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SOUTH AFRICA

AND THE

TRANSVAAL.

The Story of a Conspiracy.

BEING A LECTURE DELIVERED IN THE TEMPERANCE
HALL, NEWPORT, MONMOUTHSHIRE, ON THE
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BY

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Author of "Blacks, Boers, and British" "South Africa as it is," &c

THE TRANSVAAL COMMITTEE,
ST. ERMIN'S MANSIONS, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

1899.

THE TRANSVAAL COMMITTEE,
TO PROTEST AGAINST WAR WITH THE
TRANSVAAL.

This Committee has been formed for the purpose of spreading accurate information, by means of Lectures, Meetings, the Circulation of Literature, &c., on the matters at issue between the two Governments, and to show that there is no question affecting the honour or interests of the Empire which calls for War.

The Committee will be glad to send Literature, or to arrange for Lectures, and they desire the adhesion and subscriptions of those who favour its objects.

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL.

I AM aware that, in venturing to say something at the present moment about South Africa, I am venturing on the surface of a somewhat troubled sea. Opinion has been much divided; feeling has been running high; the threat of war has served to obscure the importance of the considerations that make for peace. Still, it may be hoped that the possession of some considerable personal acquaintance with South Africa and South African problems will enable me to put a few points to you in a manner which, whether on the whole you agree with me or not, will not be altogether unacceptable.

There is so much that can be said on South African subjects that, in order to keep my remarks within due limits as to time, it will be necessary to make a selection as to which points to dwell upon. It is no use going back, as it were, to the creation of the world. Being a Liberal myself, and addressing, as I believe, those who are of the same political creed, it seems not inappropriate to start from the question—"Was Mr. Gladstone's policy, after the Transvaal war of independence, a success or a failure?" It is by no means uncommon—indeed, it is more common than otherwise—to hear that policy denounced as having ended in failure. That Conservatives should hold this opinion is, perhaps, not surprising; it is part of their business, as the game of politics is at present understood, to hold such an opinion. The opinion, however, is one which Liberals seem to share to some extent. They have every admiration for Mr. Gladstone, but mournfully confess—at least, a good many of them seem to do so—that his South African policy was wrong. At the time of Mr. Gladstone's death, nothing struck me more than the complete silence, even among leading Liberal journals, with regard to his action with respect to the Transvaal in 1881 and again in 1884. Now herein it seems to me that Liberals have done Mr. Gladstone's memory an injustice. My own conviction, based on a very considerable knowledge of South African affairs and history, is that Mr. Gladstone's Transvaal policy was a signal success. I will tell you why directly, only pausing to remark that, if Mr. Gladstone's policy was a success, it was by reason of the principles on which it was based; that any South African policy which is to be successful must be based on the same principles; and that all the present trouble has arisen because those principles have been discarded.

In order to show you better what I mean, I intend to take you back for a moment to the end of August, 1887—some twelve years ago—and to quote briefly from what at that time I wrote with the full approval of all organs of public opinion in South Africa. In August, 1887, I was retiring from the editorship of a leading and old-established Natal newspaper—the *Natal Witness*—after a connection extending over something more than ten years. In thus retiring, I addressed, through the columns of the *Witness*, what I called “A Word in Parting” to its readers. I have had that “Word in Parting” before me within the last few days. Here is an extract, which I will take the liberty to quote :—

“What is the one broad fact that marks the difference between South Africa in 1877 and South Africa in 1887? It is surely this : that whereas in 1887 the Afrikaner party is the dominating influence in South Africa, acknowledged as a peaceable and constitutional power, working for the benefit of country and people, in 1877 that party had no existence . . . Let it be noted—the Afrikaner party. The name is not in all respects a good one . . . The name, however, does not alter the thing, and the thing which that name is sometimes used to indicate is this—the existence in South Africa, irrespective of differences of birth and differences of locality, of a solid and growing party which, recognising the possibilities of the country and understanding its peculiarities, is conscious of the power to direct and organise the future, unassisted and unhindered by interference from outside. That is the idea, that is the conviction, that is the ruling principle of the party, by whatever name it may be called, which is so powerful an influence in 1887, but which was not in existence in 1877.”

