loyalist minority of the population. It was the nearest approach to a counter-stroke to the British advance: the danger did not melt away immediately as the result of Paardeberg and the march on Bloemfontein, in the same way as the Boers retreated from Colesberg and Stormberg; but, inasmuch as the country was difficult, the distances were great, and the only available troops, those on the line of communication, were few and scattered, the evil went on for some weeks and was only gradually stamped out. Prieska was the most important point in the area of disturbance. It is on the southern bank of the Orange River, nearly due west of the Orange River Bridge and Hopetown, and between 80 and 90 miles distant. It had been visited by British troops for two or three days at the end of January, but they had been brought back again to the railway. A small body of Transvaalers under Liebenberg had been sent down to raise these districts, and with him co-operated a Cape rebel of the name of Steenkamp. On the 16th of February, the day

*The
Prieska
Rising.*

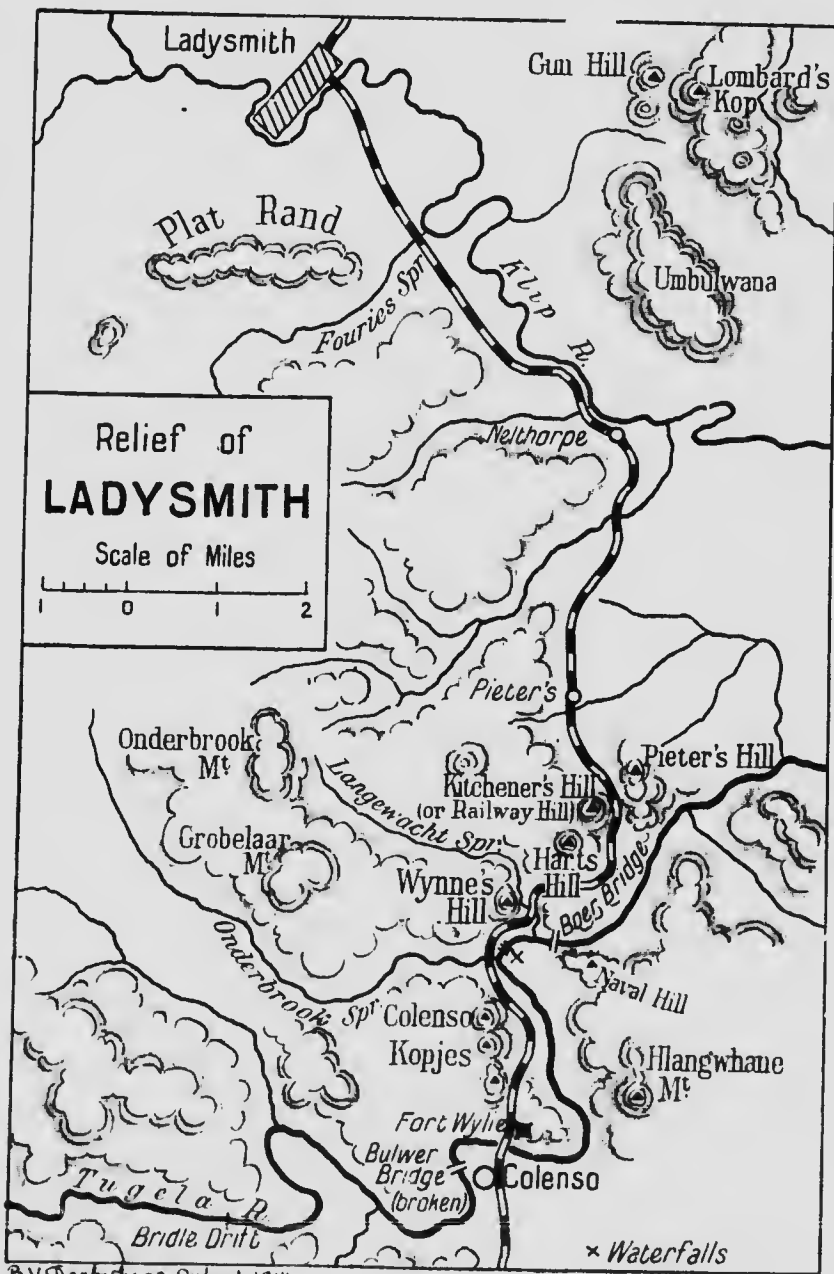
PART II. after the relief of Kimberley, Steenkamp proclaimed Prieska as part of the territory of two Republics. There followed a public meeting and commandeering for military service. About the end of February or beginning of March Kenhardt, further west, was similarly annexed, the only armed opposition here coming from a loyal band of half-breeds. On the 10th of March Upington, to the north-west, on the northern bank of the Orange River, the chief settlement of the Gordonia district of Bechuanaland, was annexed, English loyalists in this district finding refuge and a kindly welcome in German South-West Africa. On the 19th of February Major Adye was brought over from Arundel with a view to his moving from De Aar Junction to Britstown, 35 miles west of De Aar; a company of mounted infantry was sent on in advance to Britstown, and on the 1st of March Adye joined them with a battery of field artillery and two companies of City Imperial Volunteers. With this handful of men, on the 6th of March he had an unsuccessful skirmish at Houwater, north of Britstown, and was forced to fall back on Britstown with 23 casualties. This very small reverse determined Lord Roberts to take more serious measures. Lord Kitchener, who, as has been noticed, had already visited De Aar in the late days of February, came down again, and arrangements were made to clear the district. Three columns co-operated. Lord Kitchener himself moved from De Aar to Britstown and on to Prieska; further south on the railway, Sir Charles Parsons marched north-west from Victoria West to Kenhardt. General Settle moved west from Orange River Bridge. The Transvaalers were cleared out but not caught. The English reached Prieska on the 19th of March, whereas Liebenberg had left on the 17th. But the rebellion was effectually brought under. Garrisons were placed at Prieska, Upington, and Kenhardt. Settle and Adye swept up the remains of resistance; and by the beginning of April comparative security had been restored south of the Orange River and west of the trunk railway line.

When Buller, on the 7th of February, decided to abandon the attempt to force the Boer line at Vaal Krantz, he signalled to White on the same day: 'My plan is to slip back to Chieveley, take Hlangwhane, the Boer position south of Tugela and east of Colenso, and the next night try to take Bulwana from the south.' He had attacked the centre at Colenso and failed: he had attacked on the west, on the line of the Upper Tugela, without success. Now he was to try on the eastern side of the railway. It is difficult to understand why the first attack was not made in this quarter, instead of leaving it to the last. East of Colenso the northward trend of the Tugela gave an opening for striking a heavy blow and making the existing Boer positions untenable, without having to cross the river; while, on the other hand, here the Boers had to hold both banks of the river and so far to divide their forces. It is true that east of the railway there was very rough country, badly supplied with water; that earlier in the campaign Buller hesitated to take his men into the bush until they had become more inured to South Africa and South African warfare, and that he was anxious about his communications. But the distances were very short, the whole area to be covered was small, and at the time of the battle of Colenso the Boers were in two minds as to holding Hlangwhane at all. It can hardly be doubted that a concentrated attack upon the hill in December must have succeeded. Since that date the Boer positions south of the Tugela had been extended considerably beyond Hlangwhane itself, and there was now much more resistance to encounter and clear away, if Ladysmith was to be relieved.

On the 12th of February the British army, over and above the troops guarding the railway line to Maritzburg and Durban, was at Chieveley, with the exception of two small forces. One of these, a mixed force, under Burn Murdoch, like Dundonald a cavalry officer, had been left at Springfield, when the main army was brought back from Vaal Krantz.

Ch. IV.

—♦—
*The Relief
of Ladysmith.*



It served a useful purpose; it safeguarded Buller's left and kept not a few of Louis Botha's men watching the Upper Tugela, for fear that a further attempt might be made in this direction. When it was moved up later to join the centre, a number of Boers were released to obstruct Buller's advance, and it is a question whether the force would not have been better employed in remaining at Springfield and demonstrating on the left. The other body, mounted infantry under Colonel Bethune, was sent out, far on the right, to watch the line of the Lower Tugela and keep off Boer raids on the British communications. Buller had 25,000 men under his command; the Boers opposed to him seem to have numbered at most 7,000 to 9,000, and, as Roberts's movement developed, no small part of the Free Staters left to defend their own country. Botha was in command of the Boer right; the Boer left, which now immediately faced Buller, was under the older and much less capable commander Lukas Meyer, who, in view of seniority, or through Botha's regard for it, seems to have retained a more or less independent command. The Boer cause on the Tugela, therefore, lacked unity of leadership.

In describing the scene of the battle of Colenso,¹ Hlangwhane was taken to be the eastern end of a semicircle of hills fronting the battlefield. If, however, the view is confined to the ground south of the Tugela and east of the railway, this hill and its prolongation is the western side of a plateau formed by a semicircle or horseshoe of hills. A mile east of Colenso the Tugela makes an abrupt turn and flows north-west, after which it turns sharply east, north-east, and again east. In the angle thus formed there is a group of hills, the high ground extending for about four miles north and south, and a little less east and west. A ridge runs parallel to the river, as it flows to the north-west, the southern end of which is Hlangwhane. There is high ground facing the river as it flows east and north-east, with at any rate two outstanding hills, and then

CH. IV.

—♦—

The fighting ground south of the Tugela.

¹ See above, pp. 141-2.

PART II. there is another north and south ridge parallel to Hlangwhane, the northern end of which, over 1,000 feet high, is Monte Christo, and the south-western end Green Hill, which is connected by high ground, though at a lower level than the hills already mentioned, with Hlangwhane. South-east of Monte Christo, and separated from it by a well-defined neck, is a more or less detached hill, Cingolo, over 800 feet high. Due south of the whole group of hills, separated from them by a little stream, the Gomba, and three miles due east of the railway between Colenso and Chieveley, is another more sloping hill, Hussar Hill. Cingolo marked the extreme east of the Boer position, as it was in February, greatly extended since the date of the battle of Colenso; and the British movement was in the main from south-east to north-west.

*The taking
of Cingolo,
Monte
Christo,
and Hlang-
whane.*

On the 12th of February a Boer piquet was driven from Hussar Hill, and from the hill Buller carefully surveyed the whole country. He then withdrew the troops, fired on as they retired. On the 14th he reoccupied the hill, and on that day and the next brought up guns. His movements were curiously slow: the reasons given are the heat of the weather, the difficulty of supplying the troops with water, and the necessity for giving time to Bethune to safeguard the communications on the right flank. The delay was all in favour of the Boers and all against Ladysmith. On the 16th there was a reconnaissance of Cingolo, steep, rocky, with dense bush round its base and sides. On the 17th Cingolo was attacked. It was weakly held; the main body of its defenders were on its southern slope, and on the top there was only a patrol. The British infantry made a successful attack from the south-west; but, before they reached the top of the hill, they were forestalled by Dundonald, who, having been sent out wide on the right with his mounted men, came up behind the Boers intent on the attack in the opposite direction, and on his own initiative took the hill from the east. In the night of the 17th guns were brought up on to the western slopes

of Cingolo; and, supported by them and by the artillery on Hussar Hill, the infantry by 10.30 in the morning of the 18th established themselves on the southern end of Monte Christo, Dundonald working round on their right. There was sharp fighting, and for a while the Boers from Green Hill poured a cross-fire upon the British troops as they made their way up Monte Christo; but, as the result of better combination than had hitherto been in evidence in Buller's army, while the fighting on Monte Christo was in progress, Green Hill was also strongly attacked: before the day was out, both Green Hill and Monte Christo were taken: on the following day Hlangwhane was easily taken: and early on the 20th the Boers had evacuated Colenso and all their posts south of the Tugela. The relief of Ladysmith was now appreciably nearer: the British casualties up to date had barely exceeded 300: the Boers had been turned out of strong positions, appeared to be on the run, and, for the moment, undoubtedly were on the run. All this was very satisfactory. The unsatisfactory side of it was the slowness and deliberation, which was content with doing so much and no more day by day, not following up in hot pursuit, not attempting to deal some heavy blow at the enemy, to intercept a crossing or cut off a flight. The Boers gave way as the English came on, but they suffered very little in the process.

Buller's intention, as signalled to White, had been, when the ground south of the Tugela had been cleared, to cross the river lower down, that is further east, than where it was actually crossed, and where all the fighting took place, and having crossed to come up behind Bulwana, roughly following the line of the Klip River. There was a track over Cingolo Nek leading in this direction, which had been prospected; but the conclusion arrived at was that there was no good road or crossing available away to the east. Accordingly, once more the British General determined to force his way

CH. IV.



PART II. right in front, following the railway; and he had confidence
 in coming to this decision, in that he thought the Boers were
 in full retreat, that only a rearguard was in his way. But,
 while he delayed and pondered, Botha under pressure from
 Kruger and Joubert brought his men up again, and chose
 a new series of very strong positions. There was to be much
 fighting and loss of life before the end came.

*The scene
 of the
 fighting
 north of the
 Tugela.*

We must now look at the geography on the left, or
 northern, bank of the Tugela. Colenso had passed out of
 Boer keeping, and the Colenso kopjes on the northern, or,
 as it is at this point, the western bank of the river, being
 entirely commanded from Hlangwhane, had also been deserted.
 The old Boer positions had faced pretty well due south:
 the new Boer positions faced south-east, and more east than
 south. After crossing the Tugela at Colenso, the railway
 cuts across the semicircle made by the river in running north,
 and then keeps close to the bank of the river, until the latter
 breaks away due east. As it runs north, by the side of the
 river, the line crosses a brook, the Onderbrook Spruit, flowing
 in to the Tugela from the west. Further on, just after the
 river has turned east, and where the railway, which has also
 taken a north-easterly trend, is beginning to diverge from the
 river, the line crosses another brook coming from the west,
 the Langewacht or Langverwacht Spruit. Both these brooks
 run in deep channels, and were at the time swollen with the
 rains. From Colenso to the Onderbrook the line of Colenso
 kopjes sheltered the ground near the river. On the outer
 side of the kopjes there was open ground, commanded by
 high hills on the west. Between the Onderbrook and Lange-
 wacht there was much less shelter for advancing troops. In
 the background were high hills, Grobelaar's Hill, and north
 of it the still higher Onderbrook Hill, while near at hand were
 lower hills, which gained collectively the name of the Wynne
 Hills, the southern section of which is in the official History
 of the War in South Africa given the distinguishing name of

Horseshoe Hill, while the northern section retains the generic name of Wynne's Hill. Beyond the Langewacht were more hills commanding the advance on Ladysmith. Taking them from south-west to north-east, there were Terrace Hill or Hart's Hill, as it was christened after the brave fighting General who assaulted it, and Railway Hill, both these hills being on the west of the railway, which ran between them and the river; and on the east of the railway, divided from Railway Hill by a gorge, Pieter's Hill, farthest from the river and nearest to Ladysmith. This line of hills had to be forced, if Ladysmith was to be reached otherwise than by making a march wide out to the east, and this latter course Buller had discarded.

CH. IV.



The whole of the country south of the Tugela being now in his hands, Buller threw a pontoon bridge across the river from east to west right under Hlangwhane, rather over a mile north of Colenso. The bridges at Colenso, both the railway bridge and the road bridge, had long been broken up, and the Boers had kept up connexion between the two banks of the river, partly by a ferry worked with a cable, and partly by a temporary bridge near the northern end of Hlangwhane Hill, below the confluence of the Langewacht Spruit, and above the Falls over which the river takes its eastward course. The pontoon bridge was laid on the morning of the 21st, and early in the afternoon Coke's brigade crossed over, followed by batteries of artillery. Marching west and north-west, when they came beyond the shelter of the Colenso kopjes Coke's men found themselves in the open under heavy fire, and it became apparent that the Boer line did not end, as had been supposed, at the Onderbrook Spruit, but extended far to the south-east. Some of the troops made their way across the brook, but the Boer fire held them unable to advance or retreat until night came when the whole brigade was withdrawn to the shelter of the Colenso kopjes, having suffered over a hundred casualties.

*Crossing
the river
and fight-
ing on the
21st.*

PART II. Following Coke's brigade through the rest of the day and through the night, the troops poured over the river; and when daylight came on the 22nd there was a large army across the Tugela, whose advance was to be made for some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, following the river down, in an area gradually narrowing from $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles to half a mile in breadth. In the words of the German official account of the war, 'The troops advancing to the attack were to squeeze themselves in between the river and the enemy's front'¹—a most hazardous and expensive process. The first point selected for attack was the group of hills between the Onderbrook and the Langewacht, for as far as the Onderbrook there was cover to be had by keeping close to the river. On the 22nd this attack was entrusted to Wynne's Lancashire brigade. The orders were to take the farther end of the hills, Wynne's Hill: the attack was made, but it was not supported, as it should have been, by a simultaneous attack on the nearer hill, Horseshoe Hill, from which the Boers commanded the flank of Wynne's men. The losses were severe: Wynne himself was wounded: the hill was partially taken: but at nightfall, when the covering British artillery ceased fire, the Boers made a dangerous counter-attack. The balance was restored by a bayonet charge of the King's Royal Rifles, brought up from another brigade, a charge which carried the men within a hundred yards of the Boer entrenchments: the survivors threw themselves for shelter into a stone kraal and held it through the night, most of them being brought off before full daylight came. The net result of the fighting on the 22nd had been much loss, much confusion of regiments, a half-taken position, and no very appreciable advance.

The fight of the 23rd at Hart's Hill. More guns were brought over the river, and on the 23rd Buller determined to relieve the pressure on the troops at Wynne's Hill by attacking a hill still further on. This was Terrace Hill or Hart's Hill, and the work was entrusted to

¹ Vol. ii, p. 250.

Hart and his Irish brigade. This hill, as has been said, was beyond both the Onderbroek and the Langewacht, and it will be borne in mind that the further north the soldiers moved the more cooped in they were between hill and river, the more exposed to deadly fire in front and on the flank. It was possible, however, to move under cover, by marching, in some places in single file, along the actual side and bed of the Tugela, under its high bank, and this course was taken—slow and laborious in the extreme. There was one exposed part, where the Langewacht, swollen in its deep channel, could only be crossed by the railway bridge swept by Boer bullets, and here there was loss and further delay. At length Hart brought his men into a dip of ground, between the river and the railway near the foot of the hill, Hart's Hollow as it came to be called: about 5 in the afternoon, as evening was coming on, the attack was developed, and at nightfall the whole line charged. Faced by a terrible fire, the Irishmen pushed their way up the bare slopes, urged on by their General, fearless unto death. An advance Boer trench was carried, but when darkness came softening down on a scene of slaughter, the main Boer position was still intact, and the hard-trying soldiers found what shelter they could behind a low stone wall which crossed the bare slope of the hill. Early in the morning of the 24th, under increasingly heavy fire, they retreated back into the hollow, but the retreat had not been ordered by Hart, who sent fresh troops to reoccupy the ground. While this deadly fighting had taken place on Hart's Hill, the position on Wynne's Hill had remained very much unchanged, except that other soldiers took the place of the Lancashire regiments, who by the evening of the 23rd were brought back into the cover of the Colenso kopjes.

Through the 24th the lines on the hills still doggedly faced each other. When darkness came, Boer marksmen crept down, and, opening fire at close quarters, caused momentary panic among Hart's men. But the soldiers were soon steadied

PART II. again; once more the night had fallen on an undecided issue.

—♦— Yet it was on this 24th of February that the decision was taken which brought the end. The position was as follows. The fighting beyond the Tugela had already cost the British army between 1,100 and 1,200 killed and wounded. The men had been fighting at terrible disadvantage, cooped and confined, except where shelterless slopes gave elbow-room for death. The heavy guns brought across the river were far less effective than they had been in their commanding positions on the right bank. Some movement, elsewhere than on the existing line of advance, was absolutely necessary if real progress was to be made. A very little was wanted to turn the scale, for, though the Boers had held their own so far in wonderful manner, perpetual fighting and watching told on undisciplined troops, none too well fed, and their numbers had dwindled, as men were called back to the Free State to face Roberts and his army. Meanwhile, far away to the east, Bethune had on the 21st been ordered by Buller to move from Greytown along the road to what was known as the Tugela Drift, and thence towards Helpmakaar. He began his advance on the 22nd, crossed the Tugela, and on the 24th threatened Helpmakaar, drawing off by his movement 1,500 Boers from the Ladysmith force, who might otherwise have been sent to strengthen Botha and oppose Buller. Compelled to fall back, again on the 27th he was in evidence near Helpmakaar, materially aiding the main movement of the army. While he moved north, six or seven hundred Boers under Erasmus were sent south from Ladysmith on the same eastern side to threaten the British communications. They moved inside Bethune's line of march, and about the 25th came to the confluence of the Blaauwkrantz river and Tugela, and sent on scouts to Weenen. But they did no more. Buller's own cavalry proved ample protection, and if any serious raid had been intended it was certainly not carried into effect.

The position on the night of the 24th.

Bethune threatens Helpmakaar.

While men were fighting and dying on Hart's Hill and the Wynne Hills, a track had been found on the southern side of the Tugela, leading down to the river at a point 500 yards below the Falls—that is, about half a mile lower down than the Boer bridge and further east than any crossing so far in the Colenso area. Buller and Warren reconnoitred it, with the result that Buller determined to make a new move, to bring back to the southern side a considerable part of the troops and most of the guns, and to throw the troops once more over the river at this lower point, thus enabling the attack to be prolonged to the east without traversing all the long narrow area between hill and river, where so many had fallen and so little had resulted. But he had only one pontoon bridge available. It was therefore necessary, after the artillery and infantry had been brought back, to take up the bridge and relay it in the new position. Of the troops left on the northern bank some would hold the ground they already held. others would combine with the regiments which recrossed the river. All this time the wounded had been lying in their agony on the hill-sides, untended, untouched except by more shot and shell. For two days and nights even the cup of cold water had been wanting, and in the name of common humanity, on Sunday the 25th, a local armistice was kept, to gather up the fragments that remained.

Through that day the Boers came out of their trenches, and, while daylight lasted, Boer and Briton met with no intent to kill. But the move went on. On the night of the 24th guns and transport were brought back to the right bank of the river: infantry were brought back: the artillery was most carefully disposed on the hill-tops and sides fronting the river to support the coming enterprise: the 25th went by and the 26th: on the night of the 26th the pontoon bridge was taken up: and early in the morning of the 27th it was placed in its new setting, 95 yards long from bank to bank. The British commander now knew his own mind; he had

CH. IV.

—♦—
A new
crossing
found

PART II. grasped the position, and with it, after long failure, he
 —♦— gripped success.

*The battle
of the 27th.
Pieter's
Hill.*

The three hills which were the scene of the coming fight have been named already: from south-west to north-east they were Hart's Hill, to be again attacked, Railway Hill, and Pieter's Hill. All three were to be assaulted, but the first assault was to be made against Pieter's Hill. The units of the army had become much intermixed, and one and another commanding officer had from wounds or other reasons been changed; but it was decided that General Barton should lead three Fusilier regiments to the attack of Pieter's Hill; that Colonel Kitchener, who had succeeded Wynne in command of the Lancashire brigade, should operate against the central or Railway Hill, and that Colonel Norcott's brigade should make the left attack on Hart's Hill. Hart's Hill, which had been the extreme right of the British advance and attack so far, became the left of the main attack on the 27th. But there were troops still holding the ground which had been occupied south of the Langewacht, the Wynne Hills, and further south again. General Lyttelton was in command of all this left wing, and the orders sent to him, but never received, were to advance directly the main attack succeeded. As it was, he kept up fire through the day on the Boer positions opposite him, but was not seriously engaged. In the main attack the new feature, as compared with the fighting of the last few days, was a combined, well-concerted, and thoroughly understood effort against three separate but adjoining positions, with infantry not packed together but spread out, and fully covered by artillery.

It was Majuba day, the 27th of February, and the British guns, carefully placed, skilfully directed, scourged the Boer lines, preparing the way for the infantry. The bridge being ready, Barton led his men across, and, as they went, the news came of Cronje's surrender, a good omen for the coming fight. By 10.30 in the morning the Fusilier regiments were

over the bridge, and turning sharp to the right the men followed the river for rather more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, keeping in the bed of the river under the right bank. When at the foot of the slope leading up to Pieter's Hill they were wheeled round to face the hill. Closely following, Kitchener led two of his four regiments across the bridge, picked up the other two on the northern bank, moved to the right down stream in Barton's footsteps, but stopped at the point where the deep gorge, with the little runlet, Kruger's Spruit, marked the division between Railway Hill and Pieter's Hill. Along the left, the western, face of this gorge ran the railway line to Ladysmith. Norcott's men were already in position to try conclusions once more on Hart's Hill. Barton disposed his fighting men, the Irish Fusiliers on the left, the near side of Pieter's Hill, the Scots Fusiliers on the right to work up the eastern side of the hill: the supporting regiment was the Dublin Fusiliers. Behind Pieter's Hill and the whole line of hills the Boers could bring up men safely and swiftly to any threatened point: on Pieter's Hill the resistance was stubborn and the losses heavy. The day went on, all the men on the British side had been thrown into the fight: much of the hill was gained, but the Boers still held the northern point, and the British advance was stayed. Kitchener meanwhile had begun his movements about 1.30 in the day; on the right his own regiment, the West Yorkshires, were told to work up the gorge, between Railway Hill and Pieter's Hill. Skilfully and well they did so, the guns clearing the way before them, and about 4 in the afternoon they were nearing the top, took the Boers on Railway Hill on their left flank, relieved the pressure on Pieter's Hill, and poured a cross-fire on to Hart's Hill. As their attack developed, the South Lancashires on their left were told to charge up the face of the hill, and with a great rush of pent-up manhood they swept a Boer trench, making prisoners of some forty sturdy marksmen who would not turn and fly. Yet farther on the left the Royal Lancasters

PART II. mounted and fought, and some by mistake charged up the eastern slope of Hart's Hill, supporting Norcott's attack. Norcott had moved a little before 3 o'clock, and his attack grew in volume as Kitchener's men carried bit by bit the adjoining hill. As the men neared the top, the battles on the two hills tended to merge in one, and about 5.30 in the afternoon both Railway Hill and Hart's Hill were in British hands. At 6 o'clock Buller on Pieter's Hill ordered one more charge against the Boers who still obstinately clung to the north end of the hill. More ground was taken and was held out even now the hill was not cleared of the enemy. It was not till night-time that the Boers slipped away and the whole of the position was abandoned. For there was no headlong flight at any point. Finely the Boers had held the hills, and finely, when driven from their trenches, they fought a rearguard action against their victorious foes. Hence in the late evening Buller did not launch his cavalry in pursuit, and the Dutchmen had a respite for that night.

The absence of pursuit.

And it was not for that one night only. There was no pursuit at all. There might, it is true, still have been hard fighting round Ladysmith, had Joubert not already on the 27th broken up his camp. But he had settled the matter: Botha and his men had to follow suit: retreat and nothing but retreat was in the Boer minds: everything invited hot and hard pursuit. So thought General Barton, who, wounded as he was on Pieter's Hill, on the night of the 27th wrote Buller asking for reinforcements and to be allowed to advance at once on Bulwana. Nothing was done. At daylight on 28th the two cavalry brigades were ordered over the river to move north and west and north and east respectively: and some delay through a breakdown in the pontoons, the mounted men came across and rode forward and skirmished, but nothing more, except that late in the evening Dundonald rode into Ladysmith. The next day the Ladysmith garrison tottered out to pursue, but the Boers and the guns all poured

The Relief of Ladysmith.

away, unharmed, to fight again. On that day, the 1st of March, Buller came into Ladysmith, and on the 3rd the relieving army, headed by all that were left of the Dublin Fusiliers, marched through the streets of the long-beleaguered little town, and between the ranks of the starving garrison, who had kept the British flag flying for 120 days.

Ladysmith was relieved at last, and a great cloud was lifted from the heart and mind of Englishmen all the world over. It had been a long and complex process. The fighting on the 17th and 15th cost the British 200 of which were in Buller's regiment. The whole campaign between the 14th and 1st of February produced 2 casualties; and soldiers and men suffered terribly, especially among the ranks of the Inverness Regiment, in the first fighting at Hart's Hill, lost 72 per cent. of its officers, 27 per cent. of its men. The Royal Lancasters lost 1 per cent. and 21 per cent. respectively. The whole story of the siege and relief of Ladysmith will always remain difficult to appreciate, and to all time criticism will bustle itself about the part played by the Commander-in-Chief.

However difficult the country was, however much it hampered the Boer methods of fighting, however skilfully they were handled—indeed—had their handling must have been a very good order—would be difficult to find a parallel

in the history of war, and impossible to find a parallel in the history of the British Army, of such a strong body of picked troops being almost starved into surrender, because an army, so well equipped at every point except in the numbers of mounted men, was, close by, held up for weeks and months by one end of its own strength. Sir Redvers Buller has passed beyond all reproach or blame; only military experts can rightly appraise the one and the other: but the ordinary student of the war may try and find some clue to what still remains, after all that has been said and written, hard to understand. Set side by side with Lord Roberts, Buller suggests, in

*Sir
Redvers
Buller.*

PART II. temperament, Amherst, as compared with Wolfe, in the famous campaign of 1759. The comparison must be inverted; Wolfe before Quebec had something like Buller's task before the Tugela heights. Amherst on the central line of advance up Lake Champlain was more nearly engaged in similar work to that of Lord Roberts. We read how Wolfe tried this and that, sparing not himself nor his men, and finally broke through to death and victory: we read at the same time how Amherst cautiously advanced, occupied two abandoned forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point, then wasted months, went into winter quarters, and waited till next year. Yet Amherst was a good General of the slow-going type. Had Buller, by force of circumstances, not been called off to Natal, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have made his way steadily and deliberately to Bloemfontein, though his name, we may assume, would not have been associated with such movements of brilliant conception and prompt execution as Lord Roberts designed and carried through. Fortune was against Buller in sending him to Natal. In Natal was wanted, in a special degree, over and above skilled generalship, that element of iron resolution which was found in General Grant when at frightful loss he broke down Robert Lee's last glorious resistance, but the German comment on Buller, the cold measured military estimate, is—'In his anxiety to avoid heavy losses, Buller had, on almost every occasion, broken off an action as soon as it began to be costly in lives.'¹ Why was this? Here was a man every inch a soldier, who had in former days shown abundant firmness as well as military skill and superb personal courage—strong, straight, imperturbable, a typical Englishman. It is true that he was advanced in years when the South African crisis came, and that his sword had been some long time in its sheath; but the real clue may perhaps be found in one trait in his character, and in the particular kind of war in which he found

¹ Vol. ii, p. 286.

himself engaged. Buller was in his element as a Devonshire squire, happy among his people and making them happy, a kindly English gentleman if ever there was one. Sent to Ireland, he had full sympathy with the Irish peasantry: he was a soldier and a brave one, but suffering, among what are called the common people, was abhorrent to him. He had known the Boers and fought side by side with them. Farmers they were and countrymen, such as those among whom he was most at home. He went out at the call of duty to repel their invasion, but it may well be that, like the Howes in the war with the American colonists, he had no great love for the work. At any rate it is clear that he was anxious, as far as might be, to spare life. This explains the breaking off of actions: this explains slowness of movement when conditions were trying to his own men: this explains the absence of pursuit after Pieter's Hill. Why was this last? Because the General wanted to use his one bridge to pass over stores to Ladysmith instead of holding up the stores, until the guns had been passed over. It was the Relief of Ladysmith, because it was relief, that appealed to Buller. What did not appeal to him was taking farmers' lives. He had nothing in him in this South African War of the spirit of Stonewall Jackson, who preached and practised that armies are called out 'to find the enemy and strike him, to invade his country and do him all possible damage in the shortest possible time'.¹ If Sir Redvers Buller had been more ruthless he would have been a better General.²

¹ Henderson's *Life of Stonewall Jackson*, vol. ii, p. 481, 1902 ed.

² The following extracts from Sir R. Buller's Evidence before the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa are interesting as showing his attitude towards the Boers (see Cd. 1791, 1903, Minutes of Evidence, vol. ii, pp. 182, 211):

'All that I know worth knowing about rearguards I learned from the Boers whom I commanded in 1879.'

'I knew I had a good deal of influence in the Wakkerstroom district with the resident Boers. All the principal Boers or their fathers had served under me 20 years before. I knew a great many of them personally.'

'I had always from the very earliest inception of the war conceived

PART II. A bare month wholly changed the face of the war in South Africa. When French on the 11th of February rode out from Modder River to Ramdam the Boer cause seemed in the ascendant. By the 13th of March Kimberley had been relieved, Ladysmith had been relieved, the Cape Colony had been cleared of invaders, the capital of one of the two Republics had been occupied. A crisis had passed—the worst crisis for England in the memory of living men, when failure and defeat were acclaimed by a bitterly hostile world. There were to be more misfortunes in a long lingering war, but the great danger had passed, and never came back again. To Lord Roberts and the Chief of his Staff, Lord Kitchener, this result was due. Roberts gripped the nettle in a firm strong hand, and rescued England from adversity. Men's memories are short, and in England party bitterness, never more unlovely than in the years of the South African War, is ever ready to belittle public worth; but to all time it should be told that when in 1900 England was in sore trouble, once more in her history the man was found to redress the balance, and that man was Lord Roberts. That the tide had turned was shown by overtures made early in March by the two Boer Presidents to the British Government, proposing that peace should be restored on condition of recognizing the complete independence of the two Republics as sovereign States, and giving immunity to British subjects who had taken up arms on the Republican side. The best possible answer was given in a recital of the plain facts. The two Republics, with one of which there had not been any point at issue, of their own motion, after long accumulation of military stores, had declared war on Great Britain. British territory had been overrun and treated by way of annexation, numbers of lives had been lost, heavy expenditure had been entailed. 'This great calamity has been the penalty which Great

Boer overtures for peace.

that the real way to end it would be by getting, if possible, some portion of the Boers to revolt from the tyranny of the others.'

Britain has suffered for having in recent years acquiesced in the existence of the two Republics. In view of the use to which the two Republics have put the position which was given to them, and the calamities which their unprovoked attack has inflicted upon Her Majesty's dominions, Her Majesty's Government can only answer your Honours' telegram by saying that they are not prepared to assent to the independence either of the South African Republic or of the Orange Free State.¹ It was time for plain speaking. The two Republics or their leaders had played for high stakes and had nearly won. They had played not for independence but for supremacy, and on that basis the answer was given. Because the Boers had aimed at more than independence as they had it before the war, therefore their then enemies and present fellow citizens were forced to go forward from defence to conquest and annexation.

The British successes between the middle of February and the middle of March had been great and of lasting effect. But there was another side to them. On the one hand, they had been very costly to the winners—in lives of men, in lives of animals, in loss of stores, and in various other directions. On the other hand, they had, with the one exception of the capture of Cronje's force, not been costly to the losers. The Boers who fled in wild disorder from Poplar Grove suffered no loss at all. The Boers who retreated at leisure before Clements and Gatacre suffered no loss. The absence of pursuit after the relief of Ladysmith has been noted. There was appreciable loss at Driefontein, Pieter's Hill, and in one or two of the fights; but except at Paardeberg the Boers had felt nothing like a crushing blow. What they wanted was breathing time, and what they secured through the weeks of comparative inaction which followed Lord Roberts's entry into Bloemfontein—weeks when they rather gained ground than lost it, and when the English rather lost ground than gained it.

*The halt
at Bloem-
fontein.*

¹ Cd. 35, March 1900, p. 3.

PART II. — There was inaction at Natal as well as in the central area, and it is important to note exact dates. The siege of Ladysmith came to an end on the 28th of February, and Buller's formal entry into the town was on the 3rd of March. This was before Lord Roberts started from Paardeberg on his march for Bloemfontein. Now Buller stated before the War Commission, 'I wished to move within a week after arriving in Ladysmith,'¹ and his evidence was to the effect that it was in deference to Lord Roberts's views and against his own judgement that he made no move until the 7th of May. A series of telegrams, which are not easy to follow, passed between the two generals, and views and plans seem constantly to have changed, except that Lord Roberts from the first was anxious that a division of Buller's army should be shipped from Durban to East London to strengthen the line along which Gatacre advanced—a step which, after chopping and changing, was eventually taken. But, if Buller could and would have moved on in a few days in any direction, it seems most unfortunate that he did not do so, instead of wanting Lord Roberts to make up his mind for him. Widely separated as he was from Roberts, with the latter engaged in a pressing and anxious movement, it is difficult not to conclude that he might perfectly well have taken the initiative on his own responsibility, and either struck at the Orange Free State through Van Reenen's Pass or pushed through the Biggarsberg into northern Natal. The one thing to be avoided was general inaction, which gave the Boers rest, and with rest more heart for fighting. Yet it was the very course which was taken. 'They regained courage by our prolonged and enforced halt, and their retrograde movement was arrested.'² These are Lord Roberts's words. The halt at Bloemfontein, unlike that at Ladysmith, was inevitable. Food,

¹ Minutes of Evidence, vol. ii, Cd. 1791, 1903, p. 209.

² Royal Commission on the War in South Africa, Minutes of Evidence, vol. i, Cd. 1790, 1903, p. 467.

reinforcements, remounts, tents, medical supplies, stores of all kinds had to be provided, the railway had to be repaired and secured, and meanwhile the troops were decimated by a terrible outbreak of enteric fever, the result of the tainted river at Paardeberg. The loss of life was probably greater than if the battle of Paardeberg had been renewed on the following day and Cronje's laager stormed with a second heavy death-roll.¹ It was a great opportunity for the Boers, and they turned it to good account.

CH. IV.

The war had gone on long enough to bring to the front on both sides the most capable leaders and the best fighting men. On the Boer side this process was helped by death vacancies. Through the accidental death of Ferreira, the Commandant-General of the Free State, De Wet now acted in that position, and the death of General Joubert on the 27th of March gave the chief command in the war on the Boer side to General Botha. Joubert was regretted by Boer and Briton alike. He lived and died a clean-handed patriot, humane and kindly, of the best among the older generation of South African Dutchmen. On the Boer side in the war he was in some respects a counterpart of Buller, slow to move, wanting in initiative, loath to push matters to a bitter end. He had not loved the rôle of invader, he had no dreams of Dutch supremacy, he stood for independence not for aggression. Overborne by the stronger character and more unscrupulous leading of Kruger, old-fashioned in his views of war, he was none the less a fine feature in South African history, and left a name which will always stand high in the records of his country and his race. A fortnight and more before he died the Boer retreat in Naal had been stayed, for, at a council of war held on the 10th of March, the last

*Botha and
De Wet.
Death of
General
Joubert.*

¹ On the 25th of June, 1900, Lord Roberts reported on the outbreak of enteric fever at Bloemfontein that 'in a little more than three months there have been approximately 6,369 admissions from enteric fever alone. Of these 1,370 died, giving a mortality of 21 per cent.' (Cd. 230, 1900, p. 4)

PART II. Council over which he presided, it was determined to face
 ——— Buller again along the Biggarsberg Range.

*The Boer
 Council of
 War.*

When Bloemfontein was taken, President Steyn declared Kroonstad to be the seat of government for the Orange Free State, and here on the 17th of March¹ a War Council was held, at which the future conduct of the war was discussed and largely moulded. Wagons were to be discarded as much as possible. Horse commandos were to be employed: the war was to be made more of the nature of a guerilla war than had hitherto been the case. These were the lines of action which De Wet favoured, and on this lower plane he was conspicuously and constantly successful. His genius was born of the soil. He had no wide outlook, as far as can be judged from the record of the war. He was not a great strategist in the sense of leading and handling large armies on a thought-out campaign; but he knew the land and the people, he had rare courage and determination, and a marvellous insight at the particular moment as to the immediate action to be taken. He saw after Poplar Grove that the first thing to be done was to give the burghers a holiday at home. 'I cannot catch a hare, General, with unwilling dogs,'² he said to General Joubert, when reproached with allowing his levies to disband to their homes, and the sequel proved his wisdom. The fighting men went home, saw their wives and families, and with new heart turned out again to defend them.

*Lord
 Roberts's
 Proclama-
 tion.*

Two days after entering Bloemfontein Lord Roberts issued a proclamation, in which it was announced that all burghers of the Free State, who had not taken a prominent part in the war, and who were willing to lay down their arms and take an oath to do no more fighting, might return home and would not be made prisoners of war. It was thought that resistance had collapsed, that the burgher forces had

¹ This is the date given in the official History of the War. De Wet gives the 20th of March as the date.

² *Three Years' War*, p. 78.

dissolved or were dissolving, not to come out again. Clements was moving up without opposition on the west of the line, Gatacre on the east: the line itself was repaired, and a regular service to Capetown re-opened on the 19th of March—that is in six days from the occupation of Bloemfontein: copies of the proclamation were being distributed to the farmers: all seemed to point to a quiet time, while the English army was recuperating. In reality it was far otherwise. North of Bloemfontein the English had so far no footing; and along the eastern side of the State, where was the ‘conquered territory’, the rich corn-lands of the valley of the Caledon taken in past times from the Basutos, large bodies of men, the recent invaders of the Cape Colony, were falling back, wholly untouched, in no sense disorganized. On the 17th of March President Steyn issued a counter-proclamation to that of Lord Roberts. At the War Council at Kroonstad he held out hope that Russian action against England in India would in a few weeks’ time paralyse British action in South Africa. For the moment the British army was patently at a standstill, and enteric fever was fighting for the Boers. It was a critical time—a time when movement on the part of the Natal army might have been of priceless advantage in keeping Boer attention and in preventing the Dutch farmers from being encouraged by the picture which was presented to them of general helplessness and inertia on the part of their enemies.

Immediately after reaching the capital of the Free State, Lord Roberts sent a party to secure the Bloemfontein Waterworks, the supply from which had been cut off. These waterworks were about 21 miles due east of Bloemfontein, on the line of the Modder River, which still wound itself in and out of the history of the war, as it twisted and turned in its course through the Free State. Where the Waterworks stood, its course was from south-east to north-west; at a considerable distance downstream, bending more towards the west, it

CH. IV.



*Movements
in March
and April.*

*The Water-
works occu-
pied.*

PART II. flowed under a bridge on the Bloemfontein-Pretoria Railway at Glen Siding, to the north of Bloemfontein. On the 19th and 20th of March troops were sent up from Bloemfontein to Glen Siding, but they were too late to save the bridge, which was blown up by the Boers on the night of the 18th. On the 18th French was sent out east with a flying column of some 1,700 mounted men, and on the 20th he occupied the village of Thabanchu. Thabanchu lies about 40 miles due east of Bloemfontein, the Waterworks being half-way between the two places. It was an important position. From it roads led eastward to Ladybrand and into the valley of the Caledon, while north and south there was a road running through the village roughly parallel to the railway, leading in the direction of Winburg on the north and to Dewetsdorp on the south. A body of troops stationed at this point could, if strong enough, strike at the Boers in the valley of the Caledon. In any case, they acted as a screen to the railway, and, on the supposition that resistance was abating, were well placed to issue proclamations and keep in evidence the English army and the power behind it. A detachment from this force under Colonel Pilcher, who had commanded the successful little expedition to Douglas at the New Year,¹ was sent forward on the 21st of March to the Leeuw River, a tributary of the Caledon, at a place where there was a mill on the river, Newberry's Mills. From the mill Pilcher made a hurried descent on Ladybrand, arrested and carried off the Landdrost, and managed to retreat just in time to avoid being cut off by a large body of Boers, whose presence proved that resistance was very far from being at an end. He was brought back to Thabanchu, where General Broadwood took over the command from French, who was called to Bloemfontein on the 27th, for work on the northern side of the town.

Thabanchu occupied.

Pilcher rides to Ladybrand.

The action of Karee Siding.

The bridge over the Modder at Glen is 14 miles north of Bloemfontein. Eight miles further north is Karee Siding,

¹ See above, pp. 158-9.

and about 13 miles beyond Karee Siding is the small town of Brandfort. Brandfort became one of the starting points for fresh Boer activity. Here came De Wet a few days after the meeting at Kroonstad, and from Brandfort parties of Boers worked south along the line in the Bloemfontein direction. It was necessary to repair the bridge at Glen; and in order to cover the work and to clear the way for the coming advance, Lord Roberts determined to occupy Karee Siding, where the line passed through hills, favourable for Boer obstruction, the country further north being open plain. A mounted force under French's command, combined with General Tucker's infantry division, were the troops selected for the purpose, and on the 29th of March the position was attacked. The plan was simple: the infantry were to attack in front, the cavalry and mounted infantry were to ride round on either flank and intercept the retreat. The infantry had harder fighting than had been anticipated in storming the hills. Eventually the pressure of the horsemen on the flanks had the usual result of making the Boers retire; but there was no intercepting, and though the main object, that of clearing the line, was accomplished, the day was one of the disappointing days in the war, in which action was slow and the losses were almost entirely on the British side, the British casualties numbering 188.

While a large body of troops were thus engaged north of Bloemfontein, attention was more or less drawn off from the eastern side, and this suited De Wet. He had left Brandfort on the evening before the fight at Karee Siding, carefully concealing his plans and his destination; and, having collected a band of 1,500 men, he set himself to cut off the small force of mounted infantry, 200 in number, who were holding the Waterworks. The Waterworks were on the western side of the Modder. The river was in flood, owing to recent rains, and was difficult to cross in the neighbourhood of the Waterworks, except at one of two drifts, one being at the Water-

PART II. works, and the other, Waterval Drift, being five miles downstream, that is further north.

Gradually converging towards the Modder, and meeting it near Waterval Drift, is a small ravine or water-course, the Koorn Spruit, which, due west of the Waterworks Drift, is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Modder. Further west, towards Bloemfontein, at a distance of eight miles from the Waterworks, there is a hill outstanding in the plain, called Boesman's or Bushman's Kop, and four miles west again, 11 miles east of Bloemfontein, is a farm called Springfield. There was a small British outpost at Boesman's Kop, to which patrols were sent every night from the Waterworks, and at Springfield there was a body of 600 mounted men. A railway running east from Bloemfontein was under construction, and half-finished station buildings stood between the Koorn Spruit and the Waterworks at a distance of rather over half a mile from the Koorn Spruit. The place gained the name of Sannah's Post from a hill of that name which was four miles to the south.

*Sannah's
Post.*

De Wet divided his men into two parties. The larger number, 1,100 or 1,150 in all, were to attack the garrison at the Waterworks and drive them into retreat, while he himself, with from 350 to 400 men, lying in ambush in the bed of the Koorn Spruit, was to intercept the retreat. A little before 4 o'clock in the morning of the 31st of March, he and his marksmen were in their place, securely hidden in the deep channel of the Spruit. The Boers in the valley of the Caledon, some of whom had hunted Pilcher back from Ladybrand, had been gathering strength and aggressiveness under the leadership of Olivier, and Broadwood, with the prospect of being attacked by some 5,000 men, determined to abandon Thabanchu and fall back on Bloemfontein. Keeping Lord Roberts informed, in the early afternoon of the 30th of March he sent on his convoy and transport in Pilcher's charge, and followed at night with the rest of his men. Pilcher reached the Waterworks Drift in safety, crossed the Modder, and about

midnight encamped rather over a quarter of a mile to the west of the drift. Between 3 and 4 in the morning of the 31st, Broadwood and the rest of his force came up almost exactly at the same time that De Wet was hiding himself in the Koorn Spruit. Broadwood was retiring before Olivier, and knew nothing of De Wet's movement, while De Wet was waiting for the small garrison of the Waterworks and had not expected Broadwood's whole force. The patrol which had been sent out the evening before from the Waterworks to Boesman's Kop in accordance with the usual practice, had not returned, a sign that something was wrong. It had not returned, because on the way back the men were warned that there were Boers in the way. They therefore turned back to Boesman's Kop, and no steps seem to have been taken to send warning to the Waterworks.

Notwithstanding, the position seemed perfectly safe. Broadwood had gained a long start on Olivier. The way to Bloemfontein was across open country, not through a series of defiles; it was not a very long day's march, and on the way were the British posts at Boesman's Kop and Springfield. But to make everything secure, Lord Roberts at Bloemfontein had already ordered Colvile with his division to march at daybreak on the 31st on Waterval Drift and support Broadwood's retreat. No one discerned that disaster was lurking in the Koorn Spruit, and if disaster had been prophesied, it would have been disaster to De Wet, whose action in holding his ambush against greatly superior numbers in front of him, with imminent danger behind him, must always stand out as a most brilliant feat of courage and skill. Soon after 6 o'clock in the morning, according to arrangement, De Wet's confederates on the east of the Modder, behind Broadwood, began shelling the English. Broadwood disposed his mounted infantry to hold the line of the river as far as Waterval Drift, and sent on his convoy and artillery, escorted by mounted men, the artillery becoming to some extent mixed up with

PART II. the wagons. The shell fire behind hurried on the wagon-drivers, and as they drew near to the descent into the Koorn Spruit, men and wagons and horses became congested in the track. The Spruit was little more than a dry water-course; the crossing involved disappearing under the edge of one bank and reappearing over the edge of the other, behind which there stood a farm-house; during this process the Boer rifles secured the convoy or most of it without any alarm being given, for to give alarm meant immediate death. De Wet tells us that 200 men were disarmed before alarm was given. As soon as the ambush was discovered the place became a shambles, one of the two batteries on the edge of the bank was entirely lost, with the exception of one of the six guns, which the terrified horses seem to have carried off before they could all be shot down. The other battery, a little further back, wheeled round out of the *mêlée* and did splendid service. Five of the six guns were brought back, and in front of the station buildings, within 1,100 yards from the Spruit, opened fire at short range on the Boers, while the officers and men were under terrible fire themselves. Caught in this plight Broadwood showed conspicuous coolness and resolution. His men held the line of the Modder well against the Boers on the further side: the survivors of those who had formed the escort to the convoy and the guns fought hard in the face of De Wet; and meanwhile the cavalry were thrown across the Koorn Spruit, between one and two miles above and south of the scene of the ambush, to take De Wet in the rear. There seemed a good chance for a counter-stroke, for recouping the losses at any rate in part, and possibly turning the tables on De Wet. But here there was complete failure, chiefly owing to want of promptness. The cavalry, left to themselves, did nothing. The six hundred mounted men from Springfield, who had come up to Boesman's Kop, instead of being pushed on at speed and in a body to the most critical point, were

divided into two parties, one of which joined the cavalry and did nothing, while the larger number, including a body of Queenslanders, went to Waterval Drift and there did good work in helping to cover the subsequent withdrawal. Finally Colville marched slowly towards Waterval Drift and had no effect upon the fortunes of the day. Not knowing that reinforcements were near, Broadwood decided to retreat. The guns were dragged back behind the station buildings, five out of the twelve in the two batteries being eventually brought off; and gradually, with no little skill, the whole remaining force was withdrawn beyond the Spruit and on the line to Bloemfontein. But the loss had been very great, 571 men killed, wounded, or prisoners, seven guns, and the whole convoy. Fortune on this day had backed De Wet for all she was worth, and he deserved it. No man ever showed more nerve and resolution. No soldiers, on the other hand, ever fought better than the gunners and mounted infantry of Broadwood's force, including mounted men from over the seas. But well might De Wet wonder why, when for some reason or other the English were caught napping so near home, effective help had not been forthcoming. That was the real blot on the day.

It was a bad disaster. ^{Mosterts} ^{Stock or} ^{adders.} ^{burg.} Other consequences the Waterworks were for the time abandoned, and the loss of the water-supply added to the difficulty of the enterprise. Moreover, it led immediately to a further disaster. On the evening of the same day De Wet rode on south, and on the following day, the 1st of April, heard that a small English force had occupied Dewetsdorp. This force numbered rather under 600 men, three companies of infantry and two companies of mounted infantry, belonging to the Irish Rifles, and the Northumberland Fusiliers, the two regiments of Gatacre's army which had been so cut up at Stormberg. They had no artillery with them. The infantry had come up

¹ See *Three Years' War*, p. 92, note.

PART II. — along the main north road from Smithfield and Helvetia, having been sent by Gatacre in general accordance with Lord Roberts's wishes, but without due care and circumspection. Reaching Dewetsdorp on the 1st of April, men and horses tired out, on the same night they received orders to fall back on Reddersburg, the experience of Sannah's Post having shown how insecure was their position. Early on the morning of the 2nd the retreat began, Reddersburg being over 30 miles to the south-west of Dewetsdorp and about 12 miles south of east of Bethanie Station on the main railway. De Wet dogged their march, having sent back orders to Sannah's Post for men and guns to follow up without delay, and having beaten up the farmers of the district, who had gone to their homes after the fall of Bloemfontein. The English march on the 2nd was not molested, but the weather was bad, and the animals were exhausted. On the 3rd, the march was continued, and four miles north-east of Reddersburg, on a ridge of high ground at a place called Mostert's Hoek, De Wet attacked the retreating force with, it would seem, about 2,000 men and four guns.¹ The English commander took up the best position he could; but, without artillery, with no water except what the troops were carrying with them, with a small number of men underfed and tired out, it was a difficult matter to hold a somewhat extended area. He kept his ground through that day and the following night. But the Boers had already a footing on the ridge; in the night a small party crept up the hill near the key of the position, which was in charge of the mounted infantry, and rushed it in the morning. The mounted infantry surrendered, and about an hour later, soon after 9 o'clock in the morning, the rest followed suit. The casualties had only amounted to 43 killed and wounded; and 546 unwounded prisoners fell into De Wet's hands. Had the resistance been prolonged for a few hours the surrender would probably have been averted, for troops


¹ The numbers both of men and of guns are variously given.

were being hurried up to the rescue. As it was the relief came too late, and this second mishap to Gatacre's command caused him to be superseded and sent back to England—a gallant but unfortunate soldier. CH. IV.
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Riding on the wave of success, De Wet, instead of contenting himself with cutting up the railway and carrying out small raids, gathered a large force to try conclusions with a strong body of Brabant's Colonial Division on the borders of Basutoland. He had grounds for confidence. The farmers were all coming out again in consequence of his victories, and also, if his own statement is to be believed, in consequence of the terms of Lord Roberts's proclamation not having been observed on the English side. The farmers who had surrendered their arms and gone home were not, he contended, left unmolested on their farms, with the result that, to quote his own words to President Steyn, 'Lord Roberts was the best recruiting sergeant I had ever had.'¹ Presumably mistakes had been made in particular cases, as is inevitable in war, and these had been multiplied and magnified by the fighting Boers in order to stimulate resistance. De Wet sent some of his men to cut off a British garrison at Smithfield, but the latter retreated in time, and their pursuers joined him in his new enterprise in the neighbourhood of Wepener.

The village of Wepener lies on the eastern side of the *Wepener*. Caledon, a little below the point where that river ceases to be the boundary between Basutoland and the Free State and takes its way across the south-easternmost corner of the State. Immediately north of Wepener is the Jammersberg Mountain, and three miles north-west of the village is the Jammersberg Bridge over the Caledon, 200 yards long. On the other side, the western bank of the Caledon, the British force had taken up its position. The ground had been well chosen on the 3rd and 4th of April by Major Maxwell of the Royal Engineers, who commanded the force until the arrival on the

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 106.

PART II.  eve of the fight of Colonel Dalgety of the Cape Mounted Rifles. It consisted of an oval ring of kopjes, six or seven miles round, with a diameter of about three miles, commanding the bridge over the river, containing a good water-supply, and with ample space within the ring to move men and guns from one point to another. The troops numbered rather under 1,900 men, chiefly men of Brabant's Horse, the Cape Mounted Rifles, and the Kaffrarian Rifles, with a most valuable handful of Royal Engineers. They were none too many to hold the ring, but, like the Boers, they, or many of them, were accustomed to widely extended defensive South African fighting.

This Wepener episode had very special features of interest. It was in the first place pre-eminently a fight between Dutch Afrikaners and British Afrikaners, although no doubt on the British side a number of the men were not South African born. This made the Boers specially keen on attack, and the defending force indomitably stubborn in defence. For the Boers stored up their bitterness against the British Afrikaners, whom they appear by some strange mode of reasoning to have regarded in the light of traitors. They dealt out harsher treatment to their Afrikaner prisoners than to the regular soldiers from England, reproducing the implacable temper shown towards the Loyalists in the War of American Independence by the men who followed Washington. 'They were Afrikaners,' writes De Wet, 'and as Afrikaners, although neither Free Staters nor Transvaalers, they ought, in our opinion, to have been ashamed to fight against us.'¹ Why men of British descent, who had no grievance whatever against the Home Government, unless it was that that Government had in its past dealings somewhat unduly subordinated British to Dutch interests in South Africa, should fight against their own Government and their own race on the side of Dutch invasion and supremacy, is

¹ p. 104.

not clear; but the Boers regarded, or professed to regard, Dutch subjects of England who fought against England as worthy of all praise, and British South Africans who fought on the side of England as objects of abhorrence and contempt. In the second place the fighting went on under the eyes of the Basutos, beyond question more friendly to English than to Boers, but like other dark races more or less waiting on events, anxious to see whether English or Dutch would prove the better men. Through all this troubled time the able and experienced Resident Commissioner, Sir Godfrey Lagden, held them well in hand, in spite of the fact that Boer emissaries had been busy among them; but it was not for the English to let their Basuto friends be spectators of British reverse and surrender. Dalgety was in communication with Lagden, and there was some hope, if worst came to worst, that the colonials might be able to retire into Basutoland. Late in the siege, when the Boers were strongly posted all round and when a large proportion of the defenders' horses had been killed, this retreat would hardly have been possible, without having recourse to the disastrous expedient of calling the Basutos into action, and fortunately no such extremity arose.¹ Once more the siege was allowed to drag on in somewhat leisurely fashion, presumably for the reason that every day the garrison could hold out was of great value to Lord Roberts. While from 6,000 to 10,000 Boers under their most enterprising leader were being contained in this one corner, the railway was carrying up men and stores in an uninterrupted stream. Preparations were fast going forward for a movement, compared with which the Wepener siege was a mere incident; and moreover the chances were growing that the besiegers of Wepener might themselves be cut off.

¹ A large force of Basutos was on the spot to prevent any infringement of their territory by the Boers. The Annual Report on Basutoland for 1899-1900 No. 313, Cd. 4318, January 1901 is very interesting in connexion with the Wepener incident.

PART II. The siege lasted sixteen days. On the 9th De Wet
 --- attacked hard, mainly on the south-west, where the defences
 were incomplete, and where the brunt of the fighting fell on
 the Cape Mounted Rifles. On the night of the 10th again
 the garrison was hard pressed, and it was at this early stage
 of the siege that most of the casualties occurred. Subsequently
 the Boers contented themselves with bombardment and
 blockade. They had the stronger artillery, but the British
 guns were good and very skilfully handled: the weather was
 bad; the garrison fought in trenches half full of water; there
 was scarcity of ammunition; but day by day went by, the
 Boers made no progress, and relief was near. In the early
 days of April Hart's brigade and Barton's Fusilier brigade,
 formed into a new division under Sir Archibald Hunter, were
 brought round to the Cape Colony from Natal; and, landing
 at East London, Hart's men were sent up to Aliwal North.
 Kitchener had come down from Bloemfontein to the same
 point to direct the operations for the relief of Wepener. On
 the 14th of April Brabant was sent on with 1,200 men, on
 the next day Hart followed with a little less than 3,000. The
The Relief two forces advanced to Rouxville, on the 19th they continued
of Wepener. their march towards Wepener, and on the 25th joined hands
 with Dalgety, the Boers having abandoned the siege on the
 previous night. The casualties in Dalgety's force were
 officially returned at 169, the Cape Mounted Rifles having
 suffered most, and the stand which had been made was at
 once admirable in itself and of no small importance in con-
 nexion with the main action of the war.

*The
 Sequel.*

While Brabant and Hart were coming up from the south,
 Lord Roberts was moving troops from west and north in the
 hope of intercepting the Boer retreat. The new Eighth
 Division had been landing from England, commanded by
 General Rundle, who was sent up the line to Edenburg
 Station to co-operate with Chermiside, Gatacre's successor,
 and move east on Reddersburg and Dewetsdorp. Pole

Carew, and after him French, were sent to work down south-east from Bloemfontein towards the same point; while behind them Ian Hamilton, who had come from Natal, was ordered to reoccupy the Waterworks. The different columns were spread as a net to catch the Boers when they fell back from Wepener, and they skirmished as they went with parties of Boers, holding this point and that, checking advance with their usual skill. On the 20th Rundle was near Dewetsdorp, on the 24th French and Pole Carew were in touch with him, and taking command of the combined troops, French arranged a comprehensive movement for encircling his enemies. On the same day Hamilton cleared the Boers from the Waterworks; on the next day, moving on east, he had a fight at Israel's Poort on the way to Thabanchu, and in the evening of that day, the 25th, he reached Thabanchu. But it all came to nothing, as far as the object was to cut the Boer retreat. The English had been slow, there had been want of concert and accurate information, and the Boers slipped by unharmed. By the 27th French joined Hamilton at Thabanchu, but they were now driving a rearguard before them, instead of blocking a retreat; there was some fighting to the east of Thabanchu on the 28th and 29th, but with little result.

Hamilton had to move on north, in order to reach Winburg by an appointed date, for he was to take part in, and keep pace with, the northward movement of the main army. On the 30th of April, rather over ten miles to the north of Thabanchu, at a place called Houtnek, where the road to the north passes between and over hills, he was held up by a strongly posted Boer force. There was hard fighting on that day, mainly concentrated against a high hill on the British left, which dominated the whole position. At nightfall the work was only half done, and French at Thabanchu was asked to send reinforcements. With their support, on the morrow, the 1st of May, the hill was carried and the pass was

*The Fight
at Houtnek.*

PART II. foreed.¹ On the other side of it, as Hamilton went north he
 —♦— was joined by more troops who had come east from the rail-
 way, and with a strong force he moved parallel to the line
 of the main advance. Meanwhile French had gone back
 from Thabanehu to Bloemfontein to take his part in the great
 northern march; Pole Carew had gone back previously for
 the same purpose; and Rundle, Chermiside, and Brabant
 were charged with the duty of securing the country in the
 rear of the advancing army.

The Wepener incident and its sequel brought out the strong
 and the weak points of the Boers. The way in which they
 held back their pursuers and evaded loss was wonderful. On
 the other hand there was little merit in their conduct of what
 was called the siege of Wepener, while in electing to spend over
 a fortnight in an attempt to capture an isolated band they
 showed great want of perspective. Second to none alike in
 defence of strong positions against superior numbers and in
 effecting surprises, they were very incapable or very half-
 hearted when faced by inferior numbers behind defences.
 The sieges or blockades of Kimberley, Mafeking, and Lady-
 smith said little for Boer prowess, and Wepener told the same
 tale, illustrating further and conspicuously the Boer habit of
 letting the immediate incident overshadow the war. If
 Dalgety's force had been captured it would have been a great
 success, but all the time Roberts was left undisturbed to
 mature something greater and more far-reaching. Turning
 from the Boer to the British side, the English must be credited
 with a successful stand, with complete clearance for the time

¹ Lord Roberts, in his evidence before the War Commission, attached considerable importance to the fight at Houtnek. 'On the 1st of May the enemy was signally defeated at Houtnek, with comparatively small loss on our side, thanks to the admirable dispositions made by Major-General Ian Hamilton.' (Cd. 1720, 1903, Minutes of Evidence, vol. 1, p. 467.) This was the fight in which Captain Towse of the Gordon Highlanders so distinguished himself and lost his eyesight. A good account of it is given in *Ian Hamilton's March*, by Mr. Winston Churchill, 1900.

being of the south-east of the Free State, and with steady progress in furthering the main action of the war, of which Lord Roberts never lost sight. On the other hand they must be debited with disappointing failure to strike home, when the Free State forces were gathered together, as they never were again. The German critics, emphasizing the fact that the British columns set to catch the Boers were not duly coordinated, give as their judgement: 'There is no doubt that the British commander here let slip a favourable opportunity for bringing the war to a rapid conclusion.'¹

With the early days of May the march to Pretoria began. The relief of Kimberley was designed in the form of column following closely on column, giving continuous impetus and support. The march from Paardeberg to Bloemfontein was carried out on the lines of three columns marching abreast, first diverging and then converging. The great northern advance now in hand combined both features—the parallel movement and the movement in support. Now, for the first time in the war, there was some unity of action and of design throughout the whole area: at all points there was a flowing tide of invasion, and the story of the war becomes a chronicle not so much of sieges and battles as of marches, transport, and communications, shading off into the later stages of purely guerilla warfare. Movement became comparatively fast: large armies traversed plains, and were no longer held up, except to some small extent in Natal, by mountain ranges and difficult rivers. The English had overwhelming forces and ample elbow-room in which to use them: mounted men were greatly multiplied—Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, white contingents from India and Ceylon, strong bodies of Yeomanry from England: the danger lay in the distances to be covered and the insecurity of the railway lines in an enemy's country. On the British as on the Boer side the war had

*The March
to Pretoria.*

¹ Vol. ii, p. 295.

PART II. sifted and shifted leading men. Sir George White's months of anxiety in Ladysmith had told on his health, and he was
Sir George White. invalided home, having bravely and chivalrously borne the brunt of the first most dangerous phase of the war, when the Boer resources and fighting powers were still largely an unknown quantity, when the conditions were novel and startling. He had to make the best of a most difficult position as he found it, and the thanks of England were due, as they were given, to a very gallant soldier who, whether or not he erred in judgement, never faltered in spirit. The relief of Ladysmith released for wider action two most capable soldiers, Archibald Hunter and Ian Hamilton. The latter had already served under Lord Roberts in India, the former had won high repute under Kitchener in the Sudan. Both men at Ladysmith had added to their fame, and both were chosen by the Commander-in-Chief to be Divisional Commanders. Hunter, as has been said, was brought from Natal with his new division, the Tenth Division, his brigadiers Hart and Barton and his troops having been conspicuous in Buller's army, and with them came the Imperial Light Horse. Kimberley was their destination, though Hart and his men were turned aside for the moment to relieve Wepener. Hamilton was called to Bloemfontein to command a mounted division, but as a matter of fact he commanded infantry as well as mounted men, and through part of the campaign led more than a division. Roberts's confidence in him was shown by placing him, though a very junior commander, in charge of the extreme right of the march, where he was not immediately under the eye of the Commander-in-Chief. Sir Charles Warren, too, left Natal to take over charge of Griqualand West, where the rebels had already given so much trouble, and to which, as an old Lieutenant-Governor of the province, he brought special local knowledge.

Sir Charles Warren.

The different columns.

The main army, which marched on Pretoria and which Lord Roberts commanded in person, numbered, after French

had joined it, a little under 40,000, over and above a supporting column of about 4,000 men under General Colvile. It covered a front, at any rate at the start, of many miles. The head-quarters followed the railway line, but on the left was General Hutton with his mounted infantry brigade, largely consisting of Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders under a general who knew the self-governing Dominions; and far away on the right Ian Hamilton led on and through Winburg nearly 15,000 men. Colvile followed Hamilton about a day's march behind, and while the main army went on, Rundle, slowly moving forward, was specially charged with keeping the Boers from breaking back. Bloemfontein was held by Kelly Kenny.

CH. IV.
—♦—
The main column.

On the west Methuen, after the relief of Kimberley, garrisoned Boshof, to the north-east in the Free State, on the 9th of March. Returning to Kimberley he repaired the railway northwards towards Warrenton and the Fourteen Streams Bridge over the Vaal, and occupied Barkly West. On the 4th of April he was again at Boshof, and on the next day near Tweefontein, about five miles south-east of Boshof, with a small force consisting mainly of Yeomanry, he surrounded and overwhelmed a party of the enemy commanded by the Frenchman Villebois de Mareuil, who died fighting for the Boer cause. From Boshof Methuen was to move north-east to Hoopstad and on to the Vaal, converging towards the line of Roberts's march. Outside Methuen, Hunter was to move up the railway to the north and cross into the Transvaal, invading it from the south-west; and outside Hunter again a small, carefully selected flying column was, keeping well to the west, to effect the long-deferred relief of Mafeking. Away in Natal Buller was to march northward, clearing a path he went, and to effect a junction with Roberts when the latter crossed the Vaal. Buller, though he had lost one division, had gained the survivors of the Ladysmith garrison, recuperated by rest and good food. On the 1st of June the

Methuen.
Hunter.
Mahon.
Buller.

PART II. total army under his command, including the troops guarding
 —♦♦— the railway, numbered nearly 46,000.

*Roberts's
 advance.*

On the 3rd of May Lord Roberts left Bloemfontein for the front, which was at Karee Siding, and on the evening of that day occupied Brandfort. There was some little fighting, Delarey being on the right front of the British advance, but the resistance was easily overborne. On the following day the Vet River was reconnoitred, on the 5th Hutton with his mounted men having skilfully forced a crossing on the left, the passage of the river was secured; and on the 6th the whole army was over the river and some miles beyond it, at Smaldeel Junction, 63 miles from Bloemfontein, where the cross-line from Winburg comes in. Meanwhile, many miles away on the right, Hamilton had, on the 4th, a fight which threatened to be serious, 15 miles south of Winburg. Boers retreating from Brandfort in an easterly direction came up to join the men under Philip Botha, who were trying to block his advance; but a prompt cavalry movement secured the neck of the ridge between two bodies of the enemy, and the Highland brigade, coming up from Colvile's column behind, helped to clear away the obstruction. On the evening of the 5th he entered Winburg, which is 28 miles to the eastward of Smaldeel. Roberts waited two days at Smaldeel: the railway was blown up in front of him, the convoys were struggling over the drifts of the Vet behind. The next point where resistance was anticipated was the Sand River, a tributary of the Vet River, which in turn is a tributary of the Vaal. It was this Sand River which gave its name to the famous Sand River Convention, the original charter of Transvaal independence. Hutton reconnoitred the river on the 7th; on the 8th and 9th French and his cavalry came up from Bloemfontein: Hamilton meanwhile on the 6th moved on a short distance from Winburg, gradually converging towards Roberts, and Colvile occupied Winburg in his stead. The army advanced, and on the 9th was within striking

distance of the river; Hamilton on the right, French and Hutton on the left, secured various drifts, and on the 10th the passage was forced. There was considerable fighting, but with no great result beyond clearing the way. The Boers, now commanded by Louis Botha, were outflanked and had to retreat; but they were not intercepted, and the casualties were not large. On the next day, the 11th, Lord Roberts reached Geneva Siding, 14 miles short of Kroonstad. On the same day French, sent on in advance to try to cut the Boer retreat, reached a drift of the Valsch River, nine miles to the north-west of Kroonstad; and when night came Hunter Weston, who, as we have seen, had isolated Bloemfontein by blowing up the line on the northern side of the town, with a party which included the famous American scout, Burnham, made his way across a road thronged by retreating Boers, and once more blew up the railway near America Station, about 12 miles to the north of Kroonstad. Unfortunately the last train to the north had already gone by. A stand had been intended by the Boer leaders, and had been looked for by the English, at a strong position, the Boschrand, six miles south of Kroonstad, but no stand was made. The Boers were again on the run; the defenders of Kroonstad abandoned it; on the 12th Lord Roberts entered the town, and President Steyn shifted his seat of government to Heilbron.

