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[GENERAL ELECTION, 1900.]

SHOULD THE ELECTORS
SUPPORT THE

WAR POLICY

OF THE

PRESENT GOVERNMENT ?

BY

HERBERT M. THOMPSON.

[SEPTEMBER, 1900.]

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NOTE.

The subject of which this Pamphlet treats is one of such complexity that it would be impertinent to present any connected series of conclusions concerning it without entering with some fullness into the grounds on which such conclusions are based.

On the other hand the present paper is designed to take its place in current "election literature"; it is therefore necessary that the reader should be able to master its contents quickly.

I have attempted to reconcile these divergent requirements by presenting the main heads of my argument in summary form, with marginal numbers that will refer the reader to the paragraphs correspondingly numbered in the more elaborated chapters that follow.

H. M. T.

PREFACE.

IT is inevitable that in the present General Election the series of events which during the last twelve months has absorbed so much of the thought and engaged so many of the emotions of the English people shall become the dominant subject for consideration by the electors. Nor am I one who complains that this is the case. Our country has undoubtedly been passing through a period of great difficulty; it is at such periods that it is possible to determine whether those who are in charge of the ship of State are great statesmen, or whether our political destinies are being determined by men who do not rise to the grandeur of real moral greatness, or even of extraordinary intellectual ability. Merely as a test then, of whether our present Government is worthy to continue to receive the confidence of the country, a careful review of its war policy is desirable.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that the decision arrived at will not also have immediate consequences of the utmost practical importance. The end of the war does not mark the end of a book of history, but merely the close of the first chapter of such a book. The question with which we are now faced is whether the remaining chapters of this contemporary history shall be as disastrous and tragic as its opening, or whether something can be done to mitigate its horror. Shall we continue to suffer the dominion of Mr. Rhodes (for such the African policy of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner has practically become)? Or shall we rather call to mind nobler precedents in our imperial history, such as the combined courage and humanity with which difficulties far more acute even than those that have lately faced us in Africa, were suc-

cessfully met in Australia, New Zealand, and in South Africa itself by Sir George Grey?

These are the vital questions that are now before the electors. With the purely military matters that the war has brought into prominence the present paper is not concerned. They are being used by professional politicians on the one side as on the other to snatch such party advantage as may be obtainable from our present sorrows. Amongst those who call themselves Liberals, however, as well as amongst those who call themselves Conservatives, there are still some patriots to whom England's reputation amongst the nations for spotless honour is more an object of solicitude than the mere extension of her dominions. These will despise the pettifogging manœuvres of the wire-pullers who wish to punish mistakes of judgment on military matters made by their opponents by replacing them with men who might very probably themselves have fallen into the same errors, hardly less than the shouting, the push, the blatant speaking and writing, and the well-timed arrival of fighters from the scene of carnage, which are designed to secure a "khaki" victory at the polls.

They will recognise that there is something more vital to be fought about, and will search the election addresses from whatever quarter they come, not for carping criticism or how the war has been carried out, but for either an adequate defence or a denunciation of the war itself, and for some indication of whether a policy of conciliation or one of exasperation is to be pursued in the immediate future towards the people of Dutch origin in South Africa.

HERBERT M. THOMPSON.

LLANDAFF,

September 24th, 1900.

SUMMARY.

- 1.—It is contended in this paper that though war is not always avoidable, it is so superlative an evil that if it can be shown that every possible effort to avoid it has not been exhausted, the Government that has failed to take the steps most likely to be effective in this direction loses any claim to have conducted the country's business beneficially; such failure signifies, moreover, that the individual members that the Government comprises can not be considered statesmen of the first rank.
- 2.—At times of national excitement there is a tendency to minimise the horrors of war; but war always has been and always will be a loathsome carnival of carnage.
- 3.—Whilst this may be said of all war, the present war is attended by particular circumstances disastrous alike to South Africa and to this country.
- 4.—In South Africa racial hatred has been re-kindled between the two peoples who must dwell there side by side, though in our colonies, and in one of the Dutch Republics it was previously melting away.
- 5.—In this country the result is a vast increase of the national waste of wealth and manhood in the race for armaments. Whilst the war has continued we have put ourselves largely

at the mercy of the other great Powers, and this has crippled our influence in other parts of the world, notably in China.