In another place in the same article I said :—

“The fact to be dwelt upon is the organic change that has come over South African politics, in their widest sense, between the years 1877 and 1887—a change which was officially recognised and officially confirmed by Her Majesty’s Government at the Colonial Conference in London this year. It is not a change that prejudices or jeopardises British influence in South Africa, or loosens the ties between South Africa and the rest of the British Empire. It is a change, on the contrary, that confirms that influence and strengthens those ties, because it removes from those ties all irritating associations, and restricts the exercise of that influence within its due and proper limits. It is a change which creates in South Africa the very best conditions for progress and happiness, leaving the sense of moral and political responsibility free to grow as regards internal affairs, while at the same time, as regards external affairs, reducing to a minimum all dread of adverse foreign interference.”

That is what I ventured to say in 1887, and I said it—as I could show by a variety of quotations from South African journals—with the complete approval of all parties in South Africa. But now, if

you please, mark this. The year 1877—the year, as it happens, in which I first became practically acquainted with South Africa—was the year of the Transvaal annexation. That the annexation was a terrible blunder I suppose nearly everyone in this room would be prepared to admit. Let me go back once more to 1887, and quote, from the same article, what I said about the Transvaal annexation in that year. I had spoken of the annexation as the result of an endeavour to provide, as regards South African affairs, constant and perpetual interference from outside. I had spoken of the irritation caused by such a mistake, and the further irritation caused by the failure of the mistaken policy to bring about the results that were expected. Then I proceeded thus:—

“ Such a state of irritation and exasperation existed six years ago—that is, in 1881—after the sad day of Amajuba. Men who talked and wrote then of a prospect of permanent peace in South Africa were regarded somewhat in the light of lunatics, not altogether harmless. Who, in 1887, thinks of Amajuba now? It is no more thought of as supplying a cause of race irritation than the fields of Fredericksburg or Gettysburg are thought of in the United States as supplying a cause of irritation to North or South. And why? Because here, as there, the forces that make for peace are stronger than the forces that make for war; because the very horror of war has emphasized more clearly the absolute necessity for peace; because when those political operators of 1877—the framers of the confederation policy—heaped into the crucible all the raw and shapeless material of South African possibilities, they were doing, in ignorance and out of regard for their own limited convictions, the very thing that the over-ruling Providence of nations had intended should be done, in order to set at liberty the true material of free and enlightened government—the sense of common interest, and the sense of that moral responsibility which insists on working out its own political salvation.”

Now consider what had happened in 1877—the annexation of the Transvaal, followed, as its natural results, by the Zulu war and the war of independence; consider how the whole of South Africa had been thrown into conflict and confusion by the policy responsible for such mistakes and misfortunes; and then look at the fact that in 1887 those mistakes and misfortunes were more than corrected and more than forgotten. Whence came the corrective forces? They were there on the spot, contained in the natural condition of things in South Africa. But what set those corrective forces at liberty to bring about so beneficent an end, to bring harmony out of confusion and brotherhood out of conflict, was Mr. Gladstone's Transvaal policy. I do not say that Mr. Gladstone's Transvaal policy was in all respects what it might have been and ought to have been. I think, for example, that he would have done better if, when he came into office early in 1880, he had shown greater moral courage and consistency—if then, without waiting for

the armed resistance of the Transvaal burghers, he had rectified the blunder of the annexation. It required greater moral courage to rectify that blunder after the day of Amajuba, and the requisite moral courage was forthcoming. It has been alleged that the policy which Mr. Gladstone then adopted was a failure. I, on the contrary, declare that it was signally successful, and that its success was made evident in the condition of things in South Africa in 1887—a year in which South Africa was nearer to political union, through the action of natural forces, than it has ever been before that date or since. And Mr. Gladstone's Transvaal policy was successful because it was founded on those principles of justice and of encouragement of the sense of local responsibility, as opposed to outside intervention, which are the most precious possessions of all who call themselves Liberals.