CII. IV.

*Occupation
of Kroon-
stad.*

Kroonstad, on the Valsch River, 128 miles by rail from Bloemfontein, is the principal town in the northern area of the Free State. Here Lord Roberts halted for ten days to bring up supplies and prepare for the next and final stage of his march to Pretoria. There was much sickness among the troops, and great difficulty in coping with it. Before following the further movement of the main army and of Hamilton's wing, which for a few days operated apart, the story of what was happening in the west and in Natal must be brought up to date. In the west there were, as has been



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PART II. seen, three separate forces moving north. The innermost
 —♦— was Methuen's command, guarding, though at a long distance
Methuen's away, the left side of Roberts's march, and in the other
movements. direction stretching out a hand to Hunter. One of Methuen's
 brigades, Paget's brigade, worked under Hunter, while the
 latter was beginning his move, and Methuen further helped
 Hunter by demonstrating due north from Boshof towards
 Christiana on the 3rd and 4th of May, Christiana being the
 south-westernmost town of the Transvaal just across the Vaal
 River. Returning to Boshof, on the 14th of May, in accor-
 dance with instructions, Methuen marched north-east to Hoop-
 stad on the Vet River, low down on its course, reaching it on
 the 17th. There Paget rejoined him on the 19th, and on the
 24th the force, still marching north-east, reached Bothaville.
 From that point, as will be seen, Methuen's course was
 diverted to the east.

Hunter's Hunter, on the 3rd of May, the day on which Lord Roberts
movements. began his march, left Kimberley for Windsorton, Hart's
 brigade, which had been diverted to Wepener, not having as
 yet joined him. Windsorton Road Station is rather over
 27 miles north of Kimberley by rail, and the village of
 Windsorton is seven miles west of the station, on the opposite
 bank of the Vaal River, the Vaal River at this point having
 curled round so as to flow almost due south. Hunter had to
 cross the Vaal. The railway crosses it at the Fourteen
 Streams Bridge, which is nearly 48 miles north of Kimberley
 and rather over 20 miles north of Windsorton Road, the
 village of Warrenton being three miles south of the bridge.
 But the Boers had broken the bridge and held the north bank
 of the Vaal in force. Consequently, sending Paget up to
 Warrenton to threaten the Boers who were facing the direct
 line of march, Hunter determined to force a crossing of the
 river lower down at Windsorton, and to march along the right
 bank of the Vaal—that is to say, along the outside of the
 curve of the river. On the 3rd of May Barton seized the

drift at Windsorton, on the 4th the crossing was completed, and on the 5th, near a place called Rooidam, about ten miles north of Windsorton, where the Boers held four miles of kopjes across the line of march, there was a sharp fight, decided in favour of the English by the mounted men outflanking and turning the Boer right. On the 7th Hunter reached Fourteen Streams; there Hart joined him, while Paget went back to Methuen; a week was spent in repairing the line and constructing a deviation bridge over the river; on the 15th Hunter moved on Christiana, and on the 16th he occupied the little town, being the first of the English commanders to enter the Transvaal. By the 23rd he had gone up the line, and was holding it as far as Vryburg, Vryburg being 137 miles from Kimberley to the south, 96 miles from Mafeking to the north.

His movement had been designed to cover and distract attention from the flying column destined to relieve Mafeking, and it must now be told how the defenders of Mafeking had fared, what efforts were made to help them from the north, and how in the end the garrison was relieved. Mafeking filled a large space in public attention in England, and rightly. Of the three besieged points in South Africa, longest beleaguered, latest relieved, 'remote and detached Mafeking'¹ was held with a mixture of cheery pluck and grim determination, deserving of all praise. The defenders were helped by the inertness and incapacity of the besiegers. The story goes that President Kruger would not allow Cronje to storm or try to storm the place.² Whether this is true or not, anything more unenterprising or ineffective than the Boer operations under Cronje's successor, Commandant Snyman, it

*The Siege
and Relief
of Mafeking.*

The Siege.

¹ 'Remote and detached Mafeking, the news of whose deliverance comes as these lines are writing, remains a romantic episode, a dramatic centre of interest, from the heroic endurance and brilliant gallantry displayed by its garrison.' Captain Mahan, *The Story of the War in South Africa* (1900), p. 112.

² *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, quoted by Mahan, p. 122.

PART II. would be difficult to conceive. There was no little truth in the caustic comment of one of his Boer colleagues that he regarded Snyman 'as the real defender and reliever of Mafeking'.¹ It has been seen² that the year 1899 closed with the fight at Game Tree Hill, a costly fight to Baden Powell's small garrison. The spring of 1900 went on: there was as much spirit as ever in the defence, as little spirit as ever in the attack. The chief fighting was in February and March at the Brickfields, east of the town. Here the British and Boer lines came into close contact, and there was much sapping and countersapping. On the 5th of March the defenders were for the moment driven out of their advanced positions, but they recovered their ground, and on the 23rd of March the Boers abandoned the Brickfields altogether. Before the siege began Mafeking had been amply provisioned with the help of the well-known firm of South African contractors, Julius Weil and Company. As messages came from Lord Roberts postponing the date of relief, the question of supplies became more serious, but in this as in all points the ingenuity and resource of Baden Powell and those who worked with him was never found wanting: horses were converted into sausages, and horse-hides into brawn; while in the last five or six weeks of the siege, when Plumer's force was within measurable distance, it was found possible to pass by night through the Boer lines quite a number of natives, and thereby to reduce the calls upon the depleted larder. Over 1,200 of the native population of Mafeking had been smuggled out to Plumer's care by the date when the town was relieved. Ammunition was manufactured within the lines and a gun was constructed; what took place in the Kimberley workshops took place on a small scale also at Mafeking. Brain

¹ 'General Snyman, whom I regard as the real defender and reliever of Mafeking, for he was afraid to attack a garrison of 1000 men with twice that number of burghers.' *My Reminiscences of the Anglo-Boer War*, by General Ben Viljoen (1902), p. 141.

² Above, p. 160.

combined with heart to make the most and the best of everything. Meanwhile the Boers almost invariably kept Sunday as a day of rest, if indeed they can have been said to have kept weekdays as days of action, and once a week the strain on the garrison was relaxed.

In the middle of April the number of Boers round Mafeking was increased from some 2,000 to some 3,000 men, and a little later the besiegers were joined by an enterprising young fighter of the name of Eloff, grandson of President Kruger. Snyman's inactivity was not to Eloff's mind, and he determined to effect a surprise. Mafeking, described by Baden Powell as 'an open town 1,000 yards square',¹ is on the northern bank of the Molopo, and the railway runs on the western side of the town. On the other side of the railway line, about half a mile south-west of the town, is the native stadt or town, on both banks of the river. Eloff laid his plans to come up the bed of the Molopo into the midst of the native town, and from it to rush the western defences, while Snyman bombarded from the east. The numbers are somewhat variously given, but it would seem that Eloff intended to lead over 700 men to the attack; that, as on other occasions in the war, when the time came, a large proportion of the force did not put in an appearance, and that he finally made his effort with some 300 men. In the very early morning of the 12th of May there was a heavy bombardment on the eastern side of Mafeking. This was Snyman's contribution to the day's proceedings, and apparently his only contribution. Baden Powell seems to have suspected that it was a feint to cover an attack in another quarter, and flames coming up from the native town told the story that the enemy had broken in at that point. So far Eloff had succeeded; he had fired the native town, and his success did not stop there, for pushing on towards Mafeking he rushed a so-called fort or barrack of the British South Africa Police, which stood about 400 yards

CII. IV.

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*Eloff's
attack and
defeat.*

¹ South Africa Despatches, vol. i, p. 99 (C. 457, 1900).

PART II. in advance of the native town, and made prisoners of the
 —♦♦— small party of officers and men, 18 in number, who were there at the time. But this was the end of his tether: he had divided his small force, and the arrangements within the British defences were so good that help could easily and promptly be given at any threatened point. Eloff was now cut off from the Boers who were in the native town: they in turn were divided or divided themselves into two parties, and meanwhile precautions were taken in case Snyman should support Eloff. Of the Boers who composed Eloff's force at the start but who did not accompany him to the police fort, one section, a small number, took refuge in an empty kraal and was forced into surrender: the rest who were still fighting in the native town were hunted out; and finally Eloff's party, after holding the police fort all day, at 6 o'clock in the evening surrendered to their own prisoners in the fort. The net result was that the Boers lost 60 killed and wounded, and 108 unwounded prisoners. This was by far the most enterprising attempt on the Boer side in the course of the siege of Mafeking, and its failure must be attributed to want of support from the main Boer force and its commandant. The losses of the garrison were trifling, and this final success added to the enthusiasm which greeted the news of the relief four days later.

*Rhodesia
and the
War.*

Through the long weary months which preceded the final relief, there had been a small force on the north doing all that men could do to lighten the strain, prevented by nothing but want of numerical strength from breaking the Boer ring and raising the siege. Merely to break through with numbers insufficient to drive off the besiegers would have been worse than useless: the blockade would have gone on again with more mouths to feed within the British lines. The story of Mafeking is and always has been closely connected with the story of Rhodesia, and the story of the attempts to relieve Mafeking is the story of the part which Rhodesia played

in the great war. It will be remembered that there had been a dangerous Matabele rising in the year 1896, that Baden Powell and Plumer had then done markedly good service in the bush warfare, that the Imperial Government had sent out Sir Frederick Carrington to direct the operations, and that in the autumn of 1897, after the trouble was over, the railway from Mafeking reached Buluwayo.¹ At the time of the South African War the Administrator of Matabeleland was the present Sir Arthur Lawley, of Mashonaland the present Sir William Milton, while the Commandant-General of the military police forces in Rhodesia was Colonel Nicholson—all good men.

There are three or four main features in the situation to be borne in mind. The first is the great distances involved. The distance from Mafeking to Buluwayo is 490 miles, rather greater than the distance from London to Dundee. Buluwayo is 301 miles distant by the railway from Salisbury, and at the time of the war there was no railway connexion between the two places. Salisbury is 374 miles from the port of Beira; and, though railway communication between Salisbury and Beira had been completed in May 1899, the line was not yet in satisfactory condition. In the second place, as the Boers had possession of the railway south of and to a considerable distance north of Mafeking, the only access to Rhodesia was through foreign territory, the Portuguese port of Beira and the country behind it. In the third place, the question of the natives in these northern regions was of special importance. In Rhodesia itself trouble between black and white was of such recent date that the possibility of its recrudescence could not be ignored. In the Bechuanaland Protectorate, along or near the line of the main railway, were Bechuana chiefs and tribes who liked the English much more than the Boers, and who lived under the direct and recently confirmed protection of the British

*The
Bechuana-
land Pro-
tectorate.*

¹ See above, pp. 48-52.

PART II. Crown, but who were likely to be swayed by the course of events, and, if firm in their friendship to the English, not unlikely to give trouble by taking a hand in the war. Fortunately in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, as in Basutoland, England was well served by the Resident Commissioner. Major Gould Adams, as he then was, had done much good service in South Africa already, and was to do much more. Under him were two Assistant Commissioners, one at Palapye for the northern portion of the Protectorate, one at Gaborones for the southern half. Palapye Road, the nearest railway station to Palapye, which was east of the railway, is 262 miles north of Mafeking, rather less than the distance from London to Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Gaborones is 92 miles north of Mafeking, rather less than the distance from London to Leicester. Palapye at this date was the dwelling-place of Khama, the well-known Bamangwato chief, of whose loyalty there could be no question. Going south along the line, Linchwe, the chief of the Bakhatla, had his tribal holding partly in the British Protectorate, partly in the Transvaal, but his chief kraal was at Mochudi in the Protectorate, near the railway on its eastern side, 124 miles north of Mafeking and 32 miles north of Gaborones. Farther south again, below Gaborones, Bathoen, chief of the Bangwaketse, who had accompanied Khama on his visit to England in 1895 to protest against being handed over to the control of the Chartered Company,¹ had his main home at Kanya, some 30 miles west of the railway and rather under 70 miles north-west of Mafeking.

*The
Rhodesian
Field
Force.*

Lastly, it must be borne in mind that the fighting in this northern area of South Africa was almost entirely done on the British side by irregular forces and local levies. It was essentially colonial fighting, and good fighting it was, suited to the kind of enemy. The white settlers in Rhodesia had answered well to the call to arms, but at the beginning of the

¹ See above, p. 7.

war there were not quite 2,500 men available to hold Rhodesia and to help Mafeking. Before the year 1899 ended, therefore, the Directors of the British South Africa Company pressed the Imperial Government to pay the cost of an adequate defence force for their territories. There was some demur, but in January 1900 the Government agreed to pay for 5,000 mounted men, all of whom were to be raised from outside the United Kingdom. Eventually the terms were modified, and the Rhodesian Field Force, which Sir Frederick Carrington was chosen to command, though mainly composed of Australians and New Zealanders, included also a body of Imperial Yeomanry. There was a further difficulty. The force could only reach Rhodesia through the port of Beira, that is through Portuguese territory, and the Portuguese Government not unnaturally was reluctant to abandon its neutral attitude and allow, in time of war, arms and armed men to pass through its coasts. After considerable delay, justification was found in the terms of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1891,¹ which, as interpreted by the explanations given at the time, were held to justify the passage of British troops and munitions of war through Portuguese East Africa. The Rhodesian force as a whole was slow in coming up to the scene of action, largely through delays and mismanagement on the Beira line, but some Bushmen were at Beira by the 11th of April, and Carrington, who had left England in the middle of March, took on from Capetown to Beira a Canadian battery of four guns which was in the Cape Colony. The Canadians and their guns reached Beira on the 21st of April, and, escorted by 100 Queenslanders, were brought up to Buluwayo by the 7th of May. Carried south by train and making a forced march

¹ As to the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1891, see Part I of this Book, pp. 306, 312, and 315. An admirable account of the raising of the Rhodesian force, on which this paragraph is based, is given in *The Times History of the War in South Africa*, vol. iv, p. 363, &c.

PART II. from the railway of 40 miles, they came up to Plumer's force at Sefetili just in time to take part in the relief of Mafeking.

*Fighting
on the line
in the Pro-
tectorate.*

We must now go back to the beginning of the war. In October, Nicholson sent armoured trains down the line, which accounted for not a few Boer casualties at or near a place called Crocodile Pools, about nine or ten miles south of Gaberones. The Boers retaliated, and at the end of October and beginning of November pushed up the railway as far as Mochudi. In due course they were driven back again by the armoured train and a small Rhodesian force under Colonel Holdsworth, backed by Linchwe's men, whom the Boers worried and looted, provoking the native warfare which they wished to avoid. In the neighbourhood of Mochudi the Marico River is the boundary between the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Transvaal. On the British side of the river was a native town, Sekwane, and over against it, on the other side, was a Boer laager at a place called Derdepoort. These names occur in the London Convention of 1884, the boundary of the South African Republic in this region being defined as 'up the course of the Marique river to Derde Poort, where it passes through a low range of hills called Sikwane'. Holdsworth laid his plans to attack the laager, but, when on the 25th of November he led out his small white force, the excited natives could not be held in: they crossed the river into the Republic, and took up the fighting themselves, thereby at once thwarting Holdsworth's plans, and compromising the English, who were at pains to keep black men out of the war, unless compelled to fight in self-defence. In reprisal, the Boers in December burnt Sekwane and threatened Holdsworth, who, with 200 men, was at Mochudi.

*Plumer
at Fort
Tuli.*

Up to the end of 1899 there were about 350 men, police and volunteers, on the British side, fighting along and safeguarding the railway, the two little centres of operations

being Palapye and Mochudi. The Boers at first had some 600 men along the line watching Khama, Linchwe, and their English allies. Meanwhile, on the northern frontier of the Transvaal, where the Limpopo River is the boundary, there were larger numbers, though still very small, on either side. On the Boer side was the Zoutpansberg commando, 1,300 strong with three guns; and over against them, watching the drifts of the river, and having his head-quarters at Fort Tuli, the southernmost fort of Rhodesia, was Plumer with 550 men, comprising the newly raised Rhodesia Regiment of mounted infantry, and 100 of the British South Africa Police. Early in November a detachment of Boers crossed the river at Rhodes Drift, 20 miles south of Tuli, captured a convoy, and nearly cut off the squadron of men who were guarding the drift. Tuli was threatened, but the chief commandant of these northern Boer forces, who wished to attack it, was held back by his Government, some of his men were called off south, and at the beginning of December Plumer, reconnoitring into the Transvaal, found that the whole force which had been in front of him had been withdrawn. At the same time he learnt that the Boers on the railway had become more aggressive, and the further north they went, breaking up the line, the more remote became the chance of helping Mafeking.

Accordingly, leaving 100 men to garrison Tuli, Plumer, with the rest of his small force, left the fort on the 27th of December; marched south-west for 175 miles to Palapye: entrained his men at Palapye Road, and joined hands with Holdsworth in the neighbourhood of Mochudi. With the combined force he moved south, was at Gaberones on the 14th of January, and came into touch with the Boers, who had fallen back, at Crocodile Pools. A little south of Crocodile Pools their main body had taken up a position athwart the line, behind and covering a broken iron bridge, which had to be repaired before the English could move on

CH. IV.

—♦♦—

*Plumer
moves to
the rail-
way.*

PART II. further south. An attack on the Boer fort or position in the early morning of the 12th of February cost 28 casualties and failed in its object. Anticipating, therefore, that he might find it impossible to force his way along the line, Plumer sent supplies south-west, across country to Bathoen's town of Kanya, in order to provide himself with a new base. But the Boers fell back again on the 25th of February, and he followed on, repairing the line as he went, with a force now numbering nearly 1,000 men and three armoured trains. On the 6th of March he reached Lobatsi, 47 miles from Mafeking, and on the 13th his advance guard was at Pitsani Pitlogo, the jumping-off point for the Jameson Raid, only 28 miles distant from Mafeking. Pushed back again by a strong Boer force sent up from the lines round Mafeking, and fearing to be cut off from the north if he remained at Lobatsi, on the night of the 16th he sent Holdsworth and 350 infantry back up the line as far as Crocodile Pools, while he himself with 550 mounted men left the railway altogether and established himself 30 miles away at Kanya. From Kanya he moved south, and on the 21st of March had taken up a position at a place called Sefetili, about 30 miles north-west of Mafeking, keeping in touch with Baden Powell by native runners. On the 26th of March he crossed into the Transvaal and rode within 12 miles of Zeerust. On the 30th he was at Ramathlabama on the railway, 16 miles from Mafeking; and on the next day, the last day of March, he reconnoitred within sight of the town, only six miles away. At this point he was once more hard pressed and driven back, having 49 casualties among 350 men, and being himself wounded, but through April he held his ground at Sefetili, in constant communication with Baden Powell, helping to smuggle natives out of Mafeking, trying with little success to smuggle cattle in, ready to take any opportunity which friend or enemy might proffer. May came in, bringing a reinforcement of British South Africa Police from Mashonaland. On

the 12th he heard from Lord Roberts that a relief force from the south was on its way to Mafeking: on the 13th a runner came through from the commander of the relief force, Colonel Mahon: on the 14th the Canadian battery and the Queenslanders came up: on that same evening he moved south once more with 800 men and 8 guns; and marching 28 miles through the night, joined Mahon on the north bank of the Molopo River west of Mafeking at daybreak on the 15th.

The Mafeking Relief Force consisted of about 1,200 men, all of whom were mounted except 100 infantry men from Barton's Fusilier brigade. There were 100 men of the Royal Horse Artillery with their guns, the Kimberley Mounted Corps, and the Imperial Light Horse, who had fought so hard in Natal. Among the number were men whose names had appeared in the troubled history of the Transvaal before the war, men who knew the country—Colonel Frank Rhodes, Sir John Willoughby, prominent in the Jameson Raid, 'Karri' Davies, the stalwart who had been imprisoned by Kruger and refused to beg off his imprisonment. The leader was an Irishman, Colonel Bryan Mahon, who had made his name as a cavalry officer in Egypt and the Sudan. Well chosen they were and well prepared. The sending off was in Hunter's charge, and he covered the start by his own northward move and the fighting at Rooidam. Methuen had supplied transport. The object was to move swiftly, keeping well to the west, and avoiding fighting as far as possible till the goal was reached. From the base at Kimberley, 223 miles by rail from Mafeking, they concentrated, 22 miles away to the north-west, at Barkly West on the Vaal River, and rode out from thence on the 4th of May, following the line of the Harts River. They were pursued, but outpaced the Boers on their tracks. On the 7th they were level with Taung's on the railway, lying to the east of them 10 miles away. On the 9th they came to Vryburg

The Mafeking Relief Force.

Mahon's march.

PART II. on the line, 127 miles by rail from Kimberley, and there they
 —♦♦— had a brief halt. On the 13th, near Setlagoli, 45 miles from
 Mafeking, a Boer force, largely consisting of Griqualand
 rebels and commanded by the Transvaaler Liebenberg, who
 had given so much trouble in the Prieska district, barred the
 road where it crossed over a nek between kopjes on either
 side. Mahon made a detour to the west, but as he went
 round his right was attacked in the thick bush, and before
 the assailants were beaten off he lost 31 men in killed and
 wounded. Pressing on through an almost waterless area, in
 the early morning of the 15th of May he joined Plumer
 at Jan Massibi's on the north bank of the Molopo, having
 covered 230 miles, with his convoy, and his guns, in twelve
 days. The place where they met was about 20 miles from
 Mafeking, a little to the north of west. The united force,
 of which Mahon took command, did not amount to 2,000
 men, and between them and Mafeking, at Israel's farm, eight
 miles west of Mafeking, 2,000 Boers with seven guns took
 up a position in their front, no longer commanded by
 Snyman, but by no less a leader than Delarey. On the
 16th the fight took place, the British force advancing on the
 north bank of the river. There was hard fighting on the
 British right nearest the river, where Plumer was in command,
 but the issue of the day was with the English. In the evening,
 after the fight, 'Karri' Davies rode into Mafeking, and in the
 very early morning of the 17th of May the whole relieving
 force came up and the siege was raised, the garrison turning
 out to bark and bite triumphantly at the heels of the retreat-
 ing Boers. A week later, on the 24th of May, railway
 communication with Buluwayo was restored.

*He joins
Plumer.*

*Mafeking
relieved.*

The siege had lasted 217 days, the total casualties inside
 the little town had been 813, of which 326 were among
 combatants. Nearly 50 per cent. of the officers were killed
 or wounded—evidence, if evidence were needed, that the
 leading was full of courage. The whole episode, including

the defence, the work done by Plumer, and Mahon's march, is one which must appeal to all who love to read of valour and resource in the annals of British fighting. It is true that the main current of the war flowed farther south, that in this far-off corner the drama was played on a small scale though in large spaces. But it was well played. It was not only that men were gallant and of high spirit. What was done was so well done. The defence throughout was skilful in the extreme, and the capture of Eloff and his party formed a most effective conclusion to a long-drawn time of patient and unremitting vigilance. Plumer's untiring movement with his handful of men, and his bold detachment from the railway which was his one line of communication, could not have been bettered; and, finally, Mahon led his small column with unerring accuracy, prompt decision, and complete success. The combination was good, the tactics were good, the whole constituted an excellent piece of work. And if Mafeking was a small place, it did not play a small part. It held round it a considerable number of the enemy who might have been stiffening the Boer lines against Roberts or Buller, and it gave a bright picture of British tenacity, worthy of remembrance in the coming time.

After the relief of Ladysmith, Buller's army lay outside it through March and April, faced by the Boer forces on the line of the Biggarsberg. The advanced British troops, which were encamped at Elandslaagte, were bombarded by the Boers on the 10th of April, but otherwise both sides were quiescent, and in this comparatively quiet time the Ladysmith garrison was fed up, recruited in health, and formed into a separate division under General Lyttelton. Communications too were repaired: the broken road bridge at Colenso had been made available for traffic as early as the 2nd of March, and on the 19th a temporary railway bridge over the Tugela was opened. On the 2nd of May Roberts informed Buller of his coming march, which began on the following

*Buller
moves
North.*

PART II. day, and asked that the Boers should be kept occupied in the
 ---♦--- Biggarsberg, so as to divert attention from himself. Five days later, on the 7th of May, Buller began his move. He had three infantry divisions, in addition to his artillery, cavalry, and mounted men, well over 30,000 in all. Some 6,000 Boers under Christian Botha held the Biggarsberg, and 2,000 more watched the passes of the Drakensberg.¹ Two British divisions were left to hold the Boers in front, Hildyard, who had succeeded Sir Charles Warren, being on the direct line of advance along the railway, while Lyttelton, a little behind Hildyard, was to follow outside him on the left. Taking command of the remaining infantry division and Dundonald's mounted troops, Buller proceeded to march east and north-east and turn the Boer left. This rested on Helpmakaar, well away to the east, 'a little village elbowed in a pass in the Biggarsbergen,'² where the range has curved round and runs towards the south. As Buller moved east, crossing the Sunday's and the Waschbank rivers, Bethune with his mounted infantry came up due north from Greytown and the Tugela Ferry, and on the 13th the two forces attacked simultaneously. Buller's line of march led up into the hills, where an outstanding high hill, Uithoek, was the key of the position, connected by a nek with the main range or plateau. The Boers' left wing, under Lukas Meyer, was weak in numbers, with, it would seem, some half-hearted fighters among them, and Meyer had made no adequate defences.³ Dundonald and Bethune seized the hill: with no great fighting the whole Biggarsberg position was turned; and the Boers were in full flight, covering their retreat by firing the grass in the face of

*The Boers
 driven
 from the
 Biggars-
 berg.*

¹ This estimate of the Boer forces is taken from the German account of the War, vol. ii, p. 297.

² *My Reminiscences of the Anglo-Boer War*, by General Ben Viljoen, 1902, p. 129.

³ 'The sole defending force consisted of the Piet Retief burghers, known as the "Piet retreaters", together with a small German corps.' Viljoen, p. 131.

the pursuing horsemen. On the 15th Buller reached Dundee, on the 18th Newcastle, and on the 19th Dundonald was reconnoitring Lang's Nek. The British advance had been skilful and rapid, but, as usual, the Boers gave ground without suffering any appreciable loss. On the British side there was one mishap. Bethune was sent from Dundee into Zululand to Nqutu, to restore the old order. From Nqutu he marched on Vryheid in the Transvaal, with the intention of occupying it; but six miles south of the place his leading squadron was ambushed on the 20th and lost 64 men. At Newcastle there was a halt, while the railway was being repaired and supplies brought up, and while messages were passing between Buller and Roberts as to the next move. In the interval troops were sent to Utrecht in the Transvaal, to enter but not to hold it; and Buller opened negotiations with the Boer General opposed to him, Christian Botha, in the hope of inducing him to surrender. These negotiations came to nothing.

—♦—
Buller
reaches
Newcastle.

Thus, before Lord Roberts resumed his march, Mafeking had been relieved, Hunter had broken into the Transvaal on the south-west, Buller had cleared Natal up to its northernmost corner. The complications, which had fettered British action at the beginning of the war, had all been unravelled, and the situation was no longer dominated by pressing necessities at particular points. Before Roberts himself left Kroonstad he detached Ian Hamilton once more on the right. Rather over 45 miles east of Kroonstad, higher up the course of the Valsch River, is the small town of Lindley, to which President Steyn was reputed to have transferred the head-quarters of the State, though, as a matter of fact, the transfer had been to Heilbron. Hamilton was instructed to march to Lindley, and from Lindley 36 miles north to Heilbron, gradually converging again towards the trunk railway, which was the main line of advance. The march was, in fact, to be a counterpart of his previous march through

Ian
Hamilton's
march to
Lindley
and Heil-
bron.

PART II. Winburg. The column started on the 15th of May; by the evening of the 17th Broadwood, riding on in front, reached Lindley; and on the 18th Hamilton came in with a brigade of infantry, having left Smith Dorrien's brigade 12 miles back to wait for a convoy. There was little or no opposition to the entry of the British troops into Lindley; but when they left on the 20th, turning their faces northwards, the Boers under Piet De Wet, brother of the Free State leader, swarmed out at their heels, and hotly attacked the rearguard, causing some casualties and making a few prisoners. Simultaneously Hamilton's front was blocked by another Boer force along the Rhenoster River. The position threatened to be difficult, but the arrival of Smith Dorrien's men, who had not followed on into Lindley, but struck across diagonally to the line of march, relieved the pressure, and on the 22nd the united column reached Heilbron.

*Roberts
moves from
Kroonstad.*

*Annexa-
tion of the
Orange
Free State.*

On the 22nd Lord Roberts moved on, and in the evening was at Honing Spruit, 20 miles on his way. On the 23rd he was at the Rhenoster River, where his crossing was unopposed; on the 24th at Vredefort Road. The 24th of May was Queen Victoria's birthday, and Roberts, now drawing near to the northern boundary of the Free State, issued a Proclamation, formally annexing the State under the name of the Orange River Colony. It was at Winburg on the 7th of September 1848 that Sir Harry Smith, fresh from the fight at Boomplatz, had proclaimed the dominion of the Queen over the country between the Orange and the Vaal. On the 23rd of February 1854 the Queen's sovereignty was withdrawn under the terms of the Bloemfontein Convention. Now, nearly half a century later, when the great Queen was drawing to the end of her reign, once more what had been done was undone, and the Orange Free State was brought again within the circle of the British Empire. Strong resistance had been expected to the passage of the Vaal, and skilful plans had been made to meet it. The railway crosses

the river between three and four miles to the north-east of Viljoen's Drift, the midpoint of the bridge being about 85 miles from Kroonstad. The first station on Transvaal soil is Vereeniging, by railway 49 miles from Johannesburg, much the same distance as from London to Brighton. The Boers made their preparations to block the British advance, mainly in front of the drift and of the railway, and on its eastern side, for it was on the eastern side that Hamilton's column had been operating. But Hamilton, moving on from Heilbron, had on the 24th closed up to the main army, and on that same day French, who, with his own cavalry and with Hutton's mounted infantry, had been sent out far in advance and wide on the west of the railway, crossed the Vaal with one brigade at Parys, much lower down the river than Viljoen's Drift. He came up along the Transvaal bank of the river, bringing his remaining forces and his transport over at Schöeman's Drift and Lindeque Drift, fords between Parys and Viljoen's Drift; meanwhile, on the 25th, Hamilton's column was thrown across the railway and across the front of the main army from right to left, and on the 26th he too crossed the river below Viljoen's Drift. The Boer right was thus completely turned, and on the 27th Roberts crossed at Viljoen's Drift and encamped at Vereeniging.

CH. IV.

The crossing of the Vaal.

From the Vaal the advance went strongly on to the Rand and Johannesburg. French was well in front, to the north-west of Vereeniging, ordered to move round the south and west of Johannesburg, while Roberts came up along the main railway from the south and east. Hamilton moved after and in support of French; a cavalry brigade under General Gordon rode outside Roberts on the east. On the 28th Roberts was at Klip River Station, 20 miles from Vereeniging, while French and Hutton had pushed on, fighting, to a point 15 miles south-west of Johannesburg. On the 29th the mounted men of the main force, passing through Boksburg, cut the railway north of Germistou

The march on Johannesburg.

PART II. Junction, nine miles east of Johannesburg; in the evening the infantry occupied Germiston. Germiston that night held both leaders of the rival armies, for General Botha, intercepted but undetected, was in the place, and made his way out on the following morning in the company of an unsuspecting British patrol. On the 29th, too, French and Hamilton broke down the Boer resistance on the south and west of Johannesburg. Their line of march lay along and across the Klip River, flowing in swamps, under the outer fringe of the Witwatersrand, known as the Klipriviersberg. The main Klipriviersberg is due south of Johannesburg; it is continued to the west and north-west in less regular line, and at its western end is a hill called Doornkop, hard by the scene of Jameson's surrender after his ill-timed ride. The Boers held this rim of rising ground in some strength. No little confusion had been caused by Roberts's swift movement, but reinforcements had been hurried up from various quarters. Delarey had come up, and the Boers who had been besieging Mafeking, and Viljoen with the Johannesburg commando had come from Natal. French waited for Hamilton. Then, strengthened by Hamilton's mounted troops, he moved on to round up the Boer right at Doornkop; while Hamilton with his infantry decided to force his way direct through the enemy's line between Doornkop and the main Klipriviersberg. It was after the middle of the day when the infantry fight began. On the left the attack was led by the City Imperial Volunteers, who bore themselves most manfully and well; on the right, but in the right centre, was Hamilton's own regiment, the Gordon Highlanders. With them were the main honours of the day. The ground was bare and burnt: with no cover to help them, the Scots went forward, unhurried and resistless. They carried one ridge, re-formed, gathered breath and impetus to seize a further crest 200 yards away, and, as the dusk came on, their bayonets drove the defenders into flight. Of a total number of casualties on this

*The
Doornkop
fight.*

day amounting to 162, 98 were among the Gordon Highlanders. On that night Hamilton's troops held the ground they had won, while French had ridden past Doornkop, making for the north of Johannesburg. On the next day, the 30th, the girdle was fairly complete. Roberts at Germiston, Hamilton at Florida, 12 miles due west of the city, French on the north, were masters of the place, and the Boer forces were on their way to Pretoria.

Most mining centres have dangerous elements in their population, and the past history of Johannesburg proved it, as its subsequent record has likewise proved it, to be no exception to the rule. There had been talk of blowing up the mines, against which General Botha, wise as he was brave, had sternly set his face: the fighting Boers had not yet all left the town, and there were men of the city not of the field who favoured violence and anarchy. Accordingly, on the morning of the 30th, when summoned to surrender, Dr. Krause, who was in charge of Johannesburg, asked for 24 hours' grace, lest an immediate entry should bring fighting in the streets. Lord Roberts consented, and it was not till the 31st that the British troops and their commander marched into the city, taking possession and control of the centre of modern unrest in South Africa.

*The entry
into Johan-
nesburg.*

There were two days' clear interval, and on the 3rd of June Lord Roberts moved on again, leaving a garrison in Johannesburg. He was taking great risk. His supplies had all but run out, bad news was coming from the south: Pretoria had strong forts around it. But he judged it well to press on to the final goal, while the enemy was still disorganized, and while there was a chance of recovering the British prisoners who were in or near the capital. Pretoria by rail is 45 miles from Johannesburg, not so far in a straight line. Roberts's head-quarters were three miles outside Johannesburg on the Pretoria road. The last stage of the march corresponded with what had gone before. Again

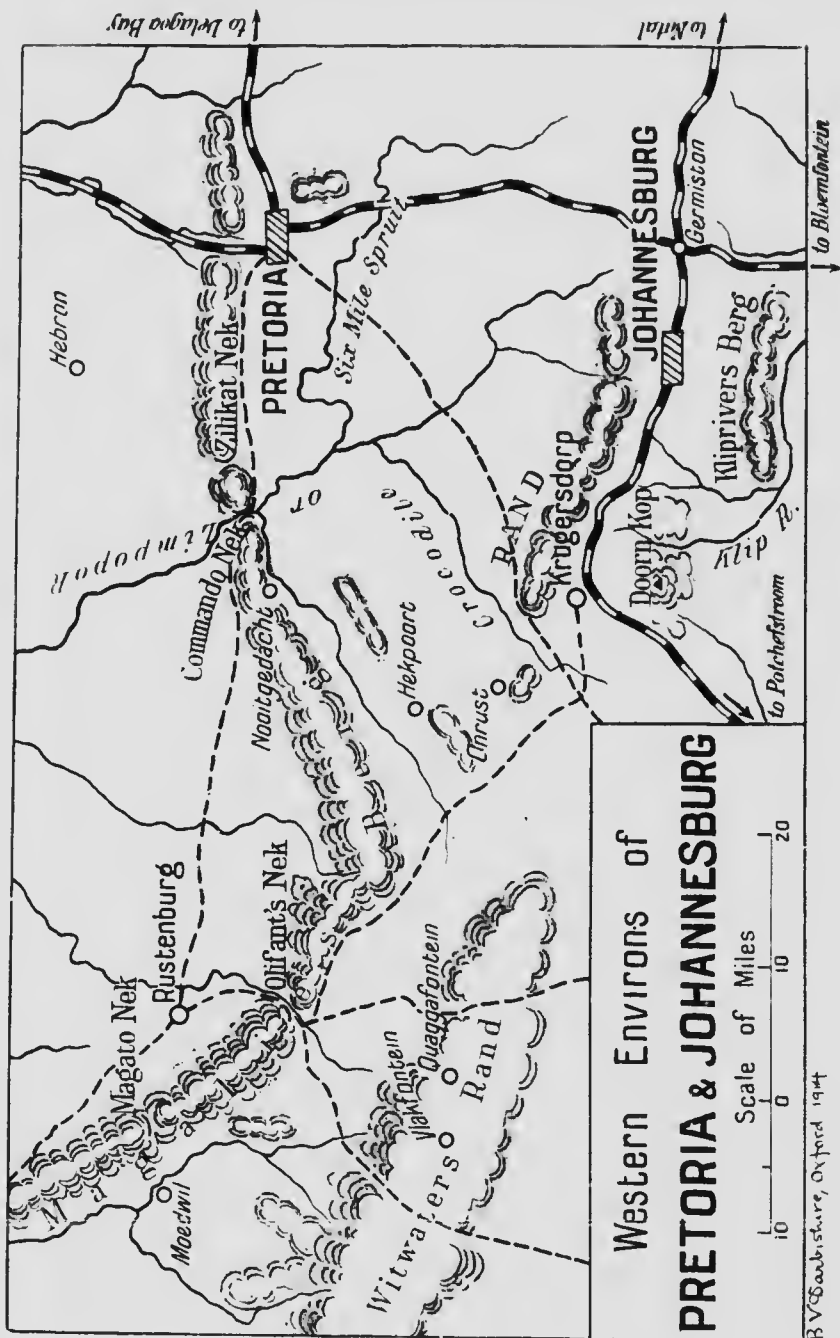
PART II. French was sent forward on the left to make his way west and north, and, if possible, cut the lines on the other side of Pretoria. The Boers had decided not to hold the town, and President Kruger had already taken his way down the Delagoa Bay line to Machadodorp; but there was to be no intercepting or cutting off—that was Botha's business, and he knew his business well. On the 4th of June there was a stiff rearguard action on the main line of march at Six Mile Spruit, six miles or so outside Pretoria. Eventually the Boers moved off their guns and themselves, and in the evening Colonel De Lisle, leading a mounted infantry force, summoned the town to surrender. There was some correspondence between Botha and Lord Roberts; and on the next day, the 5th of June, the army entered Pretoria. A number of British officers, 158 in all, who were imprisoned in the town, regained their freedom, and so did over 3,000 soldiers, who had been confined at Waterval, 11 or 12 miles to the north of Pretoria on the Pietersburg Railway.

*The entry
into Pre-
toria.*

Lord Roberts had left Bloemfontein on the 3rd of May and reached Pretoria on the 5th of June. Inclusive of these two dates he had covered 300 miles in 34 days, and of those days nearly half had been spent in halts, the longest halt being the ten days' interval at Kroonstad. In his Indian career the march to Kandahar stands out as the best-known and most brilliant enterprise, and in the South African War once more he showed his genius for long and dangerous marches, as well as the leadership which made men, hard-worked and scantily supplied, follow him, not with staunchness only, but with joyous confidence. He had the courage to risk greatly, the determination to attain the final object without waiting to make safe by the way, and the insight which detected on the one hand safety against a mobile enemy in constantly making the enemy move on, and on the other the fairest promise of ultimate success in making first for the centre, for what counted to the world as the public

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PART II. hearth and home. It was a great enterprise to have carried through, when failure meant starvation. It was, in the words of the German experts, 'a performance which furnishes a striking and eloquent proof of the energy of the Chief Command and of the devotion and endurance of the troops, and which must ever remain remarkable in the history of war'.¹

*Boer
methods of
fighting.*

De Wet tells us in his book that, when Lord Roberts crossed the Vaal, it was decided by the Boer leaders that the Free Staters should remain behind on their own soil, and that at this date there were only about 8,000 Free Staters under arms. 'All we could do was to make the best of every little chance we got of hampering the enemy.'² They did make the best of every chance, and in Christian de Wet they had an ideal leader for the purpose. A certain number of British disasters was almost inevitable. Roberts, while taking what precautions he could, was well aware of the risks which he ran in pressing forward so indomitably, and the task of gradually repairing the railway, of moving on the railhead mile after mile with working parties, whom it was at first almost impossible to keep constantly and adequately protected, lent itself to surprise. But the importance of the mishap did not consist merely or mainly in the number of men taken prisoners on each occasion or in the amount of stores destroyed, though, if supplies had been cut off wholesale, the army at Pretoria must have been starved. It consisted still more in the effect which success had upon the disheartened burghers. The taking of Bloemfontein was discounted by De Wet's subsequent coups at Sannah's Post and Reddersburg. The disasters which have now to be chronicled were a set-off against British successes in the Transvaal. At a time when the occupation of the second capital inclined Boer minds to surrender, the tale of success down the line, which lost nothing in the telling, stiffened

¹ Vol. ii, p. 305.

² *Three Years' War*, p. 118.

resistance anew. Moreover, each incident of the kind taught the Boers the real way to fight the English and to prolong the war. They broke up more and more into small commandos, operating in their home districts, bringing their hunting instincts and their knowledge of the country to the work of ambush. It was not on the open field of battle that the Boers showed to advantage. This was not their *metier*; their training and their tradition had been of a wholly different kind from that of organized and disciplined armies. They were at their best, on the one hand, in holding strong, well-chosen positions, where they were behind defences; on the other, in suddenly taking detached parties unawares. As the war went on they could no longer act on the defensive, for there were no positions left for them to defend. This fact, coupled with growing experience, made them more and more skilful and more and more bold in the second branch of their craft—that of taking the offensive in the form of surprise.

It will be remembered that Colvile's column was following closely on the tracks of Ian Hamilton, and that when Hamilton moved on from Winburg, Colvile came into the place. It will be remembered too that behind Colvile, Rundle, with Brabant on his far right, was to hold a line across the Free State on the eastern side of the railway, keeping the Boers to the north of him. On this eastern side of the railway Ventersburg lies north of Winburg, roughly midway between Winburg and Kroonstad. East by north of Winburg is Senekal, roughly midway between Winburg and Bethlehem. Lindley is nearly due east of Kroonstad, north-east by east of Ventersburg, north-east by north of Senekal. Heilbron is north of Lindley. Colvile was at Winburg from the 6th to the 17th of May. He was ordered on north; part of his force under Macdonald occupied Ventersburg on the 18th, and Colvile himself came to Ventersburg on the 23rd. His orders were to march from Ventersburg on Lindley, and

*Colvile
and
Rundle.*

PART II. thence on Heilbron. About the 17th Rundle had come up
 —♦— to Winburg, with his forces strung out to the east and south-east so as to join hands with Brabant's colonial division. Moving on, on the 25th he occupied Senekal, while Brabant was south-east of him at Ficksburg in the Caledon Valley. Colvile's place at Winburg was taken by General Clements, who came up by train from Bloemfontein with his brigade. On the 26th Colvile reached Lindley after some fighting, and on the 27th marched on again towards Heilbron.

*The Irish
 Yeomanry
 at Lindley.*

There was a body of Imperial Yeomanry over 500 strong, mainly Irish Yeomanry, who had been told off to Colvile's column, but had not come up in time to join him at Winburg or at Ventersburg. They were sent up to Kroonstad, the orders given to their commander, Colonel Spragge, being to join Colvile at Lindley, at latest on the 26th. Spragge started from Kroonstad on the evening of the 25th; on the night of the 26th he was 18 miles west of Lindley; early on the 27th he marched on, and, on coming into Lindley, was attacked by Boers, Colvile being now on his way to Heilbron. What had happened before had happened again. As soon as Ian Hamilton moved out of Lindley, the Boers collected behind him to fight. As soon as Colvile moved out, he too was molested, and the small force which was just too late to join him was attacked also. When Broadwood and Hamilton came into Lindley earlier in the month, Piet De Wet, a leader in the district, offered to surrender, if he might be allowed to go back to his farm. Lord Roberts, in his Proclamation issued after the taking of Bloemfontein, had only accorded such terms to the Boer rank and file, and he decided that De Wet, if he surrendered, must be treated as a prisoner of war. The Boer commander therefore went on fighting, and Lindley, alternately occupied and evacuated, became little better than a trap for the English. Spragge at first had only a small number of Boers against him, for the majority in the neighbourhood were following Colvile. Instead of retreating

to Kroonstad, or trying to overtake Colvile, he thought it best to take up a good position between two and three miles north-west of Lindley, near the Valsch River, and hold his ground until relieved. He sent messages to Colvile and to Rundle, which reached them on the following morning. Colvile was then 18 miles from Lindley, timed to reach Heilbron on the 29th; and sending instructions to Spragge, which never reached him, he decided to continue his march. He had himself to fight hard on the 28th, and sent a message to his head-quarters indicating that he might require relief, but late on the 29th he reached Heilbron in safety. Rundle was 40 miles from Lindley, too far to come up to Spragge's relief. Hoping to draw off the Boers who were surrounding the Yeomanry, Rundle moved out in the direction of Bethlehem, and on the 29th had some hard fighting about eight miles north-east of Senekal, where the Boers held two hills on either side of the Bethlehem road, Biddulphsberg on the north of the road, Tafelsberg on the south. It was not a successful day: the position was not forced: a bad bush fire broke out, and the British casualties numbered 185. On the other hand the Boers lost their commander, General De Villiers, who was sent in for British medical aid at Senekal but eventually died of his wounds. Meanwhile Spragge held his ground with little difficulty, until the Boers who had been following Colvile turned back to join in beleaguering the Yeomanry. On the 29th Piet De Wet came up, guns were brought into action, and the siege became serious. Through that day and the 30th the besiegers held out. But on the morning of the 31st the key of the position was lost through a non-commissioned officer losing his head and putting up the white flag: a general surrender followed, and the Boers secured about 530 prisoners.

Lord Roberts held General Colvile mainly responsible for this disaster. Colvile had been in a most difficult position; but, as in the case of Sannah's Post, he had not risen to the

CH. IV.

—♦—
*Colvile's
movements.**Rundle at
Biddulphs-
berg.**Surrender
of the
Yeomanry.**Methuen's
movements*

PART II. emergency, and like General Gatacre he was superseded. A more energetic man strove hard to be in time: this was Lord Methuen. From Bothaville, instead of following along the line of the Vaal, as had been at one time intended, he had been brought straight across to Kroonstad, which he reached on the 28th of May. On the 30th, in obedience to urgent orders, he started to succour Colville. He had not gone far before he learnt that Colville was safe at Heilbron, and he passed on to relieve the Yeomanry. On the 31st he received a message from Spragge to the effect that the latter could probably hold out till the 2nd of June; but on the next day, he found that the surrender had already taken place. On that same day, the 1st of June, the Boers were across his path, eight miles west of Lindley: he drove them into and out of Lindley, nearly but not quite recovering the prisoners; and through the rest of June one of his brigades under General Paget garrisoned Lindley, being more or less in a state of siege during the whole time. Methuen himself on the 5th marched on to Heilbron to bring supplies to Colville.

*Christian
De Wet
captures
a convoy
at Zwavel
Kranz.*

While these events were taking place, Christian De Wet had been waiting at Frankfort, east of Heilbron, for ammunition expected from the Transvaal. The ammunition came up, and on the 2nd of June, starting off with 600 men, he reached a farm about nine miles south of Heilbron. On that same day a supply convoy moved out from the railway in the neighbourhood of Roodewal Station, north of Kroonstad, the supplies being intended for and badly needed by Colville's force at Heilbron. There were 60 wagons in charge of 160 men, mainly Highlanders. The escort was too small; but soldiers were scarce at the particular point, and the despatching officer was over-confident. On the evening of the 3rd the convoy reached a place called Zwavel Kranz, near the Rhenoster River, about 14 miles west of Heilbron: Boers were in evidence in front: messages were sent back, and a relief party rode out, came within four miles of the convoy, but never

discovered them. Meanwhile, early on the morning of the 4th,¹ De Wet swooped down, gave out that he had 1,200 men with five guns, and the party surrendered without firing a shot.

This was bad enough, but worse was to follow. The railway north of Kroonstad was being repaired as speedily as construction trains and railway pioneers could, under great difficulties, carry on the work, the main gaps being where the bridges over the river had been broken. One of these gaps was at the Rhenoster River, between Roodewal Station on the south and Vredefort Road Station on the north. At Roodewal there was a congested mass of mail-bags and stores of every description, which had been brought up the line and were lying at the station until the bridge over the Rhenoster could be repaired. On the 5th of June the 4th Derbyshires—a Militia battalion—for Militia and Yeomanry were by this time much in evidence in South Africa—was brought up to Roodewal, and on the 6th the regiment, with the exception of one company, was moved on for four miles to the Rhenoster River. Behind, at Roodewal, the garrison consisted of the remaining company of the Derbyshires and one company of the Railway Pioneer Regiment, rather over 150 men all told; and in front, at Vredefort Road, there was a small party of 30 men, a stronger force being comparatively near at hand farther up the line. Having taken the convoy, De Wet set himself to overwhelm these three detachments and thoroughly to wreck the line. His own farm was hard by and he knew the lie of the country well. His enterprises read like the exploits recounted in the Book of Judges, just as the country Boers resembled the fighters of the Old Testament. He divided his force, numbering apparently about 700 men, into three bands. He sent 300 to swamp the small party at Vredefort Road, strengthening this attack, because here there was most likelihood of British reinforcements coming up. Another

¹ De Wet's account makes it the morning of the 5th.

PART II. 300 under Froneman, one of his best lieutenants, he sent
 --- against the Derbyshires at the Rhenoster River, and he himself led the smallest party, about 100 strong, against the southernmost point, Roodewal. In the early morning of the 7th of June the fighting took place. At Vredefort Road the outpost was too weak to hold out. At the Rhenoster River the Derbyshire men, new to the country and to the war, fought hard and well, and a large proportion were killed and wounded before they too succumbed. Froneman could then supplement De Wet's attack at Roodewal, and that again succeeded, though here too behind mail-bags and stores the little garrison fought with resolution. The chief secret of the success was that the Dutchmen had artillery and the English had none. The English seem to have lost nearly 150 in killed and wounded, with not far short of 500 unwounded prisoners, though it is difficult to ascertain the exact numbers; and they lost the whole of the contents of Roodewal Station—letters, clothing, stores, ammunition: the Boers looting all that they could carry off and making a bonfire of the rest. They were taking at this time, and continued to take, a great many prisoners, but it became increasingly difficult to dispose of them, when they could no longer send them into the Transvaal; and in this case the Derbyshire men were in no long time set at liberty and put through the passes into Natal.

The Railway and Boer raids.

These disasters were serious and were taken seriously. At Bloemfontein Kelly Kenny acted with promptness and vigour. He reinforced Winburg and Kroonstad, Kroonstad being of prime importance, and he did much, by redistributing troops, to ensure some measure of safety to the lines of communication. Roberts sent down Kitchener, always called upon when things went wrong, and armed and equipped the 3,000 newly recovered prisoners for the purposes of guarding the line. But the insecurity which prevailed is illustrated by the fact that shortly afterwards De Wet all but intercepted Lord

Kitchener himself, and that 400 of the ex-prisoners were very nearly caught again. Fortunately they were commanded by one of the most fearless fighters in the British army, Colonel Bullock, who at Colenso refused to surrender, keeping his life but losing his liberty by being stunned with the butt end of a Boer rifle. Methuen, ever ready and untiring in time of need, was on the war-path again. Having reached Heilbron from Lindley, he left it on the 9th of June and joined Lord Kitchener the next day on the railway at Vredesfort Road. Combining with Colonel Spens and his Shropshire men, who had come from Pretoria, he marched down the line on the 11th, found De Wet on the kopjes north of the Rhenoster River which the Derbyshire men had held, and drove him off to the west. Doubling back, De Wet and Froneman on the night of the 13th-14th and the following day recrossed the line just north of the same place, at Leeuwspruit, and Froneman attacked two construction trains, taking a few more prisoners.

This completed for the time being the tale of marked Boer successes. At break of day on the 14th a strong force, under a fighting preacher, Roux, attacked the men who were holding Virginia Siding Station, where the railway crosses the Sand River—militiamen from Lancashire, and Railway Pioneers. The attack was favoured by dense scrub round the British lines, but the assailants were beaten off. The casualties on the British side were mainly in the Railway Pioneer regiment, and one of the killed was Seymour, the American engineer of Johannesburg, who before the war lifted up his voice in the Uitlanders' cause, and in the war did yeoman service in organizing and serving in the Railway Pioneers. Meanwhile De Wet had placed himself again across the road from the railway to Heilbron, near where he had surprised the convoy, and on the 15th¹ tried to block Methuen, who was once more taking supplies to Colvile at Heilbron. Colvile's guns

¹ De Wet makes the dates different from the above.

PART II. came up and hammered him in the rear: he was driven off, and went to wreck the railway anew. Once more, according to his own account, he conducted his enterprise by means of three different parties operating on the 22nd of June at three different though neighbouring points. He himself and Froneman did their work in tearing up the line and snapping the telegraph-poles at Serfontein and America Siding, north and south of Honing Spruit respectively, America Siding, which received Froneman's attentions, being only a few miles north of Kroonstad. At Honing Spruit, however, Olivier, who led the third and central party, was well beaten off, both at a fortified post in the neighbourhood, held by two companies of the Shropshires and 50 Canadians, and at the station itself, where were Colonel Bullock and his motley group of lately released prisoners. 'Things did not go so well with Commandant Olivier,'¹ writes De Wet.

*Sir Charles
Warren
and Gri-
qualand
West.*

Lord Kitchener's operations in the Prieska district,² which have been noticed, had more or less quieted the west of the Cape Colony south of the Orange River, but so far little impression had been made on the rebels in Griqualand West, north of the Orange River and west of the Kimberley Railway. Pilcher's success at Sunnyside and his flying visit to Douglas³ had done something for the moment, but the district had not yet been mastered in any sense, and the time had come to take it in hand. The right man for the purpose was available, Sir Charles Warren. This was the part of South Africa which he knew best, and where he had in years gone by administered the government. He was now made Governor again and given a small force, which gradually rose to about 2,000 men, to bring back law and order. His men were Yeomanry and similar troops, not soldiers of the line, and with him, as intelligence officer, was a Canadian, Colonel Sam. Hughes. Among the troops was a valuable

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 150.

² See above, p. 220.

³ See above, pp. 158-9.

handful of loyal Dutchmen, Warren's Scouts, who joined the fighting because they or their fathers knew Warren personally, just as the Wakkerstroom Boers knew Buller. In the first week of May he came up to the Orange River, made his head-quarters at Belmont, and laid plans for stamping out the western rebellion. By a night-march on the 20th of May, with 600 men, he surprised and gained possession of the Boer position in front of Douglas, capturing a laager and its contents, and on the 21st occupied Douglas itself. Douglas, which had been in rebel hands since Pilcher's visit, is on the eastern bank of the Vaal; and on the other side of the river, 20 miles to the north-west, is the village of Campbell, standing on the edge of a range of hills, a good stronghold for the rebels. This was Warren's next objective. He moved over the river, and on the 26th camped at Faber's Put, about 12 miles north of Douglas, on the right of the direct road to Campbell. Here he had to wait for supplies, difficult to bring up in this western country and not to be procured on the spot. The scene of his encampment was a clearing in the middle of scrub. In front, on the northern side, were two farm-houses, one in the north-east corner, where Warren had his head-quarters, the other, 800 yards away, in the north-west corner. Behind the farm-houses, to the south, the ground sloped away, and made a depression in the middle of the bush, which was cleared for living and cultivation. There was a pool of water, and lower down a garden of fruit-trees, and there were some kraals and out-buildings. Sir Charles Warren tells us in his despatch that 'Ridges encircle Faber's Put to the north-east and west, while a shallow valley runs from the water through the garden to the south'.¹ There seems to have been high ground too on the south. The infantry were camped on the northern side, near the farm-houses; the Yeomanry and artillery were behind in the hollow nearer the centre of the clearing. The

Warren enters Douglas.

Faber's Put.

¹ South Africa Despatches, vol. i, C. 457, 1901, p. 129.

PART II. place with its surroundings lent itself to surprise, and
 —♦♦— De Villiers, who led the rebels, determined to make an effort. On the night of the 29th-30th May he led out his men, adopting De Wet's plan of three bands. One band was to attack the north-east corner, where the head-quarters were; another coming round the eastern side, was to attack from the south-west and west; and between them a small picked band of marksmen, led by De Villiers himself, was to rush the garden from the east, and amid the trees of the garden shoot down opposition. It was just before daybreak on the 30th, about 5.30 a.m., that the attack began. There were two or three piquets out, but hardly enough, considering the facilities for attack which the bush afforded. The camp was still asleep, though Sir Charles Warren himself had fortunately risen betimes. The firing began on the north-east, as had been arranged by the Boers, but this first party was soon driven off. Meanwhile De Villiers and his chosen few made their way into the garden, and the third party pressed their attack from the south and west, some of them making their way far into the enclosure, and stampeding the Yeomanry horses. For a while there was confusion, as the men tumbled out of bed into the firing line, and before it was clear where the enemy were. But a piquet on the southern side held out well: the position soon became clear: the assailants were in turn assailed; and after about an hour's fighting they were driven out with considerably heavier loss than they inflicted.

*Adye's
 success at
 K'heis.*

Two days earlier, on the 28th of May, rebellion had had another set-back further west. Colonel Adye, who had been left in charge of the Prieska district, was patrolling the Orange River, in order to help Warren's operations, and learnt that a rebel laager had been formed at Kheis on the north bank of the river, north-west of Prieska, midway between Prieska and Upington. Here was one of the few drifts over the Lower Orange River, marked by an island in the middle of the stream. Adye reached the drift on the 27th, recon-

noitred, but shunned the crossing as being dangerous in the teeth of the enemy; and, leaving his guns with an escort in front of the drift and the laager on the opposite bank, he moved off on the 28th, screened by the trees which lined the river, took his mounted men across six miles higher up, attacked the Boers in flank, while his guns shelled them from over the river, captured their laager, killed their leader, and broke them up completely. He had but few casualties in his own force, and these were mainly caused by Boers who had taken refuge in the island at Kheis Drift and fired on some of the Yeomanry escort who tried to cross at that point.

Faber's Put, combined with Kheis, had a great effect on the western rebels. For the time being there was no more organized resistance; Warren's troops occupied Campbell, Griquatown, and later the remote Kuruman. The Griqualand rebels with few exceptions gave up their arms, and by the end of July there was no more need for Sir Charles Warren's services, and he was able to return home.

We must now cross the country to northern Natal and follow Buller's movements. When June opened he had his head-quarters at Newcastle, but his advanced troops held Ingogo, 15 miles further north; and north-west again of Ingogo, close to Mount Prospect, a high, detached mountain, Inkwelo, had been occupied, and heavy guns had been mounted upon it, commanding the Boer position on the Drakensberg to the west and south-west. North at Majuba and Lang's Nek, west, in and out, along the Drakensberg the Boers lined the mountains. Here was the ground which had been the scene of General Colley's misfortunes in the Boer War of 1881, when the unsuccessful fight at Ingogo had been the prelude to the crowning disaster of Majuba. Buller had the proverbial three courses open to him—to attack Lang's Nek in front, or to turn it by east or west; by marching wide to the right into the Transvaal; or by breaking through the Drakensberg on the left, where, south-west of the camp

*Buller
takes
Botha's
Pass.*

PART II. at Ingogo, above the head of the valley watered by the Ingogo River, a road led through Botha's Pass into the Free State. He chose this last course, and having failed to procure the surrender of the Boer force opposing him without further bloodshed, he moved his head-quarters to Ingogo, and on the 6th of June began his advance. Clery was left to watch Lang's Nek, Lyttelton guarded the line of the Buffalo River on the east, and Buller took with him three infantry brigades, two mounted brigades, and artillery. General Hildyard was his second in command, immediately in charge of the operations, and proved himself to be a most able and efficient soldier. On the southern side of the road up to Botha's Pass stands a lofty isolated peak, Van Wyk's Hill. On the 6th of June this hill was rushed by the South African Horse, the Boers having neglected to occupy it in any strength, and Talbot Coke's infantry brigade was brought up to hold it. After the hill had been taken, later in the day the Boers fought hard to regain it, covering their attack by grass-fires, but they were unsuccessful, and in the night artillery was brought up the hill. Over against it, on the northern side of the road, is another outstanding hill, Spitz Kop. On the 8th the South African Horse secured this hill also; and, pressing on the same day, the main army forced the pass with little resistance, and came out on to the open veldt of the Free State, bitterly cold in this winter season. The 9th was spent in bringing up supplies through the pass, and on the 10th Buller moved on again for 12 miles in a north-westerly direction to the Gansvlei Spruit, near its confluence with the Klip River—the Transvaal not the Natal Klip River. The Gansvlei is the border stream between the Free State and the Transvaal, and here he turned north-east into the Transvaal to strike the railway again behind Lang's Nek. Directly athwart his course a steep difficult ridge of hills ran out in a north-westerly direction from the Drakensberg. Speed was of the essence of his enterprise, lest the enemy should gather in his front in

greater numbers and lest he should be straitened for supplies ; while from the lie of the land, and from the necessities of the case, he had to force his way where the road from Vrede in the Free State to Volksrust in the Transvaal crossed the ridge at the pass known as Alleman's Nek. CH. IV. —••—

Alleman's Nek lay six or seven miles beyond his bivouac on the Gansvlei. It was a mountain pass between cliffs on either side—a very strong position to hold, a hard one to take: hard because the steepness of the hills precluded a turning movement within measurable distance, and because the approach for the last two miles or so lay over open grass land sloping down to the foot of the ridge. Early in the morning of the 11th the army moved on from Gansvlei, the artillery was carefully placed, and skilfully moved from point to point, to cover the advancing infantry: the two cavalry brigades were wide on either flank: one infantry brigade was held in reserve: the other two formed the centre, marching on either side of the road to strike the west and the east of the nek respectively. About 2.30 in the day the final attack began, and, as the men went forward over the open plain, the fire from the steep frowning hills in front grew in intensity. But the British guns were notably well served, and grass-fires sprang up, which favoured the English, as the wind was blowing in the Boers' faces. It was on the southern side of the road, on the east of the nek, that the key of the position was taken. Here there was an outstanding buttress of the main ridge, a conically shaped hill linked by a saddle to the ridge. This hill was carried by the 2nd Dorset Regiment, supported by the Middlesex; but, having carried it, they were checked by heavy fire at close range beyond, and meanwhile the Dublin Fusiliers, who should have combined in their movement, had become diverted to the right to help Dundonald, who was held up by the Boers in front of him. The check was not for long: the guns on the left were promptly turned so as to pour a cross-fire on the enemy

*Alleman's
Nek.*

PART II. behind the hill which the Dorsets had won: the Middlesex men came up to stiffen the final charge: and by 5 o'clock in the afternoon the crest of the main ridge was carried and the pass was won.

*Lang's
Nek occu-
pied.*

It was a good piece of work; the troops had been well handled, the guns had most admirably supported the infantry: the men had fought fearlessly and well. The casualties were 142, and the result was possession of Lang's Nek, for the Boers evacuated the whole position. On the next day, the 12th, Clery found Lang's Nek abandoned, and occupied it, while some of Buller's men struck the railway four miles beyond Volksrust, though without intercepting the enemy. The formal surrender of Volksrust took place on the 13th, and Buller made his head-quarters at Lang's Nek. Roberts on the 10th had telegraphed to Buller that he heard Lang's Nek was to be held in strength, and suggested that Buller should leave the enemy there and march round on Standerton. It was the 12th when Buller received the telegram, and he was able to answer that Lang's Nek was already in his possession. It was at the time a very important success. With the railway in the Free State being wrecked almost from day to day, it was of priceless advantage that a new and shorter channel of supplies to Johannesburg and Pretoria should be opened and kept open.

Buller was now clear of the mountains which had for so long obstructed his path. Wakkerstroom was formally surrendered to Lyttelton and Hildyard on the 17th. On the 18th the Lang's Nek tunnel was reopened and supply trains came through. On the 19th Buller moved on again. On the 22nd his mounted troops, now supplemented by Strathcona's Horse, reached Standerton 50 miles beyond Volksrust, and on the 23rd his infantry came in. By the 25th the railway had been repaired up to Standerton, where the bridge over the Vaal had been destroyed. On the 4th of July Clery joined hands with his old Natal colleague, General Hart, now

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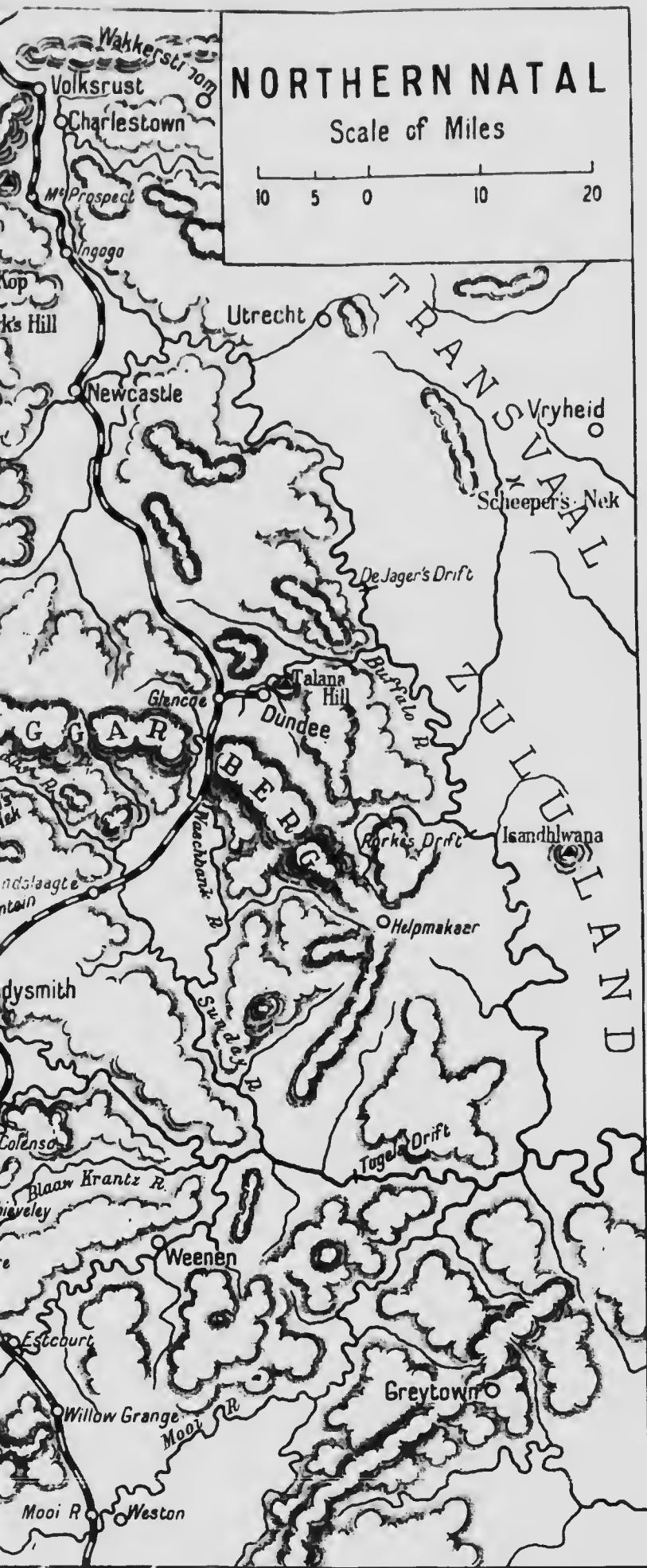


B.V. Barb

To face p. 298



By Barbisture, Oxford, 1914



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serving under Hunter, a little to the east of Heidelberg, and the Natal army was thus after many months linked on to the main army of the interior. On the 6th of July Buller went up to Pretoria.

CH. IV.

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*The Natal
army joins
hands with
the main
army.*

It had been an anxious time for the Commander-in-Chief. He had reached the goal, but with an army depleted in numbers by wear and tear, by the necessity of holding points along the route and garrisoning Johannesburg, with horse-soldiers wanting horses, with horse and foot soldiers alike dependent for food from day to day, for clothes, boots, ammunition, upon a railway which De Wet always threatened and constantly controlled. It had been an anxious time, too, because diplomacy was added to fighting and negotiations were interspersed with movements of troops. Immediately after Pretoria had fallen there was some hope of peace. The Boer Government had disappeared down the Delagoa Bay line, some of the Transvaal Generals for the moment inclined to surrender. There were intermediaries, Mrs. Botha among them, and ex-officials of the Pretoria Government; even in the middle of the fighting at Diamond Hill negotiating went on.¹ But momentary discouragement passed away, as the attacks on the British communications developed, and the end which had seemed near receded into the distance.

*The posi-
tion at
Pretoria.*

*Diamond
Hill.*

General Botha, after the loss of Pretoria, took up a position about 15 miles east of the town, athwart the Delagoa Bay Railway. The position was exceedingly strong, a broken line of hills running for some 25 miles from a little west of north to a little east of south, faced by subsidiary ridges, and with the Pienaars River flowing along the whole front. The centre of the position was where the railway ran through a steep gap in the hills at Pienaars Poort Station; on the

¹ For the negotiations see Lord Roberts's evidence before the War Commission: Minutes of Evidence, vol. ii (Cd. 1791, 1903), pp. 58 and 71-2, and see *Reminiscences of the Anglo-Boer War*, by General Ben Viljoen, chap. 16.

PART II. north of the railway the extreme Boer right rested in a cluster
 —♦♦— of hills overhanging a little stream called Kroke lil Spruit ; south of the railway there was another gap in the hills. Donkerpoort, through which a road ran to Middelburg ; and south of Donkerpoort the main ridge was continued under the names of Donkerhoek and Diamond Hill, ending in kopjes and high ground trending towards the south-east. To hold all these miles Botha had not more, it would seem, than 7,000 men ; but, determined not to be outflanked, he spread his men out in thin line and concentrated his strength rather on the flanks than on the centre. The right he placed in Delarey's charge : the left he kept more immediately under his own eye.

Where he had taken his stand he was a menace to Pretoria, and Lord Roberts thought it necessary to drive him back. Lord Roberts tells us in his evidence before the War Commission that the British troops available for the purpose were about 20,000 men, but the number engaged in the fight does not appear to have exceeded 16,000 at most. It may be taken that the British forces outnumbered the Boers opposed to them by rather more than two to one ; but, in view of the great strength of the Boer position, the numerical preponderance was insufficient. At some points, as on the extreme right, where French attacked Delarey, the Boers appear to have largely outnumbered their antagonists. Roberts's plan was to outflank the enemy, as he had so often outflanked them before, and to cut the railway in their rear. His object was not a crowning victory, but to shift, with as little loss as possible to his own attenuated army, an enemy who was inconveniently near. It was eminently a case for outflanking, not for a frontal attack, and for the purpose he had his two tried lieutenants—French, who was directed against the Boer right, Hamilton, who was directed against the Boer left. The centre of the line was held by Poie Carew and the Guards.