- 6.—It is then an indispensable question for the electors to answer, whether the war with its enormous attendant evils could have been avoided without incurring other evils of a still more serious nature.
- 7.—It will be well to take a broad survey of the general features of the problem. To do this we must first examine the character of the people with whom we had to deal, and the causes of antagonism that had arisen between them and our fellow-countrymen.

Though the fundamental conceptions of the Boers concerning government were not devoid of democratic dignity, and although they conducted their political business with a good deal of ability, their political system was vitiated by dishonesty and corruption. This however, was attributable rather to the crudity found in a State without traditions or experience than to senile decay. There was found amongst the Boers a national conscience which made some of them at all events, aware of their wrong-doing, and a reform party was endeavouring to bring about a better state of affairs. This party was likely in the future to grow in importance, but it must be admitted that for the moment its influence was overshadowed by that of the President, who was unfortunately almost the impersonification of the opposite spirit.

- 8.—It must further be noted that their methods of negotiation lacked directness and trust-

worthiness. This should have been met by firmness in holding them to their word, not by emulating their style of diplomacy, the course actually adopted.

9.—The Boers' virtues brought them into conflict with ourselves almost as much as their faults; the most conspicuous of the former was their passionate love for their country, their determination to preserve its liberties, and if possible to increase them.

10.—They aspired to the position of an independent State, and probably hankered after some means of access to the sea. There is no evidence to show that they were prepared to fight for any part of these aspirations which went beyond their Convention with England, but what they already possessed they would go all lengths to defend.

11.—The belief has been fostered in this country that not only did the Boers nourish these aspirations, but that they were involved in what was termed a "Dutch conspiracy" to establish a dominion over the English Colonies and Rhodesia, and to form a Dutch Confederation stretching from the Zambesi to the Cape. The arguments in support of this theory are of the flimsiest character, most people being apparently prepared to accept the existence of the conspiracy as a necessary conclusion from that of the legitimate aspirations that are admitted to have been theirs. So it might be said that because we do not wish the French to annex Kent and Hampshire, it is clear that we desire to add Normandy and Brittany to our domain.

12.—The small element of truth that seems to be contained in this widely accepted theory is that thoughts of unjust aggression existed in the minds of a small number of the Boers (in every country Jingoese and Chauvinists are to be found), and that during their successes in the first part of the war, these wild and unjust thoughts obtained a wider vogue.

It is easy to understand how such doctrines might gain some ascendancy, for we are now witnessing a precisely similar outburst of the aggressive spirit in our own country. We are annexing the Republics with whose liberties we affirmed a year ago that we had no intention of tampering, and this without protest from any considerable part of the nation.

13.—It is commonly put forward that evidence of the aggressive spirit of the Boers before the outbreak of the war, is furnished by their armaments. It is clear, however, that no serious arming was undertaken before the year 1895, and then only because of the attacks on their internal independence with which they were threatened, the attacks which culminated in the Jameson Raid. The arming of 1895-6 was clearly defensive, not offensive.

“But” someone will say “why should they have armed at all? We had no aggressive intentions!” True that we in this island had none, but of the Rhodesian party in South Africa this could not at all be said.

14.—The Boers then had to assure themselves with whom they were dealing, whether with a British Government that recognised that Dutch interests must be safeguarded no less than British,—the British Government as it had appeared in the past at such periods as it was represented by Governors whom they could trust and honour, (the most notable instance being Sir George Grey), or whether with the Rhodesian party.

15.—The history of the two races in South Africa has been so chequered that the Boers might well be in doubt whether they could look with confidence to the Home Government to maintain a position of Imperial impartiality. At this crisis what guidance did we give them? Our attitude was calculated to assure them more and more that the Home Government was identifying itself with the Cape English, organised both for political and commercial purposes under Mr. Rhodes, in whom they could not but recognise an enemy who would, if he could, possess himself of their country.

16.—The investigation that followed the Jameson Raid failed to probe things to the full, nor was it followed by an adequate punishment or degradation of Mr. Rhodes.

17.—Mr. Chamberlain's re-assertion in October, 1897, of the existence of a "suzerainty" had disastrous results in the same direction. It did not strengthen the rights that England possessed under the Convention, nor was it even able to cover the vague conception of "Paramountcy," which afterwards figured so largely as a justification to ourselves for

our having entered upon the war. Powerless for good, it was however all powerful for evil, exciting in the Boers just that nervous distrust of English good faith and impartiality which it was at that moment so essential to avoid.