But how, it will be asked, if matters were so promising in 1887, have they since got into a fresh tangle? Now, here I must ask you to follow me carefully. Speaking recently at Manchester, Mr. Leonard Courtney declared that the source of the present trouble was the existence of gold mines in the Transvaal. That is a good deal of the truth, but not quite the whole of it. Those gold mines have provided the means, the machinery for making trouble; but the machinery would have been comparatively harmless if there had been no one desirous of making use of it. You must go a little farther back. You must go back to Kimberley, to the diamond-mines, and to the process of amalgamation that enabled two or three men to become millionaires at the general expense of South Africa. During the last few months it has been the habit of writers in a certain section of the Press—the yellow section—to talk of Pretoria as “the plague spot” of South Africa. That is wrong. There is a “plague spot” in South Africa, but it is not Pretoria; it is Kimberley. The best that can be said for Kimberley is this—that, some five-and-twenty years ago or more, the discovery of diamonds gave rise to a commercial prosperity which possibly saved South Africa from bankruptcy. Well, there can be no doubt as to the appearance of commercial prosperity. The imports of the two South African colonies increased by leaps and bounds, enabling them to go into the money market and raise loans for the construction of railways. It was forgotten for the moment, it has been all but forgotten ever since, that South Africa is essentially an agricultural country, and that efforts made for the development of agricultural enterprise would be worth ten times as much as efforts made for the carriage to the diamond mines of goods produced and manufactured outside South Africa altogether. Apart from the temporary stimulus given to commerce—and the stimulus was merely temporary—the discovery of those diamond mines has been a curse to South Africa. What is a diamond? As an article of ordinary commerce, or as an article of general consumption, it is worthless. It has, however, an artificial value that makes it a symbol of greed and vanity. Do you know what becomes

of the diamonds that are produced from the Kimberley mines? Three-quarters of them at least go into the possession of women of what is called the "demi-monde," principally in the United States. It is to supply this kind of demand that the Kimberley mines exist. Owing to successive amalgamations, they are now practically the property of half-a-dozen, or less than half-a-dozen, men, among whom the most prominent are Mr. Alfred Beit and Mr. Cecil Rhodes. Whatever impulse the diamond-mining industry once gave to South African commerce, that impulse is dead, absolutely dead. In the process of amalgamation, and in the process of the piling up of the fortunes which the amalgamation has served to increase, every known kind of iniquity has been practised and countenanced. Bribery, blackmailing, organized espionage, political and social coercion, disregard of every kind of moral principle—these are the distinguishing characteristics of Kimberley. It was bad enough in its busiest days, when individual diggers lived amid the reckless excitement of diamond-seeking. When, a little more than ten years ago, the great amalgamation scheme was carried into effect, when De Beers Company bought up all the other mining rights with a single cheque for over five millions sterling, the one virtue Kimberley possessed—the virtue, such as it was, of being able to supply an impulse to commercial activity—faded. All the vices remained.

The amalgamation of the Kimberley diamond mines had a sequel. My object is to show you the way in which South Africa, which Mr. Gladstone's policy left peaceful, prosperous, and fairly on the road towards political union, has, by successive steps, all originally springing from that Kimberley amalgamation, been made the prey of as wicked and corrupt a conspiracy as ever disgraced—or let us rather say came near to disgracing—the history of an Empire. The immediate sequel to the Kimberley amalgamation was the formation of the Chartered Company. Mr. Alfred Beit and Mr. Cecil Rhodes were in search of new worlds to conquer. What they aimed at, what they are still aiming at, was the complete control of South Africa, including, of course, those Transvaal goldfields which, in 1888, were revealing their value. The Transvaal, however, could not be attacked all at once. The first step was to obtain a political footing in South Africa by getting hold of the interior. The Kimberley amalgamation had brought these twin conspirators into intimate contact with those lords of European finance, the Rothschilds. Backed by the Rothschilds, Messrs. Beit and Rhodes went to the Government of the day—it was a Tory Government—with a request to have handed over to them the whole interior of South Africa that lay within the British "sphere of influence." Their request, astonishing as the thing will seem to future historians, was granted. The whole "hinterland" of South Africa was made over to Messrs. Beit and Rhodes, the only stipulation being that, presumably to reconcile English opinion to the step, two or three Dukes were to be thrown in as ornamental directors. Just consider for a moment the extraordinary nature of the step taken in the granting of

the Charter to the British South Africa Company. South Africa consists of several civilized self-governing States, which are all more or less bound together by common interests, and which have been gradually extending the influences of civilization from the sea towards the interior. The "hinterland" of South Africa, then, was the general property of South Africa, in the future of which all the South African States and Colonies were interested. By a stroke of the pen, and with the assistance of two or three ornamental Dukes, this hinterland was absolutely given away to a brace of speculators, one of whom was at the time not even a British subject. Is it possible to imagine a more abject piece of folly, a more outrageous violation of all the principles of statesmanship and common sense?