The movement began on the morning of the 11th of June,

and the fighting, with the exception of the pursuit, ended at nightfall on the 12th. At the northern end of the battlefield French advanced with guns and mounted men to turn the Boer right. Here was one of the strongest parts of the whole position, and with Delarey opposed to him at the head of some 3,000 men, including 500 under Snyman, French, who, including Hutton's troops, had only about 1,600 men in all, with weak and worn-out horses, so far from being able to make a turning movement, was at pains to prevent being outflanked himself. By prompt and skilful action, and good use of his guns, he established himself firmly on the hills, and held the ground that he won with the same tenacity which he had shown in the fighting round Colesberg. But he was not able to oust the Boers. When night came the two forces were within point-blank range of each other, the British ammunition was running short, there was imminent danger of a counter-attack, and French had to report to the Commander-in-Chief that he could do no more than hold his own. That he held it through the night and through the following day was no small exploit, and contributed greatly to the fortunes of the whole fight.

Far away in the south Ian Hamilton moved forward to roll up the Boer left wing. He had a much stronger force than followed French, but it was too weak to effect his object. So extended were the Boers that Broadwood and Gordon, riding towards the south-east, were still within and not outside the enemy's line. Some of Broadwood's guns were in imminent danger, but were saved by a cavalry charge; and outflanking with a limited number of troops on horses unfit for their work became impossible. Inside the cavalry and mounted men the infantry made some steady progress, and by the end of the day Kleinfontein, a subsidiary ridge immediately facing Diamond Hill, had been carried. Hamilton was then face to face with the main Boer position.

For the fight on the morrow it was decided that the

PART II. Guards' Brigade from Pole Carew's column, which had so far hardly been engaged, should join Hamilton's men in assaulting Diamond Hill. Soon after the middle of the day the combined force, under cover of the artillery, carried the crest of the hill, but coming out on to the plateau found themselves under heavy fire from higher ground all round. A field battery brought up the hill, exposed at close range to the full fire of the enemy, none the less did most effective work in reply; and meanwhile, further to the right, Colonel de Lisle's Mounted Infantry, among whom the New South Wales Mounted Rifles were conspicuous, seized a kopje on the east of Diamond Hill in the middle of the Boer left wing, and drove the Boers from the flank of the regiments on the main hill. Night came again, and again there was no finality to record. The English held one edge of the position, but the Boers had not been dislodged. Plans were made to renew the fight next day, but when morning came, it was found that the Dutchmen had retreated. De Lisle's move had broken their line, and, with a strong force of British infantry already on Diamond Hill, Botha judged it best to hold on no longer. Hamilton took up the pursuit on the 13th, as far as Elands River Station on the Delagoa Bay line, while the West Australians harried the Boer rearguard further on at Brenkhorst Spruit. But no general British advance was attempted or intended, and, with the exception of outposts, the army was brought back to Pretoria. The British casualties numbered 176: the fighting had been of an indecisive character, but the object which Lord Roberts had in view in giving battle was obtained. He had secured his position at Pretoria.

*Hamilton
occupies
Heidel-
berg.*

There was no rest for Ian Hamilton. On the 16th of June he was recalled with his division from Elands River, and was ordered to occupy Heidelberg on the railway to Natal, Buller not having as yet moved far beyond Lang's Nek. He left Pretoria on the 19th, and on the 23rd Heidelberg was in

his hands, but he had the ill-luck to break his collar-bone, and was temporarily invalided, his place in an important movement, which Lord Roberts had designed, being taken by Archibald Hunter. We have seen that the arrangements for the relief of Mafeking had been Hunter's special charge, that it was relieved on the 17th of May, and that Hunter himself was at Vryburg on the 23rd. His own account of his proceedings at this date runs: 'I repaired the railway to Maribogo Pan—Maribogo being midway between Vryburg and Mafeking—'capturing Taungs and Vryburg, occupied that line, re-occupied Mafeking, . . . occupied Lichtenburg 3rd June, 1900.'¹ His work—and whatever Hunter took in hand was most effectively done—was, when the line from Kimberley to Mafeking had been restored and made comparatively secure, to march through the Western Transvaal, and strike the railway running west and south-west from Johannesburg, through Krugersdorp and Potchefstroom, to Klerksdorp, where so far the Boers had been undisturbed. Hard marching was involved, and no little difficulty in transport, for the Western Transvaal has more desert land than farther east. From Delarey's town, Lichtenburg, the centre of the Western Transvaal, lying north-east of Vryburg, Hunter moved east by south to Ventersdorp, and then south by east to Potchefstroom, which his troops entered on the 11th of June. From Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp was occupied in one direction, and Krugersdorp, the home of some of the most determined of the Boer fighters, in the other, the surrender of Krugersdorp taking place on the 18th of June, and the troops coming in on the 19th. Thus for the time being the whole of this branch line was in British hands; but, in order to hold Krugersdorp, the garrisons of Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp were drained, and it was soon to be found that the hold upon these places was little more than nominal. On the 24th of

CH. IV.

*Hunter's
move-
ments.*

¹ Report of the War Commission, vol. ii, Minutes of Evidence, App. i, p. 615.

PART II. July the Boers regained Klerksdorp, and early in August the English for a short time evacuated Potchefstroom.

Baden Powell and Plumer. Further north than Hunter, Baden Powell and Plumer, now that Mafeking was safe, moved east to Zeerust and on to Rustenburg. Rustenburg, lying on the northern side of the Magaliesberg range, 60 miles west of Pretoria, was occupied on the 10th of June,¹ and it seemed as though the Western Transvaal had been scoured and resistance stamped out. It was not so. There was quiet for the moment, but for the moment only, and these western districts, dominated by Delarey, were to be the scene of perpetual fighting to the very end of the war.

Operations in the north-east of the Free State. Lord Roberts tells us that, after the occupation of Pretoria and the battle of Diamond Hill, his first objective was 'to provide for the security of the railway south of the Vaal, and to capture or disperse the enemy's forces to the east of that line and in the north-east angle of the Orange River Colony'.² This was necessary before he could with his main army sweep the Delagoa Bay line eastward to Komati Poort, and he determined to effect his object by a strong combination of converging columns. Towards the end of June the following was the position in the north-east of the Free State. East of the much wrecked railway the English held Heilbron, Lindley, Winburg, and Senekal, and a line roughly from Senekal to Ficksburg in the Caledon Valley, but they had so far not penetrated to the north-east of the State. They had not touched Frankfort, Vrede, Reitz, Bethlehem, or Harrismith, and they had never yet laid hold of Van Reenen's Pass. A very difficult tract of country was still virgin soil for the war, and there were some stubborn fighters in it, for at the

¹ The 14th of June is the date given in the standard books and by Lord Roberts; but Plumer himself in his evidence before the War Commission, vol. ii. p. 325, gives the 10th of June as the date of occupation.

² Despatch of 10th October, 1900, South Africa Despatches, vol. i, C. 457, 1901, pp. 52-3.

end of the war there were more men under arms in the Bethlehem Commando than in any other Free State contingent.¹ Heilbron was held by Macdonald, who had been in command since Colville had been shelved. Lindley was garrisoned by Paget's brigade of Methuen's division, and Paget had to fight hard to hold his own. Further south General Clements, who had succeeded Colville at Winburg, when the latter moved north, on the 31st of May took over charge of Senekal from Rundle, the 31st being two days after the battle of Biddulphsberg and the day on which Spragge surrendered near Lindley. Rundle moved to Ficksburg, and with his own troops and the Colonial Division held the line from Senekal to that place. Lord Roberts's scheme was to send a strong force down from Heidelberg across the Vaal, which would combine with Macdonald's troops coming east from Heilbron, and march due south on Bethlehem, while Clements, after clearing the country towards Winburg, was to advance from Senekal in the direction of Lindley, join Paget, and also march on Bethlehem. Rundle was once more to hold Senekal in lieu of Clements, and to keep intact the lines from Senekal and Winburg to Ficksburg, the central point of his command being at or near Trommel, nearly due south of Senekal and south of east of Winburg. While Rundle thus held the Boers of the Bethlehem district on the south, Methuen on the road between Heilbron and Kroonstad was to safeguard the railway north of Kroonstad, and to keep his eye on Heilbron and Lindley, after the bulk of the troops garrisoning those two places had been withdrawn under Macdonald and Paget respectively. Rundle moved the Colonial Division from the eastern end to the western end of his line: they took over charge of Senekal; and on the 28th of June Clements began his march towards Lindley with some 5,000 men.

He had to fight his way as he went; but on the 1st of

¹ See De Wet, *Three Years' War*, p. 125 note.

PART II.

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*Clements
 and Paget
 take Beth-
 lehem.*

July he joined hands with Paget near Lindley, and on the next day the two commanders moved forward with two separate columns, marching on Bethlehem, which lay between 30 and 40 miles to the south-east of Lindley. They had De Wet in front of them. Since his last exploits on the railway in the neighbourhood of Honing Spruit he had been hovering near Lindley in the hope of cutting off the garrison, and now he was at the head of 7,000 to 8,000 burghers, blocking the way to Bethlehem, to which place President Steyn had gone on. The combined forces of Clements and Paget hardly exceeded the numbers opposed to them. On the 3rd of July there was some hard fighting on Paget's wing at a place called Bakenkop, De Wet giving it the name of Elandsfontein. Through some mistake in the dispositions of the British troops in hilly ground, the Boers, under cover of their own guns directed by De Wet, and led by Michael Prinsloo, commandant of the Bethlehem contingent, stormed the ridge on which the British artillery was placed and surprised the gunners. For the moment three out of six guns fell into their hands; but a charge of the South Australian Bushmen up the face of the hill relieved the position: the enemy were beaten off: the advance was resumed: and the invaders drew near to Bethlehem, Paget, who had started on the left of Clements, having now crossed the latter's path and holding the right. On the 6th Clements demanded surrender of the village, which was refused. 'Our line of defence', writes De Wet, 'began at the south of Wolhuterskop (a kop to the south-west of Bethlehem) and extended from there to the north-west of the town.'¹ The Boers held the hills on the south, the west, and the north-west of the little town, their centre being this well-marked height on the south-west. On the 7th the English forced the position and occupied the town. Paget had attacked the centre and gained a footing, while on the north-west the Royal Irish Regiment in Clements's

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 156.

command stormed the ridges in front of them, and made further defence impossible. The fighting cost the English 106 casualties in all, and a notable incident in it was the recovery of one of the guns which had been lost at Stormberg. According to De Wet, 'Everywhere the burghers fought with the utmost valour'¹; but the outcome of the fighting hardly points to any extraordinary effort on the Boer side. They had all the advantage of the ground; they were hardly, if at all, outnumbered; and they were led by their noted General. But there was no desperate combat and no prolonged defence. Probably two causes were at work: the first was divided counsels, or at any rate divided hearts for fighting; the second was the fact that another strong British force was close at hand, and it may well have seemed the course of wisdom to retreat while retreat was open.

The force in question was Hunter's army. On the 25th of June Hunter took over command of Hamilton's force at Heidelberg, and on the 27th he started south with a little less than 8,000 officers and men and 30 guns. With Broadwood's cavalry for his vanguard he crossed the Vaal at Villiersdorp, and on the 1st of July, the day on which Clements joined Paget near Lindley, he marched into Frankfort. Here he was joined two days later by Macdonald with 4,000 men from Heilbron. From Frankfort he marched to Reitz, traversing country and occupying places where the Boers had hitherto seen no enemy; on the 8th his advanced troops, and on the 9th his main force, reached Bethlehem. On that same day Clements left for Senekal to bring up fresh supplies.

The Boers had retreated south from Bethlehem. Due south of the town, within 15 miles distance, is the outside edge, the convex side of a semicircle of bold rocky mountains, which enclose a rich and grassy basin. The base of the enclosure, from north-east to south-west, is the Caledon River, and the hollow is watered by the Brandwater River

CH. IV.

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*Hunter's
southern
advance
from Hei-
delberg to
Bethlehem*

*The
Brand-
water
Basin.*

¹ P. 157.

PART II. running down from the mountains, from north to south, into
 —♦♦— the Caledon. On the western and north-western side the mountains are known as the Wittebergen, on the north-eastern side as the Roodebergen, which in the extreme north-eastern corner link on to the great Drakensberg Range. Outside this mountain-girdled area, the nearest town on the south-west is Ficksburg, on the north-east is Harrismith, and due north is Bethlehem. Inside there is only one centre of any size, Fouriesburg, where the wandering Free State Government now found its latest refuge. De Wet classes the whole semicircle of mountains under the title Roodebergen, and thus describes the geography: 'The Roodebergen, which now separated us from the English, is a vast chain of mountains, extending from the Caledon River on the Basuto frontier to Slabbert's Nek, then stretching away to Witzies Hoek, where it again touches Basutoland. The passes over this wild mountain range are Commando Nek, Witnek, Slabbert's Nek, Retief's Nek, Naauwpoort, and Witzies Hoek.'¹ The chief outlets were Commando Nek in the extreme south-west on the road to Ficksburg, Slabbert's Nek and Retief's Nek on the north, Retief's Nek being north-east of Slabbert's Nek and the nearest outlet to Bethlehem, and Naauwpoort on the east. There was also a subsidiary, difficult, and little-used pass, east again of Naauwpoort, called the Golden Gate, which was practically the same pass as Witzies Hoek. Of the existence of this last-named pass Hunter tells us that he was at first unaware.

The outside circumference of this arc of mountains is some 75 miles, and the task which lay before the English was to block the passes and enclose the Boers in their stronghold. This had to be done quickly, if done at all, for of all people in the world the Boers were most sensitive to the danger of being cut off, and of all Boers in the world De Wet was least likely to wait until it was too late. He knew the

¹ P. 161.

PART II. danger and the urgency, and he took steps accordingly,
 .. though hardly such steps as a great soldier would have taken. The English too knew that time was of the essence of the matter, but Hunter, who on the 11th of July had been given command of the whole of the forces throughout this north-eastern area of the Free State, including Rundle's men as well as Clements's and Paget's, was in a very difficult position. He was in the heart of the enemy's country, with a large number of men to feed, and far away from the railway. The question of supplies was all-important. He had left Bruce Hamilton at Reitz to bring up more stores from Heilbron, and Bruce Hamilton did not rejoin him at Bethlehem until the 14th. Clements, we have seen, had gone on the 9th to Senekal for more supplies, and his absence from Bethlehem at the time of Hunter's arrival tended to delay. Apart from the question of feeding the troops, neither Hunter nor those who advised him had any accurate knowledge of the country. 'My operations', he tells us in his despatch, 'extended over a vast area. The country is a perfect network of mountains and precipices. I had no information from local forces (?sources) except from Basutoland. . . . Our maps are worse than useless.'¹ New to the district, having to direct very widely extended operations, it is no matter for surprise that some days went by before he decided on the best steps to be taken. Those days De Wet turned to account. The number of fighting Boers who went into, or already were in, the Brandwater Basin was estimated at from 6,000 to 8,000. Whatever was their actual number, De Wet planned, while leaving some men of the district to hold the mountains, to bring out the rest in three parties. He himself was to start first, leading the strongest party, 2,600 in number, towards Kroonstad and Heilbron. On the next night a second party was to retreat in the direction of Bloemfontein; while the

*Hunter's
difficulties*

¹ Despatch of 4th August, 1900, South Africa Despatches, vol. i, C. 457, 1901, p. 139.

third, the smallest party, was to make for the north of Bethlehem. So far as his own party was concerned, his plan was successfully carried out. Taking with him President Steyn, and a long trailing convoy of wagons, when night came on the 15th of July he left Slabbert's Nek. CH. IV. —••

On that same day Broadwood, followed by Paget, had been sent out from Bethlehem along the Senekal road, and at the time when De Wet broke out Paget was within ten miles of Slabbert's Nek. On the next day the retreating Boers were descried, and Broadwood and Paget fought the rearguard, as they moved off to the north. It was too late. De Wet made good his escape, but it was a case of the Free State Commander-in-Chief leaving the major part of his army to take care of themselves, and with him departed firmness of resolution and undivided command. For the Free State leaders were not a happy family. Already there had been divisions among them; and when De Wet's back was turned, instead of carrying out the preconcerted scheme, they fell to disputing who should take command. The Assistant Commandant-General, the man who was De Wet's choice, was Paul Roux, the fighting minister; but in the Brandwater Basin was also Marthinus Prinsloo, a man of longer years and higher position among his fellows, who in past days had been a notable fighter, and at the beginning of the present war had held the chief command of the Boer forces in Natal and the eastern Free State. He had resigned his post, but was now brought to the fore again, and eventually on the 27th of July, when the *débâcle* had begun, was chosen by a doubtful majority to lead as against Roux.

Meanwhile Hunter had matured his plans. On the 20th Bruce Hamilton was sent to occupy Spitz Kop or Spitz Kranz, a hill nine miles south-east of Bethlehem, overlooking from the north the approaches to Naauwpoort Nek; the hill was secured on the following day. On the 20th too the Pass of Witnek on the north-western side of the horseshoe *Retief's Nek and Slabbert's Nek taken.*

PART II. was occupied, and on the west and south-west Rundle's troops
** began to close up. Clements and Paget were now directed against Slabbert's Nek, while Hunter himself marched on Retief's Nek. Moving out from Bethlehem on the 22nd in a south-easterly direction, as though his objective was Naauwpoort, when he had thus misled the Boers he changed his course and took up a position three miles north of Retief's Nek. On the 23rd he attacked Retief's Nek, and simultaneously Clements and Paget came into action at Slabbert's Nek. When evening fell both forces had gained a foothold on the passes, but had not yet carried the positions. At Retief's Nek the Highland regiments attacked on the British left, the Sussex regiment on the right. On the left—the eastern side of the pass—the Black Watch in the dusk of the evening planted themselves on the main ridge, whence the enemy's right flank might be turned; during the night the Highland Light Infantry secured a high peak on this same eastern side; and in the morning of the 24th the Seaforths came still further round on the left. The Boer right was thus overpowered, and by 3 o'clock in the afternoon Hunter halted at Retief's Farm, within the pass, a mile beyond where the Boer lines had been. The fighting at Slabbert's Nek took much the same course, but here the position was carried from the west not from the east. Before the sun was high in the morning of the 24th, a ridge was gained which overlooked and commanded the Boer left, and the position was thereby made untenable. Thus on the evening of the 24th both these passes were in British hands, and Hunter and Clements were encamped within four miles of each other on the inside slope of the mountains. Rundle was now ordered to press on through Commando Nek in the south-west corner to Fouriesburg, and at daybreak on the 25th Macdonald and his Highlanders were detached to join Bruce Hamilton in the task of blocking Naauwpoort Nek and Golden Gate. On the 26th both Rundle and Hunter

reached Fouriesburg, where over 100 British prisoners were recovered. On the 28th the English forced the position taken up by the Boer rearguard at the Slaap Kranz Ridge, east of Fouriesburg, and early on the 29th Prinsloo asked for a four days' armistice. By this time the Naauwpoort Pass had been effectually stopped, but it was not so with the Golden Gate. On the 29th Bruce Hamilton was fighting outside the pass, but there was still passage for determined men. Prinsloo's request for an armistice was met with a demand for unconditional surrender. In the afternoon of the 29th the Boer commander gave way, and on the 30th the surrender took place. The Golden Gate proved the way of salvation to a strong body of some 1,500 men under Olivier's leadership, who refused, rightly or wrongly, to be bound by Prinsloo's action and made off in safety; but over 4,000 Boers, either inside or outside the mountains, surrendered, and with them was a rich haul of horses and of stock, and three guns, two of which were British guns taken at Sannah's Post.

The number of prisoners taken was 4,140, slightly larger than the number at Paardeberg, and the Brandwater operations must be counted among the most successful in the war, though the blow was not so decisive and not so far-reaching in results as the capture of Cronje and his men. This was largely because it came at a much later stage in the war, when the main issues had already been decided. The escape of De Wet, and the failure to close the Golden Gate, made the success incomplete; on the other hand, it is possible that, if De Wet had remained in the Brandwater Basin, the issue might not have been more favourable to the English, and that there might have been greater British losses. The Free State leader was about to show in the Magaliesberg his marvellous skill in mountain country, and when at bay among the peaks and defiles of the Brandwater Basin he might well have struck heavy blows at his enemies and not been captured in the end. A review of the operations and all the difficulties

CH. IV.

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*Prinsloo's
surrender.*

PART II. which attended them places Hunter high as a commander. —♦— Chosen at a moment's notice to deal with what was practically the unknown, with troops whom he had not previously handled, he proved that he possessed in a marked degree power of combination and leadership of men. A similar review leads to a somewhat modified admiration of De Wet. We must admire his shrewdness, his prompt determination, his daring courage, but admiration is coupled with regret that he did not stand or fall with the main body of his followers, or at least speed them towards safety before he sped himself.

Harrismith occupied and Van Reenen's Pass opened.

On the 1st of August Macdonald followed towards the north-east, on Olivier's track, and on the 4th he entered Harrismith. Two days later, on the 6th, Rundle came up and took charge of Harrismith. Harrismith was then the terminus of the railway from Ladysmith through Van Reenen's Pass, and by Buller's orders, on the 5th of August that pass was at length occupied from Ladysmith. By the 9th the railway had been repaired, and thus yet another line of communication was opened to the English. Olivier, after breaking out of the mountains to the north-east, seems to have turned west with the view of rejoining De Wet, for in the middle of the month Hunter, marching from Bethlehem to Heilbron, came into collision with him near the latter

Capture of Olivier.

Turning south, later in the month, about nine miles north of Winburg, Olivier intercepted a small reconnoitring detachment of some 220 men under Colonel Ridley, who held out staunchly for two days and three nights, until they were relieved. He then attacked Winburg itself, and on the 27th of August closed his military career by falling into an ambush and being taken prisoner with his three sons.

The pursuit of De Wet.

We left De Wet retreating to the north from Slabbert's Nek, having fought a rearguard action on the 16th of July with Broadwood and Paget. Paget was required for the Brandwater business, but Broadwood and Ridley with their

mounted men followed on the Dutchman's trail. Or, rather, they tried to follow on it, for marvellous as De Wet oftentimes was in speed of movement, he was still more marvellous in the dexterity with which almost at his leisure he comfortably carried off the most slow-moving vehicles and effectually baffled pursuit. In the present instance a Boer who went with him says: 'We were 2,000 horsemen, and our vehicles, carts, ox and mule wagons formed a procession fully six miles long.'¹ Allowing for exaggeration in this statement, De Wet seems to have had a line of wagons strung out for two or three miles, and in addition to care of property he had the charge of the President of the Republic, who had left his wife behind at Fouriesburg to the safe keeping of the English, as Paul Kruger had left Mrs. Kruger at Pretoria when he fled from his capital; for, somewhat inconsistently with the charges of inhumanity so freely levelled against the English by the Boers, the latter never had any hesitation in placing their womenkind in the enemy's hands. De Wet's success in bringing off his long retinue, over and above his own cleverness, was due in part to the fact that all the countryside was with him and every farmer his friend, and in part to having at his disposal the best of scouts. One of these men, of the name of Scheepers, subsequently became notorious in the Cape Colony, and when taken prisoner was shot. Another man, of a far better class, who a few weeks later was killed when fighting on the Gatsrand, was Daniel Theron, of Krugersdorp, better known as 'Dannie Theron'. Daring and fearless to a degree, he had made his way into and out of Cronje's laager at Paardeberg; and shortly afterwards he had been appointed by De Wet to command a band of Scouts. Composed of almost every nationality, this band under Theron's leadership attained a high degree of efficiency, and the qualities of their leader De Wet summed up in the

*Scheepers
and
Theron.*

¹ *With Steyn and De Wet*, by Philip Piennar, 1902, p. 139.

PART II. words: 'When he received an order, or if he wished to do anything, then it was bend or break with him.'¹

*De Wet's
escape.*

While Theron kept him company, De Wet was able to divide his force: one could take charge of the convoy, while the other was fighting. North they went, keeping east of Lindley and then turning north-west. Broadwood and Ridley followed on as best they could, and by Lord Roberts's orders more mounted men under Colonel Little came out from Heilbron to join in the chase. On the 19th Broadwood was at the tail of the convoy, held off by Theron, and Little was in touch with De Wet. On the night of the 21st De Wet and Theron crossed the railway at the points made familiar to them by constant wreckage, De Wet taking the convoy across at Serfontein, while Theron at Honing Spruit cut off a train and took 100 prisoners. Going on north-west, on the 24th, after losing three or four wagons with grain supplies, De Wet was safe for the time in the hill-country near Reitzburg, south of the Vaal, where he took up his quarters at Rhenosterpoort Farm, the nearest drift over the river being Schoeman's Drift, and Potchefstroom being over against him not much more than 20 miles away. Here he stayed for the better part of a fortnight, and Theron twice raided the railway. The English gathered round. Lord Kitchener came down to spread the net: 11,000 men blocked the way back to the south and east. De Wet came to the conclusion that he must cross the Vaal, and his business led that way, for President Steyn wished to confer with President Kruger. There were men waiting to catch him on the other side of the river, prominent among them Methuen, who in the middle of July had been brought over from the Free State, and, reaching Krugersdorp on the 16th, had been busy in the Magaliesberg and had subsequently come down to Potchefstroom. He was set to watch the drifts of

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 194.

the Vaal by which De Wet might cross, but had not enough troops effectually to guard some 40 miles of river. CH. IV.

Before day broke on the 6th of August De Wet crossed at Schoeman's Drift. Some 2,500 men came over with or after him. He divided his forces; on the 7th Methuen came up with his rearguard, and on the 9th cut off a few of his wagons. Through the Gatsrand he went: on the night of the 10th he crossed the Krugersdorp-Potchefstroom Railway, east of Frederickstad Station, blowing up a bridge and evading the troops who were guarding the line. On the Mooi River he was joined by Liebenberg and his commando, who had been into and out of Potchefstroom. On he went north, leaving Ventersdorp on his left. Methuen, Kitchener, Smith Dorrien, Hart, Broadwood, and a host of British commanders of horse and foot were hot on his trail. In front of him Ian Hamilton with 8,000 men was moving along the foot of the Magaliesberg to bar his path. On the 12th Methuen and his mounted men pressed him hard. He lost a gun: he left his prisoners behind: his route was marked by derelict wagons and dead animals: but he fired the grass in his pursuers' faces and held on. He was making for the Magaliesberg, where full orders had been given to block the passes. Lest he should bear off to the west, Methuen took that direction. But by some error of judgement on the part of Ian Hamilton, who rarely failed, the pass of Olifants Nek was left open, and on the morning of the 14th the hard-hunted leader went safely through the mountains. He was now out of immediate danger, but was followed still. He moved east, past Commando Nek, held at this date by Baden Powell, whom by way of bravado he summoned to surrender: he haagered on the Crocodile River, and again he split up his forces. Steyn was sent on east with an escort, and eventually joined President Kruger near Machadodorp: a large party of the Free Staters made their way north up into the Bushveldt on the line of the Pietersburg Railway, and De Wet himself turned his face homewards with

The pursuit of De Wet.

PART II. a small band of rather over 200 men, including Scheepers
 —♦♦— and his Scouts. Finding the passes of the Magaliesberg at length effectually closed, on the 19th of August he made his way over the mountains by an almost impossible goat-track, recrossed the railway west of Krugersdorp, and on the 22nd or 23rd was back over the Vaal to the point from which he had started.

• It was a wonderful achievement, a marvel of courage, endurance, and dexterity. The accounts of it read like the romance of some guerilla leader or Highland chieftain in by-gone times. It was magnificent, but it was not war, as war is understood nowadays. And yet it was precisely the kind of war which gave the Boers their only chance. To worry and weary their enemies with fruitless chases, to prolong a time of great expense and constant loss of good lives, to produce in the stomachs of the British public nausea at a seemingly unending and profitless enterprise: this was the one hope for the fighting Boers of South Africa.

*Fighting
in the
Magalies-
berg.*

The Magaliesberg Range, before De Wet appeared on the scene, had already witnessed no little fighting and much hurrying to and fro. Through the latter part of June, after Diamond Hill, Lord Roberts had remained on the defensive at Pretoria, while supplies and remounts were being brought up, and while the movement against the north-east of the Free State was being organized. General Botha had his headquarters at Balmoral on the Delagoa Bay line, but the Transvaal army was now more split up than before, and Delarey went back to his own Western Transvaal, which remained his sphere of operations till the end of the war.

*The Maga-
liesberg
Range.*

July was not far advanced before he made himself felt in the region of the Magaliesberg. Pretoria lies under the Magaliesberg Mountains towards their eastern end. From Pretoria the range runs due west for between 15 and 20 miles to Zilikat's (i.e. Moselekatze's) Nek, which was also known as Uitval Nek, corrupted by a clerical error at the

time into Nital's Nek. Seven miles west of Zilikat's Nek, beyond the Crocodile River, the head-waters of the Limpopo, which make their way in a north-westerly direction through the range, is Commando Nek, through which was carried the main road from Pretoria to Rustenburg. From this point the mountains run for a long distance to the south-west with precipitous southern sides, then turn sharply to the north-west. Here there is another pass, Olifants Nek, the pass through which De Wet found salvation. Continuing to the north-west the mountains overlook Rustenburg, and north-west of Rustenburg is yet another pass, Magato Nek, through which comes a road from Elands River and Zeerust. The mountains then curl away to the north, ending in the Pilands Berg. Lying on a plain in the elbow of the mountains, on their warm northern side, Rustenburg, President Kruger's country home, is the centre of a rich semi-tropical district, growing oranges and tobacco. The railway, which now links it to Pretoria, is 61 miles in length: at the time of the war the nearest railway station was Krugersdorp, over 50 miles to the south-east. The British troops, however, which garrisoned Rustenburg, drew their supplies from Mafeking and Zeerust, Zeerust being rather under 70 miles distant, and the Elands River being midway between the two places.

As July opened the Boers began to show themselves in menacing numbers on the north and on the west of Pretoria. Baden Powell himself had left Rustenburg, and on the 7th of July the only British troops in the town were a patrol of 140 men. On that day they were hotly attacked, but were relieved by some Imperial Bushmen who came up from the west, and Baden Powell then occupied the town again in force. Nearer Pretoria small detachments were thrown out on outpost duty, and among them was a party at Zilikat's Nek, consisting on the 11th of July of three companies of the Lincolnshire Regiment which had just come up, and a squadron of the Scots Greys with two guns, which had not yet been with-

PART II. drawn. These troops held the nek on the night of the 10th-11th, but two peaks which commanded the pass had been left unoccupied. When morning came on the 11th, the Boers had seized these peaks and were firing on the English below. Delarey commanded the attack, and his men overpowered the small British force, numbering about 240.

*The fights
at Zilikat's
Nek.*

*Onderste
Poort and
Onrust.*

*Methuen
marches
into the
Magalies-
berg.*

The fight went on all day; a large proportion of the troops were killed or wounded, among the latter being the commander, Colonel Roberts of the Lincolnshires, who was wounded early in the day, and about sunset the survivors were taken prisoners and carried off with the two guns. The disaster, in the judgement of the Commander-in-Chief, was 'owing mainly to the defective dispositions of the commanding officer'.¹ On this same day there was fighting in other directions. On the north of Pretoria, at Onderste Poort, a little short of Waterval on the Pietersburg line, a cavalry attack on a Boer position was repulsed with loss by Commandant Grobler's men; and on the south the vanguard of Smith Dorrien's column marching north from Krugersdorp, when nine miles out from that place, at a point called Onrust, received a severe check, nearly losing two guns, with the result that the force was withdrawn to Krugersdorp. These small reverses led to Methuen and his men being brought over from the Free State; and, combining with Smith Dorrien, Methuen marched north into the Hekpoort Valley between the Witwatersberg and the Magaliesberg, moved west, forced Olifants Nek, and reopened communication with Baden Powell at Rustenburg. Methuen and Smith Dorrien then returned to the Krugersdorp-Potchefstroom railway, where they were soon to come into collision with De Wet, and at the end of July Ian Hamilton, who had been fully employed on the eastern side of Pretoria, was brought over to the western side, to operate along the Magaliesberg.

In order to meet the constantly growing unrest in this

¹ South Africa Despatches, vol. i, C. 457, 1901, p. 58.

Western Transvaal, and to keep up communication between Rustenburg and its source of supplies at Zeerust and Mafeking, reinforcements were brought down from Rhodesia, and Sir Frederick Carrington was ordered to Mafeking. But it became more evident day by day that the whole countryside was rising again, inspired by Delarey's leadership, and Lord Roberts, with larger movements in hand, determined to call in the outposts and evacuate places where garrisons were in constant peril and could only be fed by convoys brought for many dangerous miles. Thus he decided to move the troops from Rustenburg, and, as August began, Ian Hamilton marched west from Pretoria to bring off Baden Powell, while Carrington from Mafeking was to withdraw the garrison holding the half-way post at Elands River. This Elands River post was at a place called Brakfontein, on the eastern side of the river, near where it is crossed by the road from Zeerust to Rustenburg, and it consisted of Rhodesians and Australian Bushmen, about 300 in all, under Colonel Hore, who had played a distinguished part in the defence of Mafeking. Ian Hamilton, as he went west, cleared the Boers from Zilikat's Nek, and, when he had joined hands with Baden Powell, Rustenburg was abandoned on the 7th of August, and the garrison of Olifants Nek was also withdrawn. The withdrawal of the men holding this pass, which was in accordance with Lord Roberts's instructions, gave De Wet the outlet that saved him and his following. Retreating on Pretoria, Hamilton was near Commando Nek, when he first heard from Lord Roberts on the 8th of August that De Wet was making north, and once more he had to turn west again, while Baden Powell took charge of Commando Nek. Moving west on the southern side of the mountains, Hamilton, as events proved, moved too slowly, and, as we have seen, he failed to cut off De Wet.

Abandonment of Rustenburg and Olifant's Nek.

Before Rustenburg was abandoned, firing had been heard in the direction of Elands River, and Baden Powell had come

The stand at Elands River.

PART II. to the conclusion that Hore's party had either been captured or relieved. He was wrong. The attack began on the 4th of August, and soon Delarey brought up a large number of men and strong artillery. Carrington, who had been told off to bring back the garrison, came up on the 5th against the besieging lines, but had only 650 men available for fighting, and after a skirmish decided that he was not strong enough to break through the ring and was in danger of being cut off himself. He therefore retreated on Zeerust. Hore was now left to his fate, presumably because the chase of De Wet was absorbing general attention; but when the pursuit had ended in fiasco and news came that the brave little outpost was still holding out, Lord Roberts gave orders for its relief. Before the orders came, Lord Kitchener had acted with his usual promptitude. He made a forced march of 35 miles; early on the morning of the 16th he rode into Hore's camp, littered with dead oxen and mules; and, with the loss of about 50 in killed and wounded, the men who had stood their ground so manfully under constant shot and shell, were finally rescued. This stand by the Australians and Rhodesians was as fine a feat as any in the war, and the failure to relieve them at an earlier date was not to the credit of those who were in high command. The incident emphasized the insecurity of small bodies of men on the British side in isolated positions, the impossibility of controlling a great area of country, the necessity for concentration at a few points and along the railways.

The advance to Middelburg.

The English had fared better on the eastern side of Pretoria. Simultaneously with Delarey's efforts in the west, Botha began to worry Lord Roberts on the other side. Here Hutton had some fighting south-east of Pretoria from the 7th to the 9th of July. On the 10th French joined him, and on the 11th the enemy were driven back behind the Bronkhorst Spruit. On the 16th the Boers under the command of Viljoen, who had lately been promoted to be a general, were beaten off by

Hutton after hard fighting, in which the Royal Irish Fusiliers, New Zealanders, and Canadians played a prominent part, and Lord Roberts entered on the first stage of his advance along the Delagoa Bay line. Ian Hamilton on this same 16th of July moved north up the Pietersburg Railway, instructed, after clearing the line for a certain distance, to turn south-east and close in upon the Delagoa Bay Railway near Bronkhorst Spruit Station. Along the railway itself was the centre of the advance, with Pole Carew in charge; on his right were Hutton's men, and on the right of Hutton was French. On the 23rd the general advance began. The Boers fell back before the army, marching with a front of very many miles. Balmoral was occupied on the 25th, and on the 26th and 27th the town of Middelburg, 95 miles from Pretoria. This was to be the base for the further advance. For the time being Lord Roberts went back to Pretoria, leaving French in command, and Ian Hamilton was also brought back for the operations in the Magaliesberg, which have already been recounted.

The mastery of the Delagoa Bay line was of supreme importance to the English. Until they commanded it, the Boers had free communication with the outer world. Attempts had already been made to cut the line. When Strathcona's Horse came out about the end of May, 600 men from the Canadian North-West, injured to hard riding and rough back-wood work, brought at the expense of Canada's High Commissioner, it was at first designed that they should make their way inland through Zululand and from Kosi Bay on the Amatongaland coast and strike the line near Komati Poort. The design came to nothing, the Boers having received warning; and, though some enterprising colonial scouts in the middle of June came through Swaziland and blew up a bridge on the railway, in the month of August it was in full working order, and from a little way east of Middelburg was wholly under Boer control. The time had now come to sweep it to the Portuguese frontier, and in this final

CH. IV.

*The
Delagoa
Bay line.*

PART II. operation Buller's army was to combine with Lord Roberts.
 --- Meanwhile, French in charge at Middelburg had thrown out his outposts for many miles in all directions, and his troops were in evidence at Wonderfontein over 20 miles along the line east of Middelburg, and midway between that place and Belfast.

*Buller
marches
north.*

The Natal Railway had been repaired: troops had been disposed along its length: Hunter's operations in the north-west of the Free State had given it comparative security on the southern side: Van Rensburg's Pass had been occupied; and in accordance with instructions Buller on the 7th of August led a strong force northwards across the Southern Transvaal to join the main army east of Middelburg. He took with him Lattelton's division, two mounted brigades and artillery, from 10,000 to 11,000 men in all. The Boers in front of him or hovering on his flank were not a third of his numbers. Starting near Paardekop between Verdurst and Standerton, on the evening of the 7th, after a day's skirmishing, he entered Amersfoort: on the 11th Dundonald was at Ermelo a day in front of the infantry: on the 12th the cavalry, and on the 15th the infantry, reached Twyfelaar, Strathcona's Horse having on the 14th ridden to the village of Carolina on the east of the route. It appeared but 18 miles from Wonderfontein; Buller's cavalry soon won a battle with French's outposts; and from Wonderfontein on the 18th French made his own head-quarters. Buller's supplies for his army. On the 21st he moved for nine miles to the north-east in the direction of Belfast to Van Vliet's Farm, where there was some fighting on that day and the next, and on the 23rd, in combination with French, he moved 11 miles further on in the same north-easterly direction to a farm named Geluk. Here, in clearing a ridge which commanded the encampment, and, there was serious fighting, which involved over a hundred casualties, the chief sufferers being two companies of the 1st Cape Rifles, which were

nearly overwhelmed through advancing too far. On the next day, the 24th, Pole Carew moved up along the railway and occupied Belfast; on the 25th Lord Roberts came up himself, and the British Generals took counsel as to the next attack.

Belfast is the highest point on the Delagoa Bay Railway. Beyond it the line passes past Waterval Boven and Waterval Onder, where the hills steeply to lower levels. North-east of Belfast are the Delburg Mountains, and south-east, on the southern side of the railway, is the watershed of the Komati River. The altitude varies at from 5,000 to 7,000, under the name of the Boer Mountains for some 20 miles, athwart of the railway between Belfast and the next station Dalmanutha, the highest part of the railway, resting among the mountains, is a plateau left south of the railway, guarded by boggy ground. The Boer left was thrown back to face south as well as west, and Buller was coming up from the south. The centre was on a plateau just south of and parallel to the railway line, on which stood a farm, Bergendal Farm. At the western end of the plateau, the most advanced point of the Boer position, and the key of the whole, was a mass of rounded boulders, a natural fortress of very great strength. It was held by a small band, about 74 in number, of the South African Republic Police, the Zarps, who in peace time had gained an unenviable notoriety, but in the course of the war had been among the hardest fighters on the Boer side, a nucleus of trained men among citizen soldiers. It was arranged that the French, who had been operating side by side with Buller and under his command, should bring his troops north of the line and advance against the Boer right, to outflank it if possible, and in any case to safeguard Pole Carew and the British centre, while south of the line Buller was to continue his movement against the Boer left.

On the 26th Buller moved on to the north-east with constant fighting, unable to make any wide détour to the east and turn

CH. IV.

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The fight at Bergendal Farm.

PART II. the enemy's flank, because of the marshes. On the evening of the 26th he was within striking distance of Bergendal, and his outposts had secured a ridge facing Bergendal from the south, at a little over two miles distance, on which he could place his guns. He lost no time, and attacked on the 27th. In the early morning the cavalry and some of the guns were sent out to the west to enfilade the Bergendal position from the west and the north-west, while the main mass of the artillery opened fire from the ridge on the south. For three hours the guns concentrated their fire upon the rocks among which the South African Police were posted. Placed as they were in an exposed angle of the position, their own friends could give them little help; the open space behind them, the way of retreat, was entirely commanded by the British fire; but, while their numbers dwindled, their nerve and spirit remained. While the great guns battered the rocks, Buller set in order the infantry attack. The second Rifle Brigade were brought round wide on the left to assault the western side of the position: the Inniskilling Fusiliers were directed to attack from the south-west. In either case there was open ground to be traversed in face of the defenders of the rocks, who poured out from their stronghold a hot fire, which laid low in the ranks of the Rifles alone the Colonel and some 80 men. But both regiments went steadily forward, and as the last shot came over their heads from the British guns behind them, almost simultaneously they rushed the rocks, and a few, but very few, of the devoted handful of men, who with surpassing courage had held their ground under a hurricane of shot and shell, were taken prisoners.

Viljoen writes of this battle of Bergendal, as 'one of the fiercest fights of the war'.¹ It was noteworthy in various ways—for the stand made by the South African Police; for

¹ *My Reminiscences of the Anglo-Boer War*, p. 184. The account is much embroidered. Viljoen writes of a six days' battle, saying that the English were estimated at 60,000, and that the Boers numbered 4,000 at most.

the promptness with which Buller detected and attacked the vital point in the Boer position, and the vigour with which he carried the attack through; for the fact that this was the last of what may be called the pitched battles in the South African War, in which comparatively large bodies of men on either side were operating in and against ordered lines.

The fight was for the moment decisive: the Boers fell back at all points, retreating through Machadodorp away from the railway on its northern side to Helvetia. The English followed in the same direction, French and Buller alike. Machadodorp was occupied and Helvetia; by the evening of the 29th French and Dundonald were overlooking the line from above Waterval Boven and Waterval Onder: on the 30th Buller was on the heights above Nooitgedacht. Here had been shut up nearly all the British prisoners who had not been released when Pretoria was taken, and Viljoen set them free,¹ with the exception of a few officers carried off to Barberton. As the British troops came east along the line, they met a long line of some 1,700 of their comrades trudging west to meet them.

There was now a break-up of the Boer Government and the Transvaal forces. President Kruger went east, paused at Nelspruit Station, and on the 11th of September crossed the Portuguese frontier, went down to Lorenzo Marques, and in due course was carried to Europe in a Dutch man-of-war. Before he left, Lord Roberts had on the 1st of September issued a Proclamation, similar in terms to the earlier Proclamation in the Free State, annexing the South African Republic to the British dominions. Of the Transvaal army which had faced the English at and near Bergendal, part, commanded by Botha himself, retreated north in the Lydenburg direction, part towards the south-east and Barberton, part due east along the railway. The pursuers took much

¹ Viljoen writes, p. 188: 'I was also extremely dissatisfied with the way the prisoners had been lodged.'

PART II. the same course. Buller followed on Botha's track, moving
 —•• from Helvetia: French was directed to move on Barberton: Pole Carew was entrusted with the central advance along the railway.

*Buller's
operations
in the
Lydenburg
district.*

*Occupation
of Lyden-
burg.*

*Termina-
tion of
Buller's
command.*

The mountainous Lydenburg district had long been looked upon as a final refuge for the Boer cause, as it was one of its early homes. It was important for the English to strike while the iron was hot, to prevent a fresh stand being made in this area, at once difficult of access and well placed for counter-attacks upon the railway. For Lydenburg is well under 40 miles in a straight line from the Delagoa Bay Railway, nearly due north of Nooitgedacht. A road from Belfast leads to it in a north-easterly direction through Dullstroom. Another road runs from Machadodorp north-east and north through Helvetia. North-east of Lydenburg, about 25 miles distant, is Pilgrims' Rest, connected by road with Nelspruit on the railway; and a mountain road or track running eastward, from Lydenburg over the Mauchberg, strikes this Nelspruit road at Spitz Kop. On the 1st of September Buller started from Helvetia. On the next day he was held up by the Boers, who blocked a mountain pass. Ian Hamilton was accordingly sent out from Belfast along the Dullstroom road farther west, and, marching fast and well, turned the Boer flank and opened Buller's road. On the 6th Lydenburg was occupied, and on the 8th the combined forces drove the Boers from the mountains on the eastern side of the town. Ian Hamilton then went back to the railway, while Buller forced the Mauchberg Pass, and, pressing the Boer rearguard closely, was at Spitz Kop on the 11th of September. He now commanded the northern roads. After a pause, later in September he marched on north to Pilgrims' Rest, from there struck west, and then turning south reached Lydenburg again on the 2nd of October. This was the end of his campaigning, for he now gave up his command and shortly afterwards returned to England. As his work had begun in Natal, so

it ended, among mountains. It had been full of difficulty from beginning to end, and friends and critics alike have noted how from first to last his men followed him with unwavering trust and affection.

French had marched south from Machadodorp to Carolina, and there he concentrated his forces from the 6th to the 9th of September. On the 9th he moved north-east, making for the upper waters of the Komati River and for Barberton. A long and dangerous march lay before him, through a little-known tract of country, where mountain passes and rivers were to be surmounted and crossed, where roads were few or none, and the difficulties of supplies were correspondingly great. But, as he moved, another force under Hutton went forward between him and the railway, guarding at once his left flank, and the right flank of Pole Carew whose direction was along the railway. Taking his mounted men along the high ground, which forms the watershed between the Elands and the Komati rivers, by the 13th of September Hutton seized Kaapsche Hoop on the crest overlooking and commanding the De Kaap Goldfields, the country round Barberton, and the railway from Godwaan to Kaapmuiden; and on that same day French by a bridle-path over the mountains swooped down on Barberton from the west and south-west, recovered the few remaining British prisoners, and made a rich haul of stores and railway stock.

At Godwaan, the next station to the east of Nooitgedacht, the railway makes a curve to the north, coming down again past Nelspruit to Kaapmuiden Junction, where the branch line from Barberton, 35 miles long, joins the main line, Avoca Station being midway between Barberton and the junction. Hutton having by his advance cleared the southern side of the railway as far as Godwaan, Pole Carew's central column moved forward along the line, followed at the distance of about a day's march by Ian Hamilton, who had come down from Lydenburg. Viljoen fell back before him, noting

CH. IV.

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*French's
march to
Barberton.**Occupation
of Barber-
ton*

PART II. at Nelspruit that 'the traces of a fugitive Government were unmistakable'¹; and at Hector Spruit, the last station before Komati Poort, met General Botha, who had returned from the mountains in ill-health to face the breaking up of the Transvaal army as it had hitherto been organized. North, south, and east they went, several hundreds crossing the frontier and handing their arms up to the Portuguese. Behind them the English pressed on hard. French moved down the Barberton line, and near Avoca secured more railway engines. Pole Carew, leaving the main line where it turns north at Godwaan and marching due east past the De Kaap Goldfields, struck the railway again on the 19th of September at Kaapmuiden Junction. On the 21st he was at Hector Spruit, and on the 24th reached the goal at Komati Poort, not far short of 300 miles from Pretoria, Ian Hamilton coming up on the following day. All the enemies had disappeared; nothing was left but a wrecked mass of material, guns dismantled and wholly or half destroyed, most of them being found at Hector Spruit, engines and rolling-stock littering miles of the line, stores, stacks of coal, everything abandoned, everything bearing the mark of destruction intended or completely carried out. It looked as if the end had come, and yet in point of time the war had not run half its course. From this date onwards the Boers were cut off from the outer world; but, left more than ever to their own resources, broken up into small bodies, finding their best friends in their own great spaces, they gave the English a more difficult problem to face than when they invaded British territory in more or less organized armies. The problem was more difficult, but the great danger for England had none the less passed away for ever. There had been a time, only a few months back, when Boer successes pointed to a very different issue; but the *débâcle* at Hector Spruit and Komati Poort, and the abandonment of the great guns, told

and of
Komati
Poort.

¹ *My Reminiscences of the Anglo-Boer War*, p. 197.

the final end of the stage in which Dutch and English had fought on not unequal terms, though with unequal numbers, in the great South African War. CH. IV.
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Having marched to Komati Poort, most of the troops were brought back again, to be distributed along the line, or to continue the work of clearing the country which was never cleared. French returned from Barberton to Machadodorp, and went south with mounted columns, to sweep the area between the Delagoa Bay Railway and the Natal line, which he was to reach at Heidelberg, retracing for the first part of his march Buller's northward route. His men started on the 12th of October. On the 13th one body under Mahon was opposed at Geluk, and had to fall back until other troops could co-operate. Carolina was entered, and Ermelo, then the columns turned westward to Bethel, and on the 26th Heidelberg was reached. It was a most arduous and trying march, with perpetual fighting and skirmishing, with small losses day by day on either side, and with no decisive result. It was a sample of what was to continue for many long months, and evidence that the fighting spirit was still strong in the Boers. *French's march to Heidelberg.*

When the Boer army broke up at Hector Spruit, a great number, as already told, went on towards the frontier, and of them the larger proportion, men who had no horses, those who had no stomach for further fighting, the hangers-on of an army and so forth, disappeared into Portuguese territory, went down to Lorenzo Marques, and took no further part in the war. The determined minority broke off from Komati Poort to the north to fight again. Meanwhile from Hector Spruit the mounted Boers and the best fighters had gone, some south under the command of Tobias Smuts, who led his men out of reach of French at Barberton, and a larger number north. Of those who went north some were led by Botha across the mountains, evading Buller while the latter waited at Spitz Kop before pressing on again northwards to *Botha and Viljoen retreat.*

PART II. Pilgrims' Rest, and a larger body under Viljoen circled round
 ♦♦♦♦ on the northern side of the mountains through the Bushveldt, the home of malaria and the tsetse-fly. Viljoen has given us in his book a graphic description of the trek which he led so boldly and well, and in his judgement the English Generals at this date lost a great opportunity of intercepting the northern retreat of the patriots, and possibly ending the war. As it was, both Botha and Viljoen reached in safety Pietersburg and the Pietersburg Railway, the northern part of which was the last piece of line in South Africa on which British hands had not been laid; and on the 27th of October Steyn, Botha, and Viljoen held a gathering of burghers and exhorted them still to fight for their country. During November Viljoen was active in the neighbourhood of the western part of the Delagoa Bay line. On the 19th of that month he cut off an outpost manned by a party of the Buffs near Balmoral, and on the 29th gave Paget battle at Rhenoster Kop, some 15 miles north-east of Bronkhorst Spruit Station, repulsing the British attack and inflicting no little loss.

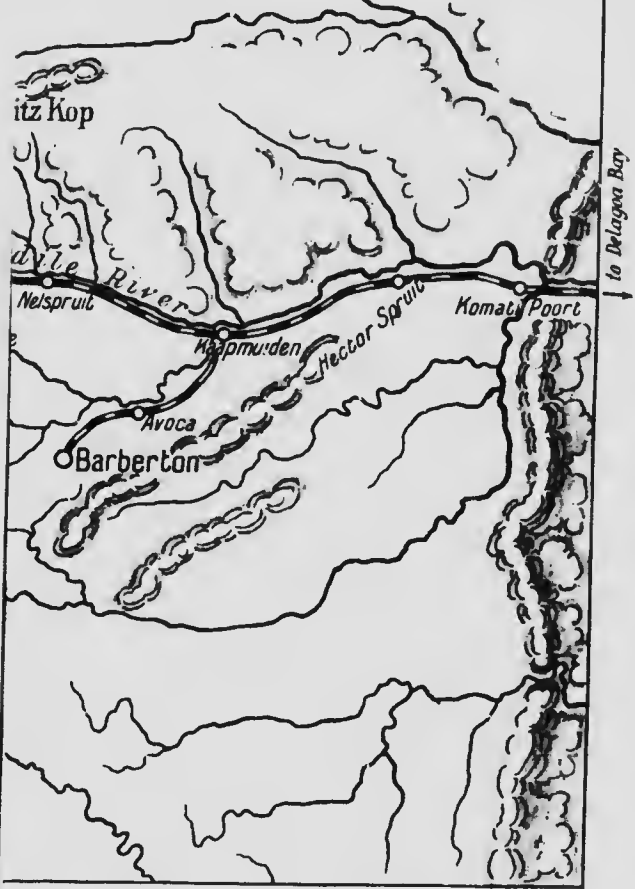
*The fight
at Rhenoster Kop.*

Paget with Plumer had been clearing, or attempting to clear, the southern end of the Pietersburg Railway and the country to the north-east of Pretoria between the Pietersburg and the Delagoa Bay lines. Clements had been operating in the Heekpoort Valley and along the southern slopes of the Magaliesberg. Methuen, who had made his base at Mafeking at the end of August, was fighting and marching to and fro in the west. Amid numberless skirmishes in various parts of the Transvaal, all testifying how far the war was from the end, mention should be made of one fight at Frederickstad on the Potchefstroom-Krugersdorp Railway, in which De Wet again appeared on the scene.

*De Wet's
move-
ments.*

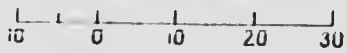
After he came back in the latter days of August from his rush to the Magaliesberg to his old retreat on the southern bank of the Vaal near Reitzburg, De Wet was for a short time not quiet, but not actively and aggressively fighting.

Rest

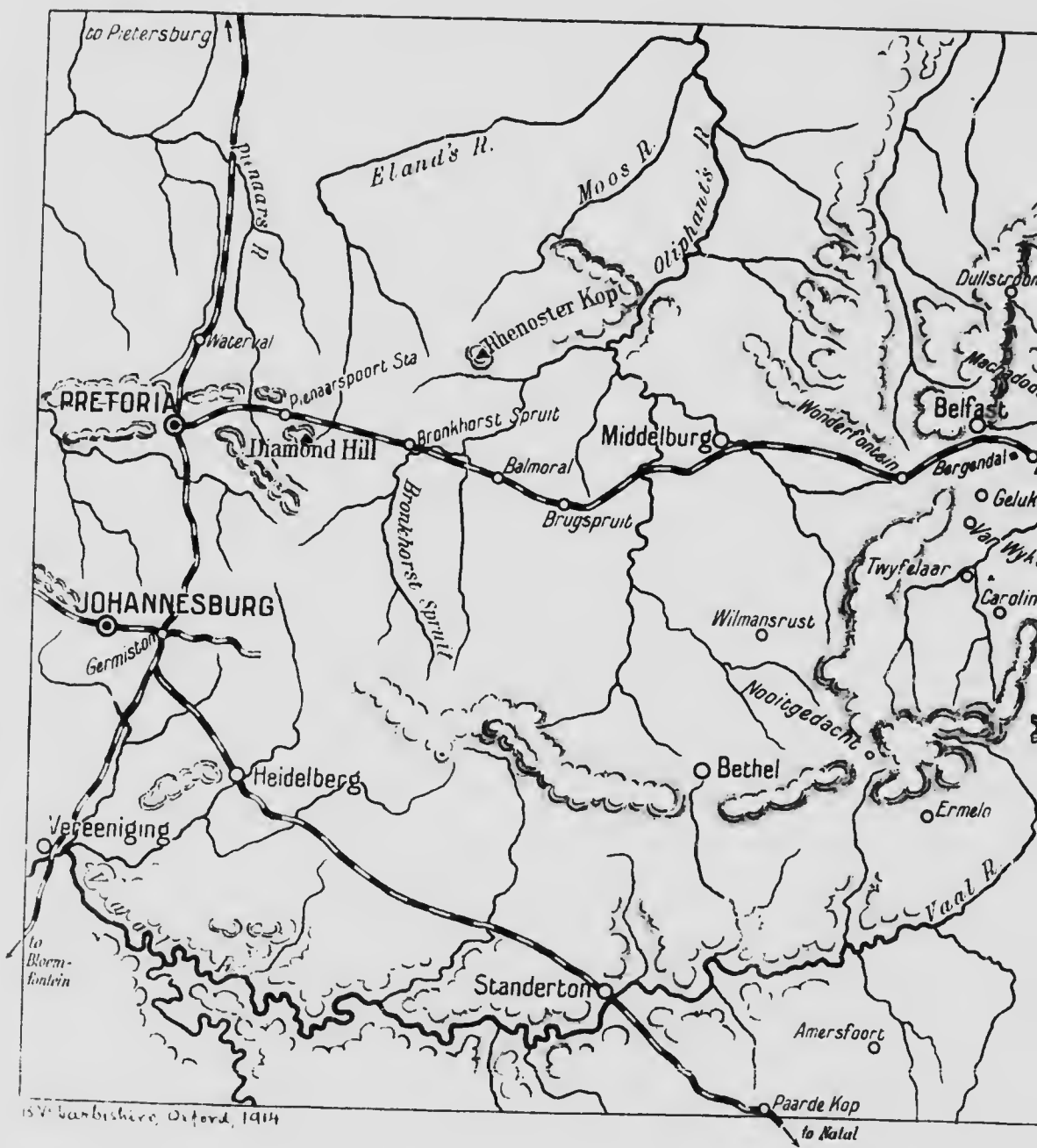


EASTERN
TRANSVAAL

Scale of Miles



To face p. 332



1871 W. B. Barbischere, Oxford, 1914



To face p. 332

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He rode over to Potchefstroom, was photographed during his visit there, and came back with a new supply of dynamite for his favourite occupation of blowing up the railways. Through September he was beating up the Free State to arms, calling out the farmers who had taken the oath of neutrality, appointing new commanders, among them one well known during the war and better known since, Hertzog, judge and general. In the middle of October he crossed the Vaal again to help Liebenberg, who was commanding in the Gatsrand and the Potchefstroom district, to attack General Barton, who had taken up a position at Frederickstad Station on the 17th of October. From about the 20th to the 25th of October, De Wet and Liebenberg surrounded Barton, but were eventually beaten off with a loss of some 80 men. Retreating south, De Wet, while recrossing the Vaal, was on the 27th of October caught up and very roughly handled at Rensburg Drift by British troops who had come up from the Free State under General Charles Knox. 'My dear old friend, General Charles Knox,'¹ as De Wet terms him, after having had experience of Knox's energy in pursuit, had at this time working with him one of the best leaders of mounted men in the British army, Le Gallais. Bad weather helped De Wet and his men to escape at Rensburg Drift, but not without loss, including two guns, and in a little more than a week's time they were caught up again. De Wet had gone with President Steyn in a south-westerly direction to the neighbourhood of Bothaville, on the Valsch River, Knox hunting for him and Le Gallais moving in front of Knox. On the night of the 5th-6th November a small Boer piquet was captured before alarm could be given, and soon after day broke on the 6th Le Gallais's scouts, looking over the edge of a low ridge, saw the whole Boer laager 300 yards away in the hollow, the men having just risen, or being in the act of rising, and making ready to inspan. Le Gallais had but

CH. IV.

At Frederickstad.

At Rensburg Drift.

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 232.

PART II. a small force on the spot, but opened fire at once. The
 —♦♦— majority of the Boers jumped on their horses, and with
De Wet's saddles or without them fled in all directions, among them
laager being De Wet and Steyn; but some 200 men were left, who
captured took up a position in a square garden or enclosure behind
near low stone walls, their artillery being in the open and com-
Bothaville. manded by the British fire. Near the garden was a farm-
 house, into which Le Gallais threw himself as a head-quarters
 from whence to direct the fight, but the doors were open and
 the light shone through, making all who moved within a mark
 for the Boer riflemen. It proved a death-trap. Le Gallais
 himself was killed, and his second in command was wounded.
 The British troops were enough to hold the Boers where they
 were, but not enough to overman them, the casualties were
 considerable, and De Wet was reforming his men for
 a counter-attack. The position was critical, but more of
 Le Gallais's own men came up in time to hold the ground,
 and shortly afterwards reinforcements under De Lisle arrived
 from Knox's main force. De Lisle took command and
 ordered the enclosure to be stormed, but by this time the
 Boers had had enough fighting and surrendered. In this
 fight De Wet lost over 150 men in killed, wounded, and
 prisoners, seven or eight guns, two of them British cannon
 now recovered, and the whole of his camp belongings. The
 English casualties were 46, but among the dead was the
 leader, Le Gallais, who could not be replaced. It was almost
 the only occasion on which De Wet was entirely surprised,
 and he suffered badly.

Yet this extraordinary man, after three reverses in suc-
 cession, at once went on to achieve a new and great success.
 He seems to have arrived at the conclusion that expeditions
 into the Transvaal were not profitable, and that more was
 to be expected from breaking into the Cape Colony and there
 raising rebellion anew. He therefore set his face south.
 There had been the same kind of spasmodic fighting in the

south of the Free State as in other directions, though on a smaller scale, one rather notable incident having been the successful defence of Ladybrand for three days at the beginning of September by 150 British troops against a much larger number of besiegers. In order to safeguard the south-east of the State, a line of forts had been planted across the country from Bloemfontein to Thabanchu and thence to Ladybrand, but the line was not held in great strength, and De Wet broke through it with a following of, it would seem, at least 1,500 men. He then turned his attention to Dewetsdorp, at this time garrisoned by some 480 officers and men. It was at Reddersburg near Dewetsdorp that he had scored one of his earlier and one of his greatest successes, and Dewetsdorp was his old home. 'My early days', he writes, 'had been spent in the vicinity of this town, which had been named after my father by the Volksraad; and later on I had bought from him the farm where I lived as a boy.'¹ He knew every inch of the country therefore, and the home surroundings, infested by the Boers of his country, must have appealed to him with peculiar force. He reconnoitred and led his men² past in full daylight in order to put the garrison off their guard, then doubled back at night, and began his investment on the 19th of November, the hard fighting beginning in the early morning of the 21st. The English positions, on three sides of the town, were too extended for the small numbers which held them. De Wet drove in the outposts one by one, took up positions himself on the south-east, the west, and the north, forced the defenders back, and cut off the water supply. On the evening of the 23rd of November, before relief came, the garrison surrendered, and De Wet went on south with over 400 prisoners.

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 221.

² De Wet says in his book that he had only 900 men with him at Dewetsdorp, of whom not more than 450 were actually attacking. This would make the attackers no more numerous than the defenders, but the former seem to have outnumbered the latter.

De Wet captures the garrison of Dewetsdorp.

PART II. He had intended to break into the Cape Colony between Bethulie and Aliwal North, while Hertzog was to cross between Norval's Pont and Hopetown, but troops and commanders were gathering to block him, and, what was more effective, the rains came down and the Orange River was in flood. It became a question not of making an advance, but of being able to retreat, for he was between the Orange River and the Caledon, and the Caledon was also in flood. In the nick of time the waters fell, he crossed the Caledon, and once more made his escape. The columns followed him, the Bloemfontein-Ladybrand chain of forts was across his path, but, with the loss of a gun and some 42 of his followers, on the 14th of December he broke through at the pass of Springhaansnek, and went on his northward way rejoicing, having left behind him men strictly charged to make mischief in the Cape Colony—Hertzog, Kritzinger, and Scheepers.

*Lord
Roberts re-
turns to
England.*

It was in the second week of December that he made good his escape, and by this time Lord Roberts had given up his South African command, having been appointed Commander-in-Chief in England. On the 29th of November he issued his farewell address to his army. He recounted their untiring and incessant work. 'For months together, in fierce heat, in biting cold, and in pouring rain, you, my comrades, have marched and fought without a halt.' He recounted too their conduct and their discipline. 'You have, in fact, acted up to the highest standard of patriotism; and by your conspicuous kindness and humanity towards your enemies, and your forbearance and good behaviour in the towns we have occupied, you have caused the army of Great Britain to be as highly respected as it must be henceforth greatly feared in South Africa.' The praise was earned. The South African campaign had tested the soldiers in a high degree. There had been no winter quarters; only such halts as military exigencies demanded. There had been endless marching against an elusive foe; there had

been constant shortage of necessaries of life. Conditions had been new and bewildering: the type of war had been such as to discourage and to provoke rather than to inspire and exhilarate. On the march and in the field the British soldiers had been at their best, and in the camp or the city their discipline had been on a far higher level than at any previous era of warfare. CH. IV.
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In this, as in all things, their General in Chief had given them a lead. Lord Roberts had not only retrieved the military position: he had raised the character of the war and of the actors in it, giving unity and cohesion and dignity to the whole, bringing out of confusion an intelligible enterprise, and into conception and execution introducing an element of greatness. Much was still left to be done, and small disasters would still call forth unkindly comment, but the world, which had mocked and jeered, stopped to think, because a great man had surmounted a crisis, and had opened the way for what was great in an Empire.

CHAPTER V
THE WAR
PART III

THE GUERRILLA WAR AND THE PEACE

PART II. —♦—
Guerrilla War. IN his *Three Years' War* General De Wet has a chapter headed 'Was ours a Guerrilla War?' Taking exception to the term as applied to the later phases of the South African War, he writes that 'the only case in which one can use this word is when one civilized nation has so completely vanquished another, that not only is the capital taken, but also the country from border to border is so completely conquered that any resistance is out of the question'.¹ When the year 1900 was drawing to a close the two Republics, though they had been proclaimed as British territory, and though, except in the far north of the Transvaal, they had been crossed and recrossed by British troops from border to border, were very far from being completely conquered, and eighteen months later, when peace came, they had still not been completely conquered. But, none the less, what remained of the Boer armies had split up into comparatively small bands of armed men, their efforts were in the main spasmodic and localized, the day of definite campaigns had passed, and the last year and a half of the South African War can only be accurately described as a guerrilla war. With this most difficult and dangerous form of resistance, adapted to the country, congenial to the race, calling out all

¹ p. 282.

the qualities in which South African Dutchmen excelled, and adding to them, as the result of experience and fine leadership, boldness in attack which had been wanting in the earlier stages of the struggle, Lord Kitchener was called upon to deal. What were the main features of the situation outside and inside South Africa when he took over the command?

CH. V.

In October there had been a general election in the United Kingdom, and Lord Roberts's successes, coupled with the sound instinct not to change horses when crossing the stream, had ensured to the existing Government a very strong majority. The Opposition was divided, and though there was an active and bitter section, described by De Wet as 'the noble classes of the British',¹ who condemned the war wholesale, as having been on the British side unnecessary and unjust, and whose speeches and writings tended materially to prolong the war by giving encouragement to the Boers, it was plain that the British nation, having put its hand to the plough, was determined not to look back until the end of the furrow. It was even more plain that this was the decision of the younger British peoples overseas, who sent a constant stream of contingents to ensure a lasting and successful issue to a war which vitally concerned the future of the whole Empire. Foreign intervention on the Boer side was more remote than ever, however strong were foreign sympathies with the brave remnant of the Republican forces in South Africa, and foreign antipathy to England. In March 1900, when the tide had turned against the Boers, a Boer deputation had been sent to Europe, consisting of Messrs. Wolmarans, Fischer, and Wessels, but no continental Government had given hope of intervention, and no hope was forthcoming from the United States. When the Dutch man-of-war brought President Kruger to Europe in the following November he was greeted with popular enthu-

The general position at the beginning of December 1900.

¹ Letter to General Smuts, February 8, 1902, printed in Appendix 3 to vol. iv of the official History of the war, p. 578.

PART II. siasm, especially in France, but the German Emperor declined to receive him. The commandos were huzzed up with impossible stories of a general uprising against England, but the leaders either had, as in Delarey's case, never expected foreign intervention, or gradually ceased to expect it. And yet the feeling against England in the world generally was intensely strong. The initial British reverses led the flame; it died down when Roberts restored British prestige; but, as the war dragged on, it burst out again. The small peoples sympathized with small peoples fighting desperately for independence. The great nations had, it must be presumed, bona fide sympathy for the weaker side, but gave vent also to suppressed antagonism and smouldering jealousy. England was heaping up her National Debt by millions; the home country was being denuded of armed men; all the world was in heart against the English; none had more cause to long that the war should come to an end than those who were responsible for England's safety.

In South Africa.

In the Cape Colony there had been a change of Government. The Schreiner Ministry had split on the question of the treatment to be meted out to the rebels. Three of its members—Merriman, Sauer, and Te Water—wanted in effect to condone rebellion, whereas Schreiner, the Premier, his Attorney-General, Richard Solomon, and the sixth member of the Cabinet, Mr. Herrholdt, were ready to meet the views of the Imperial Government by prescribing the moderate penalty of five years' disfranchisement for the rank and file of the rebels. The views could not be reconciled, and in June 1900 Schreiner retired. Sir Gordon Sprigg then came back to office and in October carried an Act, 'The Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act', on much the same lines as Schreiner had contemplated. High-minded and honourable as the retiring Premier had conspicuously been, the change of Government brought to the side of the High Commissioner, as his constitutional advisers in the Cape

Colony, a body of men more in line with the Imperial Government in regard to the war than the retiring Ministry had been. But in the later months of the year 1900 the condition of the Colony became less and less satisfactory, and Dutch sympathy with the Boers, where there was not open rebellion, became more and more pronounced. A People's Congress, as it was called, which was held at Worcester in the Colony on the 6th of December, denounced the war, and a deputation from the Congress, which waited upon the High Commissioner five days later, was told home truths by Sir Alfred Milner. 'The bulk of the men still in the field', he said, 'are buoyed up with false hopes; they are incessantly fed with lies, lies as to their own chance of success and, still worse, as to the intention of the British Government with regard to them should they surrender.'¹ Yet a few days passed, and then Hertzog and Kritzinger broke into the Colony across the Orange River, martial law was proclaimed in many districts, and, before January was out, covered nearly the whole of the Colony. Natal, on the other hand, except in the north-western angle, was fairly safe, though never free from the possibility of inroad by Botha and his mounted following. Rhodesia was quiet and not likely to be invaded; and the native districts, Basutoland and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, were comparatively secure.

The Orange River Colony and the Transvaal had been formally annexed; all the railways, with the exception of the northern part of the Pietersburg Railway, were in British hands, though constantly being interrupted and blown up, and arrangements were being made for the beginnings of administration. Commissioners had been sent out to Pretoria to inquire into the concessions which had been granted by the Transvaal Government before the war; and in December Sir David Barbour was deputed to report on the finances of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony.

¹ Cd. 547, April 1901, p. 23.