18.—The claim though in most respects shadowy, seems to have had two practical results, both of them tending to fan still more the flame of misunderstanding and distrust. These were the exclusion on Britain's demand of representatives of the Boer Republics from the Hague Conference, and the refusal of our Government to submit the points at issue to the arbitration of another State, a most regrettable decision.

19.—The fourth link was added to the fatal chain by the course pursued by the High Commissioner in South Africa, Sir Alfred Milner. Instead of becoming a mediator, and the trusted umpire between the Dutch and the English, he identified himself with the attitude of mind of the Directors of the Chartered Company, carrying with him first Mr. Chamberlain, then the Government as a whole, and finally the most demonstrative part of public opinion both in these islands and in our self-governing colonies.

20.—This disastrous series of events, for most of which the present Government was particularly responsible, made the chances of final rupture with the Transvaal exceedingly serious. In addition, it secured for that State the advantage of the support of the sister Republic; it tended to destroy the

loyalty that was ripening amongst the Cape Dutch, and it introduced divided opinion amongst the politicians and thoughtful men of this country.

- 21.—Turning now from the outside relations of the Transvaal to what was going on within its own borders, we find that since the gold discoveries of 1885 a large Uitlander population had settled in the country, the English-speaking part of which was almost as numerous as the whole Boer population; this was supplemented by half as many again from countries of non-Anglo-Saxon origin. The Boers in fact found themselves being swamped. There were symptoms that assimilation would eventually take place, but it grew but slowly.
- 22.—The total revolutionising of the conditions of their country excused in some measure the departures from declarations made at the time of the London Convention; these curtailed the privileges of the Uitlanders, especially in respect to the conditions of franchise and naturalisation.
- 23.—At the same time the new problems of government imposed on the primitive Boers were inefficiently discharged.
- 24.—Though by a disingenuous sort of afterthought, the questions of suzerainty and paramountcy later on assumed importance as being the causes of the war, at its actual outbreak practically everyone in this country would have agreed that its object was to remedy the grievances of the Uitlanders.

25.—Some, indeed, have regarded the war as one of retribution on the Boers for their cruelty to the natives, but such an opinion is not founded on the facts of the case. Those who were most keen in the pursuit of the war had little, if any, cleaner records to show in their own dealings with the black populations.

26.—What we were really fighting about was in the main, undoubtedly the grievances of the Uitlanders.

In what did these consist? There was the high tariff, which placed upon the middle class monetary burdens which besides being oppressively heavy were uncertain and unfair in their incidence.

The same class of people complained that in the public schools Dutch was the medium of instruction. They, therefore, did not enjoy the benefits of the free education for which they were taxed. They were, however, at liberty to start schools of their own.

27.—The grievances of the working people were similar, but possibly in consequence of the high rate of wages, seem to have been taken less hardly by their class.

28.—The capitalists complained, like the others, of the high tariff, but especially of what they considered the hindrances put in the way of their getting a cheap supply of native labour and the incidence of taxation on the industry of gold-mining. The last point seems to have very little foundation, since gold-mining

was in fact considerably less taxed than it is, for example, in New Zealand. With regard to the labour question, most of us in this country will not recognise the doctrine that the State must legislate to make labour cheap.

Indeed, the attitude of mind, both within the Transvaal and in Rhodesia, of the capitalists, in respect to native labour, is one that requires the closest possible attention of those who are to legislate for these regions, as there is not a little danger of terrible abuses and cruelties taking place if the employers are to be allowed to inscribe their wishes as law upon the statute book.

29.—Further, there were complaints of commandeering some of our native fellow-subjects, but one suspects that the humanitarian zeal that puts forward this plea is likely to be short-lived.

30.—The Uitlanders were said to be forbidden to carry arms, though the Boers might do so, but this statement requires modification.

31.—There does not seem to be any foundation for the serious allegations against the Transvaal Government, that they did not make proper provision for the protection of life itself. The stories that were told at the beginning of the war about the Edgar case were a scandalous perversion of the facts, one instance amongst many of how what has been called the "lie factory" that has been set up in the South African press has prejudiced and misled the people of this country.