Well, the Chartered Company was formed and floated, not without surprise and some degree of protest in South Africa. The protest, however, was faint, because the Chartered Company immediately took pains to get the Cape Colony on its side. By extravagant promises of colonial advantage, and by the judicious distribution of Chartered Company's shares, the assent of the Cape Government to what had been done was purchased. That was everything, for, according to what was then the tradition of the Colonial Office, public opinion in the Cape Colony gave the keynote to Imperial policy in South Africa. At the same time the Imperial idea was sedulously fanned into flame, and talk about "painting the map red" was coupled—mark the significance of this—with threats to the Republican States of South Africa. What was the next step? The next step was to place Mr. Rhodes in the position of a general South African dictator by his becoming the head of a Cape Ministry. To make his position stronger, the Cape was furnished with a new and inexperienced Governor and High Commissioner in the person of Lord Loch. Up to that time, Sir Hercules Robinson had held that office for eight years, and there was serious talk of his re-appointment. He was not re-appointed, the alleged reason being that he had expressed himself too openly in a public speech as to the prospects of Imperialism in South Africa. Lord Loch, an amiable but essentially weak man, and quite unacquainted with South African affairs, was appointed instead. Sir Gordon Sprigg was then Premier of the Cape Colony. But, when once the inexperienced High Commissioner had been appointed, it was a perfectly easy matter to engineer a ministerial crisis in the Cape Colony. Sir Gordon Sprigg, who fondly imagined that he was faithfully serving the purposes of Mr. Rhodes, suddenly found himself left in a minority in the Cape Parliament, and was forced to resign. Mr. Rhodes became Premier, receiving the support of the Cape Dutch party, usually spoken of as the Bond party. He had to bargain a little, it is true, in order to gain this support. Mr. Rhodes promised the Bond party three things—first, that the Cape Colony should reap the sole advantage from the work of the Chartered Company; next, that Cape wine and brandy should remain untaxed; and thirdly, that the Cape employers of native labour should be at

liberty, under the provisions of what was known as the "Strop Act," to flog their servants for neglect of duty.

Here, then, was Mr. Rhodes, the political partner in the great conspiracy, placed in the position of a South African dictator. Look at the enormous strength of his position. As Premier of the Cape Colony he controlled the acts of the Governor. As Premier of the Cape Colony, and through the same Governor, acting in his capacity of High Commissioner, he controlled the policy of the Imperial Government. The High Commissioner, too, was absolutely inexperienced. Sir Hercules Robinson, with his eight years' experience of South Africa, might have kept Mr. Rhodes in check. Lord Loch, absolutely inexperienced, could only follow Mr. Rhodes's lead. For the very best man in the world such a position as this would be dangerous. How dangerous, then, when filled by an ambitious and scheming millionaire—a millionaire whose complete political failure, or even disgrace, would still leave him completely at liberty to enjoy all the advantages of a luxurious personal existence.

What was the first use Mr. Rhodes made of his new position? The first use he made of it was to attempt to drag the Imperial Government—mark this, please—into a quarrel with the Transvaal. Up to the middle of 1890 the relations between the Imperial Government and the Transvaal were perfectly cordial. The Transvaal had made a most promising start on the path of such changes as were rendered desirable by the development of the gold industry. The Imperial Government had promised to meet the views of the Transvaal with regard to Swaziland. Suddenly, out of a clear sky, came the whisper of something almost like an ultimatum from the High Commissioner. A cut-and-dried Convention was presented to Mr. Kruger for signature—a Convention in which, no doubt, Swaziland was mentioned. But it was mentioned in this way—that unless by a given date, a few weeks ahead, the Transvaal renounced all claim to the northward expansion left free to it by the London Convention, and consented to enter into a Customs Union with the Cape Colony, the promise with regard to Swaziland would be withdrawn, and Swaziland would forthwith be occupied by a British force. Notice, please, that the condition about northern expansion was put in on behalf of the Chartered Company, and the condition as to the Customs Union on behalf of the Cape Colony, and especially on behalf of the Bond party, which includes a large number of wine-growers. That Convention, presented like a pistol at the head of the Transvaal Government, would most certainly have been rejected. A serious crisis arose. Mr. Hofmeyr, at the request of the Imperial Government, went up to Pretoria from Cape Town to try and smooth matters over, and succeeded so far that, after the modification of one or two Articles, and an agreement to drop all mention of the Customs Union, the Convention was signed and ratified. But from that moment the Transvaal recognised Mr. Rhodes as an enemy, and from that