PART II. Steps had been taken in October to form a police force, the
 —♦— South African Constabulary, the first commander of which was Baden Powell; and it had been decided that, when Lord Roberts left South Africa, the High Commissionership of South Africa should be separated from the Governorship of the Cape Colony, and that the High Commissioner should also be Governor of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal, with a Lieutenant-Governor under him for the Orange River Colony. It was not, however, till the end of February 1901 that Milner left Capetown for Pretoria. The views of the Imperial Government with regard to the future of the conquered Republics had been embodied by Mr. Chamberlain in a despatch of the 2nd of August 1900: 'It is the desire of Her Majesty's Government that the inhabitants of these territories, assuming that they peaceably acquiesce in British rule and are ready to co-operate, irrespective of race, in maintaining the peace and furthering the prosperity of the country, should, as soon as circumstances permit, have all the advantages of self-government similar to that which is enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Cape Colony and Natal.'¹ It would have been well for all parties if the peaceable acquiescence and co-operation had been forthcoming. Many good lives would have been spared, much misery would have been avoided; but independence was dear to the fighting burghers, and the end was as yet far off.

Changes among the Commanders on both sides.

Among the protagonists on the British side—in addition to Lord Roberts—White, Buller, and Warren had gone. Kelly Kenny went home and was succeeded in the Bloemfontein command by Hunter, who in turn was invalided. Ian Hamilton went to England to be military secretary to Lord Roberts at the War Office, but returned before the close of the war. General Hutton went home. Others, notably French and Methuen, and, with a brief interval of leave, General Lyttelton, gave continuous service, and from

¹ Cd. 547, April 1901, pp. 1-2.

India came new commanders, Sir Bindon Blood and General Elliot. Various men, who, in the early months of the war, had already proved their worth in subordinate positions, increased their reputation and rose to higher commands; not a few found their special *métier* in bush-fighting and night-marches. On the Boer side, three leaders in war stood out far above all others: the two Transvaalers, Louis Botha and Delarey, the Free Stater, Christian De Wet. In their fighting existence was embodied the existence of the Republican cause. They had capable lieutenants. The law gave to the army, in the Transvaal, J. C. Smuts; in the Orange Free State, Judge Hertzog. In the Transvaal, among other hard-fighting men were Viljoen, Beyers, and Kemp, Delarey's chief lieutenant. Outside the actual fighting line President Steyn was the foremost figure. From first to last he cheered on his countrymen, and from first to last, even in broken health and with failing eyesight, he never faltered in passionate determination to uphold at all costs the independence of the Republics.

It was the commanding personality and the indomitable spirit of the Boer leaders which made the resistance so formidable and so prolonged. But for two or three men, and for the successes which they achieved, the war would assuredly have come to an end in half the time. In his evidence before the War Commission Sir Redvers Buller, who knew the Boer character, stated, 'I had always from the very earliest inception of the war conceived that the real way to end it would be by getting, if possible, some portion of the Boers to revolt from the tyranny of the others.'¹ With a view to encouraging and strengthening the section of the Boer community which favoured peace, Lord Kitchener, before the year 1900 ended, formed a Burgher Peace Committee at Pretoria, and began the system of Refugee Camps, in which Boers who had surrendered might live in or near

*The
Burgher
Peace Com-
mittee and
the Refugee
Camps.*

¹ Minutes of Evidence, vol. ii, Cd. 1791, 1903, p. 211.

PART II.

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*The
National
Scouts.*

their own districts under British protection and not be forced back into the fighting-line by their irreconcilable fellow countrymen. At a later date, from about September 1901, Boers were enlisted on the British side, under the title in the Transvaal of National Scouts, and in the Orange River Colony of Orange River Colony Volunteers. But it was only very gradually that resistance was worn down by drives and block-houses. Even at the end much persuasion was needed on the part of Botha and Delarey before the fighting remnant would lay down their arms.

*Lord
Kitchener's
difficulties.*

The more the numbers were attenuated, the more difficult it became to intercept the few who remained in the field, while those who held out were the hardest fighters, the most skilled in elusion and in ambushade. It was hard at the time, it is easier now, for onlookers and students to appreciate the overwhelming difficulties with which Kitchener had to contend, the immense area of territory and the facilities which it gave to a race of men who had been bred in, traversed, and hunted through its solitudes. 'Every Boer', testified Sir Archibald Hunter in his evidence before the War Commission, 'is a past master in transport, every Boer can yoke oxen to a span, every Boer can drive a team of oxen, and every Boer knows quite well what a team of mules or a team of oxen can do with a particular weight.' 'Transport', he added, 'means mobility,'¹ and this mobility the Boers possessed in an extraordinary degree, becoming more mobile as the months went on and they had less to lose. This, which the English only partially learnt by painful experience, was their second nature. Shooting again was their second nature, and though Hunter thought that their marksmanship was overrated, he added, 'There are certain shots who have earned their living as professional hunters, and up to from 200 yards to 300 they

¹ Minutes of Evidence, vol. ii, Cd. 1791, 1903, p. 142.

are undoubtedly marvellous shots.'¹ Boer eyes had been trained in South African sunlight on the broad expanse of the veldt, and their sight was infinitely keener than that of British soldiers, many of them town-bred. They themselves in turn were not to be discerned by wearing uniform. Lord Roberts wrote that 'owing to the non-compliance of the Boers with the recognized custom of war which compels combatants to wear a distinctive uniform, they have found it easy to pose as peaceful agriculturists one day and to take part in active hostilities on the next'.² In the latest stages of the war they replenished their wardrobes by stripping their prisoners, and time and again British troops were surprised by horsemen dressed in khaki, whom they had taken for their own friends. De Wet tells us that 'the custom of Uitschudden', of stripping the prisoners and appropriating their uniforms, came into force against orders because the English destroyed the leather with which the burghers had mended their clothes.³ It was one of the irregularities which characterized the fighting of undisciplined citizens, and which, rightly or wrongly, not being summarily dealt with, tended to prolong the war.

It would have been a task of the greatest difficulty to bring the Transvaal and the Orange Free State under complete control, even if the Cape Colony had been solid in loyalty to the British cause. But it was in the Cape Colony that the greatest danger lay, and here a field presented itself for a definite policy on the part of the Boer leaders. In their own territories they could do no more than delay the inevitable by occasional coups and perpetual menace, losing ground steadily, if slowly, month by month. But in the Cape Colony there was a possibility of making in a sense a new war, of raising districts *en masse*,

*The danger
in the Cape
Colony.*

¹ Ibid., p. 138.

² Despatch of October 15, 1900, South Africa Despatches, vol. i, Cd. 457, 1901, p. 53.

³ *Three Years' War*, p. 288.

PART II. of replenishing supplies, of striking at the ports on which the enemy depended. It was no doubt a remote possibility, but the real danger to Great Britain in the latter days of the war lay not in the late Republics depleted and overrun, but in the comparatively prosperous British colony where there was much to lose. At the same time, the fact that there was much to lose was probably the determining factor which weighed down the scale on the British side. Bitter as they were against the English, keenly as they sympathized with the fighting Boers, the Cape Dutchmen as a whole were not prepared to throw in their lot against Great Britain, for it meant risking their all.

The Magaliesberg.

The Magaliesberg Mountains had already shown themselves good friends to the Boers. They lay within Delarey's 'sphere of influence', and in the earlier part of December they were again the scene of British reverses. The English garrison at Rustenburg was at this time provisioned by convoys sent westward along the road from Pretoria, and at the beginning of the month a large convoy was on its way to Rustenburg. It was divided into two parts, the leading half being some miles distant from the rear section. The whole had passed through the mountains at Commando Nek, and was moving along the northern side of the range, when very early in the morning of the 3rd of December, near a place called Buffelspoort, the front part was ambushed by Delarey, who had swooped down over the mountains from the south. The escort of this first half of the train only consisted of 230 or 240 men in all, with two guns; the men at the tail of the wagons were overwhelmed, a small party sent to hold a high hill on the south side of the road was forced to surrender, and the wagons were taken. But the rest of the escort did all that men could do to redeem the disaster. A handful in all, gunners and infantry, the latter being Yorkshiremen, beset by six times their number, posted on high ground on the north of the road, they held their own with splendid resolution from early

Convoy intercepted by Delarey at Buffelspoort.

morning till nightfall, and though half were killed or wounded, the survivors beat off their assailants and saved the guns. The day ended with the total loss of the wagons and stores in the first part of the convoy, and with 118 British casualties. The rear half, wagons and escort, remained intact.

CH. V.

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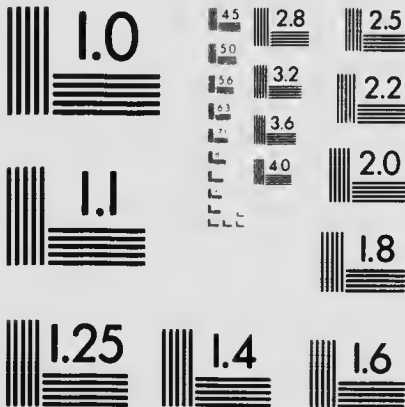
General Broadwood was at this time operating in the western part of the Magaliesberg, and General Clements had been ordered from Krugersdorp to combine with him. Clements's force had been greatly depleted for the moment, and he moved north with no more than 1,500 men and ten guns. On the 8th of December he took up a position at Nootgedacht, on the southern side of the mountains, southwest of Commando Nek. There he waited for reinforcements, endeavouring at the same time to keep in touch with Broadwood, and there the Boers determined to attack and annihilate him before he was reinforced, with a view to pressing on subsequently southwards towards Johannesburg and Krugersdorp. With this end in view General Beyers led down 1,600 men from the Pietersburg Railway. Moving swiftly and secretly, he joined Delarey in the Magaliesberg, and on the morning of the 13th of December the two leaders made a combined attack on Clements's position, Broadwood being at the time some long distance away on the northern side of the range. Clements was encamped at the very foot of the mountains, which rose behind the camp in a steep cliff. The cliff was bisected by a ravine, up which was the only approach to the plateau above. On the plateau, whence in fine weather it was possible to signal to friends on the northern side, were outposts of the British force, 300 Northumberland Fusiliers in two sections, one on either side of the head of the ravine. There were also outposts to the camp on the lower ground below the cliff, especially on the west, but the position as a whole was far easier to attack than to defend. The Boer plan was that Beyers should rush the piquets on the cliff, that part of Delarey's force should assault the

Nootgedacht.



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PART II. camp below on the western side, and that Delarey with the
 —♦♦— main body of his troops should come up from the south-west. The first effort was made on the low ground, where Badenhorst attacked from the west. Here the mounted infantry were stationed; the Boer onset broke the line, but reinforcements came up, and in no long time the enemy was beaten off, the Boer commander having been premature in his movement. He had hardly been repulsed, when the battle began on the cliffs above. The lie of the ground at the top of the cliff was such that the men on the left, the western section of the Northumberland Fusiliers, were out of sight of their comrades on the right, and the two sections fought their fights independently. The Boers first attacked and overwhelmed the western party, they then attacked in front and on both flanks the men who held the right. There was hard fighting, but ammunition failed; reinforcements could not be brought up the steep mountain side in face of the Boer fire, and the whole 300 were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. The main camp was now in imminent danger. The Boers were firing down from the mountain-top above, Delarey was threatening below; but at the critical time Clements proved himself a cool and resolute leader, 'possessed of fine soldierly qualities which his misfortunes [have] served rather to accentuate than to obscure.'¹ Under cover of his guns he withdrew his transport to a hill on the south-east, and the guns were then brought back with singular skill and courage under hot fire from the enemy. In their new position the diminished English force were still in danger of being cut off; the transport animals were stampeded by Delarey's cannon, and were with difficulty recovered; but, while the Boers lost time in looting the abandoned camp, Clements ordered a further retreat, and brought off his men

¹ This was Lord Kitchener's tribute to General Clements at the end of the war. Despatch of June 23, 1902, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 988, 1902, p. 5.

into safety. Out of 1,500 he had lost 638, but the next day he was strongly reinforced, and French having been sent up by Lord Kitchener to meet the Boer concentration, Delarey and Beyers were separated and driven off, and any further Boer designs in this region were for the time effectively countered.

About this same date, before dawn on the 11th of December, a determined attack was made on the British garrison of Vryheid in the south-eastern Transvaal, 900 strong and largely men of the Royal Lancaster Regiment. The Boer attack came as a surprise, but the main position, a hill to the north of the town, was firmly held, and, after the fight had lasted for the whole day, the Boers drew off, the British casualties having numbered 58 and the commanding officer having been killed. Later in the month, on Christmas night, the garrison at the neighbouring town of Utrecht was attacked, but in this case the defenders had been fully forewarned, and the attack proved a costly failure. Near the Delagoa Bay line, on the other hand, before the year ended, the Boers were able to record a substantial success. On the route from the railway station at Machadodorp to Lydenburg, three miles or more to the north-east of Machadodorp, Helvetia was garrisoned by over 300 men with a 4.7 inch cannon. Against it General Ben Viljoen planned a night attack, and coming down through Dullstroom from the north-west, he put his plan into execution before morning on the 29th of December. He had with him rather under 600 men. Of these he sent 120 to make a simultaneous attack on the next British post to the north of Helvetia, Zwartkopjes, three miles away; 100 he detached to watch the road from Machadodorp; and with some 350 he made the main attack on Helvetia. On the eastern side of the village were the great gun and the gunners, with 100 infantry; on the north-western side a British outpost held a kopje; and nearer the centre of the village were two other posts. It was a night of fog and mist, the

CH. V.

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*The attack
on Vryheid.*

On Utrecht.

Helvetia.

PART II. party directed against Zwartkopjes lost their way and did nothing, but the attack on Helvetia was conspicuously successful. Gun Hill, as the eastern post was called, was rushed at once, the men stationed on it being taken completely by surprise; the two inner posts thereupon surrendered, and only the small party of 65 men on the north-west kopje held their own successfully. When day came Viljoen carried off the gun, though without its ammunition, and 235 prisoners. Thus the year ended with an exploit which was evidence of Boer daring and British negligence, and which gave no little stimulus to prolongation of the war.

The combined attack on the Delagoa Bay line.

A few days later Viljoen was called to meet his Commander-in-Chief at a farm called Hoedspruit to the east of Middelburg, for Botha had in his mind a combined attack upon 40 miles of the Delagoa Bay line, from Pan on the west to Machadodorp on the east. The attack was duly made on the night of the 7th-8th January, seven points along the line being assailed simultaneously. The most serious effort was against Belfast, where Smith Dorrien had his head-quarters with a garrison of some 1,800 men. Viljoen attacked from the north of the railway, Christian Botha from the south. Viljoen had some measure of success. Led by Muller, the best of his lieutenants, who had stormed Gun Hill at Helvetia, 500 of his men broke into the defences on Monument Hill, north-east of the town, and after a spell of desperate hand-to-hand fighting overmastered the men, about a hundred, who held it, while a small outpost on the west, after a stubborn resistance, was also blotted out. But here the success ended; the central defences were not carried, and on the south Christian Botha was beaten off. At Belfast the British casualties numbered 140, but the Boers suffered heavily also, and at all the other posts on the railway they failed completely.

French's drive in the Eastern Transvaal.

Botha's scheme had in short ended in a fiasco, and, before January was out, Lord Kitchener had initiated an attempt on

a large scale to clear the Eastern Transvaal between the Natal and Delagoa Bay Railways, the general charge of the operations being entrusted to French. Starting towards the end of January, not far from the line from Johannesburg to Pretoria, a row of columns moved east, while others coming south from the Delagoa Bay line converged to meet them. One of these latter columns was Smith Dorrien's, and, as it moved south-east, it was hotly attacked in its camp at the northern end of Lake Chrissie by Botha, who was breaking back through the British cordon. The attack was beaten off with somewhat heavier loss to the Boers than to the English, but Botha went free, as did also at one point and another most of the hard-fighting Boers. The drive went on, the trend being to the south-east, where the Transvaal narrowed towards Zululand and Natal; the difficulties of supplies became increasingly great through heavy rains and flooded rivers. When the end came about the middle of April, the English had accounted for some 1,300 Boers and 11 guns, with vast numbers of wagons and stock. The Boer cause had thus been appreciably weakened in the Eastern Transvaal; and though Botha and the great majority of his best fighting men had escaped the net which had been thrown round them, there was no question for the time being of any descent on Natal, such as had been contemplated in the event of the Boer invasion of the Cape Colony, which will now be noticed, having achieved some marked success.

In a despatch of the 8th of March, 1901,¹ Lord Kitchener wrote, 'From information received, and since confirmed, it has transpired that the enemy's general plans at the end of 1900, were that Hertzog should proceed to Lambert's Bay, as indeed he did, and there meet a ship, which the burghers were told was bringing mercenaries, guns, and ammunition from Europe, while De Wet was to proceed south by De Aar and join hands with Hertzog in a combined attack upon

CH. V.

*The fight
at Lake
Chrissie.*

*The invasion
of the
Cape
Colony.*

¹ South Africa Despatches, Cd. 522, 1901, pp. 6-7.

PART II. Capetown. When Commandant-General Botha had heard that this concentration had been successfully effected, he was
 —◆— to enter Natal with a picked force of 5,000 mounted men, and make for Durban. In the early stages of the war the Boers invaded the Cape Colony, except in the north-western districts, in large bodies, moving very slowly, and not making any serious attempt to penetrate far into the south. In the later stages all this was changed; and invasion took the form of small bodies, moving very quickly, diving into the heart of the Colony and making their way to the southernmost districts. So far as invasion meant pressure from without, the later phase was not so dangerous as the earlier; the number of invaders was smaller, and the number of troops available for the defence of the colony was infinitely greater. But so far as invasion implied leavening the Colony throughout with disaffection, the later inroads were more dangerous than the earlier.

*Hertzog
and Krit-
zinger.*

After De Wet had failed at the beginning of December 1900 to cross the flooded Orange River, the two Free Staters, Kritzinger and Hertzog, acting on instructions, crossed the river and entered the Cape Colony in the middle of the month. Kritzinger, with 700 men, crossed to the east of Bethulie at or near Odendaal Drift; Hertzog, with a following of 1,200, crossed at Sand Drift to the west of Colesberg Bridge. Kritzinger rode south through the eastern part of the Colony, visited the Dutch centre of Graaf Reinet, divided his small force, placing one part of it under the command of the redoubtable scout Scheepers, and nearly reached the coast in the neighbourhood of Mossel Bay. Hertzog made for the west, then turned south, and threatened an advance on Capetown through the districts of Piquetberg and Malmesbury. There was no part of the Colony which was or seemed to be safe. On the 20th of December martial law was proclaimed in many districts, including Graaf Reinet. On the 8th of January it was extended to districts as near

*Martial
law in the
Cape
Colony.*

Capetown as Malmesbury, Paarl, and Stellenbosch. On the 17th the whole Colony was put under martial law except Capetown, Simonstown, Wynberg, Port Elizabeth, East London, and the native territories. Had the military men been given their way the ports too would have been included, but in this matter Sir Gordon Sprigg did not see eye to eye with Lord Kitchener. It was not until the 9th of October, 1901, after conditions in the Colony had again become critical, that the seaboard was at length covered by martial law, and that adequate powers were at length, in Lord Kitchener's words, 'secured for the military authorities to enable them to deal with the plots and intrigues of Boer spies and sympathizers at the seaport towns, and to close to them this source of supply of munitions of war.'¹

In a despatch of the 6th of February, 1901, the High Commissioner, plain and downright as always, told how serious was the condition of the Colony, determined that his fellow countrymen should know how far the war was from being at an end. 'It is no use denying', he wrote, 'that the last half year has been one of retrogression.'² He was determined, too, that it should be known what influences had been at work to prolong the war. 'Never in my life have I read of, much less experienced, such a carnival of mendacity as that which accompanied the Pro-Boer agitation in this Colony at the end of last year.'² When he wrote Kritzinger and Hertzog were turning north again. General Settle, who was in charge on the British side, had taken adequate measures to bar Hertzog's route towards Capetown. Hertzog had reached Lambert's Bay, but had found a British man-of-war there instead of the friendly vessel which had been looked for. A Colonial Defence Force had been formed out of the Loyalists; the British

¹ Despatch of November 8, 1901, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 823, 1902, p. 11.

² Cd. 547, April 1901, pp. 55, 57.

PART II. columns were many and untiring; the raiders could not be
 —♦— caught, but were being hunted in all directions. But in their southward raids, the one on the west, the other on the east, they had had the ulterior object of drawing off the defenders of the Colony in diverse directions, so as to leave an unguarded centre through which a more dangerous inroad might be made, and in the morning north they were turning to meet the Boer commander from whom they had taken their cue.

*De Wet
 invades the
 Cape
 Colony.*

It was known to Lord Kitchener that De Wet was contemplating a fresh descent upon the Cape Colony, and he took all possible precautions to prevent it. Having escaped, as has been seen, through Springhaansnek on the 14th of December, De Wet had, as usual, disbanded his followers, with a view to future concentration after a short interval for recruiting. A month or so followed with no striking incident in the Free State, except that on the 4th of January a British patrol of 150 men was ambushed and annihilated by Philip Botha at Kromspruit, east of Lindley, in a district only too familiar with British mishaps; and then, about the 25th of January, De Wet collected over 2,000 men in the Doornberg, 20 miles and more to the north-east of Winburg.

*The meet-
 ing in the
 Doornberg.*

Here, in the absence of a Volksraad, Steyn was re-elected President by the burghers; and on the night of the 27th, De Wet, forestalling a combined attack by Knox and Bruce Hamilton, broke up his laager and led his men off to the south. On the 29th Knox caught up the rearguard, and had a hot fight at Tabaksberg, the English losing a Vickers Maxim gun; and on the 30th De Wet broke through the block-house line, between Sannah's Post and Thabanchu, and went on towards the south. Once more, as so often before, he had outdistanced the English, but Lord Kitchener held the railway. Knox's and Bruce Hamilton's columns were entrained for the Orange River, Paget and Plumer with their men were brought down from the Transvaal, General

*Tabaks-
 berg.*

Lyttelton was also brought from the Transvaal to take charge of operations in the Cape Colony.

CH. V.

De Wet, with whom was Steyn, having broken south, moved leisurely, but he evaded the columns which were lining the Orange River. He sent Commandant Fourie with some of his men into the south-east corner of the Free State, as though he intended to cross to the east of Bethulie; and moving west himself, went over the railway, and on the 10th of February crossed the river at Sand Drift, to the north-west of Cclesberg Bridge, where Hertzog had previously crossed. He seems to have entered the Colony with some 1,400 men, a considerable number of those who started with him towards the south having remained behind on their own side of the river. He had effected the crossing, but almost from the moment that he reached the other side he was hunted as hotly as he had been chased in the Transvaal. Among the many columns that were converging on him was Plumer's force, largely composed of hard-riding Australasians. Coming up from Colesberg, Plumer cut him off from the south and drove him west. The rain was falling in torrents;

De Wet crosses the Orange River, Feb. 10.

the ground was bogged; the rivers were in flood. On the eastern side of the Kimberley Railway, north of De Aar, Plumer came up with the Boer rearguard, and in mud and morass De Wet lost many of his wagons. He crossed the railway, fired on but not stopped, and rode north-west towards Prieska, hoping to join hands with Hertzog. The Brak River was in his way, and the Brak River was flooded. To the north was the great northern loop of the Orange River, also in flood; to the south the English columns were on his heels. The dream of invasion had vanished, it was a question merely of escape. He doubled back eastward, following the upward course of the Orange River in the hope of finding a crossing. A party of Queenslanders hung on his trail, and brought Plumer again upon it. Some 200 of De Wet's men made their way in a boat across the Orange River,

PART II. high up in the great loop a little above the confluence of the
 ♦♦♦♦♦ Vaal. The rest, with De Wet himself, Plumer drove up-
 stream, to the south-east; and on the 22nd the worn-out
 British troops secured De Wet's two guns and 100 prisoners.
 Eastward De Wet went again, leaving some of his dismounted
 burghers under Commandant Haasbroek to find safety for
 themselves. He made his way back over the railway; he
 joined forces with Hertzog, making always eastward and up-
 stream; he tried ford after ford of the flooded river, and at
 length, having evaded his pursuers with wonderful dexterity,
 he re-crossed into the Free State on the 28th of February, at
 a drift, Leliefontein, not far from Colesberg Bridge, higher
 up the river, farther east, than the point at which he had
 broken into the Colony.

*He re-
 crosses it
 Feb. 28.*

It was, so De Wet tells us, 'an old wagon ford.'¹ Thus at last he escaped over the river by a disused drift, just as he had made his way back over the Magaliesberg by a goat-track. 'A fearful experience we had had,'² is his own comment, and Lord Kitchener summed up the results of the inroad in the following words: 'His losses in killed and wounded during the various engagements must have been very considerable, and seeing that over 200 prisoners, all his guns, ammunition, and wagons fell into our hands, he undoubtedly quitted Cape Colony with great loss of prestige.'³ He had not been caught, and to secure him and President Steyn was an object which outweighed all others. For De Wet's reputation rested at least as much on his power of escaping as on his ability to strike heavy blows. The power of escaping, the slimness, the outwitting appealed to his fellow countrymen with peculiar force; more than any man he embodied this national characteristic. Once more he had given a great illustration of elusiveness against tremendous

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 275.

² *Ibid.*

³ Despatch of March 8, 1901, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 522, 1901, p. 10.

odds, for never had British troops been more persistent and untiring, never had they been hurled on their enemies with more relentless energy. So far De Wet had scored, but otherwise his enterprise had been the most miserable failure. He came as an invader. From the moment he touched the Cape Colony he was a hunted fugitive. It may be doubted whether he ever fully recovered his eighteen days' experience in the Cape Colony. It is noteworthy that he never attempted to enter the Colony again. It is noteworthy, too, that while up to that date his career had been punctuated by brilliant surprises and captures, in the fourteen months of the war which still remained he only achieved one great success—on Christmas Day at Tweefontein. He continued to escape and to show others how to escape, but the Cape Colony had to no small extent robbed him of his sting. The immediate result was that both he and Hertzog disappeared from the Cape Colony. Plumer still hunted him northwards through the Free State, but he had a good start. He pushed up the western side of the railway, crossed the Modder at Abraham's Kraal, turned east over the railway north of Brandfort, and dispersed the remnant of his harried forces.

On the 28th of February, the day on which De Wet recrossed the Orange River, General Botha, in accordance with a verbal invitation, met Lord Kitchener at Middelburg to discuss the possibility of ending the war. The conference was foredoomed to failure, for the Boers were not yet prepared for the sacrifice of their independence by which alone peace could be bought. Yet it was thought well to let them know what terms they might expect if they accepted the inevitable submission to the British Crown, and these terms were embodied in a letter from Kitchener to Botha of the 7th of March. In the event of a general surrender, an amnesty would at once be given for all bona fide acts of war; the prisoners of war beyond the seas would be brought back

CH. V.

—*—

*The Middelburg
Conference.*

PART II. as soon as possible; the Cape and Natal rebels, if they returned to those colonies, would be liable to be dealt with by the laws that had been passed by the Colonial Legislatures. Civil administration would replace military administration as soon as practicable; representative institutions would follow, and ultimately self-government; while immediately after the end of the war a High Court of Justice, independent of the Executive, would be established in each of the two annexed territories. Assurances were given respecting Church property and public trusts, and as to allowing the Dutch language to be used side by side with English in the schools and in the Courts of law. The British Government would acknowledge no liability for the debts of the Republican Governments, but as an act of grace would grant a sum not exceeding a million to meet duly established bona fide claims by inhabitants of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony against their late rulers. Hope was held out of a loan to enable the farmers to repair the ravages of the war, and a definite promise was made that no special war-tax should be imposed upon the farms. Firearms would be allowed for purposes of protection when required, as well as of sport, on taking out licences. Finally, on the all-important native question, it was intimated that it was not intended to give the franchise to the Kaffirs prior to the grant of representative government, and that in the event of the franchise being given the predominance of the white race would be assured. Such were the liberal terms offered, but they were offered too soon. Botha rejected them, and used them as a text for an address to the fighting burghers, as evidence 'that the British Government desires nothing else but the destruction of our Afrikaner people. . . . Virtually, the letter contains nothing more, but rather less, than what the British Government will be obliged to do, should our cause go wrong.'¹ The offer was, in fact, and the Dutchmen characteristically regarded it

¹ *Cd.* 663, July 1901, p. 3.

as, the beginning of bargaining, a process of which the English had had bitter experience in South Africa. Botha was informed that, if the terms were not accepted in reasonable time, they must be regarded as cancelled. None the less they stood on record, and, regarding them as a minimum for future negotiations, if necessary, the Boers were minded to continue the war.

There had been a Boer success in the Gatsrand on the 31st of January, when J. C. Smuts, with over 1,000 men, after nearly two days' fighting, overwhelmed a British force at Modderfontein, causing a loss of some 260 officers and men, in addition to the contents of a convoy which had just come up in time to be captured. Smuts, who had been prominent before the war as State Attorney of the Transvaal Government, and who now came to the front in arms, as previously in diplomacy, had come from Delarey's command. Delarey himself on the 6th of March attacked the British garrison in his own town of Lichtenburg, but after twenty-four hours' fighting was beaten off with loss; and on the 24th of the month he suffered a serious defeat at the hands of General Babington, losing at Taaibosch Spruit his transport, and 140 men. In the north of the Transvaal the English made progress. Plumer was sent up the Pietersburg Railway, and on the 8th of April occupied Pietersburg, which remained in British hands till the end of the war. The Boers thus lost their last shred of railway line and their last unmolested resting-place. From Pietersburg he co-operated with Sir Bindon Blood's columns, which in April and the beginning of May swept the country north of the Delagoa Bay line and east of the Pietersburg Railway. Viljoen, who commanded the Boer forces in this area, slipped away, but with difficulty and with the loss of transport and guns, and some 1,400 Boers were accounted for. For the moment the fortunes of the Transvaalers were at a low ebb; winter was upon them, and on the 10th of May the itinerating

*Moi-
fontein*

*Lichten-
burg.*

*Taaibosch
Spruit.*

*Pietersburg
occupied.*

*Sir Bindon
Blood's
movements.*

PART II. Government held a Conference with Botha, Viljoen, and Smuts, Delarey being absent, at De Emigratie Farm between Ermelo and Wakkerstroom. The reports from the field of war, from east and west alike, were gloomy, and it was decided to ask Lord Kitchener to allow a deputation to be sent to Europe to confer with Kruger, and to write to Steyn informing him that this step had been taken, and suggesting that, in the event of Kitchener's refusal to grant the request, or in the event of the mission proving abortive, an armistice should be applied for. The request was refused. Kitchener would not recognize any plenipotentiaries on the Boer side except the men on the spot. But he allowed a telegram to be sent to Kruger, who counselled further resistance. Steyn, on his side, was emphatic against any sign of yielding.

—♦—
*Transvaal
 Council of
 War of
 May 10,
 1901.*

Vlakfontein.

May went on, and on the 29th there was a severe fight in the Western Transvaal at Vlakfontein Farm, south-west of Olifants Nek. The British commander was Brigadier-General Dixon, and he had a following of 1,300 men or more with guns. The Boers, some 1,500 strong, were led by Kemp, Delarey's brilliant young lieutenant. Dixon had moved out in the morning along and between two parallel ridges, his left flank being on the southern ridge, his right flank on the northern. Retiring towards the camp later in the day, he made his left flank the rearguard, and this was charged under cover of burning grass by Kemp's mounted men, an attack being simultaneously threatened on the opposite side. At first Kemp's onset was irresistible; he rode down the men opposed to him and took the guns that were on this southern ridge, but Dixon brought up the infantry from the right wing and the centre in a counter-attack, and before their bayonets the Boers gave way and the English regained the ground and recovered the guns. Yet it had been a costly fight. The Boers left some 40 dead bodies behind them, and the total British casualties exceeded 180. A fortnight later, on the 12th of June, there was for the English a disastrous fight at

Wilmansrust.

Wilmansrust, near the road from Middelburg to Ermelo. Here Commandant Muller, Viljoen's right-hand man, attacked at nightfall a detachment of 350 Victoria Rifles, not yet sufficiently acclimatized to South African warfare or sufficiently alert against surprises. Though the Boers were numerically inferior, they swept the camp with a rush, accounted for most of the Australians, and carried off the supplies and two Vickers-Maxim guns.

This fight gave encouragement to the Boer cause, on which the Governments and commanders of the two Republics met to take counsel shortly afterwards. Prior to the Conference, in the early part of June, Delarey had gone to the Free State to meet De Wet, as Botha had ridden over to meet him at Vrede earlier in the year. While Delarey and De Wet were in company, a small fight took place in the Free State at Graspan Farm near Reitz, to which some prominence has
Graspan. been given in the accounts of the war. General Elliot's forces were marching, counter-marching, and patrolling in the north of the State, and on the 6th of June a party of 200 men under Major Sladen had at sunrise captured a Boer convoy, consisting largely of women. Among the prisoners was also Mr. Kestell, President Steyn's chaplain, the author of *Through Shot and Flame*. In the neighbourhood of Graspan were De Wet and Delarey, with a few men at their back, and the news being brought to them, a rescue was attempted by 200 Boers. The English, on being attacked, threw themselves into a stone kraal near which they were encamped, and there was hot fighting, with losses large for the numbers engaged, until British reinforcements arrived, drove off the Boers, and restored the *status quo*. It was on the 20th of June that the Boer Council of War took place, the scene being Waterval Farm near Standerton, on the southern
The Boer Council of War on June 20, 1901. border of the Transvaal. All the chief leaders of the two Republics were present, and it was determined that no peace proposals should be entertained which did not ensure Boer

PART II. independence. Contact with Steyn and De Wet stiffened the resolution of the Transvaalers, who had previously wavered, and the fighting at Vlakfontein and Wilmansrust had tended to raise their spirits. Yet all turned on the leading of three or four men, and had fortune favoured the English on more than one occasion to the extent of intercepting one or other of those who were vital to the cause of resistance, the resistance might easily have crumbled. Fortune, deserved by his surpassing skill, had signally favoured De Wet in the chases through the Transvaal and the Cape Colony. Fortune favoured President Steyn at Reitz on the 11th of July 1901. The British columns had passed by, and, secure behind their backs, what remained of the Free State Government had come into the place. But secretly General Broadwood had been detached to turn back on the route which had been taken, and he had intended to surround the place before the sun was up. He made a forced night-march of 30 miles, but a slight delay made it necessary to gallop in for the last three miles in daylight. He secured nearly the whole of the officials with their State papers, but one horseman, President Steyn, just managed to escape. Without coat or boots, 'Without bridle or bit, and with only the riem of the halter in the horse's mouth, the President galloped away.'¹

President Steyn's narrow escape.

The beginnings of civil administration in the Transvaal.

The war was to go on for many long months, but none the less by the middle of 1901 the first signs of the revival of peace were to be discerned. At the beginning of March Lord Milner had come up to the Transvaal, and before he left for England in May for a short leave of absence he had made a start with civil administration. A few citizens had been allowed to return to Johannesburg, three of the mines had been partially reopened, and on the 8th of May a proclamation was issued constituting a nominated Town Council for the city, to consist of a Chairman, deputy Chairman, and not more than 18 nor less than 12 Councillors

¹ *Through Shot and Flame*, by the Rev. J. D. Kestell, 1903, p. 194.

appointed by the Governor. The block-houses and refugee camps had their civil as well as their military aspect. There had been fortified posts in existence for some time past, as on the line from Bloemfontein to Thabanchu and Ladybrand, through which De Wet had broken more than once; but it was in January 1901 that Lord Kitchener began a regular system of corrugated iron block-houses. The first were along the railway to check the perpetual wreckage of the lines, and in June and July cross-country lines began. 'The month of July', wrote the Commander-in-Chief, 'has been marked by a wide development of our system of block-house defence.'¹ Before the war ended 'the system finally included over 8,000 block-houses, covering a total distance of about 3,700 miles.'² De Wet heaped scorn upon the block-houses. 'This policy of the block-house', he writes in his book, 'might equally well have been called the policy of the blockhead';³ and to General Smuts in the Cape Colony, in February 1902, he confided his view that 'the block-houses is one of the most ridiculous of tactics that I have ever seen since the commencement of the war'.⁴ He showed himself an adept in giving them the go-by, but it may possibly be inferred from the space which he has devoted to the subject that they caused him more than passing annoyance. Standing at a distance from each other of half a mile to three-quarters, linked up by barbed-wire entanglements, it is impossible that they did not serve the purpose of impeding Boer mobility. Meanwhile, at the large centres within the lines, a better opportunity was given than would otherwise have been the case for bringing back the normal conditions of peaceful life.

Valuable, too, alike for mitigating the horrors of war and

¹ Despatch of August 8, 1901, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 820, 1901, p. 3.

² Official History of the War, vol. iv, Appendix 2, p. 570 note.

³ p. 321.

⁴ Letter of February 8, 1902. See vol. iv of the Official History of the War, Appendix 3, p. 580.

PART II. for opening the road to peace, were the much-criticized
 —♦— Refugee or Concentration Camps. It had been idle to allow
The surrendered Boers to remain on their farms, when they could
Refugee not be given adequate protection against their fighting fellow
Camps. countrymen. Kitchener had raised the question with General Botha at the Middelburg Conference, proposing that on the English side the homes and families of the fighting burghers should not be molested, unless the families actively assisted their relatives, and that on the Boer side the farms and families of neutral or surrendered Boers should be left undisturbed. Botha would have none of it. 'I am entitled by law', he said, 'to see every man to join, and if they do not do so, to confiscate their property and leave their families on the veldt.' The only course, he held, for Lord Kitchener to take by way of protecting surrendered burghers and their families was to send them out of the country, as if caught they must suffer. This drew from Lord Kitchener equally plain speech, in a letter of the 16th of April, 1901: 'As I informed your Honour at Middelburg, owing to the irregular manner in which you have conducted and continue to conduct hostilities, by forcing unwilling and peaceful inhabitants to join your commandos, a proceeding wholly unauthorized by the recognized customs of war, I have no other course open to me, and am forced to take the very unpleasant and repugnant steps of bringing in the women and children.'¹ The policy of the Concentration Camps was in short forced upon the English by the Boers; but that General Botha personally was by no means unmindful of the usages of war and the claims of humanity was proved by his dismissal in July of a leading Boer commandant, Tobias Smuts, on the ground that he had burnt down the township of Bremersdorp in Swaziland.

Starting with the object that Boers who surrendered might be enabled to live with their families and property under

¹ See Cd. 902, January 1902, pp. 119, &c., and see Appendix 12 to vol. iv of the Official History of the War, pp. 659, &c.

adequate protection near the railway in their own districts, the system of refugee camps grew from the beginning of 1901, as complaints came of families ill-treated, and stock and property confiscated, by the commandos in the field. In June 1901 the white inmates of all these camps numbered over 85,000, mainly women and children; in the following month the number was nearly 94,000; in December 117,000; and there were nearly as many at the end of the war, including more than 20,000 men. The camps were taken over by the civil administration in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony on the 1st of March, 1901, but the military governor of Pretoria had direct control of them in the Transvaal. In Natal they were not taken over by the Government till the 1st of October in that year. There were three classes of inmates—self-supporting refugees; refugees unable to support themselves, including widows and orphans and the families of the prisoners of war; and in the third place, the wives and children of burghers still in the field, brought in either for their own protection or for military reasons, because their homes had been used for hostile purposes. These last had no love for the burghers who had come in of their own free will. As was inevitable, the effects of the war on those who came or were brought in, coupled with congestion in small areas, insanitary habits, and epidemics of measles and pneumonia, produced a very high rate of mortality, especially among the children; in England and South Africa no effort and no expense was spared to cope with it, and in November 1901 Lord Milner wrote that the camps were absorbing practically the whole of his time. A commission of ladies, headed by Mrs. Fawcett, was sent out in July to make inquiry and recommendations, and gradually under close medical inspection, conditions were bettered and the death-rate reduced, until it was probably lower than the death-rate in the homes on the veldt under normal conditions. Meanwhile schools were established

PART II. in the camps which did extraordinarily useful work, and the lot of the women and children was incomparably better than if they had been left to starve in the war-stricken area.

These camps were one of the most singular features in this singular war. The English were feeding, clothing, housing, and teaching the families of the men who were fighting against them, enabling the latter to devote their whole energies to the war. The Boers meanwhile were denouncing the proceeding as a most horrible outrage, as war upon and massacre of women and children. Yet, when Lord Kitchener offered to hand over to the commandos their belongings of women and children, the offer was not accepted, and when at Vereeniging the Boers held their last conference which closed the war, General Botha told his comrades, 'One is only too thankful nowadays to know that our wives are under English protection.'¹ History will accept the verdict given in *The Aftermath of War*. 'During hostilities these camps had provided a home for those who, through the exigencies of war, had been rendered homeless. On the conclusion of peace they became a temporary resting-place for the last to surrender and the returning prisoners of war.'²

The South African winter went on to September with no very notable incident. British columns scoured the veldt in this direction and in that, the end of July and the beginning of August witnessing a great drive in the Free State from the Vaal to the Modder and between the Kimberley and Bloemfontein railways; block-houses multiplied; refugee camps filled up; but the end was not in sight. The Natal ministry urged the adoption of more stringent measures, and on the 7th of August Lord Kitchener, after consultation with the Home Government, issued a new Proclamation. Its terms were to the effect that all commandants of the Boer forces, who should not have surrendered before the 15th of September,

The Proclamation of August 7, 1901.

¹ De Wet, *Three Years' War*, App. C, pp. 491-2.

² *The Aftermath of War*, by G. B. Beak, 1906, p. 140.

would be permanently banished from South Africa, and that the cost of maintaining the families of the burghers, who should not have surrendered by that date, would be made a charge against their property. No general surrender followed, and the immediate result was renewed activity by the Boer leaders in September in order to counteract the effect of the Proclamation.

The storm broke first in the South-eastern Transvaal, where General Botha fell upon the Natal frontier. A small British force had come from Dundee into the Transvaal, crossing the Buffalo River at De Jagers Drift; and on the 17th of September half the force under Major Gough, moving forward in advance of the other half, rode into an ambush at Scheepers Nek, a few miles short of Vryheid. Gough's party consisted of three companies of mounted infantry with two guns, about 300 men in all. They were attacked by two bodies of Boers, each 500 strong, and almost immediately the guns were captured, and the whole force killed, wounded, or taken prisoners, the rear part of the column, which had not been engaged, falling back on De Jagers Drift. Following up this success, little more than a week later, Botha made a determined attack upon two British outposts on the Zululand border, north-west of Melmoth. The larger of the two forts, Itala and Mount Prospect, was held by 300 mounted infantry with two guns, under Major Chapman; the smaller, Fort Prospect, 15 miles east of Itala and nearer to Melmoth, had a garrison of 86 men, all told. Against Itala Botha sent some 1,500 men under his brother's immediate command; about 500 Boers attacked Fort Prospect. The summit of Itala Mountain was about one mile distant from the British camp below, and here, when warned of the likelihood of danger, Chapman had placed an outpost of 80 men. They were the first to be attacked, shortly after midnight on the 25th-26th of September, and after hard fighting were overwhelmed. About 2 in the morning the Boers attacked the main camp; the fight went

PART II. on by moonlight ; it died down before daybreak, then it broke
 —♦—♦— out again, and lasted through the whole day till night came
 round again. The Boers then drew off, and Chapman, in no
 case to risk a repetition of the attack, for his men were worn
 out by their brave resistance, and ammunition was running
 short, retreated through the night to Nkandhla. It had been
 a costly enterprise for the Boers. They seem to have lost
 about 300 in killed and wounded, while Chapman's casualties
 were over 80, exclusive of the detachment cut off on the hill.
 At Fort Prospect the Dutchmen were equally unsuccessful.
 Here, fighting behind excellent entrenchments, the defenders
 beat off their assailants with three or four times greater
 loss than they suffered themselves. In the middle of
 the fighting a party of the Zululand Native Police broke
 through the Boer lines and joined the defence, brave and
 loyal to the British cause.

This ended the attempt to invade Natal, where General
 Lyttelton, who had lately taken up the command, was now
 master of the situation ; but in other parts of the area of the
 war the month of September saw some hard fighting. In the
 Free State there were two small British reverses. On the 19th
 of the month a party of 160 mounted infantry with two guns,
 unwisely sent out to raid a farm about 18 miles south of
 Sannah's Post, bearing the familiar South African name of
 Vlakkfontein, was cut off and captured ; and on the night
 of the same day, in the south-eastern corner of the State,
 at a place named Quaggafontein, on the bank of the Orange
 River, Kritzinger, who at this date had come back for a
 while from the Cape Colony, rushed the camp of a detach-
 ment of Lovat's Scouts. On the last day of the month there
 was a memorable fight in the Western Transvaal. Kekewich,
 with his column, had been operating in the wild country
 known as the Zwartruggens, at the western end of the
 Magaliesberg, and on the 29th of September encamped at
 Moedwil Farm on the Selous River, a tributary of the

Elands River, flowing from south to north, but at Moedwil running in a semicircle with the convex side towards the west. Moadwil was a few miles due west of Magato Nek in the Magaliesberg, through which ran the road from Zeerust to Rustenburg, and at Moedwil the road crossed the river by a drift. The British camp was on the right, the eastern bank of the river, facing west. It was on rising ground, standing back about one-third of a mile or more from the high precipitous eastern bank of the river, and the left of the camp rested on the Zeerust road. A convoy had been sent off on the evening of the 29th, and when night came the force in camp consisted of about 800 rifles with three guns. The artillery was in the centre; the right of the camp, on the north, was in charge of the mounted men; the left, on the south, including the drift over the river, was held by the Derbyshire Regiment. There were piquets alike on north and south, including one piquet on the further side of the drift. On the western side of the river there was bush and scrub, good cover for an attacking force, but the high river-bank opposite seemed to give adequate protection against attack. None the less, Delarey, who had gathered from 1,000 to 1,500 men, resolved to attack from this side, on the night in question. His plan was that a frontal attack should be made by the main body from the west, and that two other parties should work round by the north and south and take the camp in the rear. The plan failed; the flanking parties, though one of them was led by Kemp, did nothing, and only the main attack under Delarey's own eye was pressed hard. It was made a little before dawn. Coming up through the bush in the darkness or half light, the Boers overwhelmed the piquets at either end of the camp, hard as they fought, and then made their way along the river-bed, both up and down, and, gaining the crest of the high bank, poured a rain of fire into the midst of the camp. At first there was confusion, stampeding and slaughter of horses, killing and wounding of bewildered, half-

PART II. awakened men. But Kekewich, like Clements, had a strong nerve for a crisis, and well his men answered to his lead. Soon they formed a firing line, lying on the open ground in front of the camp, and the Boer onset was effectively checked. Then came a report that the camp was being taken in rear, some men were hastily gathered to meet the danger, which proved to have little or no existence, and their commander, promptly wheeling them round from the east towards the north and gathering others in, developed a counter-attack upon the Boers, rolled up their left flank, and settled the business. The Dutchmen made good their retreat, for there were no horses left on which to pursue them, but they had suffered no little loss, and their main object had failed. The fighting had begun about a quarter to 5 in the morning; at a quarter past 6 it was all over. The English had beaten off their assailants by sheer hard fighting and resolute steadiness, but the British casualties were 192 in number, not far short of a quarter of the whole force, and among the wounded was Kekewich himself, whom for some time afterwards Delarey reported to be dead.

More than any other Boer General, Delarey trained and organized his small forces, created a disciplined fighting machine, and made or found to his hand subordinate commanders of special merit, such as Kemp, and Celliers, the leader of the Lichtenburg contingent. The result was that in the latest stages of the war the most formidable and effective opponents of the English were the mounted men of the Western Transvaal. They are spoken of in the Official History of the War as 'Delarey's "New Model"',¹ and there was much in common between the men who followed Cromwell to victory and the handful of hard fighting Dutchmen who rode behind Delarey. Their country, too, it was found when the end of the war came, had been less drained of its resources and food-supplies than was the case

¹ Vol. iv, p. 503.

with the Eastern Transvaal, the Marico district in particular having been little scourged by the war.¹ Here, then, were trained men to fight, skilled leaders to follow, and no great scarcity of food. Little more than three weeks passed after the fight at Moedwil, and then Delarey made himself felt again. The object of his attack was one of Lord Methuen's columns under Colonel Von Donop, which was escorting a large convoy back to Zeerust. The scene was thick bush some distance east of Zeerust, near a place called Kleinfontein. On the left of the British march the Boers charged down through the timber in three bodies, cutting the long line, isolating the rearguard, with whom were two guns, and capturing some of the wagons. As was so often the case in these South African *mêlées*, the first onset carried all before it, but the rearguard fought tenaciously, the guns were saved and most of the wagons, while against 90 British casualties was to be set the evidence of at least 40 dead bodies of Boers found upon the field.

Kleinfontein.

But the chief fight of the month of October was on the high veldt of the Eastern Transvaal. In this guerrilla warfare no officer on the British side had proved more daring and successful than Colonel Benson, of the Royal Artillery. He had served in the war from the first, had been with the Highlanders on the disastrous day of Magersfontein, and from the beginning of 1901 had been in charge of a column. 'In every capacity', wrote Lord Kitchener when reporting his death, 'he had shown soldierly qualities of a high order, and had invariably led his column with marked success and judgement.'² He had by his side an Intelligence officer of singular ability and close knowledge of the country and its people, Colonel Woolls Sampson, of the Imperial Light Horse, Kruger's prisoner and implacable opponent, one of the

Bakenlaagte.

¹ See General Walter Kitchener's report on the surrenders, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 988, 1902, p. 30.

² Despatch of Nov. 8, 1901, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 823, p. 6.

PART II. Uitlander leaders whom the old President had exasperated, when by straight and just dealing he might have won their friendship. In the Eastern Transvaal Benson had carried out a series of night raids, until his name was feared in the circle of fighting Boers. He was an enemy to be crushed, if possible, before he worked further mischief, and Botha gave orders accordingly. Benson had marched south from Middelburg, had scoured the country round Bethel, and in the last days of October turned back in a north-westerly direction, intending to reach the Delagoa Bay line again at Brugspruit Station. He had become aware that hostile forces were gathering round him, and his column was far out of reach of any of his friends. It was over 2,000 strong, with four guns and two Vickers-Maxims, but the men were for the most part new to him and to his work. Early on the 30th of October the column continued its north-westerly movement, marching in the direction of Brugspruit, making for a farm named Bakeniaagte¹ as the next halting-place. The route lay across rolling downs, with hollows that screened from view a hostile force; the day was one of mist and rain, driving with the wind as the hours went on. From the first the march was worried by the enemy, and when about the middle of the day the advance guard reached their destination, they had some fighting before the ground was cleared. The main body and the convoy, under Woolls Sampson's charge, came in in safety, but the rearguard some distance behind, held up for a while by a wagon which had been bogged, was hard beset by an obviously growing number of enemies. Benson, who had gone back towards the threatened rear, had posted two guns upon a ridge about a mile and a half south of the camp, and ordered the rearguard to fall back upon them. Then it was that General Botha took occasion

¹ From *The Times* History of the War, vol. v, p. 367, it will be seen that the actual scene of the fighting was not Bakenlaagte, but an adjoining farm, Nooitgejacht.

by the hand. He had come up about noon, having made a forced march to join the local commandos and strike an overpowering blow against the isolated British column. As the thin screen of men who held the rear of Benson's force was drawn inwards, he hurled his horsemen, between one and two thousand in number, upon them in an irresistible charge. Two small parties of infantry were ridden down, but the mounted men galloped back to points of vantage, the majority gathering to the guns upon the ridge. At their heels came Botha's men in hot pursuit, drew rein in the hollow at the foot of the ridge, dismounted, and working up under cover, reached the crest and poured their fire upon the men who held the hill. The disparity in numbers was great, and, according to the official despatch, 'our troops were unable to offer any serious resistance'.¹ But these words do not depict the scene. Man by man the English fought and fell: 'Of the approximately 280 officers and men on the ridge, 66 lay dead and 165 wounded.'² Thrice wounded, the last time mortally, Benson found means to send a message to the camp to shell the Boers off the hill and save the guns, despite the fact that he and his wounded and dying comrades would suffer with the enemy. His orders were obeyed, the hill was cleared of Dutchmen, who, it must be told, had stained their victory by looting and outrage; but at sundown the ambulances came out against the dying man's wish, the shelling ceased, and the Boers carried off their prize. Elsewhere than on Gun Hill, as the ridge was christened, isolated parties, who had been driven back by the Boer rush, were hard pressed but held their own, and the camp was saved from serious attack by the devotion of the men on the hill. Benson lived to be carried into camp, to confirm Woolls Sampson as his successor, and early on the next morning he

¹ Despatch of November 8, 1901, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 823, p. 5.

² Official History of the War, vol. iv, p. 314. *The Times History* (vol. v, p. 371) seems to make the number on the hill 180.

PART II. died. Bakenlaagte was but a small fight in the military history of Great Britain, but in none that have been chronicled have Englishmen taught better how to die, and among captains who have been faithful unto death a high place must be given to Colonel Benson. Turning to the other side, General Botha's movement had been masterly. He had won a great success and had removed in Benson's life a stumbling-block to the Boer cause. He had not compassed victory without paying toll in the lives of his own men, and he had failed to overwhelm the main body of the column, which was duly relieved and brought off in safety. But he had struck a strong blow when and where it was needed, and once more he had proved himself a leader of men.

Notwithstanding, the English went steadily forward in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony in the latter part of 1901. In the far north, after the occupation of Pietersburg, Beyers could make no headway against Colonel Grenfell, the South African Colenbrander, and Kitchener's Fighting Scouts. In the north-east of the Transvaal, Viljoen with his headquarters in the mountains near Pilgrims' Rest, seemed to attune his methods to the name of the place, and took little offensive action. Lord Milner, after his return from his visit to England, when for his great services he was raised to the Peerage and received the freedom of the City of London, wrote in a despatch, dated November 15, 1901, of 'the now almost absolute safety and uninterrupted working of the railways and the complete pacification of certain central districts'¹; and by this date some 10,000 citizens had returned to Johannesburg. The block-house system was doing its work, and in spite of his expressions of contempt for it, it seems to have effectually deterred De Wet from his favourite occupation of blowing up the railway. He tells us that by the beginning of November he had concentrated a force of 700 burghers between Lindley and Reitz, and on the last day

¹ Cd. 903, January 1902, p. 129.

of the month¹ he co-operated in this district in an attack on the convoy of Colonel Rimington's column, but the attack was beaten off, and De Wet's plans for a further battle on the following day were foiled by Rimington's retreat during the night. It was not till late in December, as will be seen, that he achieved any exploit comparable to his previous record.

CH. V.

When he had been hunted out of the Cape Colony, at the end of February, Hertzog had left with him; but Kritzinger, Scheepers, and Fouché had remained behind, and were supplemented by another Boer partisan of the name of Malan. Towards the end of April Kritzinger went back into the Free State, but returned again over the Orange river in May with more adherents, and surprised the town garrison of Jamestown on the 2nd of June. Meanwhile, in the west of the colony, one of Scheepers's officers, Maritz, young and enterprising, was rapidly coming to the front. At the beginning of June General French took over command of all the British columns in the Cape Colony; there were drives towards the north; and in the middle of August Kritzinger was once more harried back into the Free State. A little later, on the 5th of September, one of the worst marauders in the colony, Lotter, with a following of 120 men, was brilliantly captured east of Graaf Reinet by Colonel Scobell.

*The War
in the Cape
Colony.**Capture of
Lotter.*

By this date a new figure had appeared in the colony in the person of J. C. Smuts. At the Council of War of the 20th of June it had been decided that an expedition should be sent from the Transvaal into the Colony, and that Smuts should lead it. Accordingly, in the middle of July, some 400 Transvaalers set out from the Gatsrand to make their way south through the Free State in four separate parties. Heading the last party, Smuts, with no little difficulty and loss, towards the end of August reached Zastron in the

*Smuts in-
vades the
Cape
Colony.*

¹ The accounts do not agree as to the date, whether the fight was on the 29th of November or the 30th; the latter date has been taken.

PART II. south-east corner of the Free State, which he had appointed as a rendezvous for his men, and where he met Kritzinger driven back over the Orange River. On the night of the 3rd of September he crossed the river into the Colony close to the Basutoland border. His designs were known to the English: they had vainly tried to intercept him: they were watching for him in the Colony: but he possessed in high measure Boer astuteness and Boer mobility.

His success at Modderfontein. Moving south-west through the Dordrecht district, on the 17th of September, at Modderfontein on the Elands River, 18 miles north-west of Tarkastad, he annihilated a squadron of the 17th Lancers, who mistook the khaki-clad Boers for their own friends. South and west again he went, doubling back and fore, hotly hunted but never caught, until at the end of October he left the midland districts of the Colony, and, crossing the Capetown-Kimberley Railway, transferred his energies to the far west. By this time the English were quit of another unscrupulous but most enterprising enemy in the Colony, for on the 11th of October

Capture of Scheepers. Commandant Scheepers, lying ill at a farm, six miles south of Blood River Station on the main western railway, was captured just a month after a detachment of his force had been surprised and cut up by Colonel Crabbe, its leader Van der Merwe being killed. Kritzinger meanwhile had shown no strong desire to try his fortunes again to the

Capture of Kritzinger. south of the Orange River. It was not till the middle of December that he once more broke into the Colony, and then his career was short, for, almost immediately after he had crossed the river at Sand Drift, he was, on the 16th of December, wounded and taken prisoner, when forcing the block-house line along the railway near Hanover Road Station.

Maritz in the Cape Colony. It was in the west of the Cape Colony that the Boers made most headway. Here the English had no railways to help them, transport was difficult, distances were great, the whole

scanty population was Dutch, the great vast countryside was a home of rebellion. Before Smuts appeared on the scene, Maritz had proved himself a singularly competent leader. By the middle of October he had moved southward by Clanwilliam and Piquetberg to Malmesbury, and reached a point within three days' ride of Capetown. Turned north by French's columns, very soon he was again heading towards Capetown, and on the 10th of November some of his men were only 30 miles distant from the capital. But again he was driven back, and to prevent any repetition of similar raids, at the beginning of December Lord Kitchener ordered a line of block-houses to be carried from the sea-coast at Lambart's Bay, through Clanwilliam, Calvinia, and Carnarvon, to the railway at Victoria West Road—a distance of over 300 miles. Before November was out, Maritz had been badly wounded in attacking without success a small post north-east of Calvinia, at Tontelbosch Kalk on the Zak River, and Smuts, who about this date had taken command of all the Boer and rebel forces in the west of the Colony, now strengthened by a small band of Free Staters, was insistent on the necessity for strong reinforcements, a substantial success was to be obtained. The position in the Colony at the end of the year was in a sense promising for the Boers, discouraging for the English. Rebellion had laid strong hold upon the rank and file of the people, but they stood to lose if guided by their sympathies, not by their interests; and, if rebellion was to fructify, it was necessary that there should be evidence of Boer strength, pointing to ultimate Boer success. So far such evidence had been wanting. It might conceivably have been possible for the Boers to abandon all serious fighting in the Transvaal and the Free State and to throw their whole forces into the Cape Colony with the view of raising the Dutch population *en masse*. The Boer leaders, as will be seen, recognized the possibility; but, had the policy been adopted, it would have cut at the

PART II. root of the existing conduct of the war, whereby the commandos were keeping the field each in its own home district.

◆◆◆
Tiger Kloof Spruit. Before the year ended De Wet made his last great coup. There had already been some fighting in December in the north-east of the Free State. On the 18th of the month De Wet attacked General Dartnell on his way from Bethlehem to Harrismith at Tiger Kloof Spruit, but Dartnell's men, the two regiments of the Imperial Light Horse, were well equal to the emergency, and according to De Wet's own account two-thirds of his burghers refused to charge.

Tafel Kop. A more successful attack was made two days later by Commandant Wessels on Colonel Damant, the success being once more due to the wearing of khaki uniform by the Boers and 'clever imitation of the formation usual with regular mounted troops'.¹ Damant's small force, while scouring the country, was for the moment much scattered in the neighbourhood of Tafel Kop between Frankfort and Vrede on the 20th of December; and he himself with some 80 officers and men had come to a halt on the edge of a long hill. Mistaken for friends, a strong body of Boers suddenly rushed the crest of the hill behind and entirely commanded the small group of English. Surprised and shot down in the open, they fought as long as there were any to fight; the whole of the party, with the exception of three or four, were killed or wounded, Damant himself being wounded; but hardly had the Boers carried the position and taken possession of the guns when they in turn were driven from the field by the arrival of British reinforcements, and the guns were saved.

*Twee-
fontein.*

A line of block-houses was being built from Harrismith to Bethlehem, and had been carried west of Harrismith as far, or nearly as far, as Tweefontein Farm, nine miles west of a bridge over the Elands River. The work was being protected by a small column of 500 Imperial Yeomanry with

¹ Lord Kitchener's despatch of January 8, 1902, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 890, 1902, p. 9.

two guns under the temporary command of Major Williams, who on Christmas Eve were encamped on a isolated hill on Tweefontein Farm, called Groenkop, about two miles west of the head of the block-house line. Three miles away General Rundle was encamped, but with only a tiny force, under 400 strong. De Wet had met with little success for some long time past: he now saw his opportunity and resolved to strike hard at the Yeomanry camp. He left no stone unturned to ensure success. He concentrated from 1,000 to 1,200 men, and it happened that there were with him at the time two good officers from other districts of the Free State, General Brand and Commandant Coetzee. For two days he reconnoitred the British position and fixed the early morning of Christmas Day for the assault. His account of Groenkop is: 'on its western side was a precipice, on the north and south a steep descent, and on the east a gentle slope which ran down to the plain'¹; and with sound instinct, the instinct which had often before secured successes to the Boers, he decided to attack from the steep side, which he tells us was the west, concluding that on this side attack would be least expected. There must have been some defect in intelligence on the British side, and a grave want of vigilance in the camp itself. A large Boer force had concentrated close by without being suspected, and the stormers

¹ *Three Years' War*, p. 341. There are great discrepancies in the accounts of the fight, as to the side on which the attack was made. De Wet says he decided to attack on the west, 'the steep side of the mountain', and his rough plan seems to make the north-west the point of attack. From Mr. Kestell's account in *Through Shot and Flame* it would seem that the attack was made on more side than one, but that some stormers at any rate 'ascended on the left towards the north'. Lord Kitchener's despatch says the attack was from the south, which was the steep side, the camp lying 'on the gentle slope to the north'. The Official History of the War says that the hill sloped gently to the north, that the south was the steep side, and that 'De Wet steered straight for the southern face'. *The Times History of the War* makes the storming parties climb up the northern face, but says the west was the steepest side, and the plan shows an attack from the north-west, possibly coinciding with De Wet's sketch.

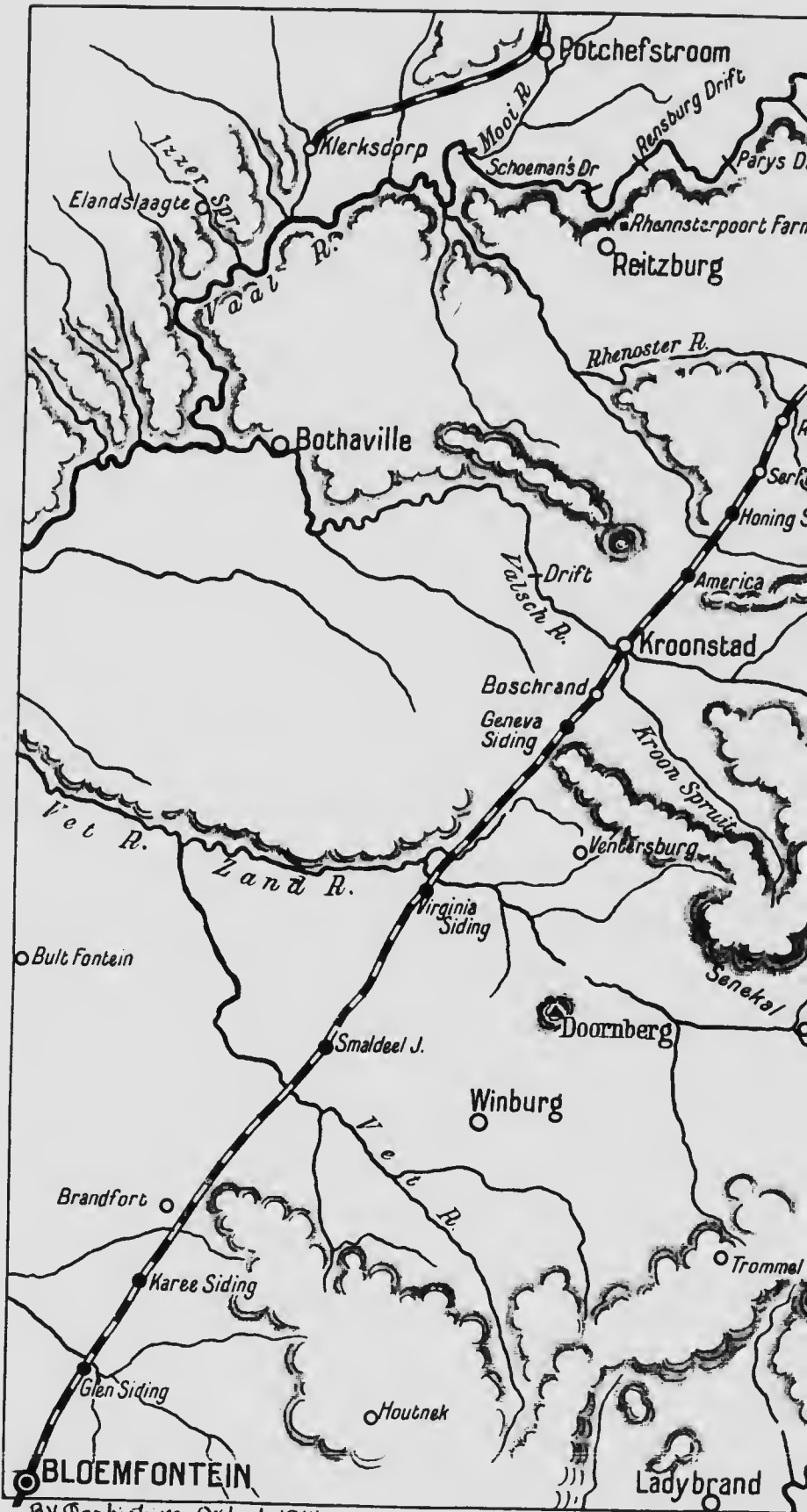
PART II were half way up the hill and more before the sentries gave alarm. De Wet had brought his men to the foot of the kopje on the night of the 24th: there they dismounted, and at 2 o'clock on Christmas morning began the climb, noiselessly, the leaders having stockings on their feet. They rushed the piquets on the crest and swarmed into the sleeping camp. No time was given for organized resistance, but in groups and parties most of the Yeomanry fought hard and well in the darkness and confusion: 57 were killed, including the commander, 88 were wounded, and over 200 were taken prisoners, being sent through into Basutoland on the following day. Guns, ammunition, horses, supplies were carried off: it was a clean sweep of the camp and all that it contained. Rundle's force was too weak to send relief, and in grave danger of being itself attacked, but the Imperial Light Horse were hurried up from Elands River Bridge, and De Wet, whose losses had been by no means negligible, did not press his men for a further effort.

This fight was a set-back to the English, but the block-houses went on. February 1902 opened with the recovery of the lost guns in a small successful fight, and from the 6th to the 8th of February a drive took place in this difficult north-eastern area of the Free State on a greater scale and more closely organized than any of its predecessors. In Lord Kitchener's words, the columns 'formed a continuous line of mounted men, constituting practically a movable chain of outposts, which extended along the western bank of Liebenberg's Vlei from Frankfort as far south as Fanny's Home and thence to 'Kaffir Kop'.¹ This human chain, stretching at right angles from the block-house line which ran through Frankfort and Heilbron to the main Bloemfontein-Pretoria Railway at Wolvehoek Siding, to the more southern line of block-houses which ran from Kroonstad

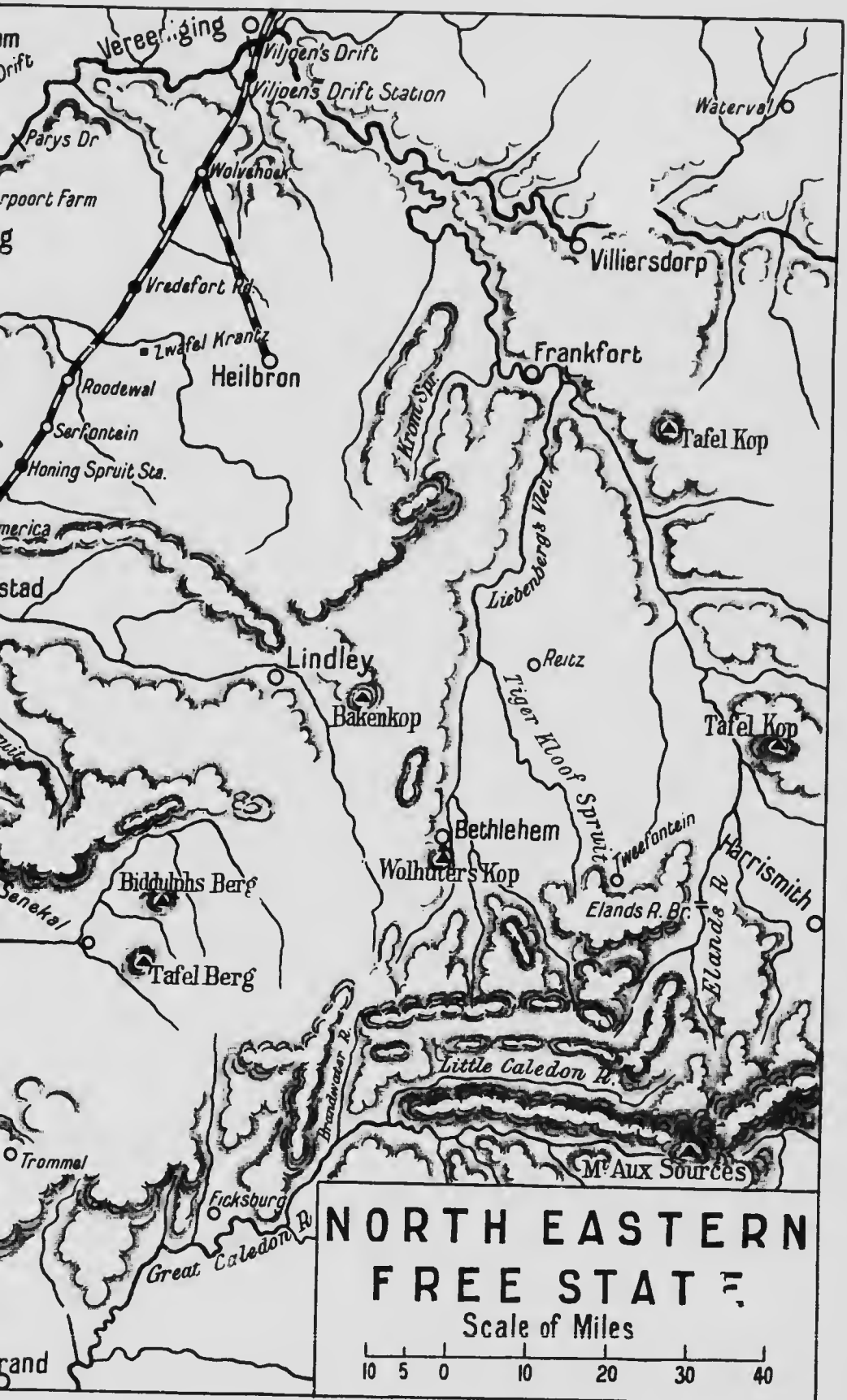
¹ Lord Kitchener's despatch of February 8, 1902, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 965, 1902, p. 8.