32.—After this survey of what the grievances actually consisted in, we are unable to plead that the grievances of our fellow-countrymen were so overwhelming that had they, for example, been suffered in the territory of any of the great European powers, we should have been called upon to interfere by force.

33.—Nor does a careful reading of the Convention of 1884 persuade one that its articles bestow a right of interference in the circumstances that had arisen

34.—The claim of “paramountcy” was based on the closeness of relationship between the inhabitants of the Transvaal and those of her British neighbours, and also upon the fact that Great Britain was the Power that had overwhelmingly the most important interests in that part of the world. It was, in fact, akin to the claims set up by America under the Munroe doctrine. The claim appears to be dangerous, and one that may in the future lead to logical conclusions, very far from meeting with the approval of this country. Such as it was, however, it was practically what we based our intervention upon.

35.—The intervention thus entered upon, on a very doubtful plea, was, as I have already pointed out, weighted with difficulties, consequent on the mistakes and misfortunes of the years 1895, 1896, 1897 and 1898. It was now to be brought to final disaster by the course taken by *diplomacy*.

36.—It was resolved to endeavour to accomplish mitigation of the Uitlanders' grievances by the indirect method of insisting on their being placed in a position of some real power in the State, and so it comes about that the diplomacy of 1899, mainly circled around questions of naturalisation, of franchise and of redistribution of seats.

37.—In the confusion of fence and counter-fence that followed, one fact stands out overshadowing in importance what had preceded it. On August 15th, 1899, the Transvaal Government made proposals far in advance of any that they had seemed before to countenance; they were, in fact, what Sir Alfred Milner had demanded at an earlier date (at the Bloemfontein Conference), except that in many respects they went beyond those demands.

The hopefulness of these advances was mitigated by the formal dispatch in which the making of the proposals was confirmed. This contained a demand for the abrogation of the suzerainty claim. Chiefly in consequence of a blunder made by Sir Alfred Milner, we also on our side, in subsequent correspondence, inserted conditions not found in the original draft notes. A hopeless imbroglio ensued, and the new proposals, spontaneously made by the Transvaal Government, were withdrawn.

38.—The Republic now wished to revert to the state of things immediately preceding its offer of August 15th. Mr. Chamberlain refused to accept this proposition, because,

as it is alleged, he had in the meantime examined the proposals of the earlier date, and had found the concessions therein suggested so complicated as to be practically useless. In his dispatch, although he pleaded this as a contributory reason for his refusal to "hark back," he did not appear even to allege that it was his main motive. His treatment of this part of the question was thus unsatisfactory.

His neglect at the same period to make any effort to resuscitate the August 15th proposals was altogether lamentable; he made no effort whatever to get the Transvaal Government back to the position of that date, although there was every indication that it was willing to reconsider the matter; and this course would have opened the door for a settlement honourable to both sides. All he would do was to express his willingness to accept those of the conditions which would unmitigatedly tell for us, eliminating anything that appeared to be to our disadvantage. He followed up an uncompromising message to this effect with another one saying that if the reply were negative or inconclusive, he reserved the right to reconsider the question *de novo*, and formulate the proposals of this country for a final settlement.

39.—The reply was as might have been expected unsatisfactory, and we then said (September 22nd), that we must now formulate our own proposals for the settlement, but instead of doing so promptly and in a straightforward way (which would have constituted our last

chance of securing peace), we preserved a diplomatic silence for three whole weeks, during which time we proceeded with our war preparations, calling out the Reserves, and massing troops on the Transvaal frontier. In the face of all this we are told that the Boers put themselves in the wrong when they began the war by launching their ultimatum of October 10th.

40.—It will be perceived that in the foregoing I do not attempt to shield the Boers from blame; but in my view the blame rests on our own shoulders in a still greater degree. For in the first instance we failed to take the proper steps to convince the Boers that the Imperial Government was determined to treat South African questions with imperial impartiality, and that it would not allow itself to be made a "catspaw" by the Chartered Company. Later on our diplomacy was unsympathetic, unskilful and involved. We trespassed against all those maxims which a man of common sense would observe if he wished to avoid quarrel and litigation with his neighbour.

41.—The utility of such a retrospect as we have been through, is its influence on our minds in grappling with the problems that are before us for settlement at the present time.

42.—Neither lapse of time nor the superior power of our arms has made what was unjust in August, 1899, just in September, 1900; if we go beyond what is just because we have the power to do so, we are little better than brigands.