moment felt bound to view with the utmost suspicion any and every proposition which he seemed to have directly or indirectly inspired.

The very next year—that is, in 1891—a second attempt was made to get up a quarrel between the Transvaal and Great Britain. A general movement had arisen in South Africa—in the Transvaal, in the Cape Colony, and very largely in the Free State—for “trekking” into the northern territories, the “hinterland” so unjustifiably handed over by the British Government to Mr. Beit and Mr. Rhodes. Immediately the Transvaal Government was held responsible for this movement by the High Commissioner, and threatened with pains and penalties. The Transvaal Government issued a proclamation prohibiting the “trek,” so far as its own burghers were concerned, and the trekkers from the Free State, rather than embarrass the Transvaal, gave up their intention. But again it became visible in Pretoria that Mr. Rhodes was the enemy.

During the two succeeding years, 1892 and 1893, the campaign against the Transvaal languished. There was a good reason for this. Mr. Rhodes, in his capacity as Premier of the Cape Colony, was anxious to secure for the railways and ports of that Colony a monopoly of the Johannesburg trade, and in effecting this object he had need of the assistance of the Transvaal. In a positive sense, the Transvaal could assist the Cape Colony by linking its own railway system on to the Cape system. This the Transvaal, out of regard for the interests of Johannesburg, willingly consented to do. It could also assist the Cape Colony in a negative sense by discouraging the construction of railways to Johannesburg from Delagoa Bay and from Natal—railways which were bound to compete very seriously with the lines from Cape Colony ports. In the early part of 1894, the Transvaal Government entered into an agreement for the extension of the line from Natal, while it became evident that the line from Delagoa Bay would also be successfully carried out. In 1894, therefore, the Cape campaign, Mr. Rhodes’s campaign, against the Transvaal began afresh. It took the shape of a demand for the general “pooling” of all the receipts on South African railways from Johannesburg traffic, the Cape Colony to appropriate the lion’s share of fifty per cent. of the total. A claim so manifestly unfair was instantly rejected. Pressure was again applied to force the Transvaal into a Customs Union, the effect of which at the time would certainly have been to advantage the trade of the Cape Colony at the expense of Natal. That attempt also failed. It was on the failure of these attempts that the first attempts at a revolutionary movement became manifest in Johannesburg. Now please remember who are, and have been, the chief wire-pullers in these revolutionary attempts. They have been the Consolidated Goldfields, representing the interests of Mr. Rhodes, and the Johannesburg firm of Eckstein, representing Mr. Beit. Owing to the influence of these two financial institutions over gold-mining companies and their directors, they are, when working together, hardly less powerful in

Johannesburg than De Beers Company—in which the moving spirits are still Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit—in Kimberley. The pretext for the agitation that arose in 1894 was the “commandeering” of certain British subjects for service in the field against a rebellious native chief. Owing to some one’s neglect, the interests of British subjects were not in this respect protected, as they ought to have been, by special treaty; hence the Transvaal Government was perfectly within its legal right in acting as it did. Moreover, the great majority of the men thus “commandeered”—and I knew some of them very well—made no objection to going to the front, receiving compensation for their services. A few—I believe five out of more than a hundred—did object to serve, and their case was made the occasion of what I must call a grossly exaggerated agitation. Lord Loch, the High Commissioner, visited Pretoria, with the result that, as regards the future, an understanding was arrived at on the subject. It was about this time, too, that persistent rumours began to be afloat of an intended attempt on the part of the Chartered Company—that is, on the part of Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit—to seize upon Delagoa Bay. It was the circulation of this rumour that led to the appearance of two German cruisers in that port, and the conclusion of an understanding between Great Britain and Germany for the maintenance of the *status quo* in respect of the Portuguese possessions in Eastern Africa. If it is asked what interest Germany had in the matter, the answer is this—that a large portion of the capital of the railway from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria is held in Germany, and that hence German interests would be prejudiced if the port of Delagoa Bay were interfered with by the Chartered Company. The fact is not to be forgotten that, as early as 1891, agents of the Chartered Company had been detected in attempts to promote a rebellion of natives in Portuguese territory against Portuguese authority.