To face p. 380



B.V. Darbishire, Oxford, 1914



through Lindley, swept the country westward up to the railway. De Wet, who was within the cordon, made good his escape, forcing his way southward through the block-house line, but the drive, which ended on the 8th of February, yielded a haul of 285 prisoners, some of whom had hidden themselves among the reeds in the bed of the Rhenoster River.

CH. V.

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Almost immediately a drive of still greater dimensions was set on foot. This time the southern fringe of the Transvaal was included as well as the north-eastern district of the Free State. The drive began with a simultaneous movement by two columns, or sets of columns, in an easterly direction. The northern group moved along the line of the Vaal from the longitude of Heidelberg to that of Standerton, covering the ground from the Transvaal-Natal Railway on the north to the Heilbron-Frankfort block-house line on the south. Having reached Standerton, and making a continuous chain from Standerton to Tael Kop east of Frankfort, they wheeled round to face south. The southern group of columns meanwhile moved east and north-east from a line between Kroonstad and the Doornberg up to the block-house line from Lindley to Bethlehem: they then moved due east to the Wilge River, held the line of that river, and joined hands with the northern columns now facing south. These northern columns then moved south, driving the Boers against the block-house line from Harrismith to Botha's pass, and into the angle formed by these block-houses and the Drakensberg Mountains, the passes through the mountains being held by troops from the Natal command. It was a great converging movement, which began on or about the 16th of February, 1902, and ended on the 27th. Meanwhile De Wet, having, as has been seen, broken through the block-houses, in three or four days retraced his steps, broke through them again in the reverse direction, and made his way north-east, joining Presi-

*The Great
Drive,
Feb. 16-27,
1902.*

PART II. dent Steyn in the neighbourhood of Reitz. He was again
 —♦ within a cordon of British troops, a more formidable cordon than had yet encircled him. The days went on: the circle grew closer, and he moved north to escape, leading a seething mass of fighters and non-combatants, of human beings, carts, and droves of oxen. 'From the foremost to the hindmost there was a distance of about six miles, and it was covered with one vast mass of living creatures, men, horses, and cattle.'¹ On the night of the 23rd of February, at a place named Langverwacht or Kalkkrans on the Holspruit, a little tributary of the Wilge, about 18 miles south of Vrede, he hurled himself northward against the British line. The point of attack was held by New Zealanders, and well and stubbornly they held it, but the impetus was too great for the line to be kept intact, and with loss on both sides the more determined of De Wet's followers, with De Wet himself and Steyn, broke through, leaving behind the fainter-hearted and all the stock. At other points also in the great entanglement there were breakages, but when the 27th February, the anniversary of Majuba, brought the end of the drive, the English had secured 778 prisoners, 648 of whom surrendered in a body, in addition to 50 killed, and in addition, too, to a huge capture of stock. This drive went far towards breaking the back of the war in the most difficult area of the Free State.

*The East
and North
of the
Transvaal.*

The back was being broken too in the eastern and northern districts of the Transvaal. After Bakenlaagte, General Bruce Hamilton had been placed in command in the Eastern Transvaal, and with him was Woolls Sampson, who had served Benson so well. In December and January, by a series of brilliant night raids, his columns captured 850 of Botha's fighting men. There were from time to time British reverses. On the 19th of December, near the line of block-houses from Standerton to Ermelo, some 200 mounted infantry in General Spens's command were surprised and sur-

¹ *Through Shot and Flame*, p. 254.

rounded, losing three-fourths of their number. On the 4th of January, at Onverwacht, east of Ermelo, an advance guard of Plumer's force under Major Vallentin was overpowered by superior numbers, Vallentin himself being killed, as well as Opperman, who led the victorious Boers. On the 18th of February two squadrons of Scots Greys were trapped 20 miles to the south-east of Springs Station. But the net result of the campaigning was heavily against the Boer cause; block-house lines and posts of the South African Constabulary were carried athwart the veldt, and Botha himself made for the Vryheid district and the borders of Natal and Zululand, where he was hunted in vain, but where in the middle of March one of his lieutenants, General Emmett, was taken prisoner. North of the Delagoa Bay line Viljoen, returning to Pilgrim's Rest from a conference with Schalk Burger, head of what remained of the Republican Government, was ambushed, and taken on the night of the 25th of January, about 2½ miles west of Lydenburg; and on the 20th of February the remnant of the Boer forces in this region was still further weakened by the capture of 164 prisoners. This was the result of a night march by Colonel Park, whose column included 300 of the National Scouts, Boers fighting on the British side, anxious to end a useless resistance which was draining the land of its life. The month of February saw the fighting Boers in this north-eastern district reduced by some 470 men. In the Pietersburg area Beyers attacked Pietersburg itself on the 23rd of January, without success beyond bringing out again on commando some of the inmates of the refugee camp; and about two months later, in the middle of March, he surrounded a little far northern outpost, south of the village of Louis Trichard. But he had to deal with a fine bush-fighter in Colenbrander, who came up in time to relieve the garrison, and whom the end of the war found steadily and successfully hunting down Beyers's attenuated following.

*Capture of
Viljoen.*

PART II. In the last months of the war, the first four months of 1902, the Western Transvaal provided the most encouragement to the Boer cause, while the Cape Colony was the field where there was most possibility, though no great possibility, of substantial success. There had been for some long time no incident of note in the Western Transvaal, when at dawn on the 5th of February Major Leader, of the Scottish Horse, caught a Boer commando napping at Gruisfontein, due east of Lichtenburg. Leader, one of Kekewich's officers, had with him a strong band of over 600 mounted men; he laid his plans well and carried them out skilfully; the Boers were entirely surrounded, and 136 prisoners were taken, including the Commandant, Sarel Alberts. But before February ended this British success was more than counterbalanced by a serious reverse. Von Donop had temporarily taken over charge of Methuen's column, and had established his base at Wolmaranstad, about 50 miles south-west of Klerksdorp on the railway, from which latter place supplies were drawn. On the 23rd he sent a train of empty wagons to Klerksdorp to bring back supplies, and with the wagons went an escort, consisting of some 600 men in all with two guns, a Vickers-Maxim, and two Maxim's, the officer in command being Colonel Anderson, of the Imperial Yeomanry. A convoy had lately come and gone by the same road without having been molested, and there had been no sign of danger when, after two days' marching, Anderson reached and crossed the Izerspruit. Izerspruit. Izerspruit on the evening of the 24th. He was now but a few miles distant from Klerksdorp, and 80 of the horsemen who had accompanied him rode into the town that night. But just as Delarey had fallen on the unsuspecting convoy at Buffelspoort more than a year before, so now he marked down Anderson's party for his prey. He had concentrated some 1,500 men and had with him his best officers, Kemp, Celliers, and Liebenberg. He waited till the English moved on again in the early morning of the 25th, and about ten

*The
Western
Transvaal*

*Gruis-
fontein.*

Izerspruit.

miles south-west of Klerksdorp, near a place called Elands-
laagte, where there was rising ground and thick bush on the left
and across the front of the line of march, he ambushed them.
There was first a heavy fire against the head of the column, then
a charge against the left flank, and then an assault on the rear-
guard. The attacks were all beaten off at the onset, but, as
at Bakenlaagte, the crisis came when the rearguard began to
fall back. In either case small numbers were overriden and
overpowered, and in the present instance the breaking of the
rearguard proved the ruin of the whole. There were 490
officers and men engaged on the British side: 58 were killed,
129 were wounded, 194 were taken prisoners; only 109
escaped. They had made a brave resistance, but the disaster
was complete: guns, horses, wagons, all fell into Delarey's
hands, and one disaster led to another still more serious.

Lord Methuen was at the time at Vryburg. Hearing of
the loss of the convoy, he organized a column as best he
could, and having asked Kekewich, who had come up to
Wolmaranstad, to detach a force to meet him, he started in
a north-easterly direction to join hands with that force,
1,600 mounted men under Colonel Grenfell, at a point about
20 miles south of Lichtenburg. By this movement he hoped
to intercept Delarey, who was presumed to be retreating
northward to the Marico district. The column, which
Methuen took with him, consisted of rather over 1,200 men
with four guns and two Vickers-Maxims, the column com-
mander being Major Paris. It was a hastily collected medley
of armed men, seasoned soldiers, especially among the
infantry and gunners, being interspersed with a considerable
element among the mounted troops of raw, untrained, and
therefore untrustworthy men. On the 2nd of March he left
Vryburg, his route lying through badly watered country, and
on the 6th he reached Tweebosch on the Little Harts River, *Tweebosch.*
dislodging a small Boer commando. There had been during
the day some firing on the rearguard, and the Yeomanry had

PART II. shown themselves unsteady under fire. Very early on the
—♦— 7th he moved on, the ox-wagons going in front, when at daybreak on a flat open plain the rearguard was hotly assailed. Delarey was the assailant with the force which had been victorious at Izerspruit, from 1,500 to 2,000 of the best-led, best-disciplined, and perhaps the hardest fighters of all the Boers. The attack being pressed on the right rear, the mounted troops broke into a rout, and flying helter-skelter left two guns unsupported, to be taken when all who worked them had fallen. With the whole of the rear laid bare, the rest of the column was in hopeless case. The infantry fought hard, the remaining two guns were nobly manned, Lord Methuen did what man could do to stem the tide, until disabled by a wound. Major Paris recalled some 40 of the mounted men and held a stone kraal stoutly for some little time; but by 10 o'clock in the morning, after at most five hours' fighting, it was all over. Nearly 200 officers and men had been killed or wounded, several hundred taken prisoners. It was a most disastrous and humiliating engagement. A British General of high rank had been taken, all the guns had been taken, the whole little column had been destroyed, and the cause had been the misconduct of the bulk of the mounted troops, who had run away. Not the least untoward feature of the miserable business was that the blow should have fallen upon Lord Methuen. For two years and more he had taken manfully the rough with the smooth, doing his country's work with his whole heart, and, in Lord Kitchener's words, he had 'done more than most officers towards maintaining throughout this campaign the high standard for personal courage, modesty and humanity which characterize the British army'.¹ He fell into the kindly hands of a chivalrous opponent. Instead of keeping the most valuable prisoner whom the Boers had yet taken, Delarey sent him into Klerksdorp to be healed of his wounds.

¹ Despatch of Lord Kitchener on the conclusion of the War. June 23, 1902. South Africa Despatches, Cd. 988, 1902, p. 5.

It was shortly after this victory that Delarey was visited by De Wet and Steyn. After escaping from the great Free State drive, they made their way westward and over the Vaal, joining the leader of the Western Transvaal in the middle of March. Steyn remained with Delarey under medical care, for his eyesight was failing. De Wet went back to the Free State, but on the Western side of the main railway, joining Commandant Badenhorst in the Boshof district in the latter days of March. On the 8th of April Badenhorst captured nearly the whole of a party of 200 mounted infantry, belonging to Colonel Ternan's force, who had been sent out from Bultfontein, on the north-east of Boshof, to clear some farms in the neighbourhood of Hartenbosch. In this instance, as at Tweebosch, the mounted men, with exceptions, showed little advantage: want of discipline, steadiness, and cohesion marked too many of the Yeomanry and irregular levies, who had replaced in the latter days of the war more seasoned troops. A week before, near Boschman's Kop, south-east of Springs in the Transvaal, the regular cavalry had shown what discipline and training mean. Three squadrons, about 300 officers and men, of the 2nd Dragoon Guards, the Queen's Bays, were sent out, guided by National Scouts, on the night of the 31st March—1st April to surprise a farm. In turn they were attacked by a large commando and had to fight a rearguard action towards Boschman's Kop for some hours against greatly superior numbers. They lost about 80 officers and men, but the rest were brought off, well led and fighting against heavy odds with unbroken steadiness. In the Eastern Transvaal and in the North-eastern Free State drives went on. In the Eastern Transvaal, Bruce Hamilton swept the country till there was little left to sweep, and at the beginning of May he brought his columns into the Free State to drive southward on to Elliot's forces, the result being over 300 prisoners.

But Delarey's victories had concentrated special attention on the Western Transvaal. After the disaster at Tweebosch

Hartenbosch.

Boschman's Kop.

Operations against Delarey.

PART II.

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Lord Kitchener went down to Klerksdorp to organize operations: columns were multiplied: Woolls Sampson was transferred from the Eastern Transvaal to the West: plans were laid for such drives as had proved effective elsewhere. On the 23rd and 24th of March a semicircular drive from west to east against the Schoon Spruit line of block-houses running north from Klerksdorp realized 173 Boer prisoners, and gave back to the English three of the captured guns and two Vickers-Maxims; and at the end of the month the columns moved west again. The new movement was productive of a hard fight. General Walter Kitchener, the direction of whose march was nearly due west from Klerksdorp, sent on 1,800 men under Colonel Cookson to reconnoitre the line of the Brakspruit, a tributary of the Harts River, at the moment little more than a dry watercourse with occasional pools of water. Cookson started in the very early morning of the 31st of March, and in the forenoon he in turn sent out an advance guard to follow up a retreating band of some 500 Boers. Damant was in command of these leading troops, having recovered from the wounds which he had received in the Free State; and as they rode forward, they rode into a much larger force of Boers, into Delarey's army, which had again gathered together. The scene was near a farm on the Brakspruit called Boschbult. Here there was clear ground in the middle of the bush; and Cookson, instead of retreating, made for this clear ground, followed up Damant with his main force, brought up his wagons and transport, stacked them on the Spruit, where there was a pool of water, and began entrenching his camp, supported half a mile to the east by a farm and garden, into which he threw men and guns. Soon after midday the Boers opened fire with their artillery. Under cover of the guns a commando tried to rush the camp on the eastern side, coming up first from the south-west, then from the north-east; some of the mounted infantry were cut off, but the charges failed, and the Boers

betook themselves to the bush due north of the camp, from which they poured in a heavy fire at a distance of a little more than a mile. Under cover of the outposts on this side Cookson continued his entrenchments, and when the laager was secure he drew in this screen of fighting men. The rearward movement, as always in these fights, was difficult and dangerous, and the Canadian Mounted Rifles, who had lately come up to the front, were conspicuous for steadiness and resolution, one small isolated party losing in killed and wounded 18 out of 22. Eventually the British force was safe behind strong defences; about 5 o'clock in the evening the Boers drew off; and when on the next day General Kitchener came up expecting to find Cookson's force annihilated, he found it fully prepared to repel any further attack. The British casualties had been about 100 in killed and wounded in addition to some prisoners who had been taken by the Boers but had not been retained, while the Boer losses seem to have been at least as heavy.

Ian Hamilton had come back to South Africa in December 1901 to be Chief of the Staff to Lord Kitchener, and early in April, about a week after this fight at Boschbult, he was placed by Lord Kitchener in command of all the columns in the Western Transvaal. He lost no time in taking action, and arranged a southerly and south-westerly sweep by his columns, moving on the 11th of April from the line of the Brakspruit. Kekewich with his column was on the right, and on the night of the 10th was encamped a little to the east of the confluence of the Brakspruit with the Harts River, in the neighbourhood of a farm, Rooiwal or Roodewal. At this date Delarey had gone off with President Steyn to Klerksdorp, under safe conduct from the English, to begin the proceedings which ended the war, and in his absence Kemp was leading the levies of the Western Transvaal. He had gathered them in full strength with their best commanders, and on the 11th of April they came into evidence. Moving

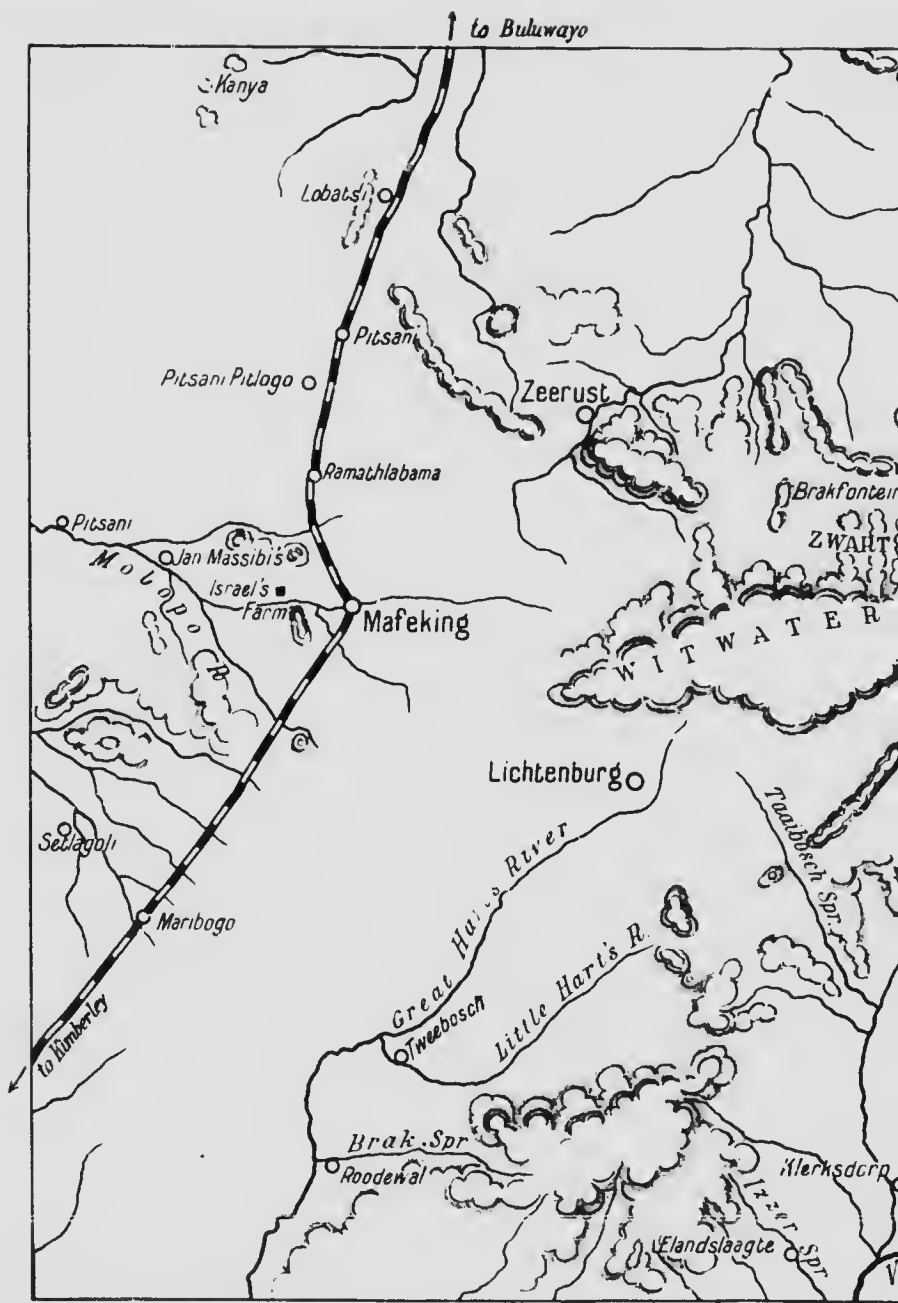
PART II. on in the morning, in a westerly and south-westerly direction, so as to strike the Hart's River before turning due south, Kekewich's advance guard, led by Von Donop, came in sight of a mass of horsemen riding on the left, who were taken for a British column, so orderly was their movement, so close and regular their formation. From south and west the horsemen began to ride round the head of the British column; the fire of their rifles proclaimed them to be enemies, and, as the British advance guard opened out under the fire, Grenfell's men, who came immediately behind and led the main column, became exposed to a rapidly closing attack. But in this part of the column were Colonel Leader and the Scottish Horse, who had shown their mettle at Gruisfontein, together with other good fighting men. Dismounting, they took up a position facing south-west, and came into ordered line just in time to pour a heavy fire upon the charging Boers. In a compact body the Boers rode on: there was no hurry, there was no ruse or concealment: it was a measured movement over open ground of men who fired from their horses and never faltered as they rode. Closely packed as they were, an easy mark for their enemies' guns and rifles, they came, with no great loss, close up to the British line, then the hopelessness of their venture dawned on them, and they turned and fled. Ian Hamilton came up, pressed pursuit and counter-attack, and the Boers lost that day 127 in killed, wounded, and prisoners, in addition to two guns and a Vickers-Maxim. The losses, not greatly exceeding the British casualties, had been curiously small considering the rashness of the attack and the opportunity for retaliation which had been given. British steadiness had once more been illustrated, but not marksmanship or mobility. Yet the repulse had no little effect on the spirit of Delarey's followers; the line of their best fighting men had crumbled: the model charge had turned into headlong flight.

EASTERN TRANSVAAL

Scale of Miles



To face p. 390



By Barbisture, Oxford 1914

WESTERN TRANSVAAL

Scale of Miles



At the beginning of May Hamilton organized a drive in the Western Transvaal on larger dimensions than any that had so far taken place in this area. The Western Transvaal is a land of great spaces; block-house lines were here not so plentiful as in, for instance, the much-enclosed and much-driven north-east of the Free State: there were few natural features of which to take advantage: a drive to be successful must depend on crafty handling. Hamilton proposed in a westward movement to sweep the central part of the country, between Lichtenburg and Wolmaranstad, and he decided to drive up against the Kimberley-Mafeking Railway, strengthened for the purpose in this particular section of the line by additional troops and armoured trains. So far no column had driven as far west as the railway, and the Boers had escaped capture by simply moving west, until the drivers turned round. This defect Hamilton proposed to cure, but the driving line, however extended, could not close the exits to north and east and south. Three columns, stretching in order from north to south, moved west: one column moved from south to north to join the extreme left of the western line. The days were spent in marching through waterless country: at night continuous and elaborate entrenchments were drawn and manned, the Australasian troops excelling in spade-work. The veldt was fired at night to give the impression of an unbroken line of bivouacs, and scouts discharged their rifles in the gaps between the columns, as though the gaps were filled. The end of it was that when the move, which began on the 6th of May, ended on the 11th, the columns having converged on the railway, they had netted 367 Boer prisoners with stock, wagons, and ammunition, 'this loss to the enemy', so Lord Kitchener reported, 'constituting a blow to his resources such as he had not previously experienced in the Western Transvaal.'¹ Before the blow could be

Ch. V.

—♦—
Jan Hamilton's drive.

¹ Lord Kitchener's despatch of June 1, 1902, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 986, 1902, p. 8.

PART II. repeated, if it was capable of repetition, the war came to
 —♦— an end.

*Operations
 in the Cape
 Colony.*

As in the Transvaal, so in the Cape Colony, the main sphere of action during the last stages of war was in the west. The midland districts, it is true, were up to the end not permanently cleared of marauders, but leaders and followers alike were steadily being reduced. Lotter, Scheepers, and Kritzinger had already been disposed of; and in May a rebel commandant, Van Heerden, was killed in an attack on the village of Aberdeen: Malan was wounded and taken prisoner: and Fouché, whose laager had been captured by Lovat's Scouts, was ringed in with columns when peace was declared. In the west there was a small British reverse at the beginning of February, Colonel Crabbe being hotly attacked between Beaufort West and Fraserburg, and his entire convoy of donkey wagons being captured; but Boer activities trended to the north-west, north of the block-house line which was being steadily carried east from Lambert's Bay. On the 8th of February General De Wet wrote to Smuts appointing him—by what authority does not appear—'head of all the fighting forces in the Cape Colony', in succession to Kritzinger, 'until such time as General Delarey shall have arrived.' 'I am convinced', the letter went on, 'that we are of the same opinion, viz., that the question of the absolute independence of the people will be decided in the Cape Colony.'¹ The letter shows that the Boer Generals recognized that their one chance lay in the Cape Colony, and Smuts was led to expect troops from the Transvaal about the month of April. Early in the year he was in the Calvinia and Van Rhynsdorp districts, and issued a proclamation as though Boer Republican Government had come to stay. He had sent Maritz before him into Namaqualand, and in due course he went up himself and

¹ This letter is given in Appendix 3 to vol. iv of the Official History of the War, pp. 577-80.

took command in this extreme north-western corner of the colony. Ch. V.
..

Port Nolloth is connected with the copper-mining centre at Ookiep by a light railway, 92 miles in length, running at first due east from the coast, and then turning almost at right angles to run south. The railhead is at Ookiep, but due south-east of it, almost in a straight line with the railway, is a place called Garies, where, about the end of March, the one small British column which had been operating, and skilfully operating, in Namaqualand, under Colonel White, was isolated from Ookiep. Having cut White off, the Boers proceeded to lay siege to Ookiep. Two outposts of the town, Springbok and Concordia, succumbed. Springbok was lost after hard fighting: Concordia with stores of dynamite and ammunition was despicably surrendered without the town guard having fired a shot; and at the beginning of April Ookiep was surrounded. But it was well fortified, and held by a strong if miscellaneous garrison under Colonel Shelton, which repelled repeated assaults with loss to the enemy. A British ship-of-war at Port Nolloth landed Blue-jackets, who kept the railway line clear for some distance from the coast, and Smuts seems to have been at no pains to break the line higher up. Consequently a relieving force, brought round by sea from Capetown, had little difficulty in raising the siege by the 4th of May, and the Boer enterprise ended in a fiasco. From Ookiep Smuts went off to warn the Boer representatives assembled at Vereeniging that no general rising must be looked for in the Cape Colony.

In January 1902 the Netherlands Government approached the British Government in the interests of peace, offering to act as intermediary, and suggesting that the Boer delegates in Holland should be allowed to visit South Africa with a view to concluding a treaty on their return. Appreciating the motives which had prompted these overtures, Lord Lansdowne none the less was constrained to answer on

Siege of Ookiep.

The overtures of the Netherlands Government.

PART II. ♦♦♦♦
 behalf of his colleagues that no foreign mediation could be entertained by the British Government, and that any peace negotiations must take place in South Africa, directly between the Boer leaders and the British Commander-in-Chief. The correspondence was communicated through Lord Kitchener to the Acting President of the Transvaal, Schalk Burger, and the latter expressed himself as desirous to make peace proposals, after consulting President Steyn. A safe conduct was given him for the purpose: on the 22nd of March the representatives of the late Transvaal Government took the railway at Balmoral, went on to Kroonstad, and eventually effected a meeting with Steyn at Klerksdorp on the 9th of April. There were at the meeting Schalk Burger and Steyn, Reitz, the State Secretary of the Transvaal Government, Botha, Delarey, De Wet, Hertzog, with half a dozen other representatives,¹ and the decision was arrived at to invite Lord Kitchener to give a personal interview at which peace proposals might be laid before him. Lord Kitchener promptly agreed, the Boer representatives went up to Pretoria, and on the morning of the 12th of April the interview took place.

The Boer meeting at Klerksdorp.

The outset was not promising. The Boers had drafted proposals at Klerksdorp and presented them to the Commander-in-Chief. They amounted to a treaty of peace on equal terms, the Republics retaining their independence, but conceding the points which before the war Kruger had refused to concede—the franchise for Uitlanders, equality of English and Dutch languages, Customs' Union, arbitration in case of differences, with foreign arbitrators excluded. It was a foregone conclusion that these terms would be rejected,

The first Peace Conference at Pretoria.

¹ For what passed at the various meetings at which the Boers discussed the peace negotiations reference should be made to the last two chapters and the Appendices of General De Wet's *Three Years' War*, and to the Rev. J. D. Kestell's *Through Shot and Flame*. Mr. Kestell, who was President Steyn's chaplain, tells us (p. 277 note) that he acted as Secretary for the Free State Executive Council at this first meeting at Klerksdorp in order to get material for his book.

and so Lord Kitchener warned his interviewers; but at their request he telegraphed to England, eliciting on the following day the expected answer that no proposals could be entertained based on the continued independence of the Republics. Lord Milner was now associated with the Commander-in-Chief in the negotiations: the Boers were told, what they knew already, that independence would not be conceded: and the haggling went on. The point was taken by the Boers that they were not empowered to make peace on the basis of sacrificing national independence, but they asked what terms the British Government would be likely to give as the price of the loss of independence, and they proposed further that an armistice should be concluded, and that one of the Boer delegates in Europe should be allowed to come out for consultation to South Africa. A telegram was therefore sent to England by Lord Kitchener asking what terms would be granted short of independence, and the reply came back that a general surrender would be accepted on the lines of the Middelburg proposals, with such modifications in detail as might be mutually agreed upon. The requests for an armistice and for the visit of a Boer delegate from Europe were refused, but Lord Kitchener consented to restrict his military operations so far as to enable arrangements to be made for a Boer Convention, which should be held on and after the 15th of May at Vereeniging near the Vaal. Thirty representatives from either State were to be chosen for this Convention, and for the purpose the Boer leaders were given facilities to visit the different commandos and hold meetings. Kitchener also agreed that in cases in which the leaders of commandos were chosen as delegates to the Convention, the British columns should not attack the commandos in their absence.

Accordingly, on the 18th of April, the Boer leaders left Pretoria, and in due course the meeting at Vereeniging was held, General Beyers being chosen as chairman. There was

CH. V.

*The Boer
Convention
at Vereeni-
ging.*

PART II. an initial difficulty in that the delegates had not, or thought
 — ♦♦ — that they had not, in all cases plenary powers, the Free Staters in particular having some sort of mandate against the surrender of independence. The legal wit of Hertzog and Smuts quashed this difficulty, and discussion went forward, reports being given of the conditions prevailing in different districts and of future prospects. The Free Staters, headed by De Wet, were almost solid for continuing the war. Some Transvaalers, notably Kemp from the Western Transvaal, sanguine and impetuous, shared that view; but it was not the view of the Acting President of the Transvaal; it was not the view of Botha, who minced no words in telling his countrymen that the Boer cause was going backwards, that national interests and national existence demanded an end to the war; it was not the view of Delarey, who, in spite of his victories, counselled that the bitter end had come, that now or never was the time for negotiation. The game was up, and the statesmen among the Boers knew it. Even among patriots the war had outstayed its welcome: it was evident that the burghers of certain districts could not and would not offer further resistance: continuance of the war would mean piecemeal conquest, aided and abetted by a growing number of Dutchmen who would not see their country and their homes ruined by fanatics. What was left was to make the best bargain possible, and all the Dutch bargaining ability was called into play. Once more it was decided to make an attempt for at any rate partial independence. Reitz suggested that the Rand and Swaziland might be given up, that the control of foreign relations might be conceded to Great Britain or that a British Protectorate might be accepted, and on the 17th of May the meeting appointed delegates to go to Pretoria and offer to make peace on these terms. The delegates were Botha, Delarey, De Wet, Hertzog, and Smuts: they went to Pretoria, and on the 19th of May they met Lords Milner and Kitchener.

The second meeting at Pretoria.

The proposals were inadmissible, and the Boers were told so. Acceptance of British sovereignty and British citizenship, they had been repeatedly warned, were the only terms on which England would make peace. This was the basis of the Middelburg proposals, but, instead of accepting the lines then laid down and lately repeated, the Boers had propounded something new. To bring matters to a point Lord Milner read out the draft of a preamble to a treaty, reciting that the burghers accepted King Edward VII as their lawful sovereign, and then it was agreed that Lord Milner and Sir Richard Solomon with Generals Smuts and Hertzog should form a sub-committee to draft articles of a treaty on the Middelburg lines for further discussion. A treaty was drafted: a long discussion, somewhat illustrating the bent of the Dutch character, followed on a financial clause, as to the amount to which the British Government should honour and make good the liabilities incurred by the Boer Governments during the war: eventually the whole draft was telegraphed to England. Some modifications were made by the Cabinet in London, and on the 28th of May the Boer delegates at Pretoria learnt the exact terms which were to be laid before the Vereeniging meeting, to be accepted in entirety or rejected in entirety, but not to be further changed. The terms were much as had been offered at Middelburg, as will be seen by comparing the two documents.¹ Under the British flag, repatriation and amnesty were ensured, except in cases in which acts had been committed contrary to the usages of war: the Dutch language was safeguarded: reasonable provision was made as to the possession of fire-arms: representative institutions, leading up to self-government, were promised as soon as circumstances permitted: the question of giving the vote to the natives was postponed until after self-government should have come into being: a pledge was given that no special war-tax would be imposed

*The draft
of treaty.*

¹ See Appendix I.

PART II. upon landed property: Commissions were promised 'as soon as conditions permit', in each district of the two States, to make good as far as possible the ravages of the war to the homes and farms, the British Government placing at the disposal of the Commissions a free grant of £3,000,000 sterling. Lastly, in addition to this free grant, it was indicated that the Government would be ready to make advances by way of loan for the same purposes, the loans to bear no interest for two years and afterwards interest at 3 per cent. In the Middelburg terms, as communicated by Lord Kitchener to General Botha on the 7th of March, 1901, the colonial rebels had been mentioned. In the new draft treaty mention of the subject was omitted, but Lord Milner read out to the Boer delegates, before they left Pretoria, the decision of the British Government on this head. The Cape and Natal colonists would be tried, if they returned to their colonies, by the laws of their colonies, and the view of the Cape Ministry was that rebels captured since April 12, 1901, and belonging to the Colony, should, if of the rank and file, and no guilty of outrage, be disfranchised for life; if in an official position, be sentenced at the discretion of the Court, but not suffer the penalty of death. These were the terms which on the 28th of May the Boer delegates carried back to Vereeniging. The decision of the Convention was to be given by the evening of the 31st. Steyn, lying ill in his tent, irreconcilable to the last, opposed acceptance of the terms, and resigned his office of President of the Orange Free State: at the meeting of the representatives the War party at first seemed likely to carry the day. But on the third and last day of debate, Saturday, the 31st of May, wiser counsels prevailed. Yielding to Botha and Delarey, to the desire to maintain in any case a united front, De Wet with no little patriotism brought his Free Staters round to the side of peace; and covering their decision with a statement drawn up by Smuts and Hertzog, the members of the

Convention, by a majority of 54 votes to 6, accepted the terms of peace. Late that evening ten Boer representatives on the one side, and Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner on the other, signed the treaty at Pretoria, and the War was over. The Boer Generals had fought up to and even beyond the point at which resistance commanded admiration. At Vereeniging they showed no less courage than they had shown in the field in insisting on peace. Equally when the treaty was signed, they used all their efforts to soften and facilitate the work of surrender. To Generals Louis Botha, Delarey, and De Wet, Lord Kitchener telegraphed at a little later date: 'I recognize how much it is due to your exertions that the burghers have displayed everywhere such a loyal spirit in accepting the change of Government that has taken place. . . . I feel confident that a new era of complete reconciliation between all races has now dawned in South Africa.'¹

CH. V.

◆◆◆
Conclusion
of Peace.

The total strength of the Boer forces is estimated in the Official History of the War to have been 87,365.² When peace was declared, they had lost three-quarters of their strength, for the total forces then in the field on the Boer side on the 31st of May, 1902, were estimated at 20,779. Of these, Transvaalers numbered 11,232, Free Staters 5,833, rebels 3,574, renegades and foreigners

¹ Lord Kitchener's despatch of June 23, 1902, South Africa Despatches, Cd. 988, 1902, p. 3.

² Made up of

Burghers of South African Republic	. . . . .	41,650
Burghers of Orange Free State	. . . . .	27,609
Regular Forces	. . . . .	2,686
Foreign Corps	. . . . .	2,120
Rebels, &c.	. . . . .	13,300

87,365

See History of the War in South Africa, vol. i, Appendix 4, pp. 457-9, and vol. iv, Appendix 20, pp. 704-5. Slightly different figures for the strength of the Boers, making a total of 89,375, will be found in the Estimate of the Strength of the Boer Forces on 31st May, 1902, supplied by the War Office to the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa. See Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence, last Appendix, Cd. 1792, 1903, p. 445.

PART II. 140.¹ The number of Boers killed and wounded will never be accurately known. On the British side, from first to last, at one time or another in the War, 448,435 officers and men were estimated to have been employed, 337,219 of whom came from home, in addition to the British regiments of the line which came from India. Over 52,000 fighting men were raised in South Africa: the colonies sent over 30,000, including Canadians recruited for the South African Constabulary. Canada contributed over 7,000, the Australian States over 16,000, New Zealand over 6,000. From India came Lumsden's Horse and two contingents from Ceylon. By the end of the war nearly 6,000 officers and men had been killed in action, over 16,000 had died of wounds or disease, between 9,000 and 10,000 had at one time or another been taken prisoners by the Boers.² The cost of the War to the British taxpayer was estimated in a Treasury Return of April 1902 to be £222,974,000 up to the 31st of March, 1903, including interest on War Debt.³ The wastage of life and money had gone on for more than two and a half years; for that long time there had been wrecking of railways, devastation of houses and farms, destruction of living creatures, conversion of dwelling-places into desert.

¹ These are the figures given in the Appendix referred to in the preceding note and in the Official History of the War, vol. iv, Appendix 25. Lord Kitchener in his despatch on the Conclusion of the War, gave as the number of armed burghers who surrendered—

in the Transvaal	11,166
Orange River Colony	6,455
Cape Colony	3,635

making 21,256 in all. See Cd. 988, 1902, p. 3.

² See Return of Military Forces in South Africa, 1899-1902, Cd. 990, 1902. Reprinted in the Appendices to the War Commission, Appendix 5, Cd. 1792, 1903, pp. 97-9, and in vol. iv of the Official History of the War, Appendices 13 and 16, pp. 671-3 and 680. See also *The Times History of the War*, vol. v, Appendix I, pp. 607-11; vol. vi, pp. 275-9; and vol. vii, Appendix III, pp. 24-5.

³ House of Commons Paper, No. 155, April 1902. See also *The Times History of the War*, vol. vi, pp. 605-7.

What should be said with regard to the Boers? On the one hand, they had been the *de facto* aggressors, and with good or bad reason the aggression had been carefully meditated and prepared. They might have had the terms which they ultimately accepted more than a year before, and more than a year of bloodshed and misery might have been spared. They had supplemented fighting in the field by fighting through the Press, and the paper campaign with its unbounded calumnies against the most humane of enemies had been mean and contemptible to a degree. On the other hand, they had made a splendid fight which will ever be remembered, and in time of their trial they had developed a cleaner patriotism, a purer love of independence, than had been in evidence in the days of Kruger. If they carried resistance beyond the limits of reasonable resistance, at least they suffered and were strong, giving manfully blow for blow till the end; and if in the details of the fighting there were features and incidents to be condemned, these were not all on the one side; no war and no people that takes part in a war has a wholly clean record; too much should not be looked for from citizen soldiers reared in such surroundings as those of the backveldt, and against actions which spoke of barbarity were to be set repeated instances of conspicuous kindness and chivalry.

If the Transvaalers and Free Staters be compared, their fighting powers were on a level, but there was more statesmanship to be found in the leaders of the Transvaal than in those of the Free State. In the Free State Steyn embodied the *ne plus ultra* of resistance, and at the final meeting at Vereeniging the Free Staters were essentially the war party. This may have been because the Transvaal had more to lose than its purely agricultural and pastoral neighbour: it may have been because, of the parties to the war, the Free State had come in with least provocation, in fact with no direct provocation of any sort or kind, and, according to the law of

CH. V.

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The Boers.

PART II. human nature, was especially reluctant to accept the inevitable consequences of its action. But it may have been also, and probably was, because the outlook of the Transvaalers was wider, their views less purely local than those of the Free State. They were members of a larger community, built on somewhat bigger lines. All alike were brave men, but Botha and Delarey were wise as well as brave.

The English

What should be said of the English, including all the many offsprings of the British race who figured in the War? As with the Boers, so with the English: they were made better by their reverses: they joined their hands and closed their ranks: they came out of the war, for the time at any rate, sobered, strengthened, and united. They had carried through a task of infinite difficulty: they had carried it through in the midst of malevolence and slander. With many mistakes, with much sifting of tares and wheat, under the military guidance first of Roberts and Kitchener, then of Kitchener alone, they had done the work effectively and with singular humanity; for, as Lord Milner told the deputation from the Worcester Congress, to which reference has already been made, at Capetown on the 11th of December 1900. 'Having regard to the conditions, it is one of the most humane wars that has ever been waged in history.'¹ Many openings were given for criticism, well-informed or ill-informed, as to surprises, surrenders, bad generalship, and the like. Some of the human material in the irregular levies at the end of the war was of the poorest. But, as in past times, there were leaders who rose to the occasion; the soldiers of the line were fearless and staunch as ever; the guns were fought as bravely and skilfully as ever; while for the first time in British history the young British nations overseas sent numbers of men second to none in hard fighting or rough riding,

¹ Lord Milner's speech has been reprinted in *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 28-32.

men whom the conditions suited, who took occasion by the hand.

What will be the ultimate verdict of history on this War? Widely different answers will be given to this question for some years to come, while events are still seen through party glasses. The following is the present writer's view of what will be the final verdict of history. The great South African War was absolutely inevitable. It was the direct result of British mismanagement in former years, which caused South Africa to be artificially split up, when it was naturally one, which evolved a series of fantastic frontiers, 'the result of historical accidents, not to say of political blunders,'¹ which made a suspicious and tenacious European race converge intensified suspicions and redoubled obstinacy against one single object, England and the English. It was the result of British politicians not gripping the nettle in due time, going back and fore, using plausible phrases, patching up compromises, instead of taking at all costs the plain path of duty, and not looking or turning back. The deaths and wounds, the 200 millions of money and more, were the price eventually paid by Great Britain for the *laches* of those who from the early days of the nineteenth century handled South African matters in the light of party government in England.

The result of the war was that the better cause won, the cause of equality of white races as opposed to the dominance of one—the Dutch race. The British cause was the cause of progress, the cause of the coming time. There is a wrong-headed kind of view only too prevalent in England, which assumes that in the case of two competing nations or countries, the smaller and weaker must be right and the larger and stronger must be wrong; and in the teeth of history the present-day fashion is to attempt to multiply and to magnify small nationalities, to exaggerate and emphasize

¹ Lord Milner, Address on Geography and Statecraft, *The Nation and the Empire*, p. 221.

PART II. every petty fissiparous tendency. The progress of the world
—* — has come through large units in which there is equal citizenship on British lines, not through small isolated states, nor through such a régime of exclusiveness as President Kruger contemplated for South Africa. South Africa, it must be repeated, is one, geographically and by nature: it should never have been split up, and its future must be the future of a single dominion. The present Union of South Africa, a nucleus for more, was the direct result of the War, and could not have been accomplished without the War. For South Africa to become one, either the Boer Republics had to be eliminated, or they had to absorb the British colonies. In either case a trial of strength was an absolutely necessary prelude to reunion.

But for the War to be fruitful for good it was necessary that it should be waged as between races that must to all time live side by side, and history will record that this all-important consideration was faithfully kept in view. While the fighting went on, there was a stronger undercurrent than in most wars of human kindliness: when the fighting was over, the work of reconciliation went forward apace. In the years to come future historians will not raise the question whether the War might have been conducted with greater humanity, for no such question can arise, but they may raise the question whether the fruits of peace would not have been in the end richer and more abiding, if the transition from open enmity to complete community had been made by slower and more measured movement.

For the British Empire as a whole—and it is with the development of the British Empire and its component parts that this series is concerned—history will assuredly record that the South African War was an event whose importance cannot be overrated. For the first time, to an appreciable extent, all parts of the Empire shared burden and sacrifice. The young peoples ranged themselves beside the Mother-

country, because they felt the call of race, because the outside world threatened the Mother-country, because a crisis had arisen which might conceivably mean dismemberment of the whole fabric of which they formed parts. From this date onward they stood on a more equal plane with the Mother-country than before. They had come forward in war-time, no one could thereafter leave them in the background in time of peace. Noteworthy too it was that Australians, for instance, who became a Commonwealth while the South African War was in progress, were in South Africa fighting for the only possible solution which could secure the Union of South Africa. To estimate this war aright in its fruitfulness for the future, it must be borne in mind that the self-governing Dominions had no small hand in it, and that its outcome was a self-governing Dominion.

Finally history will cherish the names of men, British and Dutch, now alive and praised or blamed by living men according to party predilections, who on either side were worthy protagonists of their cause. Those who hold that, so far as there is right and wrong in human actions, English lives and money were spent that wrong should be righted, that the crooked should be made straight, and that a goodlier future should grow out of a tortuous and unlovely past, will insist upon the debt which is due to the two statesmen who, one in England and the other in South Africa, saw straight, faced the facts, and made their countrymen face them; who, with everything to deter and discourage them in the record of past dealings with South Africa, determined that there should be an end to those dealings, and steadfast in time of disaster, saw the crisis through, to a definite and unambiguous issue.

CHAPTER VI

RECONSTRUCTION AND REUNION

PART II. THE greatest life of a great English Queen, who loved her people, ended sadly enough in the midst of war. Queen Victoria died in January 1901. Before King Edward VII was crowned in Westminster Abbey in August 1902 the storm was over, and the Ministers of the British Empire, who gathered in Conference at the time of the Coronation, met one another to tell not of war but of peace.

*Death of
Rhodes.*

The war was still dragging on when in March 1902, Cecil Rhodes died at the Cape, by the sea-shore at Muizenberg. His burial in April was far away in Rhodesia, in the Matoppo Hills, where a fine monument now marks the grave of the man who was, beyond all others, the forerunner of the coming time in South Africa. His good name suffered through his complicity in the Kaffir, but he was a great man in what he achieved—very great, as his will illustrated, in his outlook for the future. President Kruger outlived the war by two years. He died by the Lake of Geneva in July 1900, and his body was carried back to South Africa to be buried with all honour, public and private, in his own land. He was 'a man of simple tastes and frugal habits, strictly religious in the Puritan fashion, without political scruple, with great force of character, and thoroughly out of his place in the latter part of the nineteenth century.' Such is the estimate given of him in the *Annual Register* for 1904,¹ and now, if any, will quarrel with it. Rhodes was in front of his time. Kruger was behind it.

*And of
Kruger.*

¹ Obituary, p.

Lord Kitchener resigned his command, and left South Africa on the 23rd of June 1902. Having accomplished his long and arduous task, he went home to receive the public recognition which an Englishman of action had ever more amply earned. Sir Neville Lyttelton succeeded him as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa. Lord Milner had shared with Kitchener the burden of the prolonged crisis, and now that it was over the strain upon the civilian was great that he should find a number of able subordinates to carry on the work of the Government, the responsibility of repairing the ravages of war, and of building up on a structure which had been labelled to be a

CH. VI.

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Lord
Kitchener
returns to
England.

It had been seen that the Government had been made of of the evolution of a new order in the River Colony and in the Cape Colony. The long process of time to come, and it will be well to trace the steps which were taken to inaugurate British rule, to legalize the new order which had supplanted the old. The Proclamations which Lord Roberts issued annexing the Orange Free State and the South African Republic, thenceforward to be known as the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal respectively, contained a declaration that the Governor had been provisionally appointed Administrator with power to take such measures and to issue such laws as he deemed to be necessary.

The evolution of Crown Colony Government in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony.

Under the administration of the government of each territory under a Royal Commission. In his despatch of the 2nd of August, 1900,¹ the Secretary of State for Transvaal not having been as yet formally annexed, the Secretary of State communicated to Sir Alfred Milner, as he then was, the intentions of the Government with regard to the future government of the two new British possessions, and this despatch was amplified in a speech in the House of Commons on the following 7th of December. In the middle of October, in view of Lord Roberts's approaching return to England, the Secretary of State sent out to South Africa three

¹ See above, p. 342.

PART II. new Royal Commissions. The first conferred the High
 —♦♦— Commissionership for South Africa on Sir Alfred Milner personally, whereas it had previously been attached to the Governorship of the Cape Colony; the second was a dormant Commission, appointing the senior military officer in South Africa to be High Commissioner in Milner's absence; and the third was another dormant Commission, appointing the High Commissioner to be Administrator of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal in the absence of Lord Roberts. The intention was that the High Commissionership should be separated from the Governorship of the Cape Colony, an arrangement which the Cape Ministers accepted as necessary at the time, while expressing a hope that in due course the former combination would be restored; and that Sir Alfred Milner should cease to be Governor of the Cape but should be at once High Commissioner and Governor of the two new colonies. In the Orange River Colony, as Mr. Chamberlain had intimated in his August despatch, there was to be a Lieutenant-Governor, inasmuch as the Governor-in-Chief would have his head-quarters in the Transvaal. Lord Roberts finally left Capetown on the 11th of December 1900; immediately afterwards Milner published his dormant Commission; and on the 22nd Mr. Chamberlain wrote a despatch as to the pay and personnel of certain officers, stating that a Lieutenant-Governor of the Orange River Colony had not yet been appointed. So matters stood at the end of 1900.¹

It was not till the end of February 1901, as has already been told, that Milner left the Cape Colony and went up to the Transvaal. In this month Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson, the Governor of Natal, was appointed Governor of the Cape Colony, taking up his appointment in March, after Milner had left the Colony, and being succeeded in Natal by Sir Henry McCallum. Milner was now no longer Governor of the Cape, but was still High Commissioner for South Africa,

¹ See Cd. 547, April 1901.

and also, in Lord Roberts's absence, Administrator of the Orange River Colony and of the Transvaal, while in January 1901, Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, of tried South African experience, had been appointed Deputy Administrator of the Orange River Colony. The appointments of Governor of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal, and of Lieutenant-Governor of the Orange River Colony, were not yet in existence, but they were in course of creation.

In January 1901 the Ministers of the Cape Colony and of Natal were consulted as to the settlement of the conquered territories, in other words, as to the form of administration to be given to them, and in March drafts of the Letters Patent, which would call the new order into being, were communicated to them. Milner visited England in the summer of 1901, and when he returned all the necessary documents for constituting Crown Colony administration, the Letters Patent, bearing date of the 21st of August, the Governor's Commissions, and the Royal Instructions, had been completed.

But the war went on, and it would have been premature to publish the Letters Patent and thereby call into life in each of the two States a complete form of government, which must have remained in a state of suspended animation. Accordingly the provisional arrangements remained in force, and legislation, such as there was, took the form of Proclamations, until peace had been signed. Then at length, on the 21st of June 1902, the Transvaal Letters Patent and the Governor's Commission were published at Pretoria, and Lord Milner was sworn in as Governor of the Transvaal. On the 23rd of June the same course was taken at Bloemfontein. Thus the new colonies were started as Crown Colonies with Governor, Executive Council, and Legislative Council, but still the process of evolution went on apace. It had become evident that in the Transvaal, as in the Orange River Colony, the High Commissioner and Governor-in-Chief must be given the help of a Lieutenant-Governor, and

PART II. the appointment was the more desirable in that Lord Milner
 .. thought well to make his head-quarters at Johannesburg, as being the commercial centre of South Africa, whereas Pretoria was the recognized capital of the Transvaal, and contained the Government buildings. Thus new Letters Patent for the Transvaal were issued bearing date of the 23rd of September 1902, and Sir Arthur Lawley, who had been Administrator of Matabeleland and subsequently Governor of Western Australia, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal, taking up his residence at Pretoria.

The Legislative Councils of the two new colonies at first consisted entirely of a few leading officials; but as soon as they had come into being, early in July, Lord Milner obtained permission to announce that they would be enlarged, and that non-official members would be added. The Transvaal Council in May 1903 contained thirty members, fourteen of whom were unofficials, English and Dutch, while the Council of the Orange River Colony was also enlarged, first to ten members and subsequently to eighteen, eight of whom were unofficials. Botha, Delarey, and Smuts were invited to serve on the Transvaal Council, but declined, 'laying great emphasis on the fact that, in their opinion, the moment had not arrived for even a nominated legislature, far less that of popular representative institutions'.¹

*Self-
government and
Union
fore-
shadowed.*

From the very first, self-government for the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal had been contemplated at the earliest possible date. Mr. Chamberlain's despatch of the 2nd August 1900, in words which have already been quoted, intimated the desire of the Imperial Government that, if the inhabitants of the two territories should peaceably acquiesce in British rule, they should, 'as soon as circumstances permit, have all the advantages of self-government similar to that which is enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Cape Colony and

¹ Sir A. Lawley's words, Cd. 2104, July 1904, p. 9.

Natal.¹ The terms vainly offered to Botha at the time of the Middelburg negotiations, in February and March 1901, included a plain statement that 'it is the desire of His Majesty's Government, as soon as circumstances permit, to introduce a representative element and ultimately to concede to the new colonies the privilege of self-government'.² The seventh section of the final agreement at Vereeniging promised that 'as soon as circumstances permit, representative institutions, leading up to self-government, will be introduced'.² But, more than this, from the first men's minds turned to a Union of South Africa. The Royal Commission of the 6th of October 1900, which appointed Sir Alfred Milner personally to be High Commissioner for South Africa, contained a provision for calling conferences between the administrations of the various South African colonies and Protectorates on subjects of common interest, and the covering despatch called special attention to it. 'This provision', wrote Mr. Chamberlain, 'will serve to indicate the wish of Her Majesty's Government that, failing other means of concerted action for which legislation might be necessary in the several colonies, your position as High Commissioner should enable you to set in motion and to further the Union and consolidation of South Africa in regard to some of the most important interests which affect its various component parts.'³

The Cape Ministers, in their minute of December 4, 1900, on the severance of the High Commissionership from the government of the Cape, not only contemplated constitutional government in due course for the new colonies, but looked forward to the time 'when a Federal Union of all the British territories in South Africa shall be established'.⁴ In their minute of February 25, 1901, on the settlement of the new colonies, again they referred to a future 'Federal Union of

¹ Cd. 547, April 1901, pp. 1-2. See above, p. 343.

² See Appendices III, IV, pp. 509, 512.

³ Cd. 547, pp. 4-5.

⁴ Cd. 547, pp. 24-5.

PART II. all the British possessions in South Africa¹; and the Natal Ministers, in a similar minute, dated the 23rd of March 1901, laid down that 'Confederation should be regarded as the final consummation of the settlement'.² Words and actions, alike in England and in South Africa, testified that on the British side the war was not a war of conquest so much as a successful struggle against race dominance and race isolation, a victorious fight for free institutions and a United South Africa.

*Transfer
of territory
from the
Transvaal
to Natal.*

The boundaries of the Orange River Colony remained unchanged. It was not so with the Transvaal. In his despatch of the 2nd of August 1900 Mr. Chamberlain mentioned that suggestions had been made in unofficial quarters for altering the boundaries of the conquered territories; and when at the beginning of 1901 the Natal Ministers were consulted as to the arrangements to be made for the administration of these territories, they raised the question of an addition to their own. In October of that year Lord Milner, after his return from England, paid a visit to Natal—the first visit since he had been in South Africa—and discussed the matter. The Natalians contended that at least the Vryheid and Utrecht districts, and part of the Wakkerstroom district of the Transvaal, should be transferred to them, and also that they should receive from the Orange River Colony part of the Harrismith and Vrede districts. The claim on the Transvaal was supported by geography and to a large extent by history. The South African Republic wedged itself into the colony in awkward and unnatural fashion, and the Vryheid district represented part of Zululand, which, as has been told in the earlier volume,³ was overrun by Boer interlopers, constituted in 1884 a 'New Republic', and in 1888 annexed to the South African Republic. This claim, therefore, was conceded by the Imperial Government before the war ended, in 1902.

¹ Col. 1163, July 1902, pp. 3-4.

² Col. 1163, July 1902, p. 5.

³ See Part I, p. 301 and note.

In the Letters Patent of September in that year which created the Lieutenant-Governorship of the Transvaal, provision was made for the transfer; the necessary Act was passed by the Natal Legislature; a boundary delimitation Commission settled the exact limits, and Natal gained at the expense of the Transvaal between 7,000 and 8,000 square miles, taking over at the same time £700,000 of the Transvaal debt. The claim on the Orange River Colony was refused, for there was little either in geography or in history to support it, and the transfer would have caused, with good reason, irritation to the Free State Boers.¹

Martial law was not withdrawn in the two new colonies till the 19th of November 1902. In Natal it disappeared on the 4th of October, and in the Cape on the 16th of September, after the Legislature had met and passed the Indemnity Legislation which the crisis demanded. In August a Royal Commission, the Chairman of which was the Lord Chief Justice of England, had been appointed to inquire into such sentences passed by the military courts in South Africa under martial law as were still taking effect. The Commissioners visited South Africa, and made their report at the end of October, having reviewed 794 cases of penal servitude and imprisonment and of unpaid fines. In the case of 119 prisoners immediate release was recommended, and the recommendation was at once carried into effect. The extent to which rebellion had been carried in the Cape Colony was shown by the fact that out of the 794 cases, 721 were in the Colony, as against 59 in the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies, and 14 in Natal. The result of the war, of rebellion, of martial law, had been that constitutional government in the Cape Colony had practically come to a standstill. Prorogued from time to time, while the Colony was being overrun with invaders and rebels, the Parliament had not met since October 1900, and the registration of voters required by law had not been

CH. VI.

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*Royal
Commission
on
Martial
Law
sentences.*

¹ See Cd. 941, May 1902.

PART II. carried out. The Colony was divided into two camps, bitterly
 —♦♦— hostile to each other, and under these circumstances, early in
 May 1902, a deputation waited upon the Governor of the
 Cape, Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson, and presented a petition,
 signed by forty-two members of the Cape Parliament, in
 favour of temporary suspension of the Constitution. It was
 known that Lord Milner favoured this course, and there was
 much to be said for it. There were ample grounds for
 apprehension that the bitterness which the war had called
 forth would find its way into Parliamentary debates and
 Parliamentary elections, and that it would be difficult to
 secure the Bill of Indemnity which would be required to
 validate past actions and cover past breaches of the law. But
 Sprigg, the Premier, with most of his colleagues, was opposed
 to suspension; and, having come to England for the Corona-
 tion and the Conference, he was able to press his views in
 person. Nor was Mr. Chamberlain prepared to take such
 drastic action. He had not only to reckon with public opinion
 in England and South Africa, but also to have regard to the
 feeling likely to be aroused in the other self-governing
 dominions. At the beginning of July he refused the petition.
 Noting that it had been signed before the war had come to
 an end, and before the circumstances under which it ended
 were known, he pointed out that there was no precedent for
 formally suspending the constitution of a responsibly governed
 Colony, and that an Act of the Imperial Parliament would be
 required for the purpose; nor was there any proof that sus-
 pension was desired by a great majority of the white citizens
 of the Colony. He took the position that the Cape Parliament
 should forthwith be called together, that the requisite legisla-
 tion should be introduced, and only in the unlikely event of
 refusal on the part of the majority to take the steps necessary
 for the pacification of the country would Imperial interests
 be endangered.¹ This pronouncement had the desired effect.

¹ See *Cd.* 1162, July 1902.

*Movement
 for Sus-
 pension of
 the Con-
 stitution in
 the Cape
 Colony.*

Sprigg went back to South Africa and carried the necessary measures; the Colony was released from martial law, and civil life began to resume its normal course. But Sprigg had now parted with his old following, and his tenure of office practically depended upon the support of the Bond. His Minister of Works, Dr. Smart, had left him and was in opposition with the Progressives, who shortly afterwards found an able leader in Dr. Jameson. When a General Election came at the beginning of 1904, Sprigg found himself without a party and without a seat, and in less than ten years from the date of the Raid Jameson became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.

CH. VI.

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*Sprigg opposed by the British party.**Jameson becomes Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.*

Generals Botha, Delarey, and De Wet had been commissioned by the Boers at the Vereeniging meeting to visit Europe on behalf of the widows and orphans and those on the Boer side who had been made destitute by the war. They reached Southampton on the 16th of August, were met by Lord Kitchener, were received by King Edward, and went on at once to the Continent to attend the funeral of Lukas Meyer, who had preceded them to Europe and had died. The funeral was postponed, but the Generals had now come into touch again with Kruger and his circle, and this may have condued to a renewal of the familiar process of trying to undo and whittle away what had been done. Asking for an interview with Mr. Chamberlain, such as they had contemplated in coming to Europe, they were requested to state the subjects which they wished to discuss. They then gave a long list of proposals which, as the Secretary of State told them, amounted to 'a suggestion for an entirely new agreement, in many points inconsistent with and even contradictory to the conditions accepted and signed by the Boer delegates'.¹ He declined in any way to reopen the Vereeniging agreement, and required a formal assurance that no subject would be raised inconsistent with that settlement, before he consented to an inter-

Boer Generals' visit to Europe.

¹ Cd. 1284, September 1902, p. 7.

PART II. view. The assurance was given; the interview took place
 ---♦--- at the Colonial Office on the 5th of September, Lord Kitchener
 being present, and various points were discussed in frank and
 friendly fashion.¹ But before September was out, an 'Appeal
 to the Civilized World' from the Generals was published on
 the Continent, inviting subscriptions for the Boer sufferers
 from the war, and the tenor of the appeal, reflecting alike
 upon the acts and the intentions of the British Government—
 for money was invited even for the education of the Boer
 children, in face of the schools which had been established in
 the Refugee Camps—elicited remonstrance from Mr. Cham-
 berlain.² The new order had been accepted loyally and in
 good faith by the late Boer leaders in the field; but at the
 outset, and when they were in contact with continental
 sympathy and with the remnant of the old Boer régime, there
 was a not unnatural tendency to revert to the old view of
 England as the task-master instead of taking her by the hand
 once for all as the friend.

*Mr. Cham-
 berlain
 visits
 South
 Africa.*

Mr. Chamberlain, in his words and dealings, had been at
 once firm and generous. What had been done, had been
 done for ever. The Boers were now fellow citizens, and as
 fellow citizens were entitled to receive, and were already
 receiving, the utmost possible help. It was for them to
 reciprocate confidence and generosity, and to join in building
 up a united future. As in England, so on the spot in South
 Africa, he preached fearlessly from the same text; that there
 was to be no looking back, but much looking forward. For
 he had resolved to visit South Africa himself, and, travelling
 by the east coast of Africa, he landed at Durban on the 26th
 of December 1902. He stayed in South Africa for two months,
 visiting all parts of the present Union of South Africa, from
 Mafeking to Capetown. He dealt with all sorts and conditions
 of men, with the commercial leaders of Johannesburg, with

¹ See Cd. 1284, September 1902.

² See Cd. 1329, November 1902.

recalcitrant Boers at Bloemfontein, with Bechuana chiefs at Mafeking. He went to the Dutch centre of Graaf Reinet, and received a deputation of representatives of the Bond at Capetown. He conferred with Lord Milner on the many and great outstanding questions, and settled not a few. The fact that in little more than six months from the end of the war, the British statesman who had been held most responsible for it could visit all the scenes of the war, meet the late-fighting Generals in the same dining-hall, or on the same platform, tell home truths in the plainest language, promise and perform substantial help, and give strong, confident encouragement for the future, was evidence at once of rare personal strength of character in a great Englishman, and of conviction among the Dutchmen of South Africa that they might find worse enemies than the English, and not such profitable friends.

This visit helped forward the work of reconstruction. As the beginnings of civil administration in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal had been made in war time, so, long before peace came, Lord Milner had been laying plans for repopulating and regenerating the desolated and devastated territories. Speaking at Johannesburg on the 8th of January 1902, at a dinner given by the new Municipal Council which he had called into existence a few months previously, he urged with all his force that the transition time from war to peace, the months during which the last efforts at resistance were being worn down, should be used 'to do our best in it with might and main, in order to prepare for that season of feverish activity—straining all administrative machinery to the utmost—which is sure to come upon us with a rush when the time of transition is past'.¹ When peace was signed, the first and most urgent call upon those who were now responsible for the late South African Republic and late Orange Free State was repatriation of the inhabitants. The white inhabitants of the Transvaal had in the main

CH. VI.

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Repatriation.

¹ *The Nation and the Empire*, p. 57.

PART II. been partly Dutch, partly English. The English had been exiled during the war, and not the least of the burdens which the war cast upon the High Commissioner was the charge of the British refugees at the ports of South Africa. They had been relieved mainly from the Mansion House funds, for which Lord Milner had successfully appealed at the beginning of the war, and partly from a small Parliamentary vote. In the later stages of the war, the block-house system and the attenuation of the Boer forces enabled a constantly growing number to be sent back to their homes, and before the war ended the Rand had recovered a large proportion of its population. Temporary Government agencies were called into being to deal with the cases of these British refugees; there was a Refugee Aid Department, a Personal and Property Inquiry Department, and a Return Permit Office. A great deal of work had been done by these departments, which also served the purpose of Labour Bureaux, before the end of the war.

The Boers. Not a little, too, had been done to prepare for repatriation of the Boers. Records were, as far as possible, collected of the inmates of the Concentration Camps, and of the prisoners' camps in and out of South Africa, so as to facilitate grouping families together and speed the home-coming on the return of peace. In either of the two new colonies steps were taken to appoint a small Commission to advise as to the minimum amount of seed, stock, and so forth to be provided, and to form the nucleus of a Repatriation Department, at first in connexion with a Land Board, while the coming problems of transport and of housing received full attention in anticipation of peace. The families of the fighting Transvaalers and Free Staters were in large measure in the Concentration Camps, where their husbands and fathers found them admirably cared for; and these camps—at the end of the war in first-rate order—became dépôts from which the work of repatriation went on. On the conclusion of peace they were,

in Mr. Chamberlain's words, to a great extent 'transformed into organizations for enabling the people to return to their homes'.¹ Cn. VI.
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The Vereeniging terms, to quote Lord Milner, 'entitled something over 33,000 people to be restored to liberty'.² Of these over 24,000 were interned in British possessions beyond the seas—in St. Helena, Bermuda, Ceylon, and India, in addition to about a thousand who, having crossed over into Portuguese East Africa during the war, had been disarmed by the Portuguese and taken to Portugal. The rest were either in confinement in South Africa or were on parole, or had been allowed to live in the Concentration Camps. The second article of the Vereeniging Agreement laid down that 'all prisoners of war at present outside South Africa, who are burghers, will, on duly declaring their acceptance of the position of subjects of His Majesty King Edward VII, be gradually brought back to their homes as soon as transport can be provided and their means of subsistence ensured'. It was therefore incumbent upon the British Government, as it was also clearly to the interest of the British taxpayer, to repatriate the prisoners as soon as possible. There was, however, no little difficulty at first in persuading the majority of these Boer exiles to be repatriated, in spite of a message sent to them by the three Generals, and in spite of the fact that they were given the option of making a declaration of allegiance in lieu of taking the oath. Suspicious, and influenced by the irreconcilables among their number, they were slow to believe that the reported terms of peace were not a trick to beguile them into becoming British subjects. However, by the end of 1902, some 20,000 prisoners had been brought back, and by the middle of the following March less than 1,000 were outstanding, the large majority of whom

The Second Article of the Vereeniging Agreement.

Return of the overseas prisoners.

¹ Letter to General Botha of November 6, 1902. Cd. 1329, November 1902, p. 3.

² Despatch of March 14, 1903. Cd. 1551, April 1903, p. 2.

PART II. were in India. These irreconcilables were after an interval
 —♦♦— of many months finally got rid of by the personal persuasion
 of special emissaries sent to them, including in the end
 General Delarey himself. The last were repatriated in
 January 1904.

On landing in South Africa, the ex-prisoners of war were sent to the Concentration Camps nearest to their respective districts, to rejoin their families, and in due course be sent on to their homes. Meanwhile, the surrenders of the fighting burghers were not completed until about three weeks had elapsed from the date when peace was signed; the prisoners of war in South Africa were not released till the 20th of June, and the active work of repatriation only began on the 21st. Yet, writing on the 14th of March 1903,¹ Lord Milner was able to report that in eight and a half months about 200,000 of the old burgher population had been restored to their homes, that the Concentration Camps in the Transvaal had ceased to exist and that one only remained in the Orange River Colony, at Brandfort, where less than a hundred of the most helpless were still cared for. This had been the result of extraordinary labour and large expenditure. The details of the repatriation arrangements in the two colonies differed considerably, but in both the machinery included a Central Repatriation Board with an Executive Department attached to it, and local Commissions for the different districts, presided over by the Resident Magistrates. The Central Boards or Departments controlled and advised, gave general instructions, obtained and distributed supplies. The local Commissions undertook the actual work of relief. They had been promised by the 10th Article of the Vereeniging Agreement, which ran as follows:

*The 10th
 Article of
 the Vereeniging
 Agreement.*

‘As soon as conditions permit, a Commission, on which the

¹ Cd. 1551, April 1903, pp. 3-4. This despatch and its enclosures give a full account of the work of repatriation up to date. For repatriation in the Orange River Colony see *The Aftermath of War*, by G. B. Beak, 1906.

local inhabitants will be represented, will be appointed in each district of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, under the presidency of a Magistrate or other official, for the purpose of assisting the restoration of the people to their homes and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide for themselves, with food, shelter, and the necessary amount of seed, stock, implements, &c., indispensable to the resumption of their normal occupations. His Majesty's Government will place at the disposal of these Commissions a sum of £3,000,000 for the above purposes, and will allow all notes issued under Law 1 of 1900 of the South African Republics, and all receipts given by officers in the field of the late Republics, or under their orders, to be presented to a Judicial Commission, which will be appointed by the Government, and if such notes and receipts are found by this Commission to have been duly issued in return for valuable considerations, they will be received by the first-named Commissions as evidence of war losses suffered by the persons to whom they were originally given.

'In addition to the above-mentioned free grant of £3,000,000, His Majesty's Government are prepared to make advances on loan for the same purposes free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years with 2 per cent. interest. No foreigner or rebel will be entitled to the benefit of this clause.'

The local Commissions were duly constituted with Boer representatives upon them, Boers who had taken the British side being included in the Transvaal Commissions, which called forth a protest from General Botha¹; and the work went forward. Lord Milner had recommended, and Mr. Chamberlain had agreed, that restoration and relief should not wait for presentation and adjustment of claims, that whatever assistance was necessary should be given at once, and the cost be treated as an advance against the

CII. VI.

—♦—

Repatriation Work.

¹ See Cd. 1284, September 1902, pp. 5-6 and pp. 19-20.