43.—If our own sentiment of nationality were threatened we should defend it with the utmost jealousy. Ought we not then to respect the same sentiment in others ?

44.—If we fail to do so we may be preparing disasters for the future.

It is for the British electors at the present juncture to say what course shall be taken in this matter, and to decide whether the policy that shall be adopted towards our almost conquered antagonists shall be one in general of conciliation or of exasperation.

45.—If the decision is in the latter direction, besides committing a national crime, we shall have taken a long step towards delivering over our country to militarism. The appropriate punishment in that event will inevitably fall upon us, not only in the draining away from industrial life of our manhood and our treasure, but quite as surely in the sapping of our liberties.

HOW ANTAGONISM BETWEEN BRITON & BOER GREW UP.

I CANNOT enter upon my subject in detail without insisting on the fact that war is a supreme evil; for my argument will largely rest on the premise that the politicians who are at the head of a country's government should justly earn a reputation as great statesmen, or be condemned as incompetent to grapple with the difficulties presented by periods of danger, in proportion to the ability they display in avoiding any cause of quarrel or offence with other countries, and in striving to guide the nation along a peaceful path.

People constantly say "Oh! but there are things that are worse than war!" I do not myself take up the position of "peace at any price." I admit that even war may be better than submission to cruelty and tyranny, especially if submission be the result of cowardice; that even war may be justified in defence of one's liberties and one's country. Nevertheless, the evils of war are so terrible that we ought to be on extraordinarily safe ground before we do anything that is likely to lead to a breach of peace.

2. For war in all cases means an entire overthrow and reversal of all our ordinary conceptions of humanity; whereas ordinarily we should take infinite pains to save from death the least worthy shred of humanity, in war we send forth thousands of men with the deliberate purpose of taking the lives of other men, and with the possibility always present that they themselves will be slaughtered. Nor is wholesale death the only evil; death often

comes in peculiarly terrible shape; there are the agonies of the wounded left for many hours on the battlefield suffering from thirst the torments of hell; there are the ravages of disease in besieged places; and incidentally we cannot quite forget the terrible experiences of thousands of horses and other dumb animals. In a single day of a campaign such as we have been prosecuting, probably more horrible agonies are suffered by dumb creatures than will be hindered in England by the endeavours of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in a whole decade. Far inferior in importance to these considerations are those of the destruction of property and the loss of national wealth; yet these too are important. Consider what the result would be if the money lavished on armaments were spent in national education. But perhaps worst of all is the spirit of savage cruelty engendered in the fighters, and even in the lookers-on; witness the horrible accounts that we tolerate, and even approve and have depicted for us in our illustrated papers, of such details as the lancer who spits through two Boers on his single spear, or the grim pleasantries accompanying the terror and havoc of our lyddite shells. These things make one realise—in spite of the prating of the churches—how very little hold the ethical ideal of the brotherhood of man really has upon us.

We are apt I think, rather to allow, even to encourage, the relegation of all such circumstances as I have mentioned to the background of our minds, to keep out of sight the horrible and the ignoble details incident to a campaign, and to forget so far as we can, that as a matter of grim earnest, war always has been, is, and always will be a loathsome carnival of carnage.

There result in fact from every war the kind of evils to which I have been referring, and though it may be true that when we entered upon the present war we did not anticipate so sharp an experience of their application to our countrymen, there does not appear to me to have been a great deal of solicitude in this country about imposing them on our fellow-men in another State.

3. Besides these evils directly attendant on almost every war, the present war is accompanied by indirect results which will have the most baneful effect on the whole of South Africa as well as upon this country.

4. The result in South Africa is the reawakening of racial antagonism and even hatred between the two peoples who have to live there side by side; an antagonism which was falling to sleep in our two British Colonies and in one of the Dutch Republics, but is likely now for many a year to flame up when not under pressure, or to smoulder when suppressed by force.

5. The result in this country is to enter our names in serious competition in the race amongst the great Powers for great armies, although we were already in the forefront of the twin race for great navies, and vastly to increase the prospect of national waste of wealth and manhood in the unworthy and mischievous object of securing great armaments, an object that we agreed, with all other great European nations, in denouncing as baneful, not so very long ago, at the Hague.