We are now getting very near to events which are still fresh in the memory of all of us. It is therefore a fitting moment to face the question—“What about the grievances of the Outlanders?” With regard to these I say deliberately, as was said by independent witnesses before the South African Committee, that they have been grossly and purposely exaggerated. As regards the general position of the mining industry in the Transvaal, it is well known, and no one now attempts to deny it, that the Transvaal mining law is the most liberal in the whole world. As regards general protection to life and property, I can assert, from personal experience, that life and property in Johannesburg are, in ordinary times, as safe as they are in London. The pictures drawn by newspaper correspondents of a population living in daily dread of outrage are simply ridiculous. As for freedom of speech, the newspapers enjoy a far greater freedom—I might say licence—of utterance than would be allowed to them in Ireland, in India, or in any country of continental Europe. The patience and tolerance of the Transvaal Government under the insults and abuse hurled at it every day by newspapers known to be

run in the capitalist interest has been marvellous. What grievances there are, are negative rather than positive grievances. There are, of course, things that may well require adjustment. The change in the condition of the country during the last ten years has been so rapid and so marked that you could not expect everything at once to fall into its place. The Transvaal Government, I have always said, is very much in the position of the crew of a coasting brig who suddenly find themselves in charge of a first-class mail-steamer. That they would make mistakes was certain. The wonder is that their mistakes have not been much more numerous. I know Johannesburg pretty well, and I may say that I never met a man there whose ordinary existence, whether in business or in pleasure, suffered the smallest kind of inconvenience through the fact that he was living under the Pretoria Government. I never knew any place in which people are more free to live what life they please, including Saturday night music halls and Sunday cricket matches. The alleged grievances have been in most cases grossly exaggerated, and in some cases deliberately manufactured. The exaggeration and the manufacture have been intentional, and in order to serve the purpose of misleading and prejudicing public opinion in England, thus enabling the conspirators against the Transvaal to provoke, for their own benefit, a quarrel between the Transvaal Government and Great Britain.

Up to the middle of the year 1895, the conspirators against the Transvaal were, notwithstanding all their efforts, comparatively powerless. Lord Ripon was at the Colonial Office, and Lord Ripon, though not without his anxieties as to the situation in South Africa, was alive to the undesirability of any endeavour to force that situation. In July, 1895, Lord Ripon was succeeded by Mr. Chamberlain. From that moment there was trouble. Mr. Rhodes, as head of the Cape Ministry, and in his own interest as one of the chief pillars of the Chartered Company, was bent on "forcing the pace." That was the expression used in July, 1895, by Mr. Edmund Garrett, the Editor of the *Cape Times*, and one of Mr. Rhodes's most active lieutenants. Mr. Chamberlain readily fell in with Mr. Rhodes's ideas. A miserable dispute between the Cape and the Transvaal Governments about a through railway rate became suddenly expanded into the "drifts question," over which Mr. Chamberlain, after he had been at the Colonial Office only three or four months, was quite ready to go to war with the Transvaal. Such recklessness would seem incredible, if we had not the whole story before us in the Blue Books. The Transvaal Government withdrew from a position which they believed they were entitled to take up, and that opportunity for a rupture vanished. It was when that opportunity had vanished that the Raid and the attempted revolution in Johannesburg were resolved upon. I wish you to consider the enormity of the conduct of this man Cecil Rhodes at this juncture. He was Premier of a British colony; he was a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council. To serve his own