PART II. promised grants or loans. Thus delay was wisely and rightly avoided, though the expense to the Government was inevitably increased. The difficulties to be overcome in the actual work of repatriation were immense. Military and civil requirements were competing with each other; the railways bringing soldiers down to the coast, and refugees and ex-prisoners up into the interior, would have been blocked at the best of times, and the close of a long war did not find them in the finest working order. Thus the importation and transport of the many articles which are not produced on the South African veldt, and which could not be obtained from the army, was at first a constant struggle. Economy in military finance has always been one of Lord Kitchener's strong points, and the military authorities drove hard bargains in the matter of the stores of which the army wished to dispose, and which were in demand for repatriation purposes. The measured judgement passed at a later date by a Royal Commission upon the dealings between soldiers and civilians at the end of the war was that 'the two departments were too much disposed to regard themselves as rivals, each trying to get the better of the other in bargaining, rather than as joint administrators for the benefit of the British taxpayer of supplies and money coming from the same source'.¹ Lord Milner took over army stores to the amount of three and a half millions, paying £850,000 for food, forage, and supplies, and two and a half millions for transport oxen, mules, horses, and wagons, in addition to £110,000 for traction-engines, which proved of little use. The haggling and the bargaining caused delay, and the soldiers, who still required not a little for their own purposes, naturally parted with their worst, and kept their best. The animals were for a large part in miserable condition. Repatriation began in mid-winter, when no grass was on the veldt. Diseases

¹ Royal Commission on War Stores in South Africa Report, Cd. 3127, 1906, pp. 53-4.

indigenous to the land had been aggravated and supplemented by the importation of live stock from all quarters during the war, and rinderpest, horse-sickness, and scab were rife. The animals taken over from the Army Service Corps were in the early stages mainly required for transport, and there was a want of oxen for ploughing. This want was made good in no small degree by sending Government teams round the farms to plough enough land to keep the farmers and their families going for one season, and some 16,000 acres were ploughed in the Transvaal on this principle. Towards the end of 1902 the outlook was hopeful, but then the rains failed, and, whereas there had been good seasons during the war, peace was followed by a prolonged drought; repatriation pure and simple was over, but relief continued; the Repatriation Department of the Orange River Colony closed its doors as a Repatriation Department, but opened them again as the Orange River Colony Government Relief Department. This unfortunate failure of nature to back the efforts of man at a most critical time, when man, if ever, had earned backing, added greatly to the labour, responsibility, and outlay; it multiplied discontented Dutchmen, and strengthened the hands of ill-natured critics.

The first great object which Lord Milner and those who worked with him had in mind, and which was achieved with marvellous promptitude, was, by hook or crook, to send the inhabitants of the devastated ex-Republics back to their homes, to begin restoring the homes and tilling the lands, and to give subsistence while houses and lands were being regenerated.

Then came settlement of the bill and interpretation of the 10th Article of the Vereeniging Agreement. The British Government promised to place a sum of £3,000,000 at the disposal of the local Commissions 'for the purpose of assisting the restoration of the people to their homes and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide for

*The Funds
and their
application.*

PART II. themselves, with food, &c.' The 'people' were not defined, nor was it stated from what source the money was to come, and no mention was made of compensation for war losses, but only of evidence of war losses as entitling to participation in the grant. The interpretation placed upon the article was liberal; and more and more the view of compensation, as opposed to charitable relief pure and simple, tended to gain ground. It was decided that the 'grant' should be confined to ex-burghers of the two Republics, whatever part they had taken in the war, whether against the English or on their side, that the money should be paid out of the Imperial Exchequer, and that the ultimate distribution of the grant should depend upon the proved war losses of each individual. In the end all ex-burghers who had been relieved by the Repatriation Commissions, or who had proved war losses, were either credited with £25 against the relief which they had received, or paid in full up to £25; and the balance of the three millions was distributed *pro rata* among those whose proved war losses exceeded £25.

—♦—
The grant
of three
millions.

The grant
of two
millions.

The mili-
tary com-
pensation
fund.

None of the three millions went to British subjects who had been resident in the Republic before the war; their costs were covered by a further grant from Imperial funds of £2,000,000. This sum was to be spent in compensation to British subjects, neutral foreign subjects, and natives, who had suffered war losses. For the natives had not been and could not be ignored. During the war Concentration Camps for white men, women, and children had been supplemented by similar camps for natives, and when war was over, out of this free grant of two millions the black men received £300,000. This was not the end of funds. The close of the war found a large number of claims outstanding in South Africa against the British War Office. These claims were of two kinds. The first were for goods requisitioned during the war, for which in the later stages of the war military receipts had been given in lieu of cash. The other set of

claims was for war losses of ex-burghers who claimed compensation on the ground of specific promises made to them. Some of these ex-burghers had given active assistance to the British troops, others had voluntarily surrendered under the promise of protection to person and property contained in Lord Roberts's Proclamations, and in either case loss had resulted. The military authorities made no difficulty as to honouring the receipts for goods taken in the war, but there was growing delay in settling the second class of claims; and the result of complaints by the leaders of the 'protected burghers' and of Mr. Chamberlain's visit to South Africa, was that the balance of a sum of £4,500,000, part of which had already been expended in cashing receipts, was, at the beginning of 1903, handed over by the War Office to the civil governments, who, after dealing with outstanding receipts, devoted about £1,900,000 to paying the assessed claims of the protected burghers at the rate of 10s. in the pound. The final Court of distribution of these funds was the Central Judicial Commission which had been promised by the 10th Article of the Vereeniging Agreement, and which was appointed on the 30th of October 1902. It was appointed in the first instance to investigate notes and receipts as evidence of war losses, and to consider the reports on claims made by the local Commissions, its original duties being confined to the free grant of three millions. Then the scope of the inquiry was extended to cover the application of the two million grant for war losses incurred by British subjects, foreigners, and natives; and yet again the Commission was entrusted with the work of administering the military compensation fund. Thus all three funds came within its province, and its final report, a storehouse of information as to these complicated transactions, was not signed until the 28th of February 1906.¹

The result of repatriating first and assessing payment

¹ See Cd. 3028, July 1906, pp. 53-91.

PART II. afterwards was that the Boers received in effect a far larger
 --*-- free grant than three millions.¹ The deficit was made good
 not out of the Imperial Exchequer, but out of a loan of
 £35,000,000 raised by the two colonies under Imperial
The loans guarantee. In addition to the free grants there were also the
to farmers. loans promised by this same 10th Article. The loan fund
 was limited to three millions, and the amount actually lent
 fell rather short of that sum. The loans as a rule did not
 exceed £500 in each case, and averaged between £300 and
 £400, the money being usually lent for five years.² The
 charge of these loans, which, it will be remembered, were
 free of interest for the first two years and only carried 3 per
 cent. interest afterwards, fell upon the two colonies.

The pro- The Boers after the war were not a united family. As has
tected been noted, and as was inevitable, the feeling was very bitter
Burghers between those who fought to the end or in captivity retained
and the
bywiners.

¹ From the report of the Central Judicial Commission the state of the case, as between the three million grant on the one side of the account and the repatriation expenditure on the other, seems to have been roughly as follows. Article 10 promised three millions 'for the purpose of assisting the restoration of the people to their homes and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide for themselves, &c.' The decision having been taken to repatriate first and calculate and assess the cost afterwards, advances were made in cash and stores to the ex-burghers, the cost of which came approximately to £5,481,783. Of this sum £583,758 represented the value of supplies issued free, by way of charity, to widows and indigent burghers, leaving a balance of £4,898,025. This sum, set against the three millions left a deficit of £1,898,025, and any such deficit was originally intended to be treated as loans to burghers which were authorized by Article 10. But the deficit was very much greater, owing to the fact that the three millions came to be interpreted as compensation money for war losses. This brought in a large number of burghers who had suffered war losses but who had not required Government assistance to return to and set up their homes; and, further, of the burghers who had required and received such assistance, those who had received assistance of less value than £25 were given in cash the difference between the cost of what they had received and £25, so that all alike should have a minimum of £25. The Government also lost over the bywiners, and apparently only recovered out of the three millions £1,418,026, against its expenditure of £4,898,025, or, including the charitable grant to widows, &c., £5,481,783. Further, it paid the whole cost of administration.

² See Beak, *The Aftermath of War*, p. 45.

their fighting instincts, and those who had surrendered and lived under British protection, or as National Scouts had fought on the British side. There was also a distinction, which had been in existence long before the war, between the landed Boers and the landless, the latter being known as bywoners. This landless class had grown in numbers in the later days of the Republics, as the population grew without any change in the pastoral system or any increase of closer settlement. The result was, in Lord Milner's words, that 'there was nothing for it but that the landless man should "squat" in a more or less dependent condition on the land of his more fortunate fellow, who was generally also his relative'.¹ Impoverished by the war, the farmers were not anxious to be again burdened with their poor relations, and a considerable number of bywoners had taken the British side in the later stages of the war. The protected burghers, it has been seen, benefited with the others in the distribution of the three million grant, and also were recouped in part for their war losses from the military compensation fund. They were safeguarded in the Transvaal in regard to the grant by having representatives on the local Commissions, while in the Orange River Colony the repatriation of those who had served in the British ranks was dealt with by a special organization, the Orange River Colony Volunteer Repatriation Department, which made advances in kind of £50 to those who were in need of assistance to enable them to return to the land. For these same burghers who had fought for the English, the National Scouts in the Transvaal, the Orange River Colony Volunteers in the Orange River Colony, further care was taken. The military staff and organization was kept up for a while after the close of the war under Major Leggett, who devoted himself to the interests of the men, and obtained small concessions for them from the military authorities. Of the bywoners among them a considerable number were taken into civil

¹ Despatch of March 14, 1903. Cd. 1551, April 1903, p. 7.

PART II. employment, others were in the Orange River Colony employed on Relief Works, while in the Transvaal, under Leggett's able direction, Burgher Land Settlements were organized, by which it was sought to convert these landless men into a class of peasant farmers. They were planted out on land owned or leased by privately formed Farmers' Associations, the members of which were in sympathy with the pro-British Boers, and they were given security of tenure, holding their land on a kind of Metayer system. At first these settlements had a great success, and attracted not only protected burghers but also bywoners who had fought to the end, and not Boers only but would-be small farmers of other nationalities.¹

Land settlement.

Land settlement, especially British land settlement, was a cardinal point in Lord Milner's policy of reconstruction. In this matter again some action had been taken while the war was still running its weary course. In August 1900 a Lands Settlement Commission, with Mr. Arnold Forster as Chairman, was appointed by the British Government 'to inquire into the question of the possibility of a settlement in South Africa of soldiers who desire to remain there after the war', and the report, made in the following November, pronounced that 'a well-considered scheme of settlement in South Africa by men of British origin is of the most vital importance to the future prosperity of British South Africa'.²

The Cape Ministers, in their minute of February 25, 1901, on the settlement of the new colonies, to which reference has already been made, expressed the view that the final consummation of self-government for the conquered territories and Federal Union for South Africa 'will be ultimately assured and will be materially hastened by a large influx of immigrants favourably disposed to British rule', and they

¹ For the Burgher Land Settlements see Cd. 1551, April 1903, pp. 65, &c., and Cd. 1553, April 1903, pp. 14, &c.

² Cd. 626, June 1901, p. 7.

urged that, as soon as the war ended, such a scheme of immigration should be carried out, embracing the Cape Colony as well as the late Republics.¹ Lord Durham, the father of colonial self-government, in his great Report, laid down as an essential preliminary to the grant of responsible government to the Canadas that a British majority should be assured, but this was not Lord Milner's object in pressing forward the work of land settlement. In despatches and in speeches he urged that the two Republics had been under-populated and under-cultivated; that it was British duty and British interest to preserve the Boer as a farmer but not as a large negligent landowner, that a new and progressive farming element was needed to leaven and reinforce the old, and, above all, that British farmers and agriculturists should be planted on the land in order that the race division might no longer coincide with division of interests, the country population having so far been exclusively Dutch and the commercial and industrial population of the towns mainly British.²

Mr. Arnold Forster's report touched upon the subject of irrigation, and recommended the creation of a Land Board. Sir William Willcocks, the managing director of the Daira Sania Company, was brought from Egypt to report on the possibilities of irrigation in South Africa and made his report in November 1901,³ proposing for an outlay of thirty millions sterling to provide three million acres of permanently irrigated land. In August 1901 a vote was taken in Parliament on behalf of the administration of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony: out of six and a half millions, half a million was allotted to 'Relief and Resettlement', and under the head of resettlement the Government included the introduction of British settlers. In September 1901 a Land Board, in its first stages, was

¹ Cd. 1163, July 1902, pp. 3-4. For this minute see above, pp. 411-2.

² For Lord Milner's objects in land settlement see Cd. 1163, pp. 83, 91, &c.; Cd. 1551, April 1903, p. 12; and his speech at Johannesburg, March 31, 1905, *The Nation and the Empire*, p. 86.

³ Cd. 1163, p. 37.

PART II. constituted for the Orange River Colony, and in December
 — ** — of the same year a similar Board came into being in the Transvaal. At the end of 1901 Lord Milner urged that immediate steps should be taken to buy up as much suitable land as possible for the Government while prices were low, and to plant out settlers in temporary occupation in adequately protected districts, so as to start as many farming experiments as possible, in anticipation of peace. At this early date some 90,000 acres were bought up in the corn-growing 'Conquered Territory' of the Orange River Colony. Less than a month later, towards the end of January 1902, Milner urged a policy of land settlement on a large scale, and proposed that out of the first loans to be raised by the two colonies, £3,000,000 should be allotted to land settlement. The proposal was accepted, and the sum was included in the guaranteed loan of £35,000,000. The land question differed somewhat in the two territories. In the Transvaal the Government owned a very large area of land, but not much of it was suitable for farming on the European model. In the Orange River Colony the amount of State-owned land was much better in quality for the purpose in question, but far more limited in quantity. In either case, from 1902 onwards, for two or three years, large purchases of land were made by the Governments. The conclusion of peace was promptly followed by legislation with a view to land settlement in both colonies, and before the year 1902 ended, in the Transvaal a Crown Lands Disposal Ordinance, largely drawn on Australian lines, and a Settlers' Ordinance, became law, the Land Settlement Board being replaced by a Lands Department, with a Commissioner of Lands brought from Australia; while in the Orange River Colony a Land Settlement Ordinance was passed, and the existing Land Settlement Board was converted into a permanent Government department.

In the Orange River Colony, at the end of February 1903, the number of new settlers planted on the land was 362. In

June 1906, on the eve of responsible government, Lord Selborne reported that nearly 1,200,000 acres had been allotted in the Orange River Colony, and that 660 heads of families had been planted out. Among them were Dutch as well as English. In the Transvaal in June 1906 between 900,000 and 1,000,000 acres had been allotted, and the settlers numbered 596. The number of settlers was small, both actually and relatively to the number of applicants for land, but they formed the much-needed new leaven in the country population. As such, however, they were the object of political jealousy and racial apprehension; and therefore, when self-government was granted to the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, the settlers' interests were safeguarded by providing in the Letters Patent which created the constitutions, that for five years they should remain under Land Settlement Boards outside the control of the colonial governments.

Pari passu with the introduction of new farmers was the introduction of new methods, the bringing of science and engineering to bear upon agriculture and pasture. Beginnings were made of irrigation, water-boring, and forestry, irrigation being needed to promote closer settlement; the prevention of cattle diseases was taken in hand by trained scientists as never before in South Africa; improvement of the breed of stock and of the kinds of grain received attention; experimental farms and agricultural shows came into being. There is not space to deal with the various other items in the programme of reconstruction, such as, for instance, education, which had already received a great impetus in the schools of the Concentration Camps, and municipal government ably fostered and widely extended; but railway development stands out as a leading feature in Lord Milner's great work. Five millions were allotted to new railways out of the proceeds of the guaranteed loan, and by the end of 1906 the mileage of lines open and at work in the Transvaal and the Orange River

*Railway
Extension.*

PART II. Colony was about double the mileage before the beginning of the war. In no part of the world have railways played a greater part than in South Africa, on the one hand as machinery for developing the country, on the other as making for political union. It was with good reason, from his own point of view, that President Kruger was slow to link up the Transvaal with the British South African possessions. It was decided at the end of the war to handle the railways of the two new colonies as a single system, and by an Order in Council of September 15, 1902, they were constituted the Central South African Railways, and were placed under the control and authority of the High Commissioner as being also Governor of the two colonies, with a Financial Board of Control, one member of which was Commissioner of Railways.

By the Letters Patent which constituted the governorships of the two colonies, the South African Constabulary—a military police, the product of the war—was also placed under the administration and control of the High Commissioner. Here were two services of great importance common to the two colonies, and hence arose the Inter-colonial Council, created by Order in Council of the 20th of May 1903, which superseded the railway Order in Council. The duties of the Inter-colonial Council were to advise the High Commissioner on the financial administration of the railways and the expenditure on the constabulary, with other smaller items of common expenditure; and a Standing Committee of the Council was constituted to deal with the railways, the chairman of which was the Commissioner of Railways. The Council at first consisted of the High Commissioner—the High Commissionership being by the Order in Council attached to the Governorship of the two colonies so long as one and the same man was Governor of both—the two Lieutenant-Governors, the Inspector-General of the South African Constabulary, the Commissioner of Railways, two nominated members of either Executive Council, two

The Inter-colonial Council.

members of either Legislative Council elected by the unofficial members in each, and two nominees of the Secretary of State. Within a year, by a further Order in Council of April 21, 1904, the Council was considerably enlarged, the total number of members being raised to twenty-six, and the number of unofficial members in all from six to twelve. The Council did much work and good work, but it was short-lived. The Letters Patent which gave responsible government to the two colonies in 1906 and 1907 left it in existence, modified to suit the new constitutions, but provision was made at the same time for empowering either colony to terminate it, and in 1908 it ceased to exist, a Railway Board being retained to control the joint working of the railways.

This Inter-colonial Council was a step forward towards unification, but it affected only two of the provinces of South Africa. Meanwhile, in March 1903, a Conference was held at Bloemfontein, which resulted in a South African Customs Union, embracing all the British colonies and Protectorates in South Africa. The Cape, Natal, the Transvaal, the Orange River Colony, Southern Rhodesia, Basutoland, and the British Bechuanaland Protectorate, all were included under a Customs Tariff, which gave preference to the United Kingdom and to such other British possessions as would concede reciprocal treatment. The Conference hailed the agreement for a Customs Union as a great stride towards political union and affirmed the desirability of such wider union. They passed a resolution that 'in view of the coming federation of the South African colonies', it was desirable that a South African Commission should be constituted to gather accurate information and make recommendations to the several governments 'with the object of arriving at a common understanding on questions of native policy'¹; and in accordance with this resolution a South African Native Affairs Commission was appointed by Lord Milner in

CO. VI.

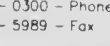
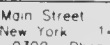
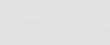
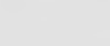
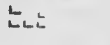
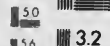
The Customs Union Conference of 1903.

¹ See Cd. 1640, June 1903, p. 13.



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PART II. the following September, under the able chairmanship of Sir
 —♦♦— Godfrey Lagden, which issued a report of great value in
 January 1905. They also passed another notable resolution,
 among others, to the effect that the permanent settlement
 of Asiatic races in South Africa would be injurious, but that,
 if industrial development positively required it, the intro-
 duction of unskilled Asiatic labourers under Government
 control, with provision for indentures of service, and repatria-
 tion at the end of service, would be permissible.

The work of repatriation and reconstruction had been
 costly. A great part of the expenditure, it is true, was
 directly or indirectly reproductive; the need for development
 was obvious, the benefits were indisputable. But the bill
 was large. Mr. Chamberlain's visit to South Africa had
 resulted in a decision that the Imperial Government should
 guarantee a loan of thirty-five millions at 3 per cent., to be
 raised by the two colonies to cover their liabilities and their
 requirements, and in an agreement with the representatives
 of the gold-mines that another loan of thirty millions should
 be raised by the Transvaal, the proceeds of which should be
 paid to the British Government as a contribution to the cost
 of the war. This last loan was never raised. Bad times and
 shortage of labour falsified expectations; the Boer leaders
 protested against taxing the Transvaal to pay for the war
 without the consent of the people; and with the grant of
 responsible government was coupled abandonment of any
 claim on the part of Great Britain to a war contribution.
 The Transvaal gold was the source from which it was hoped
 to find the necessary ways and means to pay off outstanding
 debts and to meet development charges. By proclamation
 of the 5th of June 1902 a tax of 10 per cent. had, in
 accordance with a recommendation made in Sir David
 Barbour's report, been imposed upon the annual net profits
 of gold-bearing properties; and, when the guaranteed loan
 was raised, it was raised as a Transvaal loan, the establish-

Finances.
The
Guaran-
teed Loan.

ment of the Inter-colonial Council affording machinery by which the proportion due from the Orange River Colony could be recovered. The Imperial Act which guaranteed the loan was passed in August 1903, and the Schedule to the Act allotted six millions to covering existing liabilities, fourteen millions to the acquisition of existing railways—for the Netherlands Railway Company had to be bought out—five millions for repatriation and compensation, and ten millions for development, including new railways and land settlement.

The financial position, and all that the financial position implied, depended upon the gold industry, and the gold industry depended upon the labour supply. In South Africa, unlike the other self-governing dominions of the British Empire, labour is divided on the lines of race. There is and can be no question of a white South Africa as of a white Australia, for the indigenous native population far out-numbers the whites. Here the dividing line is between white skilled and coloured unskilled labour. South Africa, too, over and above its native labour-market, had long been familiar with indentured coloured labour from over the seas, for from the year 1860 onwards East Indian coolies had been imported under the contract system for the sugar plantations of Natal. The South African labour supply had been found deficient before the war, and efforts had been made to meet the difficulty. Rhodes's Glen Grey Act, for example, contained a provision imposing a labour-tax on able-bodied natives in the Cape Colony; and in Rhodesia, just at the time when the war began, Mr. Chamberlain's attention was called to a system of labour-recruiting which seemed to approximate to forced labour, native commissioners and chiefs in Government employ being part of the machinery for supplying the labour market. In Rhodesia in 1901 ordinances were passed dealing both with indigenous and with imported labour—a Masters and Servants Act and an Immigration Act, the latter carefully providing that the immigrants should be sent

CH. VI.

*The
Labour
Question.*

PART II. back to their own lands at the expiration of their contracts, and already in 1900 Arab labourers had been imported, and Abyssinia had been tried as a possible recruiting-ground. In the case of Rhodesia, in June 1901, Mr. Chamberlain had declined for the time being to sanction the importation of Chinese.

Shortage of labour in the Transvaal.

Before the war the demand for labour in the Transvaal exceeded the supply. After the war it greatly exceeded it. Before the war the mines had no serious competitor for native labour, but after it railway construction and agricultural development were competing factors. Natives' wages had been lowered on the Rand, but were raised again, and the High Commissioner saw to it that the conditions under which natives worked in the mines were improved. As early as the 18th of December 1901 Lord Milner had secured a *modus vivendi* with the Governor-General of Mozambique, under which recruiting for native labour in Portuguese East Africa was continued as before the war. But the case became more and more urgent, and men's minds turned more and more towards the importation of Asiatic labour. There was much opposition. A White League, a deputation from which Lord Milner received on the 2nd of June 1903, opposed it, and so did an African Labour League, and the Witwatersrand Trades and Labour Council. The Boer leaders, while disclaiming responsibility, let it be known that they were opposed to it. In July the Cape Legislature passed resolutions against it, from all parts of the Cape Colony came protests, and in 1904 the Cape Legislature passed a law prohibiting the entry of Chinese into the Colony. Australia and New Zealand joined in protesting, viewing the matter in the light of their own strong feeling against coloured and especially Chinese immigration, but to those who were responsible on the spot for the economic welfare of the Transvaal it seemed to become more and more apparent that no other solution would meet the needs of the situation. The Customs Conference at

Bloemfontein in March 1903 had placed on record their view CH. VI.
 'that the native population of Africa south of the Zambesi —♦—
 does not comprise a sufficient number of adult males capable
 of work to satisfy the normal requirements of the several
 colonies, and at the same time furnish an adequate amount of
 labour for the large industrial and mining centres',¹ and, as
 has been seen, they did not bar out the possibility of Asiatic
 immigration as a temporary measure. In July 1903 Sir
 Arthur Lawley, as Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal,
 appointed a strong representative Commission 'to inquire
 what amount of labour is necessary for the requirements of
 the agricultural, mining, and other industries of the Transvaal,
 and to ascertain how far it is possible to obtain an adequate
 supply of labour to meet such requirements from Central and
 Southern Africa'.²

While the Commission was pursuing its inquiry, and the
 subject was being debated throughout South Africa, the High
 Commissioner paid a visit to Europe. He left South Africa
 in August and returned in December, having refused the
 Colonial Secretaryship, for Mr. Chamberlain had ended his
 great and long term of office, having resigned in order to
 devote his energies to the tariff question. His successor at
 the Colonial Office in October 1903 was Mr. Alfred Lyttelton,
 who, as Chairman of the Transvaal Concessions Com-
 mission, had gained recent personal experience of South
 Africa.

In November 1903, before Lord Milner's return, the *Report of
 the Trans-
 vaal
 Labour
 Commis-
 sion.*
 Labour Commission, which consisted of thirteen members,
 presented their report. All but two were unanimous in
 finding that the demand for native labour for agriculture in
 the Transvaal largely exceeded the supply, that for the
 Transvaal mining industry it exceeded the existing supply
 by about 129,000 labourers, that for other Transvaal in-

¹ Cd. 1640, June 1903, p. 13.

² Cd. 1896, February 1904, p. 1.

PART II. dustries, including railways, the demand was already greatly
 —♦♦— in excess of the supply, and that the excess would increase
 with the advancement of mining and agriculture, and finally
 that there was no adequate supply in Central and Southern
 Africa to meet the demand. The two dissentients represented
 the white labour party; they found, among other points,
 that there was sufficient native labour in Central and Southern
 Africa for existing requirements, though effort would be
 required to secure it, and 'that in many ways the supply of
 native labour can be supplemented and superseded by white
 labour'.¹ Before this report was issued Sir Arthur Lawley
 had taken what steps he could to meet the growing shortage
 of labour, which meant a growing crisis. Some new railway
 construction works were postponed so as not to absorb labour
 for which the mines were crying out, and the number of
 natives employed upon the roads and under the Repatriation
 Department was reduced. An experiment, too, was made of
 importing English navvies for railway work, which proved an
 expensive failure.

Chinese immigration.

Before Lord Milner returned, an ordinance had been drafted to regulate the introduction into the Transvaal of unskilled non-European labourers. Towards the end of the year Sir George Farrar brought forward a motion in the Transvaal Legislative Council in favour of the importation of unskilled coloured labourers under contract, to be sent back to their own lands at the expiration of their contracts. The motion was carried, after three days' debate, by a very large majority of 22 to 4, the majority including Dutchmen as well as Englishmen. The introduction of an ordinance to give effect to the resolution was sanctioned by the Secretary of State in January 1904; it was duly passed by the Legislature, received Mr. Lyttelton's approval in March, and became law. In May a convention was concluded with the Chinese Government. In July over 1,000 Chinese immi-

¹ Cd. 1896, February 1904, p. 62.

grants were already at work in the mines, and by the end of the year the number had risen to some 23,000. The highest number of Chinese labourers on the Rand was in January 1907, when they reached a total of 53,856. But long before this date a change of Government in the United Kingdom had brought a complete reversal of policy. At the end of 1905, immediately after the Liberal Government took office, the issue of further licences for recruiting in China was suspended; the Letters Patent of December 6, 1906, which gave responsible government to the Transvaal, provided that no further licences should be issued under the ordinance of 1904, and that at the end of a year from the first meeting of the new Legislature that ordinance should be repealed; the first batch of immigrants was repatriated at the end of June 1907, and the last in March 1910.

This Chinese immigration question caused almost incredible bitterness, which culminated in what amounted to a vote of censure of Lord Milner in the House of Commons in 1906, a mean and pitiful exhibition of party spite. The importation of Chinese labourers was a special measure taken to meet a special crisis, and it met it. The introduction of coloured men into Australia is opposed on two main grounds—first, that the citizens of Australia intend it to remain a white man's land; secondly, that the workmen of Australia do not intend the standard of living and the rate of wages to be lowered by the incoming of coloured labourers. South Africa, as has been said, can never be a purely white man's land, but the number and variety of the coloured inhabitants is a valid argument against the introduction of a fresh coloured strain into the permanently resident population. That the demand in the unskilled labour market as well as in the skilled could be adequately met by white workmen was a practical impossibility under the existing conditions of the Transvaal, if ever it could be realized in a land with an overwhelming majority of coloured men. But what could be

PART II. done, and what was done, was to ensure that the imported workmen should be temporary visitors only, not entering into the general life of the community, returning to their own countries at the end of their engagements, and that they should be unskilled workmen, not competing with but increasing the demand for skilled white labour. The experiment was successful, it relieved the economic position, but it called forth a dangerous and disastrous opposition. The white-labour party, led by Mr. Creswell, denounced it from the labour point of view; in England politicians raised or adopted the No Slavery cry, the slavery consisting in the fact that the labourers were restricted in their residence while in South Africa and were compelled to go back to their homes in China at the end of their term. Thus the precautions against the evils which were anticipated from the immigration were denounced as crimes against the moral law. Most serious was the feeling aroused in the Australasian colonies. There the line could be and was taken, that those who had sent their sons to fight in the war saw as the result of their efforts the adoption of a policy which was of all policies the most obnoxious to themselves. A matter of expediency was conjured into one of principle, and it was a grave drawback to the policy of Chinese immigration that it could be so misrepresented. On the other hand, it was of great and undoubted benefit to the immediate interests of the whole of South Africa, and on its merits it was a perfectly legitimate and reasonable measure, regarded as a temporary remedy for abnormal economic conditions.

The Lyttelton Constitution.

To a protest from New Zealand Mr. Lyttelton had replied that it was the policy of the Home Government to treat the Transvaal, as far as possible, as a self-governing colony, where no distinct Imperial interest was concerned, and to interfere as little as possible with local opinion and local wishes. During his short tenure of office he advanced the colony a long step on the road to self-government, for which

some voices were raised at Johannesburg as soon as the war was over. Milner was strongly in favour of moving on beyond Crown Colony government; the only question was, how far? Should responsible government, which had been promised in due course, and on which, when circumstances were ripe, all parties were agreed, be conceded at once, or should there be an intermediate stage, for the terms of peace had spoken of 'representative institutions leading up to self-government'? The Imperial Government decided on a probationary period, and the outcome of the decision was the Lyttelton Constitution. The reasons were summed up in an able despatch of the 31st of March 1905. Responsible government means party government; the war was but yesterday, and Dutch and English might well co-operate for a while as elected members of a Legislature before introducing the party system. Other self-governing dominions had gone through the intermediate stage; in the Cape and Natal there had been a long period of representative institutions without full responsibility, the citizens of these colonies had been trained in the school for self-government. In South Africa again the presence of a native population outnumbering the whites was a special reason for caution in making political changes.

To the Transvaal, therefore, it was decided to give representative institutions, broad and liberal, but to withhold for a short time control of the Executive Officers. The Constitution embodied in the Letters Patent of the 31st of March, 1905, created a Legislative Assembly, which should contain from six to nine officials and from thirty to thirty-five elected members. The elected members were thus given complete control of legislation and of the finances, exclusive of the sums reserved by a civil list, which included the moneys payable under Orders in Council to the Inter-colonial Council. The franchise was assimilated to the existing municipal franchise, but was somewhat lower; the qualification was

PART II. occupation of premises of the value of £100 or of the annual value of £10, and ex-burghers who had been on the voting list of the South African Republic were exempted from any pecuniary qualification. The franchise was confined to white men only, and a Commission was to parcel out the colony into districts on the principle of an equal number of voters. It was a good scheme, devised in a liberal and generous spirit, framed in accordance with precedent, and avowedly intended as preparatory to complete colonial autonomy. Till it had been given a trial, the Orange River Colony was to wait for a short while. But it was never tried; the preliminaries necessarily took time. It was hoped to prepare a voters' list in time for a General Election in June 1906; but meanwhile a change of Government in England had taken place, and the Liberal Ministry decided upon the immediate concession of full responsible government.

*Lord
Milner's
retirement.*

*Lord
Milner
and
Lord
Durham.*

The Lyttelton Constitution had been framed while Lord Milner was still High Commissioner and in full concert and consultation with him, but it was not published until he had left and Lord Selborne had taken his place. His health and strength had suffered under years of strain and work, and at the beginning of April 1905 he finally left South Africa. On the eve of his departure he received a telegram from the Secretary of State, noting the steadfast courage with which he had confronted 'the issues of war, and, scarcely less momentous, the problems of ensuing peace', recording that he had 'laid deep and strong the foundation upon which a united South Africa will arise to become one of the great States of the Empire'.¹ His work had been great and fruitful for generations yet unborn. It will be best appreciated if studied in the light of the *Report* in which Lord Durham inspired a new future for the British Empire. In Milner's despatches and speeches there is the same bold outspoken

¹ Mr. Lyttelton's telegram of March 29, 1905. Cd. 2482, May 1905, p. 155.

presentment of wrongs to be righted and past mistakes to be made good, the same clear and definite recommendation of the remedial measures to be adopted that is so noticeable in Lord Durham's *Report*. The one man and the other had the same healthy contempt for partisan views of the moment, for political commonplaces, for *laissez-faire* policy, for fear of taking strong action if strong action was demanded by facts. The one and the other had a profound belief in the creation of greater wholes, to flourish under democratic institutions, in the entire compatibility of Empire with freedom. Both men placed improvement of communication and development of the resources of the lands in the forefront of statesmanship. Milner practised what Lord Durham preached, but he put his hand to the plough with the benefit of all the stored experience since Lord Durham's time. Lord Durham held that a permanent British majority must be assured in Canada as a necessary preliminary to the grant of self-government. 'The ascendancy', he wrote, 'should never again be placed in any hands but those of an English population.'¹ He contemplated and hoped for the gradual obliteration of French Canadian nationality. Milner worked for equality of the white races in South Africa under the British flag, he strove to leaven the Dutch population of the country districts with an admixture of British settlers; but he was not concerned with outnumbering or denationalizing the Dutch—he was only concerned with forming one great unit in which a wider patriotism would absorb the narrowness of race prejudice. The ideals of the two men were one and the same. Lord Durham pleaded for a self-governing Canadian union as a counterpoise to any tendency to separate from the British Empire. Here are his words: 'No large community of free and intelligent men will long feel contented with a political system which places them, because it places their country, in

¹ Lord Durham's *Report*, 1912 edition, vol. ii, p. 296.

PART II. a position of inferiority to their neighbours.¹ Here are Lord Milner's last words at Johannesburg: 'The Dutch can never owe a perfect allegiance merely to Great Britain. The British can never, without moral injury, accept allegiance to any body politic which excludes their motherland. But British and Dutch alike could, without loss of dignity, without any sacrifice of their several traditions, unite in loyal devotion to an Empire State, in which Great Britain and South Africa would be partners, and could work cordially together for the good of South Africa as a member of that greater whole.'²

When the Lyttelton Constitution was on the stocks, public opinion in the Transvaal was divided as to whether responsible government should come at once. A large proportion of the British population favoured this course, and the Dutch declared for it if any change was made. A people's Congress of the Transvaal Boers had met in May 1904, and out of it had grown an organization of the people, 'Het Volk', which came to birth in January 1905. An efficient party organization it was, on the lines of race, with Louis Botha at its head. The change of Government in England came in December 1905, and the General Election of 1906 resulted in an overwhelming Liberal majority. 'Chinese slavery' had been one of the election cries, and out of those who were returned to power and their supporters a large proportion had been opposed to the South African policy of the late Government, root and branch. The old mischief of party government was rife again, making against continuity of policy; fanatical partisans were concerned to undo the work of political opponents; members of Parliament had to translate into action speeches made and pledges given when fighting for their seats. On the other hand, there were some substantial arguments in favour of an immediate grant of responsible

¹ Lord Durham's *Report*, p. 310.

² Speech at Johannesburg, March 31, 1905, *The Nation and the Empire*, p. 91.

government. After the first annexation of the Transvaal, delay in giving a promised constitution had much to do with the disastrous sequel, and in the present case it was not Dutchmen alone who were asking for a complete colonial constitution. It was therefore decided to make the concession as soon as possible; the Lyttelton Constitution was withdrawn; a Commission was sent out to South Africa to gain information and guidance for the Home Government, and on their return the new constitution for the Transvaal was framed and embodied in Letters Patent of the 6th of December 1901. It consisted of a Legislative Council of fifteen members and a Legislative Assembly of sixty-nine. The members of the Council were to be appointed by the Governor in the first instance, subsequently by the Governor in Council, that is, on the advice of his Ministers; but power was given to the Legislature in due course to substitute, if they wished, an elective for a nominated Council. The franchise was confined to the whites, and the members of the Assembly were to be elected on adult manhood franchise, six months' residence in the country being required, as it was under the Lyttelton Constitution. Representation was, as under the Lyttelton Constitution, to be approximately on the principle of an equal number of voters for each constituency; the numbers were based on the census of 1904, and the magisterial districts were adopted as electoral units, being subdivided, when entitled to more than one member, into single-member constituencies. The Rand, including Krugersdorp, received thirty-four members, Pretoria six, and the rest of the Transvaal twenty-nine. Under the Letters Patent the Governor was to reserve any law imposing special disabilities or restrictions on persons not of European birth or descent, a provision intended to safeguard British Indians in the Transvaal; and a tribute was paid to the antagonism to Chinese immigration in the following clause: 'Whereas it is our will and pleasure that all persons within our dominions

CH. VI.

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Responsible Government given to the Transvaal.

PART II. shall be free from any conditions of employment or residence of a servile character, the Governor shall reserve any law providing for the introduction under contract, indenture, or licence, of labourers into the colony from places outside South Africa.' The first election under the new constitution took place early in 1907. Helped by divisions among the British population, the Boers obtained a large majority. General Botha, with Mr. Smuts as his Colonial Secretary, formed a Government, and in April 1907 took his place in London at the Imperial Conference as a Minister of the Crown, side by side with Jameson, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and the Premier of Natal. It was less than twelve years since the Raid took place, five years only since the end of the war.

Responsible Government given to the Orange River Colony.

The Bond comes into power in the Cape Colony.

In June 1907 a similar constitution was given to the Orange River Colony, the number of members in the Legislative Council being eleven, and in the Legislative Assembly thirty-eight. Here there was a Boer political organization, Orangia Unie, answering to Het Volk in the Transvaai, and a certainty of a large Dutch majority. The result of the General Election towards the end of the year was that Mr. Abraham Fischer became Prime Minister, taking for his colleagues, among others, Generals De Wet and Hertzog. Early in 1908 Jameson resigned office in the Cape Colony, and was succeeded by Merriman, who had been a strong and bitter opponent of Lord Milner's policy and the South African War. Merriman formed a Bond Ministry, and a General Election gave the Bond a sweeping majority. Thus, in 1908, there were four self-governing colonies in South Africa, three of them completely dominated by the Dutch. As in England, so in South Africa, there had been a complete *rolle-face*. Bad times ensuing on the war had contributed to the political upheaval in South Africa, and in turn political change aggravated instead of relieving commercial and industrial depression.

Natal was the one self-governing South African colony where there had been no change from British to Boer guidance; but it had its own troubles, a native rising and the long-standing British Indian difficulty. The disturbances of 1906-7 recalled past times when Langalibalele in Natal proper and, a little later, Cetewayo in Zululand, menaced the public safety. According to the census which was taken in South Africa in 1904, the whites in Natal, including Zululand, did not number 100,000; they were outnumbered by the East Indians and other Asiatics; and to the native population were as one to nine. The native question had necessarily always been a very live matter to the white colonists of Natal. Various reasons were assigned for the unrest which came to the surface at the beginning of 1906. The Ethiopian movement, a development of native Christianity in South Africa, with the doctrine of Africa for the black men, was credited with being a disturbing factor. The South African War was supposed to have unsettled native minds and to have modified their views of the relations between white and black; the withdrawal of the Imperial troops from Natal at the end of the war was said to have been interpreted as a sign that the King was not at one with the colony; in German South West Africa the natives were fighting against Europeans with no little success; finally, a poll-tax imposed in 1905 on all adult males in Natal, whether white or black, though natives who paid hut-tax were, together with indentured Asiatic immigrants, exempted from it, gave intelligible ground for discontent. Whether this was the real cause, whether there was a combination of small irritants, or whether the native administration generally was at fault, there was a small outbreak in the heart of the colony in the early months of 1906; Natal was placed under martial law, and an Imperial battalion was moved down from the Transvaal to Maritzburg.

The Natal Government, with its local forces, had no great difficulty in dealing with the rising, but the trials and execu-

CH. VI.

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*Native
rising in
Natal.*

PART II. tions of natives caused searchings of heart among the Liberals
 —♦— in England, and a telegram from the Secretary of State to the Governor was interpreted by the Natal Ministry as an attempt to interfere with responsible government, and led to uneasy inquiries from Australia and New Zealand. Meanwhile, one of the leading native malcontents, Bambata, escaped across the Tugela and betook himself to the fastnesses of the Nkhandla forest, the last resting-place of the old Zulu king, Cetewayo. Zululand now became the main scene of action, and a Zululand field-force was mobilized under the command of Colonel Mackenzie, with Woolls Sampson for his chief Staff Officer. The force included a body of Transvaal volunteers, and before the operations were over, more help came to the Natalians from Johannesburg and from the Cape Colony. There was a considerable amount of bush-fighting; in June Bambata was killed, another chief, Siganda, surrendered, and died a little later. By the beginning of August the rebellion was at an end, the troops were demobilized, and at the beginning of October martial law was dispensed with. A Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the Colonial Government to inquire into native policy and native administration in Natal, and the inquiry brought to light much that needed amendment, notably the usury laws as affecting the natives.

In June 1907 some of the ringleaders in the late troubles were sent to St. Helena. As has been told in the former volume,¹ in the year 1883 the dethroned Zulu king Cetewayo was restored to Zululand, but not placed in sole authority, part of the native territory being left under the rule of a rival chief, Usibebu. Cetewayo and his followers and Usibebu and his clan fell foul of each other. Cetewayo was worsted, and died in 1884. The quarrel went on; Dutchmen came in, espoused the cause of Dinuzulu, son of Cetewayo, and by doing so secured the Vryheid district, whence it

¹ Part I, pp. 300-1.

became necessary to proclaim British sovereignty over what remained of Zululand. The native feuds still continued, Dinuzulu's party being known as the Usutus, and eventually Dinuzulu was exiled to St. Helena. In 1898 he was brought back; he was not placed in the position of paramount chief, but was given a Government salary and an official position and was the recognized head of the Usutus. In 1907 he was suspected of having been concerned in the late disturbances; there was apprehension of a further rising; and for a short time towards the end of 1907 resort was again had to martial law in Zululand. Happily bloodshed was averted. Dinuzulu surrendered on the 9th of December and, under a special Act passed for the purpose, was tried on various charges. The proceedings were very protracted, and there was no little divergence of feeling, the Imperial Government, in view of past history and of present pressure by a strong body of supporters in England, being concerned to ensure that every possible safeguard should be taken for a fair, unbiased trial. Miss Colenso, daughter of the Bishop who in past times had stood out as the champion of Langalibalele, was an untiring advocate of Dinuzulu's cause. Mr. Schreiner, the late Premier of the Cape Colony, undertook his defence; and eventually, on the 3rd of March 1909, Dinuzulu was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for high treason, to date from December 1907, when he had surrendered and his imprisonment had in effect begun. Before the full term expired he was released by the newly formed Government of the Union of South Africa, and his troubled life is now at an end. The main interest in the episode consists in the extraordinarily difficult position which was created by this native question between the Imperial Government and the Government of a self-governing colony, and in the fact that advanced Liberal opinion in England was enlisted on the side of interference. The difficulty may be said to have been really due to the fact that Imperial obligations in regard to Zululand and

CH. VI.

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*The Trial
of Dinuzulu.*

PART II. the Zulus, created by past history, had not yet become wholly
 —♦♦— obsolete, and that in Natal the overwhelming proportion
 of coloured to white men, coupled with memories of the
 time when the hordes of Zululand were an ever present
 danger, had somewhat narrowed the outlook on the native
 question, as compared with the views which shaped native
 policy in the Cape Colony.

*British
 Indians in
 Natal*

As years went on the growing number of Asiatics in
 Natal, due to the coolie immigration system, was not un-
 naturally regarded with some jealousy and apprehension
 by the small white population; and soon after Natal obtained
 responsible government, in 1893, the colony entered on
 a policy of restriction. The first step was to discontinue
 State subsidies to coolie immigration, though they were
 renewed for a while after the war. In 1895 it was provided
 that coolies wishing to remain in Natal after the expiry
 of their indentures should pay a £3 fee for permission to
 reside. In 1896 a franchise law was enacted, disqualifying
 all persons coming from countries not possessing elective
 institutions. In the next year it was provided that trading
 licences should be refused to those who could not keep their
 books in English; and in this same year, 1897, the well-
 known immigration restriction law was passed by the
 Colonial Legislature, under which immigrants were subjected
 to an education test and were refused admission to the colony
 if unable to make written application in a European language.
 The principle of this law, commended to the other self-
 governing colonies by Mr. Chamberlain at the Colonial Con-
 ference of 1897, as restricting coloured immigration without
 giving unnecessary offence, was adopted by the Orange Free
 State in 1899, by the Cape in 1902, by Southern Rhodesia in
 1903, and by the Transvaal when it became a self-governing
 British colony. In Natal the law was intended to apply to
 free immigrants, not to indentured coolies. In that colony it
 was renewed with modifications in 1902 and again in 1906.

Before the war difficulties had arisen with regard to Asiatics in the South African Republic. There were some Arab traders in the Republic, and East Indians came in through Natal. There were some Chinese also. As the large majority of these Asiatics were British subjects, their position in the Republic became one of the many questions at issue between the British Government and President Kruger. The 14th Article of the London Convention of 1884 had provided in very explicit terms that all persons, other than natives, who conformed to the laws of the South African Republic, should have full liberty to enter and trade in the Republic and live there with their families, without being subjected to any discriminating tax. In the following year, however, 1885, in view of the feeling shown by white residents in the Republic against the coloured storekeepers, the Transvaal Government, after having consulted the British Government as to the interpretation of this Article, passed a law which debarred Asiatics from obtaining rights of citizenship, and from owning land in future, required all who settled in the country to be registered, paying a registration fee, and gave the Government the right to compel them to live in special locations. The Asiatic traders protested; and the British Government, who had agreed not to obstruct reasonable legislation by stringently insisting upon the letter of the Convention, but had only contemplated restrictions upon Indians and Chinese of the coolie class, took exception to the law. The law was accordingly somewhat modified in 1886, the restrictions on habitation, as the phrase ran, being defined to be for sanitary purposes; and the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time, having been apprised of the amendments, waived his objections. The Republican Government, however, refused to treat the law as simply a sanitary measure, or to discriminate between coolies and Asiatics of higher class, and they interpreted restriction on habitation or residence as applying to business premises

CH. VI.
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*In the
 Transvaal.*

PART II. as well as private homes. The British East Indians complained, the British Government made representations to the Transvaal Government, especially commending the case of the traders who had settled in the Republic before the law of 1885 was passed. In 1895 the Chief Justice of the Free State, having been called in as arbitrator, practically left the matter to the decision of the law courts. A test case of a British Indian, who had been notified to leave Pretoria both for residential and for business purposes, was tried in 1898; a majority of the judges decided in favour of the Boer Government; and British Indian traders at Pretoria were summoned to remove from the town into separate locations by a specified date. At this stage the war supervened.

The result of the war was that the British Government, who had stood out for the rights of coloured British subjects in the Transvaal when the Transvaal was a foreign country, when it became a British possession were in a position to ensure those rights. But they could only do so at the cost of antagonism to the white community, and the position became difficult and perplexing to a degree. During the continuance of the war and after it, the old law remained in force, but vested interests were respected, and the influx of newcomers was prevented by the provisions of the Peace Preservation Acts, which were not directed exclusively against Asiatics. In April 1902 Lord Milner made proposals for registration and segregation, from which educated and civilized Asiatics should be exempted, but Mr. Chamberlain refused to assent to what amounted to a continuance of a system against which, when it was upheld by the Government of the South African Republic, the British Government had repeatedly protested. In May 1903 the High Commissioner applied to India for 10,000 Indian coolies to work for a term on the new South African railways, and be repatriated at the end of the term; but the Indian Government now made a stand, demanding that race distinction should, as far as possible, be

abolished, legislation against undesirable incomers generally being substituted for registration of Asiatics, and against speculative acquisition of land for restriction on Asiatic ownership of land; that special locations for Asiatics should be confined to those only for whom such a provision was required on sanitary grounds, and should apply to residence only, not to business premises; and, finally, that Asiatics of higher class should be exempted from all special restrictions. The Transvaal Government had in the meantime in April issued a notice to the effect that bazaars would be set apart in every town in the colony in which alone Asiatics would be allowed to live and trade, but that vested interests in this regard would be protected and that Asiatics of high education or social standing would be exempted. The old law was still in force, and no new legislation had taken its place; the law was opposed to British tradition and British contention; but the feeling of the white community in the Transvaal consolidated against Asiatic immigrants and traders, and the Home Government had taken up the position that the Transvaal, though not self-governing, would in regard to local questions, as far as possible, receive such consideration as would be given to a self-governing colony. The year 1904 came; there had been an outbreak of plague in the Indian quarter of Johannesburg, which seemed to support the contention that Asiatics should be separately located; and in April Lord Milner and Sir Arthur Lawley put forward proposals for dealing with the matter. Asiatic immigration into the country was to be restricted by an immigration law on the lines of the Natal law; Asiatics already in the Transvaal were to be registered, paying a fee, and to be segregated both for residence and for trade, but the vested interests of existing traders were to be safeguarded, and high-class Asiatics were to be exempted. This was on the lines of the Government notice of the preceding year. The essence of the proposed immigration law was an education

PART II. test, and it was at first contemplated to admit Indian languages to rank with European languages in applying the test, but subsequently Indian languages were ruled out—a sign of the strength of feeling among the white men of the Transvaal. Mr. Lyttelton agreed to accept in the main what was proposed, but, strengthened by a judgement of the High Court of the Transvaal, which upset the former ruling of the judges in 1898, he insisted that the locations should be only of the nature of municipal provisions on sanitary grounds and should not apply to business premises. 1904 went by, and 1905. At length, in September 1906, the Transvaal Legislature—still a Crown Colony Legislature—passed a law, the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, which provided for the registration of all Asiatics lawfully resident in the country other than the indentured Chinese labourers. There was an outcry from the British Indians, and as the colony was on the eve of responsible government, Lord Elgin, now Secretary of State for the Colonies and formerly Governor-General of India, did not give the requisite assent to bring the law into operation, but held the matter over for consideration by the new Legislature. The Legislature promptly passed an Act, the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, which was practically the same as the suspended ordinance, and also passed an Immigrants Restriction Act, which imposed an education test on immigrants, and the provisions of which, coupled with those of the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, gave the Government power practically to bar all further Asiatic immigration. The Imperial Government, as has been seen,¹ had under the new constitution taken special powers with regard to legislation discriminating against non-Europeans, but these Acts embodied the solid feeling of the Transvaal electors, and they were not disallowed.

The laws and the regulations made under them, such as the prescribing of finger-prints for purposes of registration,

¹ Above, p. 445.

roused British Indian resentment in and out of South Africa, and the Chinese Government was concerned on behalf of the unindentured Chinese subjects residing in the Transvaal. An agitation was set on foot which continued, and the trouble was handed on to the Union of South Africa. There was no little irony in the position. Free democratic government on British lines proved to be hardly more tender to coloured men from over the seas than a Boer oligarchy in the days of Kruger, and the story of the latter years of South Africa warns us that the colour problem in difficulty and danger excels all other questions which threaten the cohesion of the British Empire.

Swaziland, by the Convention of 1884, had been placed *Swaziland.* under the administration of the South African Republic. When that Republic was annexed to Great Britain, its Swazi dependency came into British keeping. In August 1902, when the war was over, a provisional administration was established in the territory under a Special Commissioner, whose headquarters were placed at Mbabane, which is still the administrative centre. The old capital had been Bremersdorp, but the Boers had destroyed it during the war, and their commander, Tobias Smuts, had been on that account cashiered by General Botha. Mbabane has the advantage of Bremersdorp in climate, being on higher ground. In June 1903 an Order in Council was passed, which gave to the Governor of the Transvaal administrative authority over Swaziland, empowering him to appoint a Resident Commissioner and other officers and to legislate by proclamation; and in October 1904 Lord Milner issued a Proclamation, constituting an administration, and putting into force in the territory the laws of the Transvaal so far as they were applicable. At the same time he appointed a Commission to inquire into the numerous concessions which were the pest of Swaziland, with a view to expropriating the majority of the concessionaires on payment of the value of their concessions before

PART II. the war. The Commission reported in 1906, and in December of that year, in view of the grant of self-government to the Transvaal, a further Order in Council was passed transferring to the High Commissioner the powers which had been vested in the Governors of the Transvaal, so as to retain undiminished the control of the Imperial Government. Lord Selborne, after this Order in Council had been passed, and after he had paid a personal visit to Swaziland, developed the administration, creating a Resident Commissioner with a staff of officers—for so far the chief British officer had not been formally appointed Resident Commissioner—establishing a Special Court of Justice, which answered to a Superior Court elsewhere, and bringing into existence a local police force, the police duties having previously been discharged by the South African Constabulary. The concessions were gradually bought out or delimited, native rights were placed on a sound footing, though there was some discontent over the land question, and a Swazi deputation visited England. Swaziland, in short, from having been in a chronic state of administrative chaos, was turned into an orderly British Protectorate.

Basuto-land.

Basutoland after the war went on as before, prospering under good guidance, and kept as far as possible as a native reserve. Sir Godfrey Lagden, who had seen it safely through the early and dangerous stages of the war, when the natives were looking on at the unedifying spectacle of Dutch and English taking each other's lives, was moved to Pretoria in 1901 to take up the very important post of Commissioner for Native Affairs in the Transvaal, but under a most competent successor, the present Resident Commissioner, Sir Herbert Sloley, the territory held on its way, a Crown Colony in which over 400,000 natives are managed successfully and tactfully by a handful of white officers. At the end of 1905 a little branch railway was carried from the Orange River Colony across the Basuto border, close to the administrative centre at Maseru.

The Bechuanaland Protectorate also, when the war was over, was administered as before the war, the Bechuana chiefs who had seen Mr. Chamberlain in England meeting him again at Mafeking when he visited South Africa. In Rhodesia, released from martial law before the end of July 1902, railway-making went on apace. Early in October 1902 Salisbury was linked up to Buluwayo, giving through railway communication from Capetown to Beira; before the end of April 1904 the line from Buluwayo to the Victoria Falls had been completed; on the 12th of September 1905 fifty years to the day from the date when Livingstone first gazed upon the Falls, the railway bridge over the Zambesi was formally opened by Sir George Darwin, President of the British Association, which in this year held its annual meeting in South Africa. By this date the line was being carried forward fast and far on the northern side of the Zambesi; on the 1st of September 1906 it was opened for traffic as far as the Broken Hill mine, 374 miles from the Falls, and by the end of 1909 it had reached the frontier of the Congo Free State.

*Rhodesia.**The Cape
to Cairo
Railway.*

An Order in Council of 1898, as has been told,¹ gave a constitution to Southern Rhodesia. The administration of the territory was left in the hands of the British South Africa Company, but the control of the Imperial Government over the administration was in various ways effectively ensured. The administration consisted, and still consists, of an Administrator, an Executive Council, and a Legislative Council, the latter being composed partly of nominated, partly of elective members. By the side of the Administrator, a servant of the Company, was a Resident Commissioner, a servant of the Crown, holding a watching brief, having a seat, but not a vote, alike in the Executive and in the Legislative Council. The Order in Council of 1898 was modified by subsequent Orders in Council, and the strength of the elective element in the Legislative Council was increased. For in spite of bad times

*Southern
Rhodesia.*

¹ Above, p. 52.

PART II. Southern Rhodesia developed surely and steadily; and, as it developed, the white settlers began to demand more voice in the control of the country. During the years which followed the war and preceded the Union of South Africa more gold-fields were discovered, agriculture was promoted, branch railway lines were opened; the current income was brought abreast of the current expenditure; Southern Rhodesia joined the South African Customs Union, and became more and more an integral part of South Africa. The troubles there were much the same as elsewhere. Labour was a standing difficulty; there was a renewed demand, in 1903 and 1904, for Chinese indentured labour; and in 1907 the sickness in the mines among native workers who came from the north of the Zambesi led to the intervention of the High Commissioner; but, taken as a whole, Southern Rhodesia, in the first ten years of the present century, was rather preparing to make history than making it, going through the ordinary phases of a young community placed on the border-line between South and Central Africa, with the special colouring of having been called into existence by, and remaining under, the direct administration of a Chartered Company.

*Rhodesia
north of
the Zam-
besi.*

That Company was responsible, not only for Southern Rhodesia, but also for a vast territory north of the Zambesi. By Orders in Council of November 1899 and January 1900, that territory was divided into Barotziland—North-western Rhodesia and North-eastern Rhodesia. Where Barotziland, ruled by King Lewanika, touched Portuguese West Africa, a question arose as to the limits of the Barotze kingdom, and in June 1905 the King of Italy, having consented to act as arbitrator in interpreting the 4th Article of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of June 1891, gave his award, and settled the western boundary of North-western Rhodesia. The High Commissioner for South Africa exercised control over North-western as over Southern Rhodesia, and the administrative centre, which had been at first fixed at Kalomo, was in 1907

moved south to Livingstone, a new township, rather over four miles north of the Victoria Falls, laid out in 1905. The supervision of North-eastern Rhodesia was left in the hands of the Commissioner for the adjoining British Central Africa Protectorate, as Nyasaland was then called. CH. VI. —♦—

The Union of South Africa had, alike in war and peace, been ever present to Lord Milner's eyes—a necessary preliminary to Imperial Unity, 'to an Empire State, in which Great Britain and South Africa would be partners'.¹ Practical steps towards this union had been the South African Customs Union, and the amalgamation of the railways of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, pointing, as he said in his last speech before leaving South Africa, 'to the amalgamation, which might even precede political union, of all the railways of South Africa'.² Competition in railway rates was one and a main irritant which made for union, the more so in that the *modus vivendi* concluded with the Governor-General of Mozambique in December 1901³ had confirmed the port of Delagoa Bay in the advantages which it enjoyed before the war with regard to the traffic of the Rand. A second Customs Union Conference had been held in 1906, but Lord Selborne wrote of the Customs Convention that it 'does not represent a South African Customs policy; it is a compromise between five colonial customs policies, almost universally disliked, tolerated only because men shrink aghast from the consequences of a disruption of the Convention'.⁴ In May 1908 another Conference was called at Pretoria to consider these two burning questions of customs and railways. The delegates recognized that the only solution was to be found in political union, and passed resolutions to be submitted

*South
African
Union.*

*The Pre-
toria Con-
ference.*

¹ Speech at Johannesburg, March 31, 1905, *The Nation and the Empire*, p. 91. See above, p. 444.

² Speech at Johannesburg, March 31, 1905, *The Nation and the Empire*, p. 88.

³ See above, p. 436.

⁴ In January 1907, Cd. 3564, July 1907, p. 7.

PART II. to the several Legislatures with a view to their sending representatives to a National Convention to draft a Constitution for South Africa.

Lord Selborne's memorandum.

A powerful impetus to the Union movement had been given by a memorandum reviewing 'the present mutual relations of the British South African colonies', which Lord Selborne issued in January 1907, and which was published in a Blue Book in the following July.¹ He had been invited to give an expression of his views in the previous November by the Cape Ministry, Jameson being then still in office. Jameson and his colleagues considered it 'due to the people of South Africa that they should have a timely opportunity of expressing a voice upon the desirability, and, if acknowledged, the best means of bringing about a central national Government, embracing all the Colonies and Protectorates under British South African administration'.² In complying with the invitation and embodying his views in a memorable and comprehensive statement, Lord Selborne availed himself of the work and the thought of young, able, and forceful men, prominent among whom was Mr. Lionel Curtis, whom Lord Milner had gathered round him in the Transvaal after the war, and who served their apprenticeship in the school of political construction. They did much to turn South African minds to wider issues, to convert vague aspirations into articulate possibilities. The report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, too, published early in 1905, and the subsequent native rising in Natal and Zululand, demonstrated to thinking white men in South Africa the necessity for a uniform native policy. Equally patent was the need for a Court of Appeal for the whole of South Africa, and at the Imperial Conference of 1907 General Botha, speaking as the Premier of the Transvaal, and speaking in line with the other South African Premiers, testified: 'there is a great desire in South Africa to establish a Court of

¹ Cd. 3564.

² Cd. 3564, p. 5.

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Appeal, and, although we have there four colonies, we think that we can commence Federation by establishing this Appeal Court for South Africa'.¹ In short, Dutch and English alike seemed to come to the conclusion that at length the time was ripe for repairing the errors of the past, for making one again lands and peoples which should never have been sundered. The movement, when it came, came swiftly, but none the less it was well thought out. Lord Selborne's memorandum, *The Government of South Africa*, and *The Framework of Union*, instructed the public both in South Africa and in England; no such grounding in the principles and the precedents of union or federation, and no such analysis of existing political conditions, had precluded similar enterprises elsewhere. Every effort was made that whatever should be done should be, as far as was humanly possible, the work of understanding peoples.

CH. VI.



The Parliaments of the four colonies agreed to the National Convention, and it met at Durban in October 1908. The delegates numbered thirty-three, three of whom came from Rhodesia, holding, so to speak, a watching brief, for Rhodesia was not sufficiently full-fledged to become an original partner in the Union. The Cape sent twelve delegates, the Transvaal eight, the Orange River Colony and Natal five each. 'National Union', said Lord Selborne, 'is one of those few matters upon which every Government must take every opposition into its confidence without reserve',² and all parties were represented in the National Convention. With Botha and Smuts from the Transvaal came Farrar and Fitzpatrick. From the Cape came not only Merriman, the Premier, and the spokesmen of the Bond, but Jameson and Smartt. The outstanding characteristic of the Convention, Mr. Brand tells us in *The Union of South Africa*, was the preponderance of the farming element. The driving power, by common consent, came mainly from the Transvaal, leading in peace as it had led

*The
National
Conven-
tion.*

¹ Cd. 3523, May 1907, p. 208.

² Cd. 3564, p. 60.

PART II. in war. For the Transvaal delegation were solid in their views; the leaders had settled their differences and they went into Council as one. Moreover, they had defined for themselves the lines upon which a South African constitution should be framed; they knew their own minds and brought to the work in hand the combined product of Dutch and British intellects. The High Commissioner took no formal part in the Convention, though kept in close touch with all the proceedings, and the delegates chose as their Chairman Sir J. H. De Villiers, then Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, and afterwards Chief Justice of South Africa. They debated with closed doors, so that publicity should not hamper the free interchange of views. Beginning at Durban on the 12th of October 1908, later they adjourned to Capetown, and early in February 1909 they had framed and published a draft constitution.

The Draft Constitution.

There had been much give and take, wise and tolerant compromise. Union was carried as against Federation; but in framing the Union regard was had to the interests and the susceptibilities of the smaller colonies. In the Upper House—the Senate—the four colonies were at the outset equally represented. In the Lower House, the House of Assembly, larger representation than was their strict due on numerical lines was conceded to the Orange River Colony and Natal. The Dutch language was placed on the same level as English for official purposes, and Boer feeling in the Orange River Colony was conciliated by reviving the name of the Orange Free State. On the other hand, the principle of equal rights, that is, the creation within each of the four colonies of electoral divisions, containing approximately the same number of registered voters, and each returning one member, which was the main plank in the British platform, was embodied in the constitution, and so was the principle of proportional representation. The franchise qualification was left as it stood in the four colonies, for an

attempt to fix a uniform franchise would have raised the impossible colour question; and a compromise was reached on the question of a capital for the Union, Capetown being made the seat of the Legislature, Pretoria of the Executive Government, and Bloemfontein of the Supreme Court of South Africa.

The draft constitution was laid before the Parliaments of the four colonies. By the Transvaal Legislature alone was it accepted as it stood. Many amendments were demanded by Natal, for of all the four colonies Natal was most reluctant to enter the Union; and in the Cape, as in the Orange Free State, the Dutchmen took alarm at the provisions for equal rights and proportional representation. The power of the Bond depended largely on country constituencies over-represented as compared with the towns, and the Boer politicians dreaded the result of establishing equal electoral districts. The Cape Parliament declared against this provision, as also against proportional representation, designed to give a voice to the British minority in the country districts, to the Dutch minorities in the town areas; and, faced by this opposition from the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State, the Convention met again in Bloemfontein to consider the amendments to their draft. On the subject of equal rights the Transvaal delegation stood firm. It had already been agreed that, in marking out the electoral divisions, the Commissioners to be appointed for the purpose should be at liberty to depart from the rigid rule of an equal number of voters for the constituencies, within a margin of fifteen per cent., so as to allow for community or diversity of interests, means of communication, physical features, existing electoral boundaries, and sparsity or density of population. Beyond this point the Convention would not go. On the other hand, they bowed to the feeling of the Cape Colony so far as to abandon proportional representation, in regard to elections for the House of Assembly and the Provincial Councils, leaving

CH. VI.

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*Objections
in the Cape
Parliament.*

PART II. it in existence for the election of senators. The final draft
 —♦— was referred back to the Parliaments. Three of them accepted
 it. In Natal it had been provided that the decision should
 be left to the people, that is, to the white citizens, by means
 of a referendum, and the result was in favour of Union. In
 June 1909, therefore, the Bill had been adopted by all the four
 contracting parties, and a delegation left for England to watch
 over the final stage of its passage through the Imperial Parlia-
 ment. One of the delegates, Hofmeyr, the veteran leader of
 the Bond, did not live to return to South Africa.

*The Bill
 accepted in
 South
 Africa.*

*The ques-
 tion of
 coloured
 men.*

Satisfactory from the point of view of the white citizens of
 South Africa, the terms of union were little to the liking of
 the natives and coloured men. Basutos and Bechuanas in
 the territories outside the Union dreaded the facilities which
 were given by the measure for their being included within the
 Union, and thereby removed from the direct protection and
 control of the Imperial Government. The coloured citizens
 of the Cape Colony within the Union resented the provisions
 which excluded British subjects who were not of European
 descent from sitting in either House of the new Parliament,
 and noted that not only was the Cape franchise, which makes
 no political distinction on grounds of race and colour *per se*,
 not adopted by the other provinces, but that there was
 a remote possibility of coloured men being debarred from
 voting even in the Cape Colony in the coming time. They
 were not without friends either in South Africa or in England.
 Schreiner, the late Premier of the Cape, presented their
 petition to the Imperial Parliament, and the debates showed
 that members were alive to the fact that the Union of South
 Africa meant a White Man's Union, that Great Britain was
 invited to sanction a colour bar which, in less democratic
 days, would as a matter of course have been swept away
 by British statesmen and the British people. But in giving
 responsible government to the Transvaal and the Orange
 River Colony the Imperial Government had already sanc-

tioned an exclusive white franchise; it was well understood that to have insisted upon extending the Cape franchise to the rest of South Africa would have meant indefinite postponement of Union; that where responsible government has been conceded, there the Imperial Parliament cannot dictate to the white citizens; and, with no substantial amendment, the Bill became law. The Royal assent was given upon the 20th of September 1909. The 31st of May 1910, being the anniversary of the peace of Vereeniging, was fixed as the date upon which the Act should take effect, and the Union of South Africa come into existence; the electoral divisions were marked out; a Union Ministry was formed; a General Election was held on the 15th of September 1910; and on the 4th of November following the Duke of Connaught, on behalf of his present Majesty, opened the first Parliament of South Africa. As Queen Victoria had died before the end of the war came, so the life of King Edward VII ended before the last scene in the drama of reconstruction which followed the war.

The Constitution of the Union of South Africa has been abundantly explained by competent writers, and the points in which it differs from the Constitutions of the Dominion of Canada and the Australian Commonwealth have been often and clearly analysed.¹ The Executive Government is vested in the King, whose representative is the Governor-General, advised by an Executive Council, and this Council in effect consists of the Ministers of State, not exceeding ten in number. There are two Houses of Parliament, a Senate and a House of Assembly. Until ten years have expired from the date of the establishment of the Union, the Senate consists of forty members, eight elected by each of the four provinces,

¹ Among other books reference is invited to *The Union of South Africa*, by the Hon. R. H. Brand (1909); *Federations and Unions in the British Empire*, by Professor Egerion (1911); and *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, by A. B. Keith, D.C.L. (1912). All these books have been published by the Clarendon Press.

CH. VI.

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*The Bill
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PART II. and eight nominated by the Governor-General in Council, four of whom possess special knowledge of the requirements of the coloured races of South Africa. The original number of members in the House of Assembly was fixed by the Act at 121, 51 being assigned to the Cape, 36 to the Transvaal, and 17 each to the Orange Free State and Natal. With the growth of population the total number is to rise to 150, and until that limit is reached, and, in any case, until the Union has been in existence for ten years, each of the four provinces will keep as a minimum its original number of members. In order to sit in either House a man must have had five years residence within the limits of the Union, be qualified to be registered as a voter for the House of Assembly, and be a British subject of European descent. In addition, a Senator must not be less than thirty years of age, and own real property within the Union of the value of not less than £500. The elected Senators are not elected directly by the people of the provinces; the members of the House of Assembly are directly elected by voters whose qualification stands in each province as it stood at the time of the Union. Subordinate in every way to the Union Parliament are the Administrators, Executive Committees, and Provincial Councils in the four provinces. Yet these Councils have had for the time being some important functions left to them, notably, and regrettably, elementary education. The sections in the Act under the head of Finance and Railways are evidence of the great part which railway jealousies and competition between ports and interior played in bringing about the Union; a special section relates to Native Affairs and questions differentially affecting Asiatics within the Union; and, as regards the future, provision is made for the subdivision of provinces, for the admission of Rhodesia into the Union, and for the transfer to the Union Government of the native territories now directly under the Crown; a schedule to the Act, drafted with the utmost care in the interests of the natives, embodies the

terms and conditions upon which such transfer, if sanctioned at any future time by the Imperial Government, shall take place.

CH. VI.

The outstanding feature of the Constitution is that it creates a Union, not a Federation. 'Whereas it is desirable for the welfare and future progress of South Africa that the several British colonies therein should be united under one Government in a legislative union under the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland.' This is the preamble of the Act, and union, not federation, is of its essence. In his *Report* Lord Durham discussed the two kinds of union proposed for Canada, federal and legislative. 'A Legislative Union', he wrote, 'would imply a complete incorporation of the Provinces included in it under one Legislature, exercising universal and sole legislative authority over all of them, in exactly the same manner as the Parliament legislates alone for the whole of the British Isles.'¹ To this Legislative Union, which he advocated, the Union of South Africa approximates more nearly than the Dominion of Canada, far more than the Commonwealth of Australia. It is true that in the Senate for the first ten years the four provinces have been given an equal number of members, as equal contracting parties; that for purposes of original representation in the House of Assembly, they have been treated as distinct units; that the Provincial Councils have been given some legislative powers, which have been slightly extended by an Act of the Union Parliament; but none the less the Union has started with absolute and unquestioned supremacy of the Central Parliament in every respect, and with provisions which facilitate the growth of national and the obliteration of provincial development. It is in achieving so much union and eschewing so much federation that the greatness of this South African creation consists. Federation is in certain cases the only practicable course, but it is at best a cumbrous machinery, with infinite possibilities

¹ Lord Durham's *Report*, 1912 edition, vol. ii, p. 304.