Meanwhile, we have temporarily run, and are still continuing to run, the greatest possible national risks, lying in fact largely at the mercy of the great

European Powers, of which we are apt to think not too kindly, to put upon us any affront or aggression ; for we should be inclined to pocket a great deal rather than involve ourselves in any serious conflict whilst our attention is still engaged in South Africa. As I write, our position in China is from this cause undoubtedly weaker than it should be.

6. The first question then that I propose for consideration is, " Was the present war avoidable or unavoidable ? " and from what I have already written I hope it will be pretty clear what I mean by " avoidable."

In one sense of the word almost every war is " avoidable." It can be avoided by complete submission, and by abnegation of all demands. This is not the sense in which I desire to use the word " avoidable."

My question amounts rather to this :—Could we have avoided the terrible evils we risked, and which in fact have come upon both us and our antagonists, without incurring other evils still more serious in their nature ?

7. Before we enter into the details of such an examination it will not be a waste of time if we take a broad survey of the most salient features of the problem that had to be solved. I should like especially to draw attention to the sort of people with whom we had to deal, and the causes of antagonism that had arisen between them and our fellow-countrymen.

The Boers appear to me to be a compact of bad and of good qualities ; it is unfortunate that their good qualities, perhaps almost as much as their bad

ones, lead them into conflict with their Anglo-Saxon neighbours. I am speaking now of their qualities as a political community rather than as individuals, and I put aside for the moment the question of their cruelty to the native races, of which I wish to say something later. Apart from this the bad quality which from the political point of view was most conspicuous was the faulty way in which they practised the art of government. True the fundamental conceptions on which their constitution was based did not lack a certain democratic breadth and rugged nobility, nor were the people themselves destitute of a good deal of ability and shrewdness in the practical conduct of affairs; but the whole system was vitiated by the dry-rot of dishonesty and corruption. The infamous practices that are tolerated in America in public affairs not of the first importance, were in the Transvaal admitted to the highest matters of State. In our own country, though it cannot be said that this tremendous evil is entirely unknown, at any rate amongst some of the lower agents of the Government, (witness the army contract scandals in connection with the present war), it is on the whole one from which we are largely immune. With regard to our commercial affairs however opinion differs as to whether it can be described as rampant, or only of exceedingly dangerous proportions.

We at all events have sufficient acquaintance with it in this form to be in a position to apprise not only its danger, but the possibility of its being scotched. And here we must draw a distinction between the kind of State corruption found in the United States, and that found in such countries as Turkey and Morocco. In the former country wrong things are done, and people know that they

are wrong ; in the latter countries wrong things are done, and people acquiesce in them as being right ; in the former country there is a national conscience which may awaken to become active and effective ; in the latter countries the national conscience is dead. Now in this respect, the Transvaal is (or was) to be classed with the United States rather than with the decayed countries of some Orientals. It was a primitive country whose faults arose from the want of a good tradition founded on the accumulated wisdom of generations of statesmen, not from hopeless senile decay ; and we accordingly find amongst the Boers a reform party striving for better things. It was deplorable that the head of the State however, so far from belonging to the reform party was its most sturdy opponent.

8. Before we leave the bad side and turn to the good side of the Boer national character, a minor characteristic must be noticed, as it had its importance in bringing about our differences. Mr Auberon Herbert has indicated it by a happy comparison :— “ A friend of mine ” he says, “ used to describe the buying and selling of a calf by two Normandy peasants as a process that, with its interminable fence and counterfence, contained all the elements of an excellent play. The Boer and the Normandy peasant have a good deal in common. Like all petty bargainers, they love to grasp a little more than is in the bargain, and are nervously unhappy, after the bargain has been struck, if they think they have given away some fraction more than was necessary.” In another place, he says, speaking of a certain phase in the diplomatic negotiations, “ they had indulged in that detestable habit of snipping after the bargain had been made, which is, I suspect, a special temptation to the Boer mind.”

Here certainly were stubborn things for our diplomatists to meet. Mr. Herbert suggests some comfort in relation to the first difficulty. "The young Boers" he says, "were growing up different from their fathers; the young Boer girls were seeking education, and 'glad to marry Englishmen'; the silent effect of railways and town life, and of a different civilisation was breaking down barriers; there was a growing difference of opinion amongst the Boers themselves; some of the Boers were advocating the emancipation of the Uitlanders; moreover, President Kruger was old all was on the road to come right."