purposes and those of his co-conspirator, Alfred Beit, he deceived the Queen's representative; he deceived his colleagues in the Cape Ministry; he induced officials in the Imperial service to violate their duty; he prepared a military expedition against, as Mr. Chamberlain put it at the time, "a foreign State in friendly relations with Her Majesty's Government"; he spent thousands of pounds in providing arms and stores for the furtherance of this attack; he coerced peaceful British subjects resident in the Transvaal—miners and others—into taking up arms against the Transvaal Government; he contrived the compilation and promoted the circulation of what was practically a forged letter for the purpose of deceiving the public in Great Britain. Great financial houses in London—there is no doubt of the fact—were privy to this scheme beforehand. One of the most influential organs of public opinion—*The Times*—was, as the evidence given before the South African Committee showed, a party to the conspiracy. And, in order still further to mislead public opinion—I say this with the confidence created by an intimate knowledge of the facts—the *Daily News*, the official organ of the Liberal party, was, through one of its principal proprietors, practically made over to the Rhodesian ring, in whose service it has continued ever since.

That phase of the anti-Transvaal conspiracy came to grief, as we know. It came to grief largely because the late Lord Rosmead, who was then High Commissioner, and who had been kept in the dark because he was too honest a man to be a partaker in Rhodesian conspiracies, acted promptly, and, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, repudiated Jameson's action. The history of what happened at that particular juncture is well known to every one. But take note of the enormous power of the influences at work, look at the interests that became involved, and you will better understand the necessity of grappling at the present moment with the conspiracy—the same conspiracy, only working by different means—which aims at enriching a small band of speculators at the cost of the British Empire—at the cost of the blood that will be shed and the millions that will be spent if the conspirators succeed in forcing Great Britain into a war with the South African Republic. It is the very same conspiracy, remember, worked by the very same conspirators. The means employed have been somewhat different, that is all. Mr. Rhodes, assuming the guise of a repentant sinner in order to cover a disappointment, declared, shortly after the fiasco of the raid, that henceforth he would work by constitutional methods. He has kept his word. We have Mr. Rhodes's "constitutional methods" visibly at work before us in the South African League, and in the newspapers which have been started, or purchased, or subsidized in the interest of the great conspiracy. The South African League is an aggressive anti-Dutch organization, which has signalized its principles by electing Mr. Rhodes as its president. Owing to the extraordinary tolerance of the Transvaal Government—tolerance which I do not think any

other Government in the world would have shown—it has carried on what was essentially a seditious propaganda in Johannesburg itself, under the very eyes of the authorities in Pretoria. It has inflamed and misled public feeling in Natal, whose colonists were, a very few years ago, only too glad to kiss Mr. Kruger's feet in the hope of being allowed to make a direct railway connection with Johannesburg. As regards newspapers, two out of three daily papers in Cape Town are absolutely owned by the capitalist ring or its lieutenants. The same is to be said of two out of three daily papers in Johannesburg. The same ring owns the only paper in Kimberley. There is very good reason to believe that, by means of financial support, the ring controls what were once independent journals in Natal. Beyond this, the ring has its battalion of newspaper correspondents. The editor of the Johannesburg *Star*, perhaps the most violent anti-Dutch journal in South Africa, is correspondent of the London *Times*. The editor of the *Cape Times*, a paper hardly less violent than the Johannesburg *Star*, is correspondent of the *Daily News*. A member of the staff of the same paper is correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, both these gentlemen being on the executive of the South African League. Can it be a matter of wonder that public opinion in England is misled, or that it is worked up to a belief in the necessity for a war really to be used for the benefit of the pockets of Mr. Alfred Beit and Mr. Cecil Rhodes? We have been shocked in this country at the Panama scandal in France. Why, Panama was mere child's play compared with the conspiracy which the owners of the Kimberley diamond-mines have built up against the peace of South Africa and against the honour and stability of the British Empire!

Yet even this conspiracy, formidable as it is, would have but small chance of success had it not been for the assistance it has received from high officials responsible to the Crown. The lightness of heart with which Mr. Chamberlain planned a war with the Transvaal, when he had been only three months at the Colonial Office, is characteristic of the view he has throughout taken of South African matters. His readiness to resort to a policy of violence—there is no need to hint at any more sinister influences—has made him a ready tool in the hands of the twin conspirators. When it is said that the Dutch in South Africa do not trust the British Government, it really means that they do not trust Mr. Chamberlain. In every possible way, and latterly in an increasing degree, Mr. Chamberlain has shown his active sympathy with the criminal authors of the criminal attack upon the independence of the South African Republic. Sir Graham Bower, the Imperial official who violated his duty by concealing his prior knowledge of the Jameson raid, has been promoted. Mr. Rhodes, after being condemned by a Committee of the Cape Parliament and a Committee of the House of Commons, has been left unpunished and publicly whitewashed. Perhaps it may be