PART II. of friction. In South Africa the area concerned was far smaller
 —♦♦— than in Canada or Australia; the lie of the land, the complete
 interspersing of the white races, all made Union at once
 possible and desirable. The large native population and all the
 questions concerned with it are arguments for one supreme
 Legislature, unquestioned by State rights, and unhampered
 by provincial liberties. There is much to be done yet before
 South Africa has, to quote again Dr. Jameson's words,
 'a central national Government, embracing all the colonies
 and Protectorates under British South African administration',
 but the Union of South Africa, as it stands to-day, is a states-
 manlike and far-sighted piece of human handiwork, one of
 the latest, and assuredly one of the greatest, experiments in
 the making of Nations.

*Sir Walter
 Hely
 Hutchinson.*

The consummation of the Union involved various changes
 in personnel. The Governors of the four colonies dis-
 appeared, while a Governor-General came into being. Before
 1909 ended Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson left for England,
 the last and not the least in the distinguished list of Governors
 of the Cape Colony. First as Governor of Natal, then as
 Governor of the Cape, since 1893 he had given his life to
 South Africa, through all the troubled times, in war and in
 peace, a man who deserved well of his country. In April

*Lord
 Selborne.*

1910 Lord Selborne left. As successor to Lord Milner, he
 had been conspicuously successful under adverse conditions.
 He had proved himself to be a wise and tactful ruler; at
 a time of transition a good friend and adviser to South
 Africans, white and coloured alike; and in the front rank
 of promoters of South African Union. In May the new
 Governor-General arrived, the present Lord Gladstone, and
 invited General Botha to form the first Union Ministry. It
 included three out of the four late Premiers of the now united
 colonies, Botha himself, Fischer of the Orange River Colony,
 and Sir F. Moor of Natal; but Merriman, who had been
 Premier of the Cape Colony and might not unreasonably

*The first
 Ministry
 of the
 Union.*

have aspired to lead the Union, not become a member of the Government. From the Transvaal came three Ministers, Smuts and Hull in addition to the Prime Minister; from the Cape four, including Messrs. Sauer and Malan. The Orange River Colony provided two, Fischer and General Hertzog, and Natal two. But it was not a coalition Ministry, such as some hoped might have been formed. It represented in the main the Dutch as opposed to the English, the party of the Bond, Het Volk, and Orangia Unie. A General Election followed, and the Government obtained a substantial majority, notwithstanding that General Botha was defeated for one of the Pretoria seats by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, and that Sir F. Moor lost his seat in Natal and retired from the Ministry. The Parliamentary history of the Union thus opened with a strong party Government in power, headed by the late Boer Commander-in-Chief, who came to the post from the Premiership of the Transvaal; and in the following year, 1911, General Botha took his seat at the Imperial Conference as Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, side by side with the French Canadian Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, and the Labour Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth. He represented a white population of rather over one and a quarter millions, according to the census taken in 1911, dwelling among nearly four and three-quarter millions of natives and coloured men.

The history of South Africa since 1910 is the history of yesterday, a history in the making, and only a few words are necessary or advisable. There have been Parliamentary changes, rather many in a short time, and in the absence of a General Election. The deaths of Messrs. Sauer and Fischer have removed two leading members of the Botha Cabinet, two men who, one in the Cape Colony, the other in the Orange Free State, had for years past been conspicuous figures on the Dutch side in South Africa. On the other side two notable men have retired from Parliamentary life. Sir

*The latest
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Africa.*

PART II. George Farrar, always in the forefront of the British community at Johannesburg, and Sir Starr Jameson, who had been second to none in bringing about South African Union. The place of the latter as leader of the Unionist or British party in the Union Parliament has been taken by Sir Thomas Smartt. Gordon Sprigg has died, and Richard Solomon, the first High Commissioner in England for United South Africa. The Prime Minister has had early and ample experience of the family difficulties which attend on Cabinets. In 1912 his Treasurer, Mr. Hull, resigned; later in the year the utterances of General Hertzog caused the resignation of another Minister; and before the year ended General Botha himself resigned, resuming office with a reconstructed Ministry from which Hertzog was excluded. It was hardly to be expected that, when the work of Union had been achieved, the spirit of toleration and compromise, which alone made that work possible, would continue unabated. The first Ministry had been framed mainly, the General Election had been fought mainly, on the line of race, but it is not on those lines that a great future will be moulded for South Africa, and they are not the lines favoured by broadminded and far-seeing men. General Hertzog, before the Union came into existence, but after responsible government had been granted to the Orange River Colony, had in the government of that colony, and especially in the matter of education, seemed to show signs of anti-English bias; and, after the Union was accomplished, he became prominent among those in South Africa who would keep alive the cleavage of race. It is the unwise policy of the past, the policy of which Kruger was the embodiment, the policy with which the Orange Free State under President Brand was not concerned, but which in these last years has found its chief backing in that province. In the sphere of education, racial feeling can find its most effective expression; but though, as has been noted, elementary education has for the time been left to the separate provinces,

a working compromise on the language question has resulted from a report of a Select Committee of the Union Parliament.¹ The Union Parliament took over from the four colonies the difficult and dangerous Asiatic question. In 1911 the Indian Government prohibited further indentured immigration to Natal as a protest against the treatment of British Indians in South Africa. In 1912 Mr. Gokhale, a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, visited South Africa to confer with his fellow countrymen and with the Union Government. More than two years passed after the establishment of the Union before the Parliament legislated on the subject. At length in 1913 an Immigrants Regulation Act was passed, but it brought no finality; the resentment and restlessness of the British Indians in South Africa was not removed, and eventually found expression in open riots in Natal. The latest phase has been the appointment of a Commission by the Union Government to inquire into the grievances of which the British Indians complain; the Indian Government was represented at the inquiry by an officer of high position, and a report has been issued, the recommendations of which are, at the time of writing, still *sub judice*. It is not only coloured British subjects who have got out of hand in South Africa, for in 1913 a miners' strike on the Rand degenerated into riot and anarchy in Johannesburg; and a railway strike in the current year led to the proclamation of martial law and the deportation of certain labour leaders. The Union has its labour troubles, its native question, its coloured immigration difficulty; stable government, not weakened by race feeling between white men, not hampered in building up the future by small divisions and petty prejudices, strong and therefore able to be just, that is the one thing needful for the Union of South Africa.

Outside the Union, North-western and North-eastern

¹ For Education in the Union of South Africa see Part III of vol. iv of this series, especially pp. 24-9.

PART II. Rhodesia have been amalgamated under an Order in Council of the 4th of May 1911, which came into effect on the 17th of August in that year. Southern Rhodesia has made great strides in the last few years, notably in agricultural development, and the census of 1911 showed a European population which, though small, nearly doubled the white population of 1904, the increase having been mainly from 1907 onwards. With the growth in the number of white settlers has come, as has already been noted, the usual and healthy accompaniment of British colonization, a movement towards more extended political liberty. Under the Orders in Council of 1911 and 1913 the elective element now largely preponderates in the Legislature, and the future of Southern Rhodesia may be said to be in the balance, whether or not the present régime of the Chartered Company, to which the community owes its life and existence, shall continue, whether and when the colony shall enter the Union of South Africa. The results of a recent election show that, for the time being, the large majority of the white settlers prefer to remain outside the Union. Meanwhile, another all-important question, that of the ownership of the unalienated lands in Southern Rhodesia, has been referred for the decision of the Privy Council. Basutoland, the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and Swaziland are still outside the Union, and, were a referendum made to the natives, it can hardly be doubted that a solid vote would be cast for remaining, as they now are, under the direct control of the Imperial Government.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL SUMMARY

IN the present chapter it is proposed to sum up in very few words the principal features in South African geography and history, so far as they bear upon the subject of European colonization, and especially so far as they concern the British Empire. CH. VII.

In the preceding pages the story of South Africa has been traced onward from the time when the Cape was merely a landmark, distant and dangerous, through the long years when it became the record of a trading station on a peninsula, with small and scattered outposts of settlement on the mainland. The incoming of the English has been noticed, the dispersion of the Dutchmen, the difficulties between the white and the black races, between the white men in South Africa and their rulers at home, between the two sections of European settlers, culminating in the last great war, which approximated to a civil war. The development of self-government has been recorded, and, as the result of the war, South African Union. We have seen the historic tie which bound South Africa to the East gradually weakened and finally sundered, and have noted the rise of a South African dominion, becoming more and more continental, growing in stature and in fullness, gaining at once in expansion and in cohesion. The history of any part of the world at any given time is unfinished, and will be unfinished till the end of all things. The story of South Africa is incomplete, but beyond all question the last twenty years have brought some sign of finality on the South African horizon, and it is possible to face the future with some measure of confidence.

PART II.

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The three great homes of the British race beyond the seas which are still under the British flag are British North America, Australasia, and South Africa; and they are naturally compared by those who are interested in colonization and the British colonies.

In making a comparison between them it is perhaps not sufficiently recognized that the area of British South Africa is very much smaller than that of either British North America or of Australasia. Taking British North America, and excluding Newfoundland from the comparison, the Canadian Dominion is estimated to cover nearly three and three-quarter million square miles. Taking Australasia, and omitting again New Zealand and also the Australian dependency of Papua, the area covered by the Commonwealth of Australia is just under three million square miles. The area of the Union of South Africa, on the other hand, is only 473,000 square miles, that of the whole of British South Africa south of the Zambesi 915,000 square miles; while, if Northern Rhodesia also be included, the total British area is still, on an estimate, not more than 1,206,000 square miles. The area of the present Union of South Africa is only about two-thirds of the size of Queensland. British South Africa south of the Zambesi is smaller than Western Australia. British South Africa, therefore, great territory as it is, does not compare in size with Canada or Australia, and, unless this fact is borne in mind, a comparison between these three fields of colonization is apt to become misleading.

Of the three, South Africa is much farther from Europe than is British North America, but not so distant as Australasia. Of the three it is the least accessible from the outside. It has no Gulf of St. Lawrence, no Sydney Harbour. Its coast does not invite trade and settlement. In early days it warned them off. The Cape may have been a Cape of Good Hope, but it was a stormy Cape, notwithstanding, and Table Bay was visited, not of choice, but of necessity. Be-

cause it was distant, because it was harbourless, and because there were more attractive lands beyond, the bright and glowing East, South Africa, though it was discovered as early as Canada, and though ships of all nations were constantly passing by and calling at its shores, was not colonized in any shape or form or some time after the date of the first settlements in Canada. Quebec is between forty and fifty years older than Capetown. On the other hand, the colonization of Australia and New Zealand is of a far later date than the beginning of settlement in either North America or South Africa, the reason being that Australasia is at the uttermost end of the earth from Europe, and in old days was hardly discovered, unvisited, and for all practical purposes unknown.

In judging of a territory as a field of colonization, the lie of the land, the climate, and the resources all demand consideration. Taking the lie of the land, it is important to notice whether or not the good, the habitable land in a given area is continuous, and whether or not there is natural communication, meaning the absence of deserts and mountain barriers, and the presence of navigable rivers. Canada is well favoured in these respects. The comparatively worthless and uninhabitable part of the Dominion, though it forms, it is true, a large proportion of the whole, is in the main away in the frozen north, while, with the possible exception of the north shore of Lake Superior, the area of actual or potential settlement may be said to stretch unbroken from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, with navigable lakes and rivers too many to enumerate. Australia is not so fortunate. It is, as a whole, conspicuously wanting in large rivers suitable for transport; and though, since the early pioneers found their way over the Blue Mountains, its mountain ranges have not proved to be serious obstacles, it contains a great extent of desert land, which is in the centre of the continent, cutting off north from south and east from

Comparison of Canada, Australia, and South Africa as regards lie of the land, climate, and resources.

PART II. west. South Africa, in a smaller compass, also comprises
 —♦♦— a large desert area, but the desert—which, we are told, may
 be reclaimed in the coming time by settlement and dry
 farming¹—is mainly in the west, and only its fringes are
 touched by the line of colonization, as it runs north-east from
 Capetown.

*Want of
 navigable
 rivers in
 South
 Africa.*

On the other hand, the ranges of mountains in South Africa are complete natural barriers, and there are no waterways, none approaching even the Murray River system in Australia. Let us suppose that the Orange River had had a navigable channel and an open estuary, the whole story of South Africa would have been other than it has been. Instead of being the story of a locked-up land, most inaccessible from the western side, a land whose interior was in past days painfully reached by occasional traders and trekkers and missionaries in ox-wagons, there would have been a tale to tell of river traffic for centuries past by a highway leading from the open Atlantic, at a point much nearer Europe than is Capetown or Port Elizabeth, into the very heart of the country. This is not a merely fanciful conjecture. In Nature's distribution of her good things South Africa might reasonably have been allotted at least one fine navigable river, and the want of such a river is, apart from other reasons, sufficient to account for the very slow progress made by European colonization in this region of the world, before engineering science overcame mountains, and made good the absence of water communication. The lie of the land in South Africa and the want of navigable rivers account at once for the fact that South Africa has been colonized from the south, rather than from east or west, and for the extent to which railways have dominated later South African history. On the west is the desert, on the east the mountain buttresses of the plateau of the interior are boldest and steepest. On the south there are ranges to be surmounted, but, in Lord

¹ See *The Conquest of the Desert*, by Dr. W. Macdonald, 1913.

Milner's words, 'the approach from the south was incomparably easier and more natural than from the east. It is like the difference between climbing a steep ladder and walking up a comparatively easy flight of steps.' Lord Milner's testimony, too, to the importance of railways in South Africa may well be quoted: 'Then came the railway, by far the most potent of modern inventions in transforming the life of mankind, potent and revolutionizing everywhere, but most of all in thinly peopled and newly settled countries, and, among these, of incomparable potency in South Africa, owing to the vast distances which separate its chief centres of European settlement, and to its almost total lack of navigable waterways.'

In point of climate, South Africa as a dwelling-place for Europeans cannot be surpassed. It knows not the long Canadian winter. Its plateaus are higher than the plains of Australia; their air is more bracing. 'In South Africa, men of European race thrive and multiply exceedingly in latitudes which are generally fatal or debilitating to the white man. Their splendid physique is due to the bracing air of these large expanses of lofty open country.'¹ Like Australia, South Africa suffers from droughts in the western and central districts, and in soil it is not so blest as either Canada or Australasia. It is in no sense, as Canada is, one of the granaries of the world; and, as a wool-producing area, it comes far behind the Australasian colonies. It is the mineral discovered beneath its surface, the diamonds and the gold, which has brought South Africa commercially to the front, as it has also largely moulded its later political history.

What of the human products? South Africa differs from Canada and Australia in having an overwhelming majority of coloured men in its population. According to the figures of the 1911 census, the population of the Union of South Africa

¹ The quotations are from an Address on 'Geography and Statecraft', see *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 224-6.

PART II. was just under six millions, of whom nearly 4,700,000 were coloured, as against rather more than one and a quarter million of whites. Taking the whole of British South Africa south of the Zambesi, the total population was returned at 7,374,000, of whom six millions, 82 per cent., were coloured, against 1,304,000 whites, less than 18 per cent. Not only are the indigenous coloured men of South Africa well able to hold their own with the white population in regard to natural increase, but the number of Asiatics has been a fruitful source of trouble. A few thousand Malays to be found in or near Capetown testify to the old connexion of the Cape with the East, and the coolie immigration system, adopted by Natal but now discontinued, is mainly responsible for the fact that the East Indians in Natal outnumber the whites. From 41,000 in 1891 they had increased by 1911 to 133,000. South Africa then has race problems which do not trouble Canada and Australia. Here coloured immigration has taken place to a much greater extent than in the sister Dominions. Here there is a native question far overshadowing any question of the kind which may have a nominal existence in North America or in Australia, for South Africa has drawn native immigrants in countless numbers from the great continent to which it belongs and to which it is now more than ever linked, and it is one of the parts of the world in which the increase of the white men does not bring with it the disappearance of the blacks. Here, then, in days to come, will be seen what is the natural result when strong representatives of the white races and of the black live and multiply side by side, in a climate and under conditions which are favourable both to the one and to the other.

The two white races.

Turning to the white races, in South Africa as in Canada, there have been two distinct strata of colonization, the earlier being in the one case Dutch, in the other case French; but it will be noted that in South Africa the Dutch and English have never lived so much outside of each other, as regards

the areas of settlement, as has been the case with the French and English in Canada, and also that Dutch and English belong to the same Teuton race. South Africa, so far as white colonization is concerned, is essentially a Teuton colony. Dutchmen, Englishmen, and, to a smaller extent, Germans, have entered and multiplied there, and the only alien strain of any importance has been that of the French Huguenots, important in quality rather than in numbers. It is a question how far it is a gain to a colony to have been always under one rule and to have been peopled mainly by one race; whether Australia, having been chiefly colonized from the British Isles, has for that reason brighter prospects for the future than Canada or South Africa. On such a point we can only speculate, and the growing intermixture of races all over the world rather deprives speculations of their interest and arguments of their value. But it is well to remember the fact that Canada and South Africa differ from Australia and New Zealand in not having always been British colonies, and in having the two white races; and that South Africa differs from Canada in that its two European races came originally from the same stock. Judging from our own English history, it is easy to believe that South Africa may eventually be a gainer by the blend, while it is certain that its people will in some respects and characteristics gain, as all peoples do gain, by having had changes of fortune and variety of history.

CH. VII.



South Africa a Teuton colony.

If South Africa has been a Teuton land, it has been still more pre-eminently a Protestant land. Dutch and French Calvinism, British Protestantism, in the past of a strongly Evangelical type, German Lutheranism—these have been the main creeds. The missionaries have been Moravians, Wesleyans, Scotch Presbyterians, members of the London Missionary Society, English Episcopalians, French Protestants in Basutoland, Rhenish missionaries among the Namaquas and Damaras, Norwegian missionaries among the Zulus.

South Africa a Protestant land.

PART II. Only in comparatively late years have Roman Catholic missionaries also been in the field, for South Africa has been peculiarly a land of Protestant labour. Whoever wishes to study and to record the missionary efforts of Protestantism will certainly turn his attention to South Africa, and whoever wishes to study and to record the share which missionaries have had in making history will do likewise. On this last point enough has been said in the first Part of this Book, but it is perhaps worth adding that missionary influence has, in the sphere of South African politics, been felt in two nearly opposite directions. In the days of Sir Benjamin D'Urban and Lord Glenelg the voice of the missionaries, or of some of them, went against the annexation of territory. In later times their voice was rather raised for it. Yet they have not been inconsistent, whether right or wrong; protection of the natives has been their aim; and when the Dutchmen trekked into the interior the missionaries saw security for the black men only through the extension of British rule.

The history of South Africa.

The history of South Africa has been very unlike that either of Canada or of Australia. In early days its story was subsidiary to that of the East. In one sense, from the point of view of discovery, as old as Canada, in another sense it is younger than Australia, for it never really became a field for colonization, till it lost, or was fast losing, its connexion with the East—in other words, till after the beginning of the nineteenth century. Like Canada, unlike Australia, it has known war, invasion, revolt in all their forms, and the last great South African War finds no parallel in the history of the Empire, the nearest analogy, perhaps, being the War of American Independence. South Africa has indeed been baptized in the deep waters of affliction, it has gone through the trials and sufferings which make nations and men. From the date when the English took the Cape there are four principal landmarks in South African history. The first was the great trek, which meant political disruption and Dutch

Main landmarks in the history of the last hundred years.

settlement in the far interior. The second was the discovery of diamonds and the subsequent discovery of gold. This meant that the compromise by which the English should hold the coast territories and the land up to the Orange River, while the Dutchmen should be left in isolation beyond, could not be maintained. The third was the British acquisition of Rhodesia. This meant that the line of British advance was carried behind and beyond the Dutchmen, that the day of trekking was finally over. It meant, too, that the future of South Africa should be largely a continental future. The fourth was the South African War, the result of, and the terrible remedy for, the original disruption. It is possible that future historians will record that the most epoch-making event of them all in its eventual results, direct and indirect, was the acquisition of Rhodesia.

For the purpose of studying the making of a nation, South African history has singular interest. Three features, perhaps, may be specially noted. The first is the extraordinary contrast between the slow pace at which European-South African history moved for the better part of four centuries since Diaz first sighted the Cape, as compared with the startling rapidity with which events have trod on each other's heels in the last less than half a century. The second is a corollary of the first. The making of the nation having been postponed till the latest times, both the pulling down and the building up have been of the most modern type. In other words, South Africa has in our own day gone through stages which were overdue, and the work has therefore borne the mark of all the newest improvements. The third is the fact, which differentiates the present political position of South Africa from that of Canada or Australia, that the Union of South Africa does not as yet cover the whole field, and that the Imperial Government has still a *locus standi* in South Africa.

One great feature of our times, perhaps its most striking

PART II. feature, is the increased pace at which the world moves. Towns rise up almost in a night, railways are made, not only where they would never have been made in old days but at a rate which would never have been dreamed of not many years ago. Nowhere has this been more marked than in South Africa. It seems as though some pent-up force, having slumbered in past centuries, at length burst forth, making a rapid, rushing life in a part of the world whose conditions before the days of men now living were peculiarly behind the times. What were the causes of all this fire and energy? There was the expansion of railways, making good the natural defects of the land, bringing not only communication but comparatively fast communication—very fast as compared with transport in a wagon. There was pre-eminently discovery of minerals. This meant the incoming of a large number of active pushing settlers, the appearance on the scene of the capitalist, the speculator, the miner, the store-keeper, the journalist, and other ingredients of modern commercial life. It meant the development of towns and of town population as opposed to quiet-going farmers and graziers. South Africa in the past had not much town life, and such town life as it possessed was mainly the life of what we call in England small country towns. The life of Kimberley or of Johannesburg was something wholly new, an importation into an old-world land of all that is most up to date and most quickly moving. Many political lessons might be drawn from the effects of the discovery of mineral wealth upon South African history, but one very commonplace deduction is perhaps specially noteworthy. Before any land is appropriated, and before any land which has once been taken is abandoned, it is well to be at pains to find out what it contains. If diamonds and gold had been discovered in appreciable quantities in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal respectively, before the Boer Republics were ever recognized, the political difficulties of the time might have disappeared,

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*Causes of
 modern
 progress in
 South
 Africa.*

and the whole of the subsequent history might have been altered, for the incoming settlers would have counterbalanced the old residents, and under British rule the new life would have absorbed or assimilated the old.

Railways and gold and diamond mines gave an impetus to South Africa, but other moving causes too were at work. There are such things as blessings in disguise, and foreign competition is one of them. The declaration of a German Protectorate in South-west Africa over a coast which the English had looked upon as their own was in a sense an annoyance and a misfortune, but from another point of view it was a distinct gain, for the result was that the English in South Africa extended themselves, to use a racing metaphor, because they became conscious of rivalry. For in trade and colonization, as in every other sphere of human activity, competition is the breath of life, and most of all is this the case with those peoples, such as our own, whose colonial empire has been mainly due either to individual effort, or to the enterprise of associations of private men. It is certain that from the date when Germany gained a footing in South Africa, the English in South Africa and their Dutch fellow citizens bestirred themselves as they never did before; and, though other powerful influences have also to be taken into account, it is possible to shut our eyes to the fact that in the south as in the west and east of Africa, foreign rivalry introduced a new element of keenness, a stronger desire to move forward, and greater vigilance in all matters relating to the present and the future of the empire.

The English throughout their history, when pressing onward, have always made use of Chartered Companies. Two instincts have guided them—dislike of official interference, and the commercial instinct. Those men, as a rule, do most and best work who have a pecuniary interest in the undertaking, and an actual or prospective share in the profits; and accordingly the British nation, being largely a nation of

PART II. traders, has favoured the system of co-partnership among its citizens, who wish to open up distant lands.

Colonization in South Africa began with a Chartered Company, and its present development has been to a great extent due to the energy of another Chartered Company. The old company was Dutch, not English; it was closely bound up with the State; it was an East Indian, not a South African Company; it aimed at making money by a trade monopoly, not by promoting settlement. The modern company, the British South Africa Company, is British; its sphere has been in South Africa alone. It has been as progressive as the Netherlands East India Company was the reverse. It has been a land company, not a sea company, making railways instead of building ships, developing an inland territory instead of establishing factories on a coast. To criticize a Company's acts and administration, to analyse, possibly to condemn, the motives of the promoters, is easy and to some is congenial. It is obvious that a private association is more adventurous and less safe than the State. It is obvious that there are serious drawbacks to the system of Chartered Companies, however carefully safeguarded, and that such defects are more apparent in modern days than in times when public opinion was less scrupulous and criticism less outspoken.

But for the purpose of studying the history of colonization, Chartered Companies should be looked on as pioneers, and the question to be asked is not so much whether this or that Company had this or that object in its formation or in its working, whether it is or is not likely to be financially successful, whether or not some of its dealings deserve reprobation; but rather, is it a good thing that British colonization should extend? and has the Chartered Company system promoted the extension? Englishmen are always being asked to apologize for themselves and for what they have done. The answer is that the English have been human, have made

many mistakes, have done things which they ought not to have done, and still more have left undone things which they ought to have done; but notwithstanding their work has been in the main great, wholesome, and sound; and those who read a true record of what British colonization has meant, and how it has been carried out, will realize that the world owes much to the system of Chartered Companies.

In the story of the Cape Colony, from the date when it became a British possession, all the usual phases in British colonial history were manifested. Slave emancipation embodied the assertion of Imperial control. The successful resistance to the importation of convicts marked the rise of colonial self-dependence. The colony went through the usual preliminary stages on the way to self-government, and in due course, at a later date than was the case with the British North American and Australian colonies, it became a self-governing colony, responsible government in Natal being later still. But, though the Cape Colony and Natal grew politically and otherwise in the orthodox manner, the making of a South African nation was impossible, as history had been allowed to drift, without a great cataclysm and a great reconstruction. These came very late in the day, and there was an up-to-date impress on both war and peace. The strength of the Boers in the war lay in the combination of the latest military science with the peculiar South African conditions which they knew far better than the English; and the spirit of modern humanity and enlightenment marked off this war from all its predecessors. After the war reconstruction came at a stage in the British Empire when self-government was a commonplace and a foregone conclusion, and Union, which followed closely and swiftly, because it ought to have come long ago, was markedly wise and statesmanlike in its inception and execution, because there were precedents to be followed or to be avoided.

CII. VII.



PART II. There are still wings to be added to the House of Union, and the structure is not yet complete. It is well that the Imperial Government should for some time at any rate play its part on South African soil, but the relations between that Government and the self-governing Dominion are well-defined, and both parties co-operated in the Act of Union, in its provisions for future contingencies as well as in those which have already taken effect. One great point overshadowing all others has been gained, that South Africa cannot be again, as it has been in the past, at the mercy of party government in England. One lesson above all South Africa seems to teach, that the overseas policy of Great Britain should be consistent and unswerving, that constantly to go forward and back again is bad for all. It is the same throughout life, public and private. No men or people can lead, unless they are as good as their word. No men or people can lead, unless those around them, men, women, and children, and dumb animals too, are confident that, as they have acted to-day, so under similar conditions they will act to-morrow. This one great lesson is sadly taught by South African history. If it were to be learnt thoroughly, for that one single reason, beyond all others, we should have cause to value South Africa.

From time to time the echoes of troubles between coloured and white men, of race jealousy among the white men, of friction between classes, reach us from over the sea and warn us that South Africa is still in the making. At least we can bear in mind that neither in war nor in peace should South Africa be tried solely by a European standard. Criticism would be fairer, judgement would be juster, history would be more truly written and read, were it remembered how different from our own conditions of life are the ways and the necessities of living in this southern land. Where white men live among outnumbering natives, where there are complications of race and upbringing, where the old order is very tenacious and the new somewhat aggressive, where there are

divers elements in divers stages, it is not only foolish to interpret men and events in the light of our own firesides, it is untrue to the facts and therefore wrong. It is not so much England and the English Government that have made South Africa, as the men on the spot, English and Dutch, who have lived and worked in and for the land, who have seen the things whereof we read in Blue Books or newspapers, not in a glass darkly but face to face.

CH. VII.
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APPENDIX I¹

THE PRETORIA CONVENTION OF 1881

Convention for the Settlement of the Transvaal Territory

Preamble. Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Settlement of the Transvaal territory, duly appointed as such by a Commission passed under the Royal Sign Manual and Signet, bearing date the 5th of April 1881, do hereby undertake and guarantee on behalf of Her Majesty that, from and after the 8th day of August 1881, complete self-government, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, will be accorded to the inhabitants of the Transvaal territory, upon the following terms and conditions, and subject to the following reservations and limitations:—

Article 1. The said territory, to be herein-after called the Transvaal State, will embrace the land lying between the following boundaries, to wit: [here follow three pages in print defining boundaries].

Article 2. Her Majesty reserves to herself, her heirs and successors, (a) the right from time to time to appoint a British Resident in and for the said State, with such duties and functions as are herein-after defined; (b) the right to move troops through the said State in time of war, or in case of the apprehension of immediate war between the Suzerain Power and any Foreign State or Native Tribe in South Africa; and (c) the control of the external relations of the said State, including the conclusion of treaties and the conduct of diplomatic intercourse with Foreign Powers, such intercourse to be carried on through Her Majesty's diplomatic and consular officers abroad.

¹ Reprinted from C. 259S, August 1881, with slight verbal corrections from the later and more complete copy of the Convention which will be found on pp. 37-43 of C. 3114, February 1882.

Article 3. Until altered by the Volksraad, or other competent authority, all laws, whether passed before or after the annexation of the Transvaal territory to Her Majesty's dominions, shall, except in so far as they are inconsistent with or repugnant to the provisions of this Convention, be and remain in force in the said State, in so far as they shall be applicable thereto, provided that no future enactment specially affecting the interests of natives shall have any force or effect in the said State, without the consent of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, first had and obtained and signified to the Government of the said State through the British Resident, provided further that in no case will the repeal or amendment of any laws which have been enacted since the annexation have a retrospective effect, so as to invalidate any acts done or liabilities incurred by virtue of such laws.

Article 4. On the 8th day of August 1881, the Government of the said State, together with all rights and obligations thereto appertaining, and all State property taken over at the time of annexation, save and except munitions of war, will be handed over to Messrs. Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Martinus Wessel Pretorius, and Petrus Jacobus Joubert, or the survivor or survivors of them, who will forthwith cause a Volksraad to be elected and convened, and the Volksraad, thus elected and convened, will decide as to the further administration of the Government of the said State.

Article 5. All sentences passed upon persons who may be convicted of offences contrary to the rules of civilized warfare, committed during the recent hostilities, will be duly carried out, and no alteration or mitigation of such sentences will be made or allowed by the Government of the Transvaal State without Her Majesty's consent, conveyed through the British Resident. In case there shall be any prisoners in any of the gaols of the Transvaal State, whose respective sentences of imprisonment have been remitted in part by Her Majesty's Administrator or other officer administering the Government, such remission will be recognized and acted upon by the future Government of the said State.

Article 6. Her Majesty's Government will make due compensation for all losses or damage sustained by reason of such acts as are in the 8th Article herein-after specified, which may have been committed by Her Majesty's forces during

the recent hostilities, except for such losses or damage as may already have been compensated for, and the Government of the Transvaal State will make due compensation for all losses or damage sustained by reason of such acts as are in the 8th Article herein-after specified, which may have been committed by the people who were in arms against Her Majesty during the recent hostilities, except for such losses or damages as may already have been compensated for.

Article 7. The decision of all claims for compensation, as in the last preceding Article mentioned, will be referred to a Sub-Commission, consisting of the Honourable George Hudson, the Honourable Jacobus Petrus de Wet, and the Honourable John Gilbert Kotzé. In case one or more of such Sub-Commissioners shall be unable or unwilling to act, the remaining Sub-Commissioner or Sub-Commissioners will, after consultation with the Government of the Transvaal State, submit for the approval of Her Majesty's High Commissioner the names of one or more persons to be appointed by him to fill the place or places thus vacated. The decision of the said Sub-Commissioners, or of a majority of them, will be final. The said Sub-Commissioners will enter upon and perform their duties with all convenient speed. They will, before taking evidence, or ordering evidence to be taken, in respect of any claim, decide whether such claim can be entertained at all under the rules laid down in the next succeeding Article. In regard to claims which can be so entertained, the Sub-Commissioners will, in the first instance, afford every facility for an amicable arrangement as to the amount payable in respect of any claim, and only in cases in which there is no reasonable ground for believing that an immediate amicable arrangement can be arrived at, will take evidence, or order evidence to be taken. For the purpose of taking evidence and reporting thereon, the Sub-Commissioners may appoint Deputies, who will, without delay, submit records of the evidence and their reports to the Sub-Commissioners. The Sub-Commissioners will arrange their sittings and the sittings of their Deputies in such a manner as to afford the greatest convenience to the parties concerned and their witnesses. In no case will costs be allowed to either side, other than the actual and reasonable expenses of witnesses whose evidence is certified by the Sub-Commissioners to have been necessary. Interest will not run on

the amount of any claim, except as is herein-after provided for. The said Sub-Commissioners will forthwith, after deciding upon any claim, announce their decision to the Government against which the award is made and to the claimant. The amount of remuneration payable to the Sub-Commissioners and their Deputies will be determined by the High Commissioner after all the claims have been decided upon. The British Government and the Government of the Transvaal State will pay proportionate shares of the said remuneration, and of the expenses of the Sub-Commissioners and their Deputies, according to the amount awarded against them respectively.

Article 8. For the purpose of distinguishing claims to be accepted from those to be rejected, the Sub-Commissioners will be guided by the following rules, viz.:—Compensation will be allowed for losses or damage sustained by reason of the following acts committed during the recent hostilities, viz., (a) commandeering, seizure, confiscation, or destruction of property, or damage done to property; (b) violence done or threats used by persons in arms. In regards to acts under (a), compensation will be allowed for direct losses only. In regard to acts falling under (b), compensation will be allowed for actual losses of property, or actual injury to the same, proved to have been caused by its enforced abandonment. No claims for indirect losses, except such as are in this Article specially provided for, will be entertained. No claims which have been handed in to the Secretary of the Royal Commission after the 1st day of July 1881 will be entertained, unless the Sub-Commissioners shall be satisfied that the delay was reasonable. When claims for loss of property are considered the Sub-Commissioners will require distinct proof of the existence of the property, and that it neither has reverted nor will revert to the claimant.

Article 9. The Government of the Transvaal State will pay and satisfy the amount of every claim awarded against it within one month after the Sub-Commissioners shall have notified their decision to the said Government, and in default of such payment the said Government will pay interest at the rate of six per cent. per annum from the date of such default; but Her Majesty's Government may at any time before such payment pay the amount, with interest, if any, to the claimant in satisfaction of his claim, and may add the sum thus paid

to any debt which may be due by the Transvaal State to Her Majesty's Government, as herein-after provided for.

Article 10. The Transvaal State will be liable for the balance of the debts for which the South African Republic was liable at the date of annexation, to wit, the sum of 48,000*l.* in respect of the Cape Commercial Bank Loan, and 85,667*l.* in respect to the Railway Loan, together with the amount due on the 8th August 1881 on account of the Orphan Chamber Debt, which now stands at 27,226*l.* 15*s.*, which debts will be a first charge upon the revenues of the State. The Transvaal State will, moreover, be liable for the lawful expenditure lawfully incurred for the necessary expenses of the Province since annexation, to wit, the sum of 265,000*l.*, which debt, together with such debts as may be incurred by virtue of the 9th Article, will be a second charge upon the revenues of the State.

Article 11. The debts due as aforesaid by the Transvaal State to Her Majesty's Government will bear interest at the rate of three and a half per cent., and any portion of such debt as may remain unpaid on the 8th August 1882 shall be repayable by a payment for interest and sinking fund of six pounds and ninepence per 100*l.* per annum, which will extinguish the debt in twenty-five years. The said payment of six pounds and ninepence per 100*l.* shall be payable half yearly in British currency on the 8th February and 8th August in each year. Provided always, that the Transvaal State shall pay in reduction of the said debt the sum of 100,000*l.* before the 8th August 1882, and shall be at liberty at the close of any half year to pay off the whole or any portion of the outstanding debt.

Article 12. All persons holding property in the said State on the 8th day of August 1881 will continue to enjoy the rights of property which they have enjoyed since the annexation. No person who has remained loyal to Her Majesty during the recent hostilities shall suffer any molestation by reason of his loyalty, or be liable to any criminal prosecution or civil action for any part taken in connexion with such hostilities, and all such persons will have full liberty to reside in the country, with enjoyment of all civil rights, and protection for their persons and property.

Article 13. Natives will be allowed to acquire land, but the grant or transfer of such land will, in every case, be

made to and registered in the name of the Native Location Commission, herein-after mentioned, in trust for such natives.

Article 14. Natives will be allowed to move as freely within the country as may be consistent with the requirements of public order, and to leave it for the purpose of seeking employment elsewhere or for other lawful purposes, subject always to the pass laws of the said State, as amended by the Legislature of the Province, or as may hereafter be enacted, under the provisions of the Third Article of this Convention.

Article 15. The provisions of the Fourth Article of the Sand River Convention are hereby re-affirmed, and no slavery or apprenticeship partaking of slavery will be tolerated by the Government of the said State.

Article 16. There will continue to be complete freedom of religion and protection from molestation for all denominations, provided the same be not inconsistent with morality and good order; and no disability shall attach to any person in regard to rights of property by reason of the religious opinions which he holds.

Article 17. The British Resident will receive from the Government of the Transvaal State such assistance and support as can by law be given to him for the due discharge of his functions, he will also receive every assistance for the proper care and preservation of the graves of such of Her Majesty's forces as have died in the Transvaal, and if need be for the expropriation of land for the purpose.

Article 18. The following will be the duties and functions of the British Resident:—Sub-section 1, he will perform duties and functions analogous to those discharged by a Chargé d'Affaires and Consul-General.

Sub-section 2. In regard to natives within the Transvaal State he will (*a*) report to the High Commissioner, as representative of the Suzerain, as to the working and observance of the provisions of this Convention; (*b*) report to the Transvaal authorities any cases of ill-treatment of natives or attempts to incite natives to rebellion that may come to his knowledge; (*c*) use his influence with the natives in favour of law and order; and (*d*) generally perform such other duties as are by this Convention entrusted to him, and take such steps for the protection of the person and property of natives as are consistent with the laws of the land.

Sub-section 3. In regard to natives not residing in the Transvaal (*a*) he will report to the High Commissioner and the Transvaal Government any encroachments reported to him as having been made by Transvaal residents upon the land of such natives, and in case of disagreement between the Transvaal Government and the British Resident as to whether an encroachment has been made, the decision of the Suzerain will be final; (*b*) the British Resident will be the medium of communication with native chiefs outside the Transvaal, and, subject to the approval of the High Commissioner, as representing the Suzerain, he will control the conclusion of treaties with them; and (*c*) he will arbitrate upon every dispute between Transvaal residents and natives outside the Transvaal (as to acts committed beyond the boundaries of the Transvaal) which may be referred to him by the parties interested.

Sub-section 4. In regard to communications with foreign powers, the Transvaal Government will correspond with Her Majesty's Government through the British Resident and the High Commissioner.

Article 19. The Government of the Transvaal State will strictly adhere to the boundaries defined in the First Article of this Convention, and will do its utmost to prevent any of its inhabitants from making any encroachment upon lands beyond the said State. The Royal Commission will forthwith appoint a person who will beacon off the boundary line between Ramatlabama and the point where such line first touches the Griqualand West boundary, midway between the Vaal and Hart rivers; the person so appointed will be instructed to make an arrangement between the owners of the farms Grootfontein and Valleifontein on the one hand, and the Barolong authorities on the other, by which a fair share of the water supply of the said farms shall be allowed to flow undisturbed to the said Barolongs.

Article 20. All grants or titles issued at any time by the Transvaal Government in respect of land outside the boundary of the Transvaal State, as defined in Article 1, shall be considered invalid and of no effect, except in so far as any such grant or title relates to land that falls within the boundary of the Transvaal State, and all persons holding any such grant so considered invalid and of no effect will receive from the Government of the Transvaal State such

compensation either in land or in money as the Volksraad shall determine. In all cases in which any native chiefs or other authorities outside the said boundaries have received any adequate consideration from the Government of the former South African Republic for land excluded from the Transvaal by the First Article of this Convention, or where permanent improvements have been made on the land, the British Resident will, subject to the approval of the High Commissioner, use his influence to recover from the native authorities fair compensation for the loss of the land thus excluded, and of the permanent improvements thereon.

Article 21. Forthwith, after the taking effect of this Convention, a Native Location Commission will be constituted, consisting of the President (or in his absence the Vice-President) of the State, or some one deputed by him, the Resident, or some one deputed by him, and a third person to be agreed upon by the President (or the Vice-President, as the case may be) and the Resident, and such Commission will be a standing body for the performance of the duties herein-after mentioned.

Article 22. The Native Location Commission will reserve to the native tribes of the State such locations as they may be fairly and equitably entitled to, due regard being had to the actual occupation of such tribes. The Native Location Commission will clearly define the boundaries of such locations, and for that purpose will, in every instance, first of all ascertain the wishes of the parties interested in such land. In case land already granted in individual titles shall be required for the purpose of any location, the owners will receive such compensation, either in other land or in money, as the Volksraad shall determine. After the boundaries of any location have been fixed, no fresh grant of land within such location will be made, nor will the boundaries be altered without the consent of the Location Commission. No fresh grants of land will be made in the districts of Waterberg, Zoutpansberg, and Lydenburg, until the locations in the said districts respectively shall have been defined by the said Commission.

Article 23. If not released before the taking effect of this Convention, Sikukuni, and those of his followers who have been imprisoned with him, will be forthwith released, and the boundaries of his location will be defined by the Native

Location Commission in the manner indicated in the last preceding Article.

Article 24. The independence of the Swazis within the boundary line of Swaziland, as indicated in the First Article of this Convention, will be fully recognised.

Article 25. No other or higher duties will be imposed on the importation into the Transvaal State of any article the produce or manufacture of the dominions and possessions of Her Majesty, from whatever place arriving, than are or may be payable on the like article, the produce or manufacture of any other country, nor will any prohibition be maintained or imposed on the importation of any article, the produce or manufacture of the dominions and possessions of Her Majesty, which shall not equally extend to the importation of the like articles, being the produce or manufacture of any other country.

Article 26. All persons other than natives conforming themselves to the laws of the Transvaal State (*a*) will have full liberty with their families to enter, travel, or reside in any part of the Transvaal State; (*b*) they will be entitled to hire or possess houses, manufactures, warehouses, shops, and premises; (*c*) they may carry on their commerce either in person or by any agents whom they may think fit to employ; (*d*) they will not be subject, in respect of their persons or property, or in respect of their commerce or industry, to any taxes, whether general or local, other than those which are or may be imposed upon Transvaal citizens.

Article 27. All inhabitants of the Transvaal shall have free access to the Courts of Justice for the prosecution and defence of their rights.

Article 28. All persons, other than natives, who established their domicile in the Transvaal between the 12th day of April 1877 and the date when this Convention comes into effect, and who shall within twelve months after such last-mentioned date have their names registered by the British Resident, shall be exempt from all compulsory military service whatever. The Resident shall notify such registration to the Government of the Transvaal State.

Article 29. Provision shall hereafter be made by a separate instrument for the mutual extradition of criminals, and also for the surrender of deserters from Her Majesty's forces.

Article 30. All debts contracted since the annexation will

be payable in the same currency in which they may have been contracted; all uncanceled postage and other revenue stamps issued by the Government since the annexation will remain valid, and will be accepted at their present value by the future Government of the State; all licenses duly issued since the annexation will remain in force during the period for which they may have been issued.

Article 31. No grants of land which may have been made, and no transfers or mortgages which may have been passed since the date of annexation, will be invalidated by reason merely of their having been made or passed after such date. All transfers to the British Secretary for Native Affairs in trust for natives will remain in force, the Native Location Commission taking the place of such Secretary for Native Affairs.

Article 32. This Convention will be ratified by a newly-elected Volksraad within the period of three months after its execution, and in default of such ratification this Convention shall be null and void.

Article 33. Forthwith, after the ratification of this Convention, as in the last preceding Article mentioned all British troops in Transvaal territory will leave the same, and the mutual delivery of munitions of war will be carried out. Articles end. Here will follow signatures of Royal Commissioners, then the following to precede signatures of triumvirate.

We, the undersigned, Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Martinus Wessel Pretorius, and Petrus Jacobus Joubert, as representatives of the Transvaal Burginers, do hereby agree to all the above conditions, reservations, and limitations under which self-government has been restored to the inhabitants of the Transvaal territory, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, and we agree to accept the Government of the said territory, with all rights and obligations thereto appertaining on the 8th day of August 1881; and we promise and undertake that this Convention shall be ratified by a newly-elected Volksraad of the Transvaal State within three months from this date.

APPENDIX II¹

THE LONDON CONVENTION OF 1884

A Convention between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the South African Republic.

Whereas the Government of the Transvaal State, through its Delegates, consisting of Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, President of the said State, Stephanus Jacobus Du Toit, Superintendent of Education, and Nicholas Jacobus Smit, a member of the Volksraad, have represented that the Convention signed at Pretoria on the 3rd day of August 1881, and ratified by the Volksraad of the said State on the 25th October 1881, contains certain provisions which are inconvenient, and imposes burdens and obligations from which the said State is desirous to be relieved, and that the south-western boundaries fixed by the said Convention should be amended, with a view to promote the peace and good order of the said State, and of the countries adjacent thereto; and whereas Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, has been pleased to take the said representations into consideration: Now, therefore, Her Majesty has been pleased to direct, and it is hereby declared, that the following articles of a new Convention, signed on behalf of Her Majesty by Her Majesty's High Commissioner in South Africa, the Right Honourable Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and on behalf of the Transvaal State (which shall herein-after be called the South African Republic) by the above-named Delegates, Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Stephanus Jacobus Du Toit, and Nicholas Jacobus Smit, shall, when ratified by the Volksraad of the South African Republic, be substituted for the articles embodied in the Convention of 3rd August 1881; which latter, pending such ratification, shall continue in full force and effect.

¹ Reprinted from C. 3914, February 1884.

ARTICLES.

ARTICLE I.

The Territory of the South African Republic will embrace the land lying between the following boundaries, to wit:

Beginning from the point where the north-eastern boundary line of Griqualand West meets the Vaal River, up the course of the Vaal River to the point of junction with it of the Klip River; thence up the course of the Klip River to the point of junction with it of the stream called Gansvlei; thence up the Gansvlei stream to its source in the Drakensberg; thence to a beacon in the boundary of Natal, situated immediately opposite and close to the source of the Gansvlei stream; thence in a north-easterly direction along the ridge of the Drakensberg, dividing the waters flowing into the Gansvlei stream from the waters flowing into the sources of the Buffalo, to a beacon on a point where this mountain ceases to be a continuous chain; thence to a beacon on a plain to the north-east of the last described beacon; thence to the nearest source of a small stream called "Division Stream"; thence down this division stream, which forms the southern boundary of the farm Sandfontein, the property of Messrs. Meek, to its junction with the Coldstream; thence down the Coldstream to its junction with the Buffalo or Umzinyati River; thence down the course of the Buffalo River to the junction with it of the Blood River; thence up the course of the Blood River to the junction with it of Lyn Spruit or Dudusi; thence up the Dudusi to its source; thence 80 yards to Bea. I., situated on a spur of the N'Qaba-Ka-hawana Mountains; thence 80 yards to the N'Sonto River; thence down the N'Sonto River to its junction with the White Umvulozi River; thence up the White Umvulozi River to a white rock where it rises; thence 800 yards to Kambula Hill (Bea. II.); thence to the source of the Pemvana River, where the road from Kambula Camp to Buigers' Lager crosses; thence down the Pemvana River to its junction with the Bivana River; thence down the Bivana River to its junction with the Pongolo River; thence down the Pongolo River to where it passes through the Libombo Range; thence along the summits of the Libombo Range to the northern point of the N'Yawos Hill in that range (Bea. XVI.); thence to the northern peak of the

Inkwakweni Hills (Bea. XV.); thence to Sekonda, a rocky knoll detached from and to the north-east end of the White Koppies, and to the south of the Musana River (Bea. XIV.); thence to a point on the slope near the crest of Matanjeni, which is the name given to the south-eastern portion of the M'lamla Hills (Bea. XIII.); thence to the N'gwangwana, a double-pointed hill (one point is bare, the other wooded, the beacon being on the former), on the left bank of the Asegai River and upstream of the Dadusa Spruit (Bea. XII.); thence to the southern point of Bendita, a rocky knoll in a plain between the Little Illozane and Asegai Rivers (Bea. XI.); thence to the highest point of Suluka Hill, round the eastern slopes of which flows the Little Illozane, also called Ludaka or Mudspruit (Bea. X.); thence to the beacon known as "Viljoens," or N'Duko Hill; thence to a point north-east of Derby House, known as Magwazidili's Beacon; thence to the Igaba, a small knoll on the Ungwempisi River, also called "Joubert's Beacon," and known to the natives as "Piet's Beacon" (Bea. IX.); thence to the highest point of the N'Dhlovudwalih or Houtbosch, a hill on the northern bank of the Umqwempisi River (Bea. VIII.); thence to a beacon on the only flat-topped rock about 10 feet high and about 30 yards in circumference at its base, situated on the south side of the Lamsana range of hills, and overlooking the valley of the great Usuto River; this rock being 45 yards north of the road from Camelon and Lake Banagher to the forests on the Usuto River (sometimes called Sandhlana Beacon) (Bea. VII.); thence to the Gulungwana or Thubulundi, four smooth bare hills, the highest in that neighbourhood, situated to the south of the Umqazi range; thence to a flat-topped rock, 8 feet high, on the crest of the Busuku, a low rocky range south-west of the Impulazi range (Bea. V.); thence to a low bare hill on the southern slope overlooking the Impulazi River, to the south of the river, a tributary of the Impulazi with a considerable waterfall, on the road from the river passing 200 yards to the north of the beacon (Bea. IV.); thence to the highest point of the Maqumula range, the watershed of the Little Usuto River to the north, and the Umqazi River on the south, the hill the top of which is a bare rock, falling abruptly towards the Little Usuto (Bea. III.); thence to the western point of a double-pointed rocky hill, present on all sides called Malana,

its top being a bare rock (Bea. II.); thence to the top of a rugged hill of considerable height falling abruptly to the Komati River, this hill being the northern extremity of the Islotani range, and separated from the highest peak of the range of Mokazi (a sharp cone) by a deep neck (Bea. I.). (On a straight line between Beacons I. and II. is an intermediate beacon.) From Beacon I. the boundary runs to a hill across the Komati River, and thence along the crest of the range of hills known as the Makoloya, which runs northward to a high Kamhlabana Peak; thence in a straight line to Muna, a point in the Libombo range, and thence to a point in the Portuguese frontier on the Libombo range, along the summits of the Libombo range to the Komati River, where the Komati River passes through the lower Komati Poort, thence in a straight line to a beacon (No. 9) on Iloens Kop, situated on the north side of the Komati River, where it passes through the Pafori gorges; thence in a straight line north-north-west to the nearest point of Serra da Cuijana, and thence to the junction of the Pafori River with the Limpopo or Crocodile River; thence up the course of the Limpopo River to the point where the Marique River falls into it. Thence up the course of the Marique River to "Derde Poort," where it passes through a low range of hills called Sikwane, a beacon (No. 10) is erected on the summit of said range near to, and westward of the banks of the river; thence, in a straight line, through the range to a beacon (No. 9), erected on the top of the same range about 100 yards distant from beacon No. 10; thence in a straight line to a beacon (No. 8) erected on the highest peak of an isolated hill called Dikgagong, or "Wildebeest Kop," situated south-eastward of, and about $3\frac{1}{3}$ miles distant from a high hill, called Moripe; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 7) erected on the summit of an isolated hill or "koppie" forming the eastern extremity of the range of hills called Moshweu, situated to the northward of, and about two miles distant from a large isolated hill called Chukudu-Chochwa; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 6) erected on the summit of a hill forming part of the same range, Moshweu; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 5) erected on the summit of a pointed hill in the same range; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 4) erected on the summit of the western extremity of the same range; thence, in a straight line, to

a beacon (No. 3) erected on the summit of the northern extremity of a low, bushy hill, or "Koppie," near to and eastward of the Notwane River; thence in a straight line to the junction of the stream called Metsi-Mashwane with the Notwane River (No. 2); thence up the course of the Notwane River to Sengoma, being the Poort where the river passes through the Dwarsberg range; thence, as described in the Award given by Lieutenant-Governor Keate, dated October 17, 1871, by Pitlanganyane (narrow place), Deboaganka or Schaapkuil, Sibatoul (bare place), and Maclase, to Ramatlabama, a pool on a spruit north of the Molopo River. From Ramatlabama the boundary shall run to the summit of an isolated hill, called Leganka; thence in a straight line, passing north-east of a Native Station, near "Buurman's Drift," on the Molopo River, to that point on the road from Mosiega to the old drift, where a road turns out through the Native Station to the new drift below; thence to "Buurman's Old Drift"; thence in a straight line, to a marked and isolated clump of trees near to and north-west of the dwelling-house of C. Austin, a tenant on the farm "Vleifontein," No. 117; thence, in a straight line, to the north-western corner beacon of the farm "Mooimeisjesfontein," No. 30; thence, along the western line of the said farm "Mooimeisjesfontein," and in prolongation thereof, as far as the road leading from "Ludik's Drift," on the Molopo River, past the homestead of "Mooimeisjesfontein," towards the Salt Pans near Harts River; thence, along the said road, crossing the direct road from Poffontein to Schuba, and until the direct road from Poffontein to Lotlakane or Pietfontein is reached; thence, along the southern edge of the last-named road towards Lotlakane, until the first garden ground of that station is reached; thence, in a south-westerly direction, skirting Lotlakane, so as to leave it and all its garden ground in native territory, until the road from Lotlakane to Kunana is reached; thence along the east side, and clear of that road towards Kunana, until the garden grounds of that station are reached; thence, skirting Kunana, so as to include it and all its garden ground, but no more, in the Transvaal, until the road from Kunana to Mamusa is reached; thence, along the eastern side and clear of the road towards Mamusa, until a road turns out towards Taungs; thence, along the eastern side and clear of the road towards Taungs, till the line of the district known as "Stellaland" is

reached, about 11 miles from Taungs; thence, along the line of the district Stellaland, to the Harts River, about 24 miles below Mamusa; thence, across Harts River, to the junction of the roads from Monthe and Phokwane; thence, along the western side and clear of the nearest road towards "Koppie Enkel," an isolated hill about 36 miles from Mamusa, and about 18 miles north of Christiana, and to the summit of the said hill; thence, in a straight line, to that point on the north-east boundary of Griqualand West as beacons by Mr. Surveyor Ford, where two farms, registered as Nos. 72 and 75, do meet, about midway between the Vaal and Harts Rivers, measured along the said boundary of Griqualand West; thence to the first point where the north-east boundary of Griqualand West meets the Vaal River.

ARTICLE II.

The Government of the South African Republic will strictly adhere to the boundaries defined in the first Article of this Convention, and will do its utmost to prevent any of its inhabitants from making any encroachments upon lands beyond the said boundaries. The Government of the South African Republic will appoint Commissioners upon the eastern and western borders whose duty it will be strictly to guard against irregularities and all trespassing over the boundaries. Her Majesty's Government will, if necessary, appoint Commissioners in the native territories outside the eastern and western borders of the South African Republic to maintain order and prevent encroachments.

Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the South African Republic will each appoint a person to proceed together to beacon off the amended south-west boundary as described in Article 1 of this Convention; and the President of the Orange Free State shall be requested to appoint a referee to whom the said persons shall refer any questions on which they may disagree respecting the interpretation of the said Article, and the decision of such referee thereon shall be final. The arrangement already made, under the terms of Article 19 of the Convention of Pretoria of the 3rd August 1881, between the owners of the farms Grootfontein and Vallefontein on the one hand, and the Barolong authorities on the other, by which a fair share of the water supply of the

said farms shall be allowed to flow undisturbed to the said Barolongs, shall continue in force.

ARTICLE III.

If a British officer is appointed to reside at Pretoria or elsewhere within the South African Republic to discharge functions analogous to those of a Consular officer he will receive the protection and assistance of the Republic.

ARTICLE IV.

The South African Republic 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.

Such approval shall be considered to have been granted if Her Majesty's Government shall not, within six months after receiving a copy of such treaty (which shall be delivered to them immediately upon its completion), have notified that the conclusion of such treaty is in conflict with the interests of Great Britain or of any of Her Majesty's possessions in South Africa.

ARTICLE V.

The South African Republic will be liable for any balance which may still remain due of the debts for which it was liable at the date of Annexation, to wit, the Cape Commercial Bank Loan, the Railway Loan, and the Orphan Chamber Debt, which debts will be a first charge upon the revenues of the Republic. The South African Republic will moreover be liable to Her Majesty's Government for 250,000*l.*, which will be a second charge upon the revenues of the Republic.

ARTICLE VI.

The debt due as aforesaid by the South African Republic to Her Majesty's Government will bear interest at the rate of three and a half per cent. from the date of the ratification of this Convention, and shall be repayable by a payment for interest and Sinking Fund of six pounds and ninepence per 100*l.* per annum, which will extinguish the debt in twenty-five years. The said payment of six pounds and ninepence per 100*l.* shall be payable half-yearly, in British currency, at the

close of each half year from the date of such ratification: Provided always that the South African Republic shall be at liberty at the close of any half year to pay off the whole or any portion of the outstanding debt.

Interest at the rate of three and a half per cent. on the debt as standing under the Convention of Pretoria shall as heretofore be paid to the date of the ratification of this Convention.

ARTICLE VII.

All persons who held property in the Transvaal on the 8th day of August 1881, and still hold the same, will continue to enjoy the rights of property which they have enjoyed since the 12th April 1877. No person who has remained loyal to Her Majesty during the late hostilities shall suffer any molestation by reason of his loyalty; or be liable to any criminal prosecution or civil action for any part taken in connexion with such hostilities; and all such persons will have full liberty to reside in the country, with enjoyment of all civil rights, and protection for their persons and property.

ARTICLE VIII.

The South African Republic renews the declaration made in the Sand River Convention, and in the Convention of Pretoria, that no slavery or apprenticeship partaking of slavery will be tolerated by the Government of the said Republic.

ARTICLE IX.

There will continue to be complete freedom of religion and protection from molestation for all denominations, provided the same be not inconsistent with morality and good order; and no disability shall attach to any person in regard to rights of property by reason of the religious opinions which he holds.

ARTICLE X.

The British Officer appointed to reside in the South African Republic will receive every assistance from the Government of the said Republic in making due provision for the proper care and preservation of the graves of such of Her Majesty's Forces as have died in the Transvaal; and if need be, for the appropriation of land for the purpose.

ARTICLE XI.

All grants or titles issued at any time by the Transvaal Government in respect of land outside the boundary of the South African Republic, as defined in Article 1, shall be considered invalid and of no effect, except in so far as any such grant or title relates to land that falls within the boundary of the South African Republic; and all persons holding any such grant so considered invalid and of no effect will receive from the Government of the South African Republic such compensation, either in land or in money, as the Volksraad shall determine. In all cases in which any Native Chiefs or other authorities outside the said boundaries have received any adequate consideration from the Government of the South African Republic for land excluded from the Transvaal by the first Article of this Convention, or where permanent improvements have been made on the land, the High Commissioner will recover from the native authorities fair compensation for the loss of the land thus excluded, or of the permanent improvements thereon.

ARTICLE XII.

The independence of the Swazis, within the boundary line of Swaziland, as indicated in the first Article of this Convention, will be fully recognised.

ARTICLE XIII.

Except in pursuance of any treaty or engagement made as provided in Article 4 of this Convention, no other or higher duties shall be imposed on the importation into the South African Republic of any article coming from any part of Her Majesty's dominions than are or may be imposed on the like article coming from any other place or country; nor will any prohibition be maintained or imposed on the importation into the South African Republic of any article coming from any part of Her Majesty's dominions which shall not equally extend to the like article coming from any other place or country. And in like manner the same treatment shall be given to any article coming to Great Britain from the South African Republic as to the like article coming from any other place or country.

These provisions do not preclude the consideration of

special arrangements as to import duties and commercial relations between the South African Republic and any of Her Majesty's colonies or possessions.

ARTICLE XIV.

All persons, other than natives, conforming themselves to the laws of the South African Republic (*a*) will have full liberty, with their families, to enter, travel, or reside in any part of the South African Republic; (*b*) they will be entitled to hire or possess houses, manufactories, warehouses, shops, and premises; (*c*) they may carry on their commerce either in person or by any agents whom they may think fit to employ; (*d*) they will not be subject, in respect of their persons or property, or in respect of their commerce or industry, to any taxes, whether general or local, other than those which are or may be imposed upon citizens of the said Republic.

ARTICLE XV.

All persons, other than natives, who established their domicile in the Transvaal between the 12th day of April 1877 and the 8th August 1881, and who within twelve months after such last-mentioned date have had their names registered by the British Resident, shall be exempt from all compulsory military service whatever.

ARTICLE XVI.

Provision shall hereafter be made by a separate instrument for the mutual extradition of criminals, and also for the surrender of deserters from her Majesty's Forces.

ARTICLE XVII.

All debts contracted between the 12th April 1877 and the 8th August 1881 will be payable in the same currency in which they may have been contracted.

ARTICLE XVIII.

No grants of land which may have been made, and no transfers or mortgages which may have been passed between the 12th April 1877 and the 8th August 1881, will be invalidated by reason merely of their having been made or passed between such dates.

All transfers to the British Secretary for Native Affairs in

trust for natives will remain in force, an officer of the South African Republic taking the place of such Secretary for Native Affairs.

ARTICLE XIX.

The Government of the South African Republic will engage faithfully to fulfil the assurances given, in accordance with the laws of the South African Republic, to the natives at the Pretoria Pitso by the Royal Commission in the presence of the Triumvirate and with their entire assent, (1) as to the freedom of the natives to buy or otherwise acquire land under certain conditions, (2) as to the appointment of a commission to mark out native locations, (3) as to the access of the natives to the courts of law, and (4) as to their being allowed to move freely within the country, or to leave it for any legal purpose, under a pass system.

ARTICLE XX.

This Convention will be ratified by a Volksraad of the South African Republic within the period of six months after its execution, and in default of such ratification this Convention shall be null and void.

Signed in duplicate in London this 27th day of February 1884.

(Signed)	HERCULES ROBINSON.
(Signed)	S. J. P. KRUGER.
(Signed)	S. J. DU TOIT.
(Signed)	M. J. SMIT.

APPENDIX III¹THE MIDDELBURG TERMS OFFERED BY LORD
KITCHENER TO GENERAL BOTHA 7 MARCH
1902

With reference to our conversation at Middelburg on 28th February, I have the honour to inform you that in the event of a general and complete cessation of hostilities and the surrender of all rifles, ammunition, cannon, and other munitions of war in the hands of the burghers or in Government dépôts or elsewhere, His Majesty's Government is prepared to adopt the following measures:

His Majesty's Government will at once grant an amnesty in the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies for all *bonâ fide* acts of war committed during the recent hostilities. British subjects belonging to Natal and Cape Colony, while they will not be compelled to return to those Colonies, will, if they do so, be liable to be dealt with by the law of those Colonies specially passed to meet the circumstances arising out of the present war. As you are doubtless aware, the special law in the Cape Colony has greatly mitigated the ordinary penalties for high treason in the present cases.

All prisoners of war now in St. Helena, Ceylon, or elsewhere will, on the completion of the surrender, be brought back to their country as quickly as arrangements can be made for their transport.

At the earliest practicable date military administration will cease and will be replaced by civil administration in the form of Crown Colony Government. There will therefore be, in the first instance, in each of the new Colonies a Governor and an Executive Council, consisting of a certain number of official members, to whom a nominated unofficial element will be added. But it is the desire of His Majesty's Government, as soon as circumstances permit, to introduce a representative element and ultimately to concede to the new Colonies the privilege of self-government. Moreover, on the cessation of hostilities a High Court will be established in each of the new Colonies to administer the law of the land, and this Court will be independent of the Executive.

¹ Reprinted from Cd. 528, March 1901, p. 6.

Church property, public trusts, and orphans funds will be respected.

Both the English and Dutch languages will be used and taught in public schools where parents of the children desire it, and allowed in Courts of Law.

As regards the debts of the late Republican Governments, His Majesty's Government cannot undertake any liability. It is however prepared, as an act of grace, to set aside a sum not exceeding 1,000,000*l.* to repay inhabitants of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies for goods requisitioned from them by the late Republican Governments or, subsequent to annexation, by Cominandants in the field being in a position to enforce such requisitions. But such claims will have to be established to the satisfaction of a Judge or Judicial Commission appointed by the Government to investigate and assess them, and if exceeding in the aggregate 1,000,000*l.*, they will be liable to reduction *pro rata*.

I also beg to inform your Honour that the new Government will take into immediate consideration the possibility of assisting by loan the occupants of farms who will take the oath of allegiance to repair any injury sustained by destruction of buildings or loss of stock during the war, and that no special war tax will be imposed on farmers to defray the expense of the war.

When burghers require the protection of fire-arms such will be allowed to them by licence and on due registration, provided they take the oath of allegiance. Licences also will be issued for sporting rifles, guns, &c., but military fire-arms will only be allowed for means of protection.

As regards the extension of the franchise to Kaffirs in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to give such franchise before representative government is granted to these Colonies, and if then given it will be so limited as to secure the just predominance of the white races. The legal position of coloured persons will however be similar to that which they hold in Cape Colony.

In conclusion, I must inform your Honour that if the terms now offered are not accepted after a reasonable delay for consideration they must be regarded as cancelled.

APPENDIX IV

THE TERMS OF THE VEREENIGING TREATY,
31 MAY 1902

Army Headquarters,
South Africa.

General Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, Commanding-in-Chief, and His Excellency Lord Milner, High Commissioner, on behalf of the British Government, and Messrs. S. W. Burger, F. W. Reitz, Louis Botha, J. H. De la Rey, L. J. Meyer, and J. C. Krogh, acting as the Government of the South African Republic, and Messrs. C. R. de Wet, W. J. C. Brebner, J. B. M. Hertzog, and C. H. Olivier, acting as the Government of the Orange Free State, on behalf of their respective burghers, desirous to terminate the present hostilities, agree on the following Articles:—

1. The burgher forces in the field will forthwith lay down their arms, handing over all guns, rifles, and munitions of war in their possession or under their control, and desist from any further resistance to the authority of His Majesty King Edward VII, whom they recognize as their lawful Sovereign. The manner and details of this surrender will be arranged between Lord Kitchener and Commandant-General Botha, Assistant Commandant-General Delarey, and Chief Commandant De Wet.

2. All burghers in the field outside the limits of the Transvaal or Orange River Colony and all prisoners of war at present outside South Africa who are burghers will, on duly declaring their acceptance of the position of subjects of His Majesty King Edward VII, be gradually brought back to their homes as soon as transport can be provided and their means of subsistence ensured.

3. The burghers so surrendering or so returning will not be deprived of their personal liberty or their property.

4. No proceedings, civil or criminal, will be taken against any of the burghers surrendering or so returning for any acts in connection with the prosecution of the war. The benefit of this clause will not extend to certain acts, contrary to usages of war, which have been notified by Commander-in-

chief to the Boer Generals, and which shall be tried by court-martial immediately after the close of hostilities.

5. The Dutch language will be taught in public schools in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony where the parents of the children desire it, and will be allowed in courts of law when necessary for the better and more effectual administration of justice.

6. The possession of rifles will be allowed in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony to persons requiring them for their protection on taking out a licence according to law.

7. Military administration in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony will at the earliest possible date be succeeded by Civil Government, and, as soon as circumstances permit, representative institutions, leading up to self-government, will be introduced.

8. The question of granting the franchise to natives will not be decided until after the introduction of self-government.

9. No special tax will be imposed on landed property in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony to defray the expenses of the war.

10. As soon as conditions permit, a Commission, on which the local inhabitants will be represented, will be appointed in each district of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, under the presidency of a Magistrate or other official, for the purpose of assisting the restoration of the people to their homes [and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide themselves with food, shelter, and the necessary amount]¹ of seed, stock, implements, &c., indispensable to the resumption of their normal occupations.

His Majesty's Government will place at the disposal of these Commissions a sum of 3,000,000*l.* for the above purposes, and will allow all notes issued under Law 1 of 1900 of the South African Republic and all receipts given by officers in the field of the late Republics, or under their orders, to be presented to a Judicial Commission, which will be appointed by the Government, and if such notes and receipts are found by this Commission to have been duly issued in return for valuable considerations, they will be received by the first-

¹ Another version of these two lines, which seems more correct, is 'and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide for themselves, with food, shelter, and the necessary amount', &c.

named Commissions as evidence of war losses suffered by the persons to whom they were originally given.

In addition to the above-named free grant of 3,000,000*l.*, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to make advances on loan for the same purposes free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years with 3 per cent. interest. No foreigner or rebel will be entitled to the benefit of this clause.

Signed at Pretoria this thirty-first day of May in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and two.

S. W. BURGER.	KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM.
F. W. REITZ.	MILNER.
LOUIS BOTHA.	
J. H. DE LA REY.	
L. J. MEYER.	
J. C. KROGH.	
C. R. DE WET.	
J. B. M. HERTZOG.	
W. J. C. BREBNER.	
C. H. OLIVIER.	

APPENDIX V

BOOKS, PUBLICATIONS, ETC., RELATING TO SOUTH AFRICA

Of late years the printed information relating to South Africa has multiplied exceedingly. Only a very few standard publications are mentioned in this list, though others are referred to in the Notes. South Africans and students of South African history owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. SIDNEY MENDELSSOHN for his *South African Bibliography* (2 vols., Kegan Paul & Co., 1910), which is accompanied by extensive notes and contains, in addition to the Bibliography proper, a list of all Blue Books relating to South Africa, and also a list of the principal magazine articles.

EARLY HISTORY

The Cape of Adventure, by Mr. IAN COLVIN (Jack, 1912), contains an attractive selection of passages from the old voyages, &c., with descriptive annotations.

Moodie's Record (quarto, 1838-41), a collection of translated Dutch despatches, is invaluable with regard to the history of the first years of the Dutch settlement.

Barrow's Travels into South Africa, 1797-8, by Sir JOHN BARROW (2 vols., quarto, London, 1802-4; 2nd ed., 1806), is the standard work on the condition of the Cape Colony at the end of the eighteenth century.

An attractive account of the Cape during the first British occupation is given in *South Africa a Century Ago: Lady Anne Barnard* (Smith, Elder & Co., 1901). The letters were written to Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville, by Lady Barnard.

Dr. THEAL'S works are known to all who are interested in South Africa. They include *The Portuguese in South Africa* (Fisher Unwin, 1896); *The History and Ethnography of South Africa before 1795* (3 vols., Sonnenschein, 1907-10); *The History of South Africa since 1795* (5 vols., Sonnenschein, 1908); *The Records of the Cape Colony* (36 vols., 1897-1905); *The Records of South-Eastern Africa* (9 vols., 1898-1908), especially valuable for the Portuguese period.

Vols. i and ii of *The Rise of South Africa*, by Professor G. E. CORY, have been published (Longmans, 1910-13).

From 1835 onwards the Blue Books are numberless. Some of the older Blue Books are of great historical interest and value.