With regard to the other point, we do not refuse to buy farm produce from Normandy peasants because they are bargainers. We were surely far enough ahead of the Boers in diplomatic experience and position to have become their tutors in this matter. To have held them absolutely firmly to what they had agreed would have been a proper course—salutary, moreover, for their diplomatic souls. What we in fact did was not this, but to begin snipping away a bit ourselves on the other side of the bargain, not a good education!

9. So much for the Boers' faults. What were their virtues? The most conspicuous was surely a passionate love of their country—a determination to preserve its liberties, and if it so might be, to increase them.

This object stirred and interested them; it was the one aim of their political life that appeared to them vital; for this, if need be, they would fight like tigers.

And surely I am right in speaking of this phase of the Boer character as a "virtue." In the case

of what other country have we regarded the love of its inhabitants for their fatherland and its liberties—or even a desire to increase those liberties and throw off anything like a foreign dominion—as anything but a virtue?

10. That then was undoubtedly the Boer aspiration. They guarded with jealousy the liberties they had secured, and were prepared to fight for them; other liberties that they thought they had secured years ago they would do much to get formally acknowledged by their powerful neighbour,—and their ambitions leaped to the enjoyment of the position of an absolutely independent State with access to the sea. All these further points however, were for the future to determine. There is no evidence to shew that they were prepared to contend by force for any increase of their privileges—but to retain what they had already obtained, they would go all lengths.

11. Such was the Boer “aspiration.” What was the Dutch “conspiracy?” The Dutch conspiracy was said to be not the assertion of their own independence, but the subjugation of the independence of others. The establishment of Dutch rule over the English colonies and Rhodesia and the formation of a Dutch confederation stretching from the Zambesi to the Cape. I must really enter a protest against the confusion of these two ideas. Because we do not wish to be ruled by Frenchmen, it does not follow that we wish to rule France. Yet by those who commonly discuss this point, a like conclusion to this is drawn quite glibly. The bulk of our countrymen seem prepared to take this extraordinary leap in conclusions. It is as much as to say, “If a man is a patriot, it

necessarily follows that he is a Jingo of extreme type." If he is prepared to defend his own country from aggression, we must conclude that he is also prepared to invade the liberties of other States.

12. No doubt such extreme Chauvinists do exist, scattered in every State. But is it seriously maintained that there is evidence to convict the people as a whole of entering into a conspiracy? Such an idea it is true, if formerly latent in a few minds only, might spread with alarming rapidity, were a vista of unchecked power to mould events opened up before a people; and it is likely enough that during the Boer successes of the first part of the war thoughts of unjust aggression spread to many minds. We are to-day witnessing a precisely similar outburst of the aggressive spirit in our own country. Though there has long been a large section of our countrymen who lived in Africa who coveted the Boers' country, of the great mass of people in this island, it was at the beginning of the war true to say—as it was true to say of Lord Salisbury—that they did not desire to interfere with the liberties or internal independence of the Republics; to-day, those of us who hold that opinion are in a small minority. I think we may add to our list of the horrors of war the distortion of the sense of justice and fair play accompanying success.

13. But *before* the war—what evidence is there that the aggressive spirit was at work on any scale of importance in the Transvaal? The answer comes pat—"The arming of the Boers. What evidence do we require more than that? Their extraordinary war preparations could have but one objective. It was not to resist our

aggressive designs, for we had none. They must, therefore, have been undertaken with the express purpose of aggression against us."

This statement deserves examination. When we say "we had no aggressive designs," we mean that we in this island had none, and so far, I think, the statement is in the large true; but of a section, and of a large section of our countrymen in South Africa, the statement is not true at all. What for lack of a better name we may call the Rhodesian party had long been suspected of designs on their country. The Rand gold mines at all events held out a tempting bait which might some day be filched, as the diamond mines were formerly dishonestly taken from the sister State. These suspicions were turned into certainty by the Jameson Raid and the evidence adduced at the various enquiries that followed that raid.