said that this was in view of the probability—Mr. Rhodes used to boast of it as a certainty—that he would again secure a majority in the Cape Parliament. But mark what happened. When Mr. Rhodes was signally defeated at the Cape elections, Mr. Chamberlain turned his back on the old traditions of the Colonial Office, and instead of accepting, or at least consulting, the views of the Cape Ministry, intrigued against them, through Sir Alfred Milner, in the interest of Mr. Rhodes and his Jingo minority. Those who were aware of the traditions of the Colonial Office—sound traditions for the most part—said, when they saw that the Rhodes party had been defeated in the elections: “This will make for peace, because the views of the Cape Ministry will prevail.” Nothing of the sort! Sir Alfred Milner, with the assent and support of Mr. Chamberlain, has ignored the Cape Ministry, ignored the Cape Parliament, has made himself “solid” with the intriguing Jingo minority, and instead of the influence of the Cape Ministry being allowed to make for peace, the question seems rather to be whether they also, as well as the burghers of the Transvaal, ought not to be shot down by Imperial troops for daring to resist the purposes of Mr. Beit and Mr. Rhodes.

This seems, it may be said, a *reductio ad absurdum*. It is an absurdity, doubtless; but it is an absurdity that is on the very brink of becoming more tragic than any event in the history of England during the last three centuries. And all this, be it observed, in a country—I speak from an intimate knowledge of South Africa—in which all the natural forces make for peace. There is no natural bitterness or antagonism between Dutch and English in South Africa. If there is antagonism at the present moment, it is antagonism that has been intentionally and wickedly created to serve a certain purpose, created, too, by the very men who have been hypocritically preaching the necessity for Dutch and English to live in harmony. I believe and hope that the ancient harmony between the two races may yet be restored. If the efforts of the capitalist conspirators to bring about a catastrophe can only be defeated, I believe that the light that has been shed upon the whole subject, and the feeling that has been aroused, will make it impossible for any future attempt to be successful. Let us hope so. In the meantime, let me recommend to your consideration, as supplying the key to the South African problem, a recent saying of an honoured British soldier, Sir William Butler. “What South Africa needs,” he said a few months ago on a public occasion in the Cape Colony, “is rest, and not a surgical operation.” Let us hope, even against hope, that the rest will come.

One thing remember. The dominant factor in South Africa is the Dutch population. It represents those to whom South Africa is home, as much as Scotland is home to Scotchmen and Wales is to Welshmen. They form a majority of the European population. You do not see them when you travel through the country. But they are there, striving from month to month and from year to year, and not unsuccessfully, with conditions of soil and climate which

are often difficult enough to try the most patient and persevering temper. These are the men to whom South Africa owes its civilization. But for their endurance and courage as pioneers, South Africa would still be a waste and howling wilderness, peopled only by wild beasts and savages. Its rivers would be unbridged ; its railways would be unmade ; its diamond-fields would be undiscovered ; its gold-fields would be unknown. Well, you can, if you like—this country can, if it likes—send fifty thousand or a hundred thousand soldiers to South Africa, and spend fifty millions or a hundred millions in shooting down men fighting simply for their liberty. And when you have done this, when England has done this, and earned the scorn and contempt of the whole world in doing it, the trouble will be only beginning. On the other hand, if, instead of treating the Dutch, the dominant factor in South Africa, as if they were natural enemies, you treat them as friends, there is nothing they will not do for you. Every difficulty will disappear, all racial antagonism will vanish, and you will be once more on the high road towards that political union which, thanks to Mr. Gladstone, came almost in sight in 1887. Look at the two pictures steadily. Look at the two policies which they respectively represent, and ask yourselves which is worthy of the country to which you belong. To that question surely there can be only one answer.

THE TRANSVAAL COMMITTEE,
FORMED TO PROTEST AGAINST WAR WITH THE TRANSVAAL.

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Treasurer.—DR. G. B. CLARK, M.P.

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