LATER HISTORY

The period from 1895 to the present day is nearly all covered by *The Times History of the War in South Africa* (6 vols., 1900-9, Sampson Low, Marston & Co.), the most masterly and comprehensive work of Mr. AMERY and his collaborators.

The two sides of the issues which led to the war are given, one view in Sir PERCY FITZPATRICK'S *The Transvaal from Within* (Heinemann, 1899) and Sir EDWARD COOK'S *Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War* (Arnold, 1901); the other in Mr. J. A. HOBSON'S *The War in South Africa, its causes and effects* (Nisbet & Co., 1900) and Mr. F. W. REITZ'S

A Century of Wrong (Review of Reviews Office, 1900). This last book gives the extreme Boer view.

For the war itself, in addition to *The Times History*, there is the official *History of the War in South Africa, 1899-1902* (4 vols., 1906-10, the first two volumes of which were compiled by the late Sir FREDERICK MAURICE, accompanied by 4 vols. of maps). *The German Official Account of the War in South Africa, Authorized Translation*, has been published in two volumes (John Murray, 1904 and 1906), the translators being Col. WATERS and Col. DU CANE. Among a very great many other books may be mentioned Sir F. H. E. CUNLIFFE'S *History of the Boer War* (2 vols., 1901 and 1904, Methuen & Co.); and, for a short account, Sir A. CONAN DOYLE'S well-known book, *The Great Boer War*, first published in 1900 and brought up to the end of the war in later editions.

On the Boer side, most interest perhaps attaches to General DE WET'S *Three Years' War* (Constable, 1902); General BEN VILJOEN'S *My Reminiscences of the Anglo-Boer War* (Hood, Douglas & Howard, 1902); and the Rev. J. D. KESTELL'S *Through Shot and Flame* (Methuen & Co., 1903).

The work of reconstruction after the war is told in full by Mr. BASIL WOODS in *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies under Lord Curzon* (2 vols., Kegan Paul & Co., 1913); and Mr. C. B. SMITH, in *The Aftermath of War* (Arnold, 1906), gives an excellent account of the task of repatriation, more especially in the Orange River Colony.

The Union of South Africa (Clarendon Press, 1909), by the Hon. R. H. BRAND, is an admirable short study of the South African Constitution; and the *Inner History of the National Convention of South Africa* is told by the Hon. Sir EDGAR WALTON, K.C.M.G. (Longmans, 1912).

The latest conditions in South Africa are depicted by Miss VIOLET MARKHAM in *The South African Scene* (Smith, Elder & Co., 1913).

The Annual Reports of the British South Africa Company give full information as to Rhodesia, and among many books bearing on Rhodesia and its founder, special mention should be made of the Hon. Sir LEWIS MICHELL'S *Life of Rhodes* (2 vols., Arnold, 1910).

INDEX

- Aasvogel Kop, 215.
 Aberdeen, 392.
 Abon's Dam, 195.
 Abraham's Kraal, 213, 357.
 Acton Homes, 171, 174.
 Adendorff Trek, 16.
 Adye, Major (afterwards Colonel),
 220, 294.
 Afrikaner Bond, 5, 10, 23, 64,
 76, 417, 446, 469.
 Albert district, 154.
 Alberts, Commandant Sarel, 384.
 Alderson, Colonel, 51.
 Aliwal, Convention of, 10.
 Aliwal North, 124, 144, 218, 254,
 336.
 Alleman's Neck, 297-8.
 Amatongaland, 1, 6, 9, 14, 48,
 323.
 America Siding, 261, 292.
 Amersfoort, 324.
 Amery, L. C., 514.
 Anderson, Colonel, 384.
 Anglo-Portuguese Commission, 9.
 " " Treaty, 9, 269,
 458.
 Arundel, 216, 217, 220.
 " Siding, 150.
 Asiatic immigration; *see under*
 British-Indian and Chinese.
 Asiatic Law Amendment Act, 454.
 Australia, 2, 76, 148, 150, 474-
 81; and Chinese immigration,
 440-1.
 Australia, Commonwealth of, 465,
 467, 469.
 Avoca Station, 329.

 Babington, General, 190, 359.
 Badenhorst, Commandant, 387.
 Baden-Powell, Colonel (after-
 wards Sir Robert), 50, 92, 107,
 111, 159, 264, 265, 267, 272,
 304, 317, 319-21, 342.

 Bakenkop, 306.
 Bakenlaagte, 371-4, 382, 385.
 Bakhatla Protectorate, 268.
 Balfour, Right Hon. A. J., 91.
 Balmoral, 318, 323, 332, 394.
 Bamangwato, 268.
 Bambata, 448.
 Bangwaketse, 268.
 Banyailand Trek, 16.
 Barberton, 78, 327, 328, 329, 331.
 " Ravay, 330.
 Barbour, Sir David, 341, 434.
 Barkly East, 154.
 " West, 273.
 Barnard, Lady Anne, 514.
 Barotziland, 458.
 Barrow, Sir John, 514.
 Barton, General, 167, 167, 232-5,
 254, 258, 262, 273, 333.
 Bastion Hill, 171, 174, 175.
 Basutoland and Basutos, 1, 5, 8,
 10, 52, 105, 124, 243, 251, 253,
 268, 308, 310, 341, 376, 380,
 433, 456, 464, 472, 479.
 Bathoen, chief of the Bangwaketse,
 268, 272.
 Beak, G. B., 420 *n.*, 426 *n.*, 515.
 Beaufort West, 392.
 Bechuanaland and Bechuanaas, 5,
 7, 13, 153, 166, 220, 417, 464.
 Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1, 7,
 8, 26, 33, 52, 92, 107, 267-8,
 270, 341, 433, 457, 472.
 Beira, 7, 50, 51, 267, 269.
 Belfast, 324, 325, 328, 350.
 Bell Spruit, 120.
 Belmont Station, 126, 158, 159,
 188, 293.
 Benson, Colonel, 371-4, 382.
 Bergendal Farm, 325-7.
 Bethanie Station, 250.
 Bethel, 331, 372.
 Bethlehem, 285, 287, 304-8, 310-
 12, 314, 378, 381.

- Bethulie, 187, 218, 336, 352, 355.
 Bethulie Bridge, 92, 109, 124, 125, 130, 218.
 Bethune, Colonel, 223, 224, 230, 276, 277.
 Beyers, General, 343, 347, 349, 374, 383, 395.
 Biddulphsberg, 287.
 Biggarsberg Range, 110, 111, 116, 240, 242, 275, 276.
 Bird River Siding, 218.
 Blaauwkrantz, the, 230.
 Block-house system, 363, 366, 374, 377, 378, 380-3.
 Bloemfontein, 11, 46, 65, 70, 71, 76-8, 101, 108, 109, 121, 125, 187, 188, 197, 199, 209, 210, 212-14; entry of Lord Roberts, 215; 219, 236, 241-6, 254-61, 282, 284, 286, 290, 310, 335, 363, 366, 417, 463.
 Bloemfontein Conference, 66-9, 73, 74 *n.*, 75, 77, 89.
 Bloemfontein Convention, 278.
 Bloemfontein-Prctoria Railway, 244, 380.
 Bloemfontein Waterworks, 243-7, 249, 255.
 Bloemfontein Waterworks Drift, 246.
 Blood, Sir Bindon, 343, 359.
 Blood River Station, 376.
 Boer generals' visit to Europe, 415-16.
 Boers, the, untrained as rulers, 3-4; commandeering of British subjects by, 22; their fighting powers, 401; repatriation of, 418-19, 428; *see passim*.
 Boesman's (Bushman's) Kop, 246, 247, 248.
 Boksburg, 279.
 Boomplatz, 110, 273.
 Boschbult, 388-9.
 Boschman's Kop, 387.
 Boschrand, 261.
 Boshot, 259, 262.
 " district, 387.
 Botha, Commandant Christian, 276, 277, 350.
 Botha, Commandant Philip, 260, 354.
 Botha, General Louis, 121-3, 127, 140, 141, 144, 181, 223, 230, 241, 261, 280-2, 299, 300, 318, 322, 325, 327, 328, 330-2, 341, 343, 344, 350-2, 357, 359, 360, 361, 364, 366, 367, 372-4, 382, 383, 394, 396, 398, 399, 402, 410, 411, 415, 419, 421, 446, 455, 460, 461, 468-70.
 Botha, Mrs., 299.
 Botha's Pass, 295, 296, 381.
 Bothaville, 262, 288, 333-4.
 Brabant, General, 158, 217, 218, 251, 253, 254, 256, 285, 286.
 Brakfontein, 170, 171, 182, 183, 321.
 Brakfontein Ridge, 172.
 Brak River, 355.
 Brakspruit, 388, 389.
 Brand, General, 379.
 Brand, Hon. R. H., 461, 465 *n.*, 515.
 Brand, President, 10, 12, 46, 99, 470.
 Brandfort, 245, 260, 357.
 Brandwater Basin, 307-8, 310, 311, 313.
 Brandwater River, 307.
 Bremersdorp, 364, 455.
 Bridle Drift, 144, 145.
 British Association meeting in South Africa, 457.
 British Central Africa Protectorate, 459.
 British-Indian immigration difficulties, 447, 450-5, 466, 471, 478.
 British South Africa Company, 6, 7, 13, 15, 26, 28, 32, 38, 41, 44, 46, 49, 268, 269, 457, 472, 484, 515.
 Britstown, 220.
 Broadwood, General, 200, 244, 246-9, 278, 286, 301, 307, 311, 314, 316, 317, 347, 362.
 Broken Hill mine, 457.
 Bronkhorst Spruit, 302, 322.
 " Station, 323, 332.
 Brown's Drift, 197.
 Brugspruit Station, 372.
 Buffalo River, 112, 113, 141, 296, 367.
 Buffelspoort, 346, 348, 384.

- Buller, General Sir Redvers, 106, 122, 125, 130, 132, 140-9, 161, 166 8, 172-5, 182 7, 221, 223-5, 227, 230, 231, 234-7, 240-2, 244, 258, 259, 275-7, 295, 296, 298, 302, 314, 324-9, 331, 342, 343, 359.
 Bullock, Colonel, 291.
 Bultfontein, 387.
 Buluwayo, 49, 50, 51, 52, 108, 267, 457.
 Bulwana, 164, 221, 225, 234.
 Burger, Schalk, 383, 394.
 Burgher Peace Committee at Pretoria, 343.
 Burghersdorp, 218.
 Burnham, American scout, 261.
 Bushman's Kop: *see* Boesman's Kop.
 Bushveldt, the, 317, 332.
 Butler, General Sir William, 55, 56, 92.
 Bywoners, the, 426-8.

 Caesar's Camp, 140, 162, 164.
 Caledon River, 244, 251, 307, 308, 336.
 Caledon Valley, 10, 243, 244, 246, 286, 304.
 Calvinia, 377.
 „ district, 392.
 Campbell, 293, 295.
 Canada, 2, 3, 76, 91, 148, 159.
 Canada, Dominion of, 465, 467, 469, 474-81.
 Cannon Kopje, 159.
 Cape Colony: *see* Cape of Good Hope.
 Cape Colony and Orange Free State Railway, 17.
 Cape of Good Hope (Colony 1806-1910, Province from 1910), 1, 3 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 17, 28, 30, 32, 41, 42, 46, 48, 50, 52-4, 63-5, 75, 76, 79, 80, 92, 94, 95, 98, 99, 101, 102, 107-9, 112, 122, 124, 125, 130, 153, 155, 157, 166, 187, 408, 409, 411, 413-15, 433, 435, 436, 441, 448, 450, 461, 463, 464, 466, 468, 469, 474, 480, 481, 485; rebellion and military operations in, 210-13, 217-19, 238, 243, 274, 292, 334, 336, 340-1, 345-6, 351-7, 375-7, 392-3. *See also under* War.
 Cape Parliament, 414, 428, 436, 446, 460, 463.
 Cape Railways, 108-9.
 Cape to Cairo Railway, 457.
 Capetown, 28, 36, 47, 74, 76, 83, 108, 109, 125, 149, 152, 167, 191, 243, 269, 342, 352, 353, 377, 393, 417, 462, 463, 475, 476, 478.
 Capetown-Kimberley Railway, 376.
 Carnarvon, 377.
 Carnarvon, Lord, 10.
 Carolina, 324, 329, 331.
 Carrington, Sir Frederick, 267, 269, 321, 322.
 Carrington, Sir Richard, 50, 51.
 Celliers, Commandant, 370, 384.
 Central South African Railways, 432.
 Cetewayo, 447, 448.
 Ceylon, 148.
 Chamberlain, Right Hon. Joseph, 7, 30-2, 34-6, 39-41, 43, 44, 60, 66, 71, 73, 76, 79, 82, 84, 88, 93, 105, 407, 410-12, 414, 415, 419, 421, 435-7, 450, 452; visit to South Africa, 416-17, 425, 434, 457.
 Chapman, Major, 367, 368.
 Chartered Companies, 483-5 *n*.
See also British South Africa Company.
 Chermiside, General, 207, 254, 256.
 Chieveley, 140, 142, 161, 166, 167, 184, 221, 224.
 Chinese labour, 436-40, 451, 458.
 Christiana, 262, 263.
 Churchill, Winston, 256 *n*.
 Cingolo, 224, 225.
 „ Nek, 225.
 Clanwilliam, 377.
 Clarke, Sir Marshall, 8, 52.
 Clements, General, 152, 209, 215-17, 243, 286, 305 7, 310, 312, 332, 347, 348, 370.
 Clery, General, 175, 296, 298.
 Climate of South Africa, 475, 477.

- Coetzee, Commandant, 379.
 Colenbrander, Major, 374, 383.
 Colenso, 122, 123, 139-49, 161,
 166-8, 184, 185, 221, 223 7,
 229, 231, 275, 291; battle of,
 144-7.
 Colenso, Bishop, 449.
 Colenso, Miss, 449.
 Colesberg, 149-54, 187, 189, 213,
 215, 216, 219, 301, 355.
 Colesberg Bridge, 352, 355, 356.
 „ Junction, 150.
 „ Road Bridge, 151, 152.
 Coleskop, 151, 152, 216.
 Colley, General, 295.
 Colonial Defence Force, 353.
 Coloured races, the, 477-8, 486.
 Colville, General, 201, 247, 249,
 259, 260, 285-8, 291, 305.
 Commando Nek, 308, 312, 317,
 319, 321, 346, 347.
 Concentration camps, 364, 418-
 20, 431.
 Concordia, 393.
 Congo Free State, 457.
 Connaught, Duke of, 465.
 Convicts, resistance to importa-
 tion of, 485.
 Cook, Sir Edward, 514.
 Cookson, Colonel, 388, 389.
 Coolies: *see under* British-Indian.
 Cory, Professor G. E., 514.
 Crabbe, Colonel, 376, 392.
 Creswell, Mr., 440.
 Crocodile Pools, 270-2.
 „ River, 317, 319.
 Cronje, General, 27, 78, 123, 128,
 129, 136, 138, 187-92, 196,
 199-202, 205-9, 211, 232, 239,
 241, 263, 313; surrender of,
 207-9.
 Crown Colony Government in the
 Transvaal and Orange River
 Colony, 407-10.
 Cunliffe, Sir F. H. E., 515.
 Curtis, Lionel, 460.
 Customs Union Conference, 433,
 436-7, 459.
 Customs Convention, 459.
 Dalgety, Colonel, 252, 253, 254,
 256.
 Dalmanutha, 325.
 Damant, Colonel, 378, 388.
 Damaras, the, 479.
 Dartnell, Colonel (afterwards
 General), 118, 378.
 Darwin, Sir George, 457.
 Davies, 'Karri', 37, 273, 274.
 De Aar Junction, 108, 149, 188,
 209, 215, 220, 351, 355.
 De Aar-Naauwport line, 109.
 De Beers Company and the siege
 of Kimberley, 161.
 De Emigratie Farm, 360.
 De Jagers Drift, 367.
 De Kaap Goldfields, 329, 330.
 De Kiel's Drift, 19 5.
 Delagoa Bay, 17, 31, 42, 299,
 459.
 Delagoa Bay Railway, 299, 304,
 318, 323, 325, 328, 331, 332,
 349-51, 359, 372, 383.
 Delarey, General, 127, 128, 136,
 152, 187 *u.*, 213, 214, 216, 260,
 274, 280, 300, 301, 303, 318,
 320-2, 340, 343, 344, 346 9,
 360, 361, 369-71, 384-8, 390,
 392, 394, 396, 398, 399, 402,
 410, 415, 420.
 De Lisle, Colonel, 282, 302, 334.
 De Mareuil, Villebois, 211, 259.
 De Montmorency, Captain, 218.
 Derde Poort, 270.
 De Villiers, General, 164, 287,
 294.
 De Villiers, Lord, 462.
 Dewdrop, 171.
 De Wet, Commandant Piet, 278,
 286, 287.
 De Wet, General Christian, 121,
 187 *u.*, 189 *u.*, 190, 192, 195,
 196, 205-7, 209, 211-15, 241,
 242, 245-52, 284, 288-92, 294,
 299, 305 *u.*, 306-8, 310, 311,
 313-22, 332-5, 338, 339, 343,
 345, 351, 352, 354-7, 361 3,
 374, 375, 378, 379-82, 387,
 392, 394, 396, 398, 399, 415,
 446, 515.
 Dewetsdorp, 121, 244, 249, 250,
 254, 255, 335.
 Diamond Fields, 155.
 Diamond Hill, 299 302, 318.
 Diamonds, 477, 481, 482.

- Diaz, 481.
 Dinnzulu, trouble with, in Zululand, 448; trial of, 449.
 Dixon, Brigadier-General, 360.
 Donkerhoek, 300.
 Donkerpoort, 300.
 Doornberg Mountains, 354, 381.
 Doornkloof, 170.
 Doornkop, 27, 170, 182-4, 280-1.
 Dordrecht, 218.
 " district, 376.
 Douglas, 158, 159, 189, 244, 292, 293.
 Doyle, Sir A. Conan, 515.
 Drakensburg Mountains, 110, 170, 171, 295, 296, 308, 381.
 Driefontein, 213-14.
 Drifts, closing of the, 17.
 Dronfield, 200.
 " Ridge, 198.
 " Station, 198.
 Du Cane, Colonel, 515.
 Dullstroom, 328, 349.
 Dundee, 110-13, 116, 118, 277, 367.
 Dundonald, Lord, 167, 174, 221, 224, 225, 234, 276, 277, 297, 324, 327.
 Durban, 2, 6, 106, 110, 111, 119, 123, 125, 140, 221, 240, 352, 461, 462.
 D'Urban, Sir Benjamin, 480.
 Durham, Lord, 429, 442-3, 467.
 Dutch, the, 3-5, 11, 12, 17, 19, 20, 23-5, 30, 39, 42, 43, 45, 49, 52, 53, 55, 62-6, 86, 88, 90, 96, 97, 403, 478-9.
 Dutch language, 462, 510, 512.
 Dutch Reformed Church, 76.
 Dutch Republic, 2.
 Dynamite monopoly in the Transvaal, 59.

 East Indian coolies, 6, 435, 478.
 East London, 108, 109, 125, 130, 240, 254, 353.
 East London-Bethulie Railway, 130.
 Edenburg Station, 254.
 Edgar case, the, 55-8.
 Education question, 47c 1.
 Edward VII, 406, 415, 419, 465.

 Egerton, Professor, 465 n.
 Elandsfontein, 306.
 Elandslaagte, 275, 384-5.
 " Station, 110, 113, 115, 116, 118.
 Elands River, 302, 319, 321, 329, 369, 376, 378.
 Elands River Bridge, 380.
 " Station, 302.
 Elliott, General, 343, 361, 387.
 Eloff, Commandant, 265-6, 275.
 Emmett, General, 383.
 English, the, 4, 7, 9, 13, 19, 22, 24, 32-4, 36, 38-43, 45, 49, 51-3, 62, 67, 71, 73, 77, 83, 84, 87-90, 94-6, 99, 102, 105, *et passim*.
 Enslin, 126, 130.
 Erasmus, General, 113, 114.
 Ermelo, 324, 331, 360, 361, 382, 383.
 Estcourt, 123, 167.
 Ethiopian movement, the, 447.

 Faber's Put, 293-5.
 Fairview Farm, 171.
 " Road, 174.
 Fanny's Home, 380.
 Farquhar's Farm, 119.
 Farrar, Sir George, 438, 461, 470.
 Fauresmith, 192.
 Fawcett, Mrs., 365.
 Federation *versus* Union, 462, 467.
 Ferreira, General, 241.
 Ficksburg, 286, 304, 305, 308.
 Fischer, Abraham, 75, 339, 446, 468, 469.
 Fitzpatrick, Sir Percy, 461, 469, 514.
 Florida, 281.
 Forster, Rt. Hon. Arnold, 428, 429.
 Fort Prospect, 367, 368.
 Fort Tuli, 271.
 Fort Wylie, 142.
 Fouche, Commandant, 375, 392.
 Fourie, Commandant, 355.
 Fouriesburg, 308, 312, 313, 315.
 Fourteen Streams, 263.
 " Streams Bridge, 262.
 France and the French, 5, 30, 60.

- Franchise question, 20-5, 35, 39, 60, 67-9, 77-85, 358, 441-2, 462-5, 510, 512.
- Frankfort, 288, 304, 307, 378, 380, 381.
- Fraser, Mr., 46.
- Fraserburg, 392.
- Frederickstad, 332.
- " Station, 317, 333.
- French, General Sir John, 115, 116, 122, 125, 130, 149-52, 187-95, 197, 198, 200, 201, 204, 207, 209, 214-17, 238, 255, 256, 260, 261, 279-82, 300, 301, 322-5, 327-30, 342, 351, 375, 377.
- Frere, 140, 161, 167.
- Frere, Sir Bartle, 2, 46.
- Froneman, Commandant, 290, 291, 292.
- Gaberones, 268, 270, 271.
- Game Tree Hill, 160, 264.
- Gansvlei Spruit, 296, 297.
- Garies, 393.
- Gatacre, General, 125, 130-4, 139, 187, 217, 218, 240, 243, 249-51, 254, 288.
- Gatsrand, the, 315, 333, 359, 375.
- Geluk, 324.
- Geneva Convention, 75.
- Geneva Siding, 261.
- George V, 465.
- German Protectorate in South-West Africa, 2, 10, 220, 447, 483.
- Germany and the Germans, 17, 22, 24, 30, 31, 35, 38, 40, 54, 115, 138, 173.
- Germiston Junction, 279-81.
- Girouard, Colonel Sir Percy, 188.
- Gladstone, Lord, 468.
- Glen Siding, 244, 245.
- Glencoe, 93, 98, 110, 111, 113, 119.
- Glencoe Junction, 110, 113.
- Glenelg, Lord, 480.
- Glen Grey Act, 435.
- Godwaan, 329, 330.
- Gokhale, Mr., 471.
- Golden Gate Pass, 308, 312, 313.
- Gomba, the, 224.
- Goold-Adams, Major (afterwards Sir Hamilton), 268, 409.
- Gordon, General, 207, 279, 301.
- Gough, Major, 367.
- Graaf Reinet, 53, 352, 375, 417.
- Graspan Farm, 361.
- Graspan Station, 126, 188, 191.
- Crazy Hill, 152.
- Green Hill, 171, 183, 184, 224, 225.
- Greene, Conyngham, 48, 56, 57.
- Grenfell, Colonel, 374, 385, 390.
- Grey, Lord, 49.
- Grey, Sir G., 2.
- Greytown, 122, 230, 276.
- Griqualand West, 10, 153, 258, 292-5.
- Griquatown, 295.
- Grobelaar's Hill, 226.
- Grobler, Commandant, 153, 320.
- Groenkop, 379.
- Gruisfontein, 384, 390.
- Gun Hill, near Bakenlaagte, 373.
- Gun Hill, near Helvetia, 350.
- Gun Hill, near Lombard's Kop, 140.
- Gwelo, 50.
- Haasbroek, Commandant, 356.
- Hamilton, Colonel (afterwards General) Ian, 116, 162, 165, 255, 256, 258-61, 277-80, 285, 286, 300-2, 307, 317, 320, 321, 323, 328-30, 342, 389-91.
- Hamilton, General Bruce, 310-13, 354, 382, 387.
- Hannay, Colonel, 191, 198, 204-6.
- Hanover Road Station, 376.
- Harrismith, 6, 110, 304, 308, 314, 378, 381.
- Harrismith district, 413.
- Hart, General, 145, 227, 229, 254, 258, 263, 298, 317.
- Hartenbosch, 387.
- Hart's Hill, 227-9, 231-5.
- " Hollow, 229.
- Harts River, 273, 388, 389, 390.
- Hector Spruit, 330, 331.
- Heidelberg, 121, 209, 302, 307, 331, 381.
- Heilbron, 261, 277-9, 285, 286, 288, 291, 304, 305, 310, 314, 380, 381.

- Heekpoort Valley, 320, 332.
 Helpmakaar, 116, 230, 276.
 Helvetia, 327, 328, 349, 350.
 Hely-Hutchinson, Sir Walter, 408, 414, 468.
 Herbert district, 158.
 Herrholdt, Mr., 76, 340.
 Hertzog, General, 333, 336, 341, 343, 351-3, 355-7, 375, 394, 396-8, 446, 469, 470.
 Het Volk, 446, 469.
 Hildyard, General, 276, 296, 298.
 Hlangwhane Hill, 141, 142, 144, 168, 184, 221, 223-7.
 Hobson, J. A., 514.
 Hofmeyr, Jan Hendrik, 5, 10, 30, 63-5, 76, 78, 464.
 Holdsworth, Colonel, 270, 271, 272.
 Hollanders in the Transvaal, 22, 38, 54, 115.
 Holspruit, 382.
 Honey Nest Kloof, 198.
 Honing Spruit, 278, 291, 306, 316.
 Hoopstad, 262.
 Hopetown, 108, 219, 326.
 Hore, Colonel, 321, 322.
 Horseshoe Hill, 227, 228.
 Houtnek, 255-6.
 Houwater, 220.
 Hughes, Colonel Sam, 292.
 Hull, Mr., 469, 470.
 Hunter, General Sir Archibald, 93, 111, 140, 254, 258, 259, 262, 263, 273, 277, 299, 303, 307, 308, 310-12, 314, 324, 342, 344.
 Hussar Hill, 224, 225.
 Hutton, General, 259, 260, 261, 279, 301, 322, 323, 329, 342.

 Immigrants Regulation Act, 471.
 Immigrants Restriction Act, 454.
 Imperial Conference of 1907, 460.
 Imperial Light Infantry, 178.
 Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act, 340.
 India and the War, 92, 93, 105, 106, 110, 148.
 Indian coolies: *see under* British-Indian.
 Indwe, 218.
 Ingogo, 121, 295, 296.
 „ River, 296.
 Ingwavuma, 8.
 Inkwelo, 295.
 Inter-colonial Council, the, 432-3.
 Israel's Farm, 274.
 „ Poort, 255.
 Itala Fort, 367.
 „ Mountain, 367.
 Izerspruit, 384.

 Jacobsdal, 129, 189, 195, 197.
 Jagersfontein, 10.
 Jameson, Dr. (afterwards Sir Starr Jameson), 6, 26-34, 36-8, 42, 49, 280, 415, 446, 460, 461, 468, 470.
 Jameson Raid, the, 26-39, 44-7, 49, 50, 63, 70, 71, 73, 85, 90; the origin of the movement, 27; causes of failure, 28; action taken by the Imperial Government, 29; feeling aroused against Great Britain, 31; action taken with regard to Jameson and his men, 31; the South African Committee, 32; historical view of the Raid, 33; the Johannesburg Reformers, 34; their fate, 36; Boer feeling and net result of the Raid, 37; Boer claim for compensation, 44.
 Jamestown, 375.
 Jan Massibi's, 274.
 Johannesburg, 6, 11, 15-17, 25, 27-9, 31, 34-40, 43, 45, 56-8, 60, 74, 75, 78, 94, 98, 298, 299, 303, 362, 410, 417, 441, 444, 448, 470, 471, 482; Lord Roberts's entry into, 279-81.
 Joubert, Commandant-General, 78, 111, 112, 113, 123, 127, 139, 140, 226, 234, 238, 242; death of, 240.

 Kaal Spruit, 213, 215.
 Kaapmuiden Junction, 329, 330.
 Kaapsche Hoop, 329.
 Kafir Kop, 380.
 Kafirs, 58, 81, 145, 358.
 Kalkkrans, 382.

- Kalomo, 458.
 Kameelfontein, 200.
 Kanya, 268, 272.
 Karee Siding, 244-5, 260.
 Keith, Professor A. B., 465 *n.*
 Kekewich, Colonel, 160, 368, 370, 384, 385, 389, 390.
 Kelly-Kenny, General, 187, 188, 194, 195, 198, 202, 211, 212, 214, 259, 290, 342.
 Kemp, Commandant, 343, 360, 369, 370, 384, 389, 396.
 Kenhardt, 220.
 Kestell, Rev. J. D., 361, 362 *n.*, 379 *n.*, 394 *n.*, 515.
 Khama, chief of the Bamangwato, 7, 268, 271.
 Kheis, 294-5.
 Kimberley, 10, 94, 100, 107-9, 123-6, 128-30, 153, 160, 161, 197, 198, 200, 207, 209, 210, 216, 219, 220, 256, 257, 259, 262, 264, 273, 274, 303, 366, 482; siege of, 124-5, 125, 130, 153, 159-61, 188, 189, 191; relief of, 194-5.
 Kimberley Railway, 292, 355.
 Kimberley - Mafeking Railway, 391.
 Kissieberg Hills, 133.
 Kitchener, Colonel (afterwards General) Walter, 232, 233, 234, 388, 389.
 Kitchener, Lord, 149, 184, 188, 194, 199-202, 206, 207, 209, 217, 220, 238, 254, 258, 290-2, 316, 317, 322, 339, 343, 348-51, 353, 354, 356, 357, 360, 363, 364, 366, 371, 377, 380, 386, 388, 389, 391, 394-6, 398-400, 402, 407, 415, 416, 422.
 Kitchener's Drift, 210.
 " Kopje, 204-6.
 Kleinfontein, 301, 371.
 Klerksdorp, 303, 304, 384-6, 388, 389, 394.
 Klip Drift, 193-5, 199, 201, 207.
 Klip Kraal Drift, 193, 199, 201, 207.
 Klip River (Natal), 93, 139, 225.
 Klip River (Transvaal), 280, 296.
 " " Station, 279.
 Klipriviersberg, the, 280.
 Knox, General Charles, 198-200, 204, 205, 333, 354.
 Koch, General, 115, 116.
 Koedoesberg, 189-90.
 Koffyfontein, 10, 192, 205.
 Komati Poort, 304, 323, 330, 331.
 " River, 325, 329.
 Koodoos Drift, 200, 207.
 Koodoosrand, 206, 207.
 Koorn Spruit, 246-9.
 Kosi Bay, 323.
 Kotze, Chief Justice, 54.
 Kraaipan, 111, 127.
 Krause, Dr., 281.
 Kritzinger, Commandant, 336, 341, 352, 353, 368, 375, 376, 392.
 Kromspruit, 354.
 Kroonstad, 121, 242, 243, 261, 277, 279, 282, 285, 286, 288-90, 292, 305, 310, 380, 381, 394.
 Kruger, Mrs., 315.
 Kruger, President, 3, 4, 10, 17, 19, 22-5, 30, 31, 33-9, 41, 44, 46, 54, 59, 61, 65-9, 71, 74, 76, 77-80, 82, 83, 86-8, 96, 99, 112, 122, 149, 156, 157, 211, 226, 238, 241, 263, 265, 273, 282, 315-17, 319, 394, 404, 415, 432, 451, 470; flight of, 327; visits Europe, 339, 360; death, 406.
 Krugersdorp, 27, 303, 316, 318, 319, 320, 347.
 Krugersdorp-Potchefstroom Railway, 317, 320.
 Kruger's Spruit, 233.
 Kuruman, 159, 295.
 Labour Commission, 437.
 Labour question, 435-40.
 " troubles, 458, 486.
 Labram, Mr., 161.
 Labuschagne's Nek, 218.
 Ladybrand, 244, 246, 335, 363.
 Ladysmith, 93, 98, 110, 111, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119; siege of, 122, 123, 125, 130, 139-41, 145, 147, 149, 152, 153, 162, 165, 166, 170, 171, 174, 181, 182, 185, 187, 188, 221-24, 256,

- 258, 259; relief of, 234-5.
237-40.
- Lagden, Sir Godfrey, 8, 253, 434, 456.
- Lake Chrissie, 351.
- Lambart's Bay, 351, 353, 377.
- Land settlement, as a policy of reconstruction, 428-31.
- Langalibalele, 447, 449.
- Langewacht (or Langverwacht) Spruit, 226 9, 232, 382.
- Lang's Nek, 110, 277, 295, 296, 298, 302.
- Lansdowne, Lord, 393.
- Lawley, Sir Arthur, 267, 410, 437, 438, 453.
- Leader, Major (afterwards Col.), 384, 390.
- Lebombo Mountains, 8, 9, 14.
- Leeuw River, 244.
- Leeuwspuit, 291.
- Le Gallais, Colonel, 333, 334.
- Leggett, Major, 427, 428.
- Leliefontein, 356.
- Lennox Hill, 113.
- Leonard, Charles, 22, 25, 28, 29, 37.
- Leyds, Dr., 54.
- Lichtenburg, 127, 303, 359, 384, 385, 391.
- Liebenberg, Commandant, 219, 220, 274, 317, 333, 384.
- Liebenberg's Vlei, 380.
- Limpopo, 16.
" River, 271.
- Linchwe, chief of the Bakhatla, 268, 270, 271.
- Lindeque Drift, 279.
- Lindley, 277, 278, 285, 286 8, 291, 304-6, 316, 354, 351.
- Little, Colonel, 316.
- Little Harts River, 385.
- Livingstone, 459.
- Livingstone, David, 457.
- Loan, the guaranteed, to the Transvaal and the Orange River colonies, 434.
- Lobatsi, 272.
- Lobengula, 48, 51.
- Loch, Sir Henry, 21, 22, 25.
- Lombaard, 57.
- Lombard's Kop, 119, 139, 140.
- Long, Colonel, 146 and *n.*
- London Convention of 1884, 9, 12-17, 40, 41, 43, 60, 69-72, 76, 83, 102, 451, 455; text of the Convention, 498-508.
- Lorenzo Marques, 95, 327, 331.
- Lotter, Commandant, 375, 392.
- Louis Trichard, 383.
- Lydenburg, 121, 327-9, 349, 383.
- Lydenburg Mountains, 325.
- Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred, 437, 438, 440, 441, 454.
- Lyttelton Constitution, abortive, 440-2, 444, 445.
- Lyttelton, General Sir Neville, 178, 179, 232, 275, 276, 295, 298, 324, 342, 354, 368, 407.
- McCallum, Sir Henry, 408.
- Macdonald, General Hector, 190, 205, 206, 285, 305, 307, 312, 314.
- Macfarlane Siding, 198.
- Machadodorp, 282, 317, 327-9, 331, 349.
- Mackenzie, Colonel, 448.
- Mafeking, 7, 26, 49, 50, 107, 108, 111, 123, 124, 128, 130, 153, 160, 187, 268, 269, 304, 319, 321, 334, 417; siege of, 130, 153, 159, 256, 259, 263-6, 271-2; relief of, 273-5, 277, 303.
- Magaliesberg Range, 304, 313, 316-18, 320, 323, 332, 346, 347, 356, 368, 369.
- Magato Nek, 319, 369.
- Magersfontein, 136, 137, 138, 139, 144, 149, 189, 192, 197, 371.
- Mahan, Captain, 263 *n.*
- Mahon, Colonel Bryan, 259, 273-5, 331.
- Majuba Hill, 110, 121, 186, 295, 382.
- Malan, Commandant, 375, 392, 469.
- Malays, 478.
- Mahmani, 26.
- Malmesbury, 352, 353, 377.
- Maputo River, 9.
- Maribogo Pan, 303.
- Marico district, 371, 385.
" River, 270.

- Maritz, Commandant, 377-392.
 Maritzburg, 111, 118, 123, 139, 221, 447.
 Markham, Violet, 515.
 Martial law sentences, Royal Commission on, 413.
 Martin, Sir Richard, 50, 52.
 Maseru, 456.
 Mashonaland and Mashonas, 6, 50, 51, 267, 272.
 Matabeleland and Matabele, 6, 26, 42, 48, 49, 51, 207, 410.
 Matoppo Hills, 49, 51, 406.
 Mauchberg Pass, 328.
 Maurice, Sir Frederick, 515.
 Maxwell, Major, 251.
 Mbabane, 455.
 Melmoth, 367.
 Mendelssohn, Sidney, 513.
 Merriman, Rt. Hon. J. X., 40, 47, 155, 446, 461, 468.
 Merton Siding, 136.
 Methuen, Lord, 125, 127-30, 134, 137, 139, 152, 158, 160, 161, 172, 188, 189, 195, 203, 207, 210, 259, 262, 263, 273, 288, 291, 305, 317, 320, 332, 342, 371, 384-6.
 Meyer, General Lukas, 112 and *n.*, 113, 121, 223, 276, 415.
 Michell, Sir Lewis, 33, 515.
 Middelburg, 323, 324, 361, 372; conference at, 357-9, 364; proposals for peace, 395, 397, 398, 411; terms offered by Lord Kitchener to General Botha, 509-10.
 Military compensation fund, 424.
 Milner, Sir Alfred (afterwards Lord Milner), 47, 48, 52, 53, 57, 63-76, 78-80, 83, 85, 89, 92, 101, 107, 154, 340-2, 353, 362, 365, 374, 395-9, 402, 403, 407-12, 414, 417-23, 427, 429-31, 433, 436-9, 441-4, 452, 453, 455, 459, 460, 468, 477.
 Milton, Sir William, 267.
 Mineral resources, effect of, on later political history of South Africa, 477, 481, 483.
 Missionary influence, Protestant, 479-80.
 Mochudi, 268, 270, 271.
 Modder Drifts, 193-5, 198, 210.
 Modder River, 126-30, 134, 136-9, 158, 161, 187-94, 197, 201, 204, 207, 210-13, 238, 243, 245-8, 366.
 Modder River Bridge, 188.
 " " Camp, 188, 198.
 " " Station, 127, 136.
 Modderfontein, 359, 376.
 Moedwil, 368, 369-71.
 Molopo River, 7, 265, 273, 274.
 Molteno, 132, 134.
 Monte Christo, 224, 225.
 Monument Hill, 350.
 Mooi River, 123, 317.
 Moor, Sir F., 468, 469.
 Moselikatse, 20.
 Mossel Bay, 352.
 Mostert's Hoek, 249, 250.
 Mount Alice, 167 and *n.*, 176, 179.
 Mozambique, 459.
 Muzenberg, 406.
 Muller, Commandant, 350, 361.
 Murdoch, Burn, 221.
 Naauwpoort Junction, 108, 125, 149, 150, 187, 188, 209, 215.
 Naauwpoort Nek, 308, 311, 312.
 Namaqualand and Namaquas, 392, 393, 479.
 Natal (Colony, 1843-1910; Province from May 31, 1910), 1, 5, 8, 31, 48, 52, 72, 76, 91-3, 98, 105-7, 109-12, 122, 123, 125, 130, 132, 140, 141, 144, 149, 153, 155, 161, 166, 167 and *n.*, 170, 182, 187, 236, 240, 241, 243, 254, 257, 259, 277, 290, 295, 302, 311, 328, 341, 351, 352, 367, 408, 409, 411, 413, 433, 441, 447, 448, 450, 453, 460, 461, 463, 464, 466, 468, 469, 478, 485. *See also under War.*
 Natal Railway, 109-10, 324, 331, 351.
 National Convention of 1908, 461-2.
 National Scouts, 344.
 " Union, 25.
 Native Location Commission, 493, 495, 497.

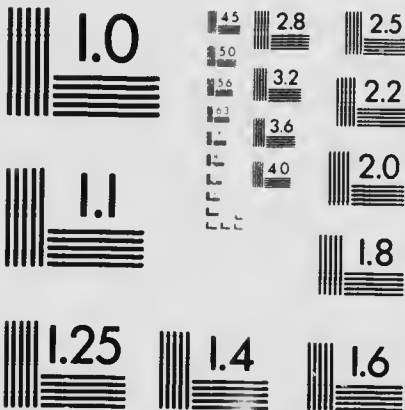
- Nelspruit, 328-30.
 " Station, 327.
 Netherlands East India Company,
 2, 484.
 Netherlands Government, over-
 tures for peace by, 393-4.
 Netherlands Railway Company,
 11, 16, 17, 435.
 Newberry's Mills, 244.
 Newcastle, 110, 111, 113, 277,
 295.
 New Zealand and New Zealanders,
 148, 150, 152, 441.
 Niagara River, 166.
 Nicholson, Colonel, 267, 270.
 Nicholson, Sir William, 188.
 Nicholson's Nek, 119, 120, 139.
 Nitral's Nek: *see* Uitval.
 Nkandhla, 368.
 " Forest, 448.
 Nooitgedacht, 327, 329, 347-8.
 Norcott, Colonel, 232-4.
 Norval's Pont, 108, 109, 124, 125,
 149-52, 187, 217, 336.
 Nqutu, 277.
 Nyasaland, 6, 459.
- Observation Hill, 162.
 Odendaal Drift, 352.
 Olifants Nek, 317-21, 360.
 Olivier, Commandant, 132, 246,
 247, 292, 313, 314.
 Onderbrook Spruit, 226, 227, 228.
 " Hill, 226.
 Onderste Poort, 320.
 Onverwacht, 383.
 Ookiep, siege of, 393.
 Opperman, Commandant, 383.
 Orange Free State (from 1854-
 1900, Republic; from 1900-10,
 Orange River Colony; from
 1910, Province), 2, 3, 6, 10-13,
 15, 18, 30, 44, 46, 52, 64, 65,
 68, 81, 92-5, 98-103, 108-10,
 115, 121, 122, 128, 129, 155,
 182, 187, 191, 192, 205, 207,
 217-19, 230, 240, 242, 243,
 257, 259, 261, 267, 278, 284,
 285, 296-8, 304, 310, 311, 316,
 318, 320, 324, 333, 342, 354-7,
 368, 374-82, 387, 396, 398,
 401, 402, 407-10, 412, 417,
 420, 421, 423, 427, 429-31,
 433, 435, 442, 450, 461-3, 466-
 70, 482; annexation of, 278,
 341; responsible government
 given to, 447. *See also under*
War.
 Orange River, 100, 108, 109, 124-
 6, 151, 153, 157, 158, 160, 187,
 191, 216, 218-20, 278, 292-4,
 336, 341, 352, 355, 357, 368,
 375, 376, 481.
 Orange River Bridge, 94, 108,
 109, 219, 220.
 Orange River Colony Volunteers,
 344.
 Orangia Unie, 446, 469.
 Ortel's Drift, 213.
 Osfontein, 204, 206, 210.
 Outlanders: *see* Uitlanders.
- Paardeberg, 199, 201, 210, 211,
 219, 240, 257, 315, battle of,
 202-9, 239, 241, 313.
 Paardekop, 324.
 Paardekraal, 78.
 Paarl, 353.
 Paget, General, 262, 263, 288,
 305-7, 310-12, 314, 352, 354.
 Palapyc, 268, 271.
 " Road, 268, 271.
 Pan, 350.
 Paris, Major, 385, 386.
 Park, Colonel, 165, 383.
 Parsons, Sir Charles, 220.
 Parys, 279.
 Peace Preservation Acts, 452.
 People's Congress at Worcester,
 341.
 Pepworth Hill, 118, 119, 139.
 Petrusberg, 212.
 Picnaars Poort Station, 299.
 " River, 299.
 Pietermaritzburg, 110.
 Pietersburg, 332, 359, 374, 383.
 " district, 383.
 " Railway, 282, 317,
 323, 352, 347, 347, 359.
 Pieter's Hill, 227, 232-5, 237,
 270.
 Piet Pietief, 276 *n.*
 Pilands Berg, 319.

- Pilcher, Colonel, 159, 244, 246, 292, 293.
 Pilgrims' Rest, 328, 332, 374, 383.
 Piquetberg, 352, 377.
 Pitsani Pitlogo, 26, 272.
 Platrand, 162, 164, 165, 166.
 Plumer, Major (afterwards Col.), 50, 51, 92, 107, 124, 264, 267, 270-2, 274, 275, 304, 332, 354-7, 359, 383.
 Pole-Carew, General Sir R., 129, 215, 254-6, 300, 302, 325, 328-30.
 Pondoland, 5.
 Pongola River, 8, 9, 14.
 Poplar Grove, 207, 210-14, 239, 242.
 Poplar Grove Drift, 211, 213.
 Population of South Africa, 478.
 Port Alfred, 108.
 Port Elizabeth, 108, 109, 130, 353, 476.
 Port Elizabeth-Norval's Pont Railway, 130, 132, 149.
 Port Nolloth, 393.
 Portugal and Portuguese East Africa, 9, 13, 14, 17, 31, 269, 419, 436.
 Potchefstroom, 46, 303, 304, 316, 317, 333; treaty of, 10.
 Potchefstroom-Krugersdorp Railway, 332.
 Potgieter's Drift, 167, 168, 170-2, 179, 181-3.
 Pretoria, 15, 18, 21, 22, 25, 27-31, 34-7, 40, 43, 48, 56, 58, 74, 76, 78, 80, 102, 105, 121, 125, 341, 342, 452, 463, 469; march to, 257-62, 278-82; occupation of, 282, 284, 298-300, 302, 315, 318-21, 346, 365, 459; first Peace Conference at, 394-5; second Peace Conference, 396-8; treaty of peace signed at, 399.
 Pretoria, Convention of 1881, 9, 12, 19, 69, 70, 72, 79, 112; text of the Convention, 488-98.
 Prieska district, 210, 212; rebellion and operations in, 219-20, 274, 292, 294, 355.
 Prinsloo, Commandant Michael, 306.
 Prinsloo, Martin, 311, 313.
 Proclamations: by Lord Roberts at Bloemfontein, 242, 251, 286; annexing the Orange Free State, 278, 327; annexing the Transvaal, 327; by Lord Kitchener (August 7, 1901), 366.
 Prospect, Mount, 295.
 Protestantism in South Africa, 479-80.
 Putterkrnal, 131, 132.
 Quaggafontein, 368.
 Quebec, 91.
 Queensland and Queenslanders, 76, 92, 159.
 Queenston Heights, 166.
 Queenstown, 130, 131, 132.
 Railway Hill, Natal, 227, 232, 233, 234.
 Railways, extension of, 431-2; importance of, 476-7, 482-3; rates, 459.
 Ramathlabama, 272.
 Ramdam, 191, 192, 194-6, 198, 209, 238.
 Rand, the, 17, 23, 39, 40 *n.*, 57, 58, 60, 66, 69, 75, 80, 396. *See* Johannesburg.
 Rangeworthy Hills, 170, 171 and *n.*
 Reddersburg, 249, 250, 254, 284, 335.
 Refugee camps, 343, 363-6, 416.
 Refugees, British, 418.
 Reitz, 304, 361, 362, 382, 394, 396.
 Reitz, President, 10, 46, 54, 70, 72, 83, 99, 514.
 Reitzburg, 316, 332.
 Rensburg, 150, 216, 217.
 " Drift, 333.
 Repatriation schemes, 418-19, 421-8.
 Responsible government, 445-6.
 Retief's Farm, 312.
 " Nek, 308, 312.
 Rhenoster Kop, 332.
 " River, 278, 288-91, 381.
 Rhenosterpoort Farm, 316.
 Rhodes, Colonel Frank, 273.
 Rhodes, Rt. Hon. C. J., 5-7, 28-



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- 30, 32, 33, 38, 46, 47, 50-2, 55, 124, 161, 515; death of, 406.
 Rhodes Drift, 271.
 Rhodesia, 1, 6, 7, 16, 31, 33, 48, 50, 52, 92, 107, 266-70, 321, 341, 406, 433, 435, 436, 450, 457-8, 461, 466, 472, 481, 515.
 Rhodesia, Northern, 458-9, 474.
 Ridley, Colonel, 314, 316.
 Rietfontein, 118.
 Riet River, 126-9, 136, 158, 189, 190 *n.*, 191, 192-6, 205.
 Rimington, Colonel, 375.
 Ripon, Lord, 20 *n.*
 Rivers, navigable, want of, 476.
 Roberts, Colonel, 320.
 Roberts, Lord, 149, 157, 167, 168, 173, 181, 182, 184, 186-8, 190, 191, 193-9, 201, 202, 207-13, 215, 217, 219, 220, 223, 230, 235, 236, 238, 241, 242, 245-7, 250, 253, 254, 256-62, 264, 273, 275, 277-9, 281, 282, 284, 286, 287, 290, 298, 300, 302-4, 316, 318, 320-5, 327, 329, 340, 342, 345, 402, 407, 408; returns to England, 336-7.
 Robinson, Sir Hercules (afterwards Lord Rosmead), 5, 30, 34-6, 40, 47, 128, 129.
 Roman Catholics, 480.
 Rondeval, 193.
 " Drift, 197.
 Roodebergen, the, 308.
 Roodewal (or Rooiwal), 290, 389-90.
 Roodewal Station, 288, 289, 290.
 Rooddam, 263.
 Rosmead, 128, 129.
 " Junction, 103, 109, 132, 187.
 Rosmead, Lord. *See* Robinson, Sir Hercules.
 Roux, Paul, Assistant Commandant-General, 291, 311.
 Rouxville, 254.
 Rundle, General, 254-6, 259, 285, 286, 287, 305, 310, 312, 379, 380.
 Rustenburg, 304, 319-21, 346, 369.
 Salisbury, 50, 51, 267, 457.
 Salisbury, Lord, 154.
 Sand Drift, 352, 355, 376.
 " River, 260, 291.
 Sand River Convention, 12, 18, 260, 493, 505.
 Sannah's Post, 245-50, 284, 287, 313, 354, 368.
 Sauer, Mr., 469.
 Scandinavians, 138.
 Scheepers, Commandant, 315, 318, 336, 352, 375, 376, 392.
 Scheepers Nek, 367.
 Schiel, Colonel, 115.
 Schlachters' Nek, 155.
 Schoeman, Commandant, 150.
 Schoeman's Drift, 279, 316, 317.
 Schoon Spruit, 388.
 Schreiner, Hon. W. P., 47, 52, 53, 65, 76, 98, 153, 155, 156, 340, 449, 464.
 Scobell, Colonel, 375.
 Scott-Turner, Colonel, 160.
 Sefetili, 272.
 Sekwane, 270.
 Selborne, Lord, 442, 456, 459-61, 468.
 Selous River, 368.
 Senekal, 285-7, 304, 305, 307, 310, 311.
 Serfontein, 292.
 Setlagoli, 274.
 Settle, General, 209, 220, 353.
 Seymour, Mr., 291.
 Shelton, Colonel, 393.
 Sigananda, 448.
 Sikukuni, 495.
 Simonstown, 353.
 Six Mile Spruit, 282.
 Skiets Drift, 170, 172, 182, 183.
 Slaap Kranz Ridge, 313.
 Slabbert's Nek, 308, 311, 312, 314.
 Slave emancipation, 485, 493, 505.
 Slingersfontein Farm, 152, 216.
 Sloley, Sir Herbert, 456.
 Smalldeel Junction, 260.
 Smartt, Dr. (afterwards Sir Thomas), 415, 461, 470.
 Smith, Sir Harry, 278.
 Smith-Dorrien, General, 205, 206, 208, 278, 317, 320, 350, 351.
 Smithfield, 251.
 Smuts, Commandant Tobias, 331, 364, 445.

- Smuts, General J. C., 339, 343, 359, 360, 363, 375, 377, 392, 393, 396-8, 410, 446, 461, 469.
- Snyman, Commandant, 160, 263-6, 274, 301.
- Solomon, Sir Richard, 340, 397, 471.
- South Africa: compared with Canada and Australia, 474-5; its climate and resources, 475, 477; want of navigable rivers, 476; the coloured races, 477-8; the two white races, 478; a Teuton colony, 479; a Protestant land, *ib.*; missionary influence, 480; main landmarks in the history of the last hundred years, 480-1; special features in the making of the South African nation, 481; causes of modern progress, 482-7. *See also under* Union, War.
- South African Committee on the Jameson Raid, 22, 32.
- South African Constabulary, 342, 432.
- South African Customs Union, 11, 15, 458, 459.
- South African Explosives Company, 59.
- South African League, 57, 58.
- South African Native Affairs Commission, 433, 460.
- South African Republic. *See* Transvaal.
- Spearman's Hill, 167, 168, 172, 176.
- Spens, Colonel (afterwards General), 291, 382.
- Spion Kop, 167, 170-6, 184.
- Spitz Kop (or Spitz Kranz), 213, 296, 311, 328, 331.
- Spragge, Colonel, 286, 287, 305.
- Sprigg, Sir John Gordon, 46, 53, 340, 353, 414, 415, 470.
- Springbok, 393.
- Springfield, 167, 172, 221, 223, 246-8.
- Springfontein Junction, 109, 187, 215, 219.
- Springhaansnek, 336, 354.
- Springs Station, 383, 387.
- Spytfontein, 136.
- Standerton, 298, 324, 361, 381, 382.
- Steenkamp, a Cape rebel, 219, 220.
- Stellenbosch, 353.
- Stephenson, General, 201, 204, 205, 214.
- Sterkstroom, 131, 132, 134, 218.
- Sternberg, Count, 189*n.*, 192.
- Steyn, President, 46, 65, 92, 94, 98-103, 109, 124, 136, 153, 155, 156, 211, 215, 238, 242, 243, 251, 261, 277, 306, 311, 316, 317, 332-4, 343, 354-6, 360, 362, 382, 387, 394, 401.
- Steynsburg, 132, 133.
- Stinkfontein, 204.
- Stormberg, 109, 131, 132, 139, 144, 217-19, 249.
- Stormberg Junction, 125, 130.
- Suffolk Hill, 152.
- Sunday's River, 276.
- Sunnyside Farm, 158, 292.
- Surprise Hill, 140.
- Suzerainty, British, 41, 69-72, 488 ff.
- Swaziland and Swazis, 1, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 41, 323, 364, 396, 455-6, 472, 496, 506.
- Swaziland Convention, 15*n.*, 16.
- Symons, General Penn, 110, 111, 113, 114, 116.
- Taaibosch Spruit, 359.
- Tabaksberg, 354.
- Tabanyama Hills, 170, 171, 174.
- Table Bay, 474.
- Tafel Kop, 378, 381.
- Tafelsberg, 287.
- Talana Hill, 113-16, 127.
- Talbot-Coke, General, 175, 177-80, 227, 228, 296.
- Tariff, Customs, 433.
- Tarkastad, 375.
- Taungs, 273, 303.
- Ternan, Colonel, 387.
- Terrace Hill, 227, 228.
- Te Water, Mr., 156.
- Thabanchu, 244, 246, 255, 256, 335, 354, 363.
- Theal, Dr., 514.
- Theron, Daniel, 207, 315, 316.

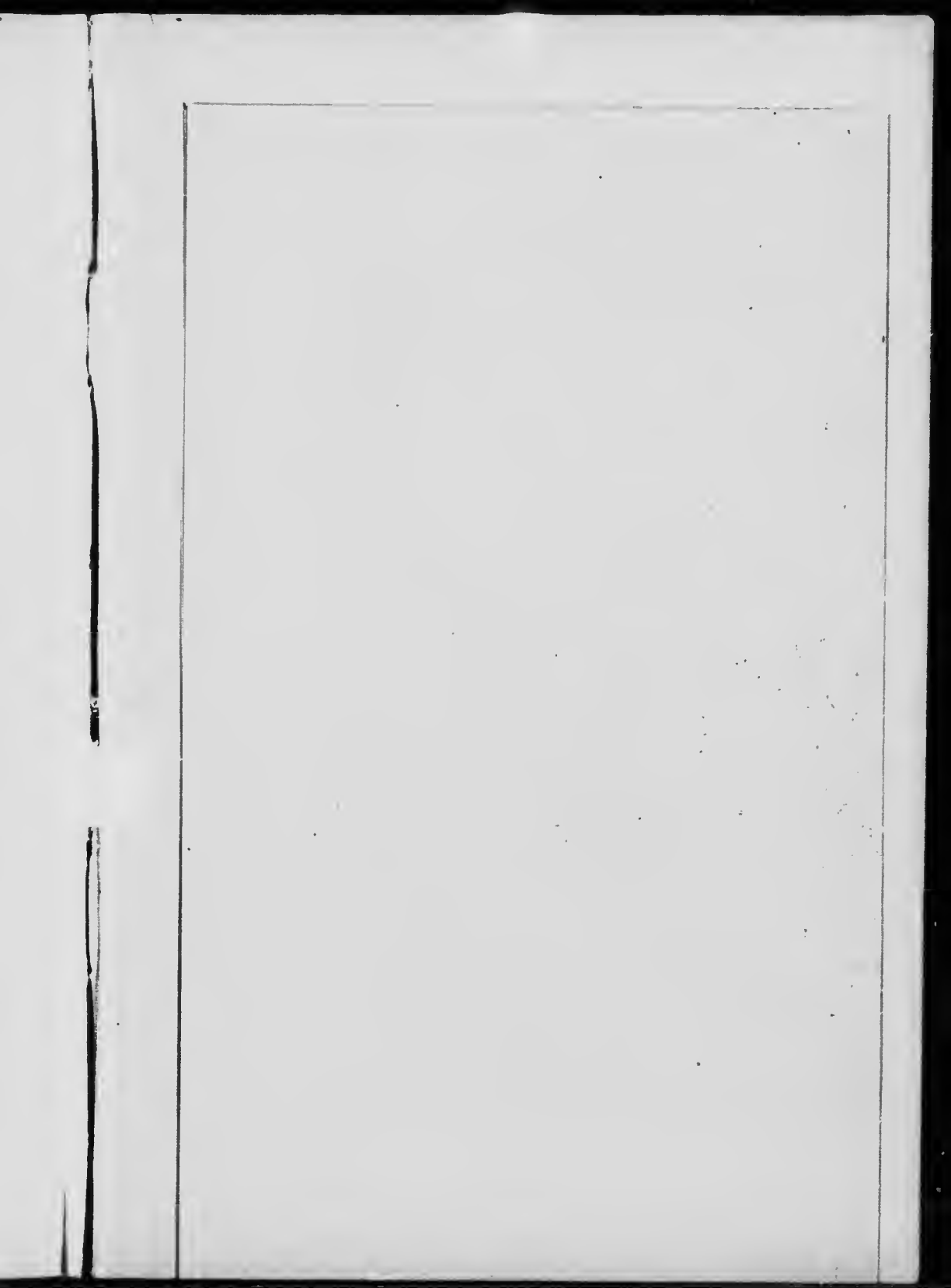
- Thorneycroft, Colonel, 175, 177-8, 180, 181.
- Three Tree Hill, 171, 174.
- Tiger Kloof Spruit, fight at, 378.
- Tontelbosch Kalk, 377.
- Towse, Captain, 256 *n.*
- Trans-Pongola territories, 14.
- Transvaal (Republic, 1852-79 and 1881-1900; Colony, 1879-81, 1900-10; Province from May 31, 1910), 2-30, 34-45, 48, 52-4, 56-73, 76-87, 89, 93-5, 97-103, 107, 108, 110, 112, 121, 122, 124, 127, 401, 407-9, 410, 412, 413, 417, 420, 421, 423, 427, 429-36, 438, 440, 441, 446, 450-6, 459, 461, 463, 464, 466, 469, 482; annexation of, 327, 341; responsible government given to, 445-6. *See also* London Convention, Pretoria Convention, War.
- Transvaal-Natal Railway, 381.
- Transvaal National Union, 22.
- Trek, the great, 480-1.
- Trickhardt's Drift, 171-3, 175, 179.
- Trommel, 305.
- Tucker, General, 188, 196, 212, 245.
- Tugela Drift, 230.
- " Ferry, 276.
- " River, 122, 123, 130, 140-2, 167, 170, 171, 179, 221, 223, 225-31, 275.
- Tugela, Little, 167.
- " Upper, 181, 182, 184, 185.
- Tuli: *see* Fort Tuli.
- Tweebosch, 385-7.
- Tweefontein, 259.
- " Farm, 357, 378-80.
- Twin Peaks, 176, 179.
- Twyfelaar, 324.
- Ubombo Mountains, 8.
- Uithoek, 276.
- Uitlanders, 19, 20, 22, 25, 29, 34-6, 38-43, 54, 59-62, 66, 73, 74, 76-8, 80-2, 84-7, 90, 98, 106.
- Uitschudden, custom of, 345.
- Uitval (corruptly Nitral's) Nek, 318-19.
- Umbulwana, 139.
- Umgusa River, 49, 50.
- Umtali, 51.
- Union of South Africa: conference at Pretoria, 459; Lord Selborne's Memorandum, 460-1; the National Convention at Durban, 461-2; Draft Constitution framed at Capetown, 462; objections in the Cape Parliament, 463; the Bill accepted in South Africa, 464; the question of coloured men, 464-5; the Bill passed by the Imperial Parliament, 465; features of the Constitution of the Union, 465-8; the first Ministry of the Union, 468-9; mentioned, 5, 15, 404, 410, 449, 458, 459, 474, 481, 486.
- Upington, 220.
- Usibebu, 448.
- Usutus, the, 449.
- Utrecht, 349.
- " district, 412.
- Vaal Krantz, 170, 181-5, 221.
- Vaal River, 16-18, 24, 30, 122, 158, 259, 262, 273, 278, 279, 284, 288, 293, 298, 304, 307, 316-18, 332, 333, 356, 366, 381, 395.
- Vallentin, Major, 383.
- Valsch River, 261, 277, 287, 333.
- Van der Merwe, Commandant, 376.
- Van Heerden, Commandant, 392.
- Van Reenen's Pass, 110, 240, 304, 314, 324.
- Van Rhynsdorp district, 392.
- Van Wyk's Hill, 296.
- " Vlei, 324.
- Vendutie Drift, 199, 200, 202, 210.
- Ventersburg, 285, 286.
- Ventersdorp, 303, 317.
- Venter's Spruit, 171, 174.
- Vereeniging, 279, 366, 393; Boer Convention at, 395-6, 398-9, 401, 415; peace agreed to at, 411, 419-21, 423, 425, 465; terms of the treaty, 511-13.

- Vet River, 260, 262.
 Victoria, Queen, 278, 465; death of, 406.
 Victoria Falls, 457, 459.
 Victoria West, 220.
 " " Road, 377.
 Viljoen, General Ben, 155, 184, 264 *n.*, 276 *n.*, 280, 299 *n.*, 322, 326, 327, 329, 331, 332, 343, 349, 350, 359-61, 374, 383, 515.
 Viljoen's Drift, 18, 279.
 Villiersdorp, 307.
 Virginia Siding, 291.
 Vlakfontein, 368.
 " Farm, 360, 362.
 Volksraad, 16, 21, 45, 46, 52, 68, 69, 77, 78, 82, 84, 90, 93, 98, 100, 121, 122, 127.
 Volksrust, 297, 298, 324.
 Von Donop, Colonel, 371, 384, 390.
 Vrede, 297, 304, 361, 378, 382.
 Vredefort Road Station, 278, 289, 291.
 Vryburg, 111, 263, 273, 303, 385.
 Vryheid, 122, 277, 349, 367.
 " district, 383, 412, 448.
 Wagon Hill, 140, 162, 164.
 " Point, 162, 164, 165.
 Wakkerstroom, 298, 360.
 " district, 412.
 Walker, Sir F. Forestier, 92.
 Walton, Sir Edgar, 515.
 War, the South African: British preparations, 92; Boer preparations, 94-5; difficult position of Great Britain, 96; true view of the contest, 97; eve of the war, *ib.*; in the Transvaal, 97-9; in the Orange Free State, 99-102; the ultimatum, 102; unique character and great importance of the struggle, 104; difficulties of Great Britain, 105; number of the British and Boer forces respectively at the beginning of the war, 106-8; the railways, 108-11; military position in Natal, 111; Boer invasion of Natal, 112; Talana Hill, 113-15; Elandslaagte, 115; retreat from Dundee, 116; investment of Ladysmith, 118, 122, 139, 147, 149, 162, 165-6; Nicholson's Nek, 120; Boer advance into southern Natal, 122; invasion of Cape Colony, 124; arrival of Sir Redvers Buller, 125; military dispositions in Cape Colony, 125; Methuen's advance, *ib.*; Belmont and Graspan, 126; Modder River, 127; Stormberg, 130-4; Magersfontein, 134-9; Sir R. Buller in Natal, 140; Colenso, 141-7; Lord Roberts takes command, 149; the Colesberg campaign, 149-52; the situation at the beginning of 1900, 152-4; the rebels in the British colonies, 154-9; Mafeking, 159; Kimberley, 160; the situation in Natal at beginning of 1900, 162-6; Buller's move to Springfield and Potgieter's Drift, 166-8; Spion Kop, 168-81; Vaal Krantz, 181-5; Lord Roberts's plans, 187-9; Koedoesberg, 189; start of flank movement, 191; French occupies De Kiel's Drift, 191-2; and seizes Modder Drifts, 193; Kimberley relieved, 194; De Wet captures a convoy at Waterval, 195; Cronje moves, 196; French at Dronfield, 198; Cronje's retreat, 199; intercepted by French, 199-200; Kitchener in command, 202; battle of Paardeberg, 202-7; surrender of Cronje, 207-9; fighting at Poplar Grove, 210-13; Driefontein, 213; Lord Roberts enters Bloemfontein, 215; General Clements's movements, 215-17; Gatacre and Brabant, 217-19; the Prieska rising, 219-20; new plans for relief of Ladysmith, 221; fighting south of the Tugela, 223-4; the taking of Cingolo, Monte Christo, and Hlangwhane, 224-6; fighting north of the Tugela, 226-8; Wynne's Hill, 228;

- Hart's Hill, 228-30; battle of Pieter's Hill, 232-4; relief of Ladysmith, 234-7; Boer overtures for peace, 238; halt at Bloemfontein, 239-41; death of General Joubert, 241; Botha and De Wet in command of the Boers, *ib.*; Boer Council of War, 242; Lord Roberts's Proclamation, *ib.*; fresh movements, 243; the Waterworks and Thabanchu occupied, 243-4; Karee Siding, 244; Sannah's Post, 245-9; Mostert's Hoek, 249-51; Wepener, 251-4; Houtnek, 255-6; march to Pretoria, 257; siege and relief of Mafeking, 263-75; Buller moves north, 275; and reaches Newcastle, 277; annexation of the Orange Free State, 278; Roberts's march on, and entry into, Johannesburg, 279-81; entry into Pretoria, 282; Boer tactics, 284-5; fighting at Lindley, 286; Biddulphsberg, 287; Zwavel Krans, 288; Roodewal, 289; Boer raids, 290-2; Sir Charles Warrar and Griqualand West, 292-5; Buller takes Botha's Pass, 295-8; Natal army joins hands with the main army, 299; position at Pretoria, 299-302; Ian Hamilton occupies Heidelberg, 302; Hunter's movements, 303; operations in the north-east of the Free State, 304-13; Prinsloo's surrender, 313; Harrismith occupied, 314; pursuit of De Wet, 314-18; fighting in the Magaliesberg Range, 318-21; advance to Middelburg, 322-3; Buller marches north, 324; fight at Bergendal Farm, 325-7; flight of Kruger and annexation of the Transvaal, 327; Buller's operations in the Lydenburg district, 328; French's march to Barberton, 329; and to Heidelberg, 331; De Wet's movements, 332-6; Lord Roberts returns to England, 336; prolonged guerrilla warfare 338-81; the great drive in the Free State, 381-3; position in the Western Transvaal, 384-90; Ian Hamilton's drive, 391; operations in the Cape Colony, 392-3; Peace Conferences at Pretoria, 394-8; conclusion of peace, 399; statistics of the war, 399-400; part played by the Boers, 401; and by the English, 402; estimate of the war and the verdict of history, 403-5; repatriation, 417-18, 421-8; return of overseas prisoners, 419-20.
- War, Royal Commission on, 187, 191 *n.*, 237, 240, 256, 299, 300, 303, 304, 343, 344, 399, 400.
- Warren, Sir Charles, 7, 166, 170, 172-6, 177-80, 186, 231, 258, 276, 292-5, 342.
- Warrenton, 262.
- Waschbank River, 276.
- Waters, Colonel, 515.
- Waterval, 192, 194, 282, 320.
 „ Boven, 325, 327.
- Waterval Drift (on the Riet), 191-6.
- Waterval Drift (on the Modder), 246, 247, 249.
- Waterval Farm, 361.
 „ Onder, 325, 327.
- Wauchope, General, 137, 138, 190.
- Weenen, 230.
- Wegdraai, 194, 195, 196, 201.
- Wepener, siege and relief of, 251-6.
- Wessels, Commandant, 339, 378.
- Weston, Major Hunter, 215, 261.
- White, Colonel, 393.
- White, General Sir George, 93, 110, 111, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 122, 124, 141, 144, 145, 147, 149, 165, 166, 182, 221, 225, 258, 342.
- Wilge River, 381, 382.
- Willcocks, Sir William, 429.
- Williams, Major, 379.
- Willoughby, Sir John, 273.
- Willow Grange, 123.
- Wilmansrust, 361, 362.

- Winburg, 244, 255, 260, 278, 285,
 286, 290, 304, 305, 314, 354.
 Windsorton, 262, 263.
 „ . . . Road Station, 262.
 Witnek Pass, 308, 311.
 Wittebergen, the, 308.
 Witwatersrand, 57, 280.
 Witzies Hoek, 308.
 Wodehouse district, 154.
 Wolhuterskop, 306.
 Wolmarans, Mr., 339.
 Wolmaranstad, 384, 385, 391.
 Wolseley, Lord, 55, 157.
 Wolvehoek Siding, 380.
 Wonderfontein, 324.
 Woodgate, C. neral, 175-7.
 Woolls-Sampson, Colonel, 37,
 371-3, 382, 388, 448.
 Worcester, 341.
 „ Congress, 402.
 Worsfold, Basil, 515.
 Wynberg, 353.
 Wynne, Colonel, 228, 232.
 Wynne Hills, 226, 231, 232.
 Wynne's Hill, 227, 228, 229.
 Yule, General, 116, 118.
 Zak River, 377.
 Zambesi River, 1, 6, 457, 458, 474,
 478.
 Zambesia, North, 6.
 Zand Drift, 18.
 Zastron, 375.
 Zeerust, 272, 304, 319, 321, 322,
 369, 371.
 Zilikat's (Moselekatze's) Nek, 318,
 319, 320, 321.
 Zoutpansberg, 271.
 Zululand and the Zulus, 1, 6, 8, 9,
 13, 14, 48, 52, 141, 277, 323,
 367, 383, 447-50, 460, 479.
 Zululand Native Police, 368.
 Zwart Kop, 170, 172, 183.
 Zwartkopjes, 349, 350.
 Zwartuggens, the, 368.
 Zwavel Kranz, 288.

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