But it is said that the arming of the Boers preceded the Raid. This appears to be to some extent true for a period of some months before the Raid; but it is also true that during precisely those same months active preparations were going on both in Rhodesia and in Johannesburg for an attack on the Transvaal Government. The Government was well enough informed to be aware of this and to make its preparations accordingly. If we go to the statistics of the preceding year, 1894, we find that the military expenditure was only £28,152, in 1895 this was increased to £57,284, but in 1896, the year after the raid, this figure multiplied itself by eight times, and for 1896 the expenditure rose to £495,618. As things apparently quieted down, however, this expenditure quickly began to diminish. In 1897 it was £396,384, and for the first nine months of 1898

£163,451, or at the rate of about £218,000 a year. This does not look like continuously preparing and working up for a struggle with the British Empire. It is worth while putting in tabular form the figures from 1890 to 1897, because in 1891 there was a scare in the Boer mind somewhat similar to that which took place in 1895; and there was a sudden enormous leap in the military estimates, which, however, quickly settled down again to their normal level when the Boer mind once more became reassured.

“In 1890, when President Kruger went to Johannesburg to make an address, the Transvaal flag was torn down from the Government buildings, torn in shreds, and trampled under foot; and the year after that the military expenditure rose to £117,927 from £42,999 in the previous year. Incidents of this sort indicated a danger and constituted a menace, which naturally led to measures of defence.”

The above extract is taken from No. 12 of the leaflets of the South African Conciliation Committee, “The Boer Armaments,” which treats this part of the subject so convincingly that it is unnecessary for me to enter into it more fully here. I will, therefore, content myself with adding in tabular form the military expenditure of the Transvaal for the years I have mentioned:—

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-----|-----------------|----|---------|
| 1890— | about | 43 | thousands | of | pounds. |
| 1891 | ” | 118 | ” | ” | ” |
| 1892 | ” | 30 | ” | ” | ” |
| 1893 | ” | 19 | ” | ” | ” |
| 1894 | ” | 28 | ” | ” | ” |
| 1895 | ” | 57 | ” | ” | ” |
| | | | [Jameson Raid.] | | |
| 1896 | ” | 496 | ” | ” | ” |
| 1897 | ” | 396 | ” | ” | ” |

14. But the Rhodesian party was not the whole British nation—nor by any means the most important part of it. What had British opinion focussed in the British Parliament, and the British Government to say on the matter? It was possible to believe that the British Government had a tradition behind it—an honourable tradition—to the effect that its policy should not necessarily be shaped at the dictation of the English Colonists alone. At times it had recognised other interests that had a right to be considered. Earlier in the century for example it had frequently happened that the British Government intervened to secure that more humanity should be extended towards the natives. Under the best of the subsequent governors not only had this object been kept in view, but it was further recognised that amongst the white population, Dutch interests must be safeguarded no less than British. But if such ideas had been conspicuous under such administrators as Sir George Grey, they had not been followed with any constancy by others of the Governors, and the policy of the Home Government in these respects had been chequered, varying with the personelle of the Cabinet and of the Colonial office.

15. The tradition then may be described as an uncertain one. The Boers might well be in doubt as to whether they could look with confidence to the Home Government to maintain a position of Imperial impartiality and to see that no injustice was perpetrated.

Yet immediately after the Jameson Raid they had undoubtedly inclined to place confidence in our national honour. An incident, of which too

little notice has been taken, bears witness to this :—

“Soon after the Raid (and this is a piece of evidence no amount of plausible argument can get over) both the Transvaal and the Orange Free State passed resolutions through their respective Rands asking *Britain* to *abolish the Chartered Company* and to assume DIRECT IMPERIAL control of Rhodesia. This happened after the Raid, during a time when the conspiracy-mongers assured us that the Republics were plotting to drive England into the sea. The Republics, while contemplating this, we are asked to believe, were at the same time, in the most direct, responsible, and powerful way, imploring Britain not to go out of, but to come directly and permanently with Downing Street and all, further *into* South Africa, and thereby to draw tighter the British circle round their borders.” [Pamphlet, “The Pan-Afrikander Conspiracy.”]

To me, this particular phase of the question appears to be of the first and the last importance. In the Cape English, organised as well for political as for commercial purposes under Mr. Rhodes, the Transvaal Dutch had every reason to recognise an enemy who would, if they could, possess themselves of their country.

As time went on, doubtless the Boers scanned the political horizon in the direction of the British Islands no less critically than anxiously. They awaited the guidance of events to tell them whether they were dealing with a just and fair-minded people, a section only of whom was animated by antagonism towards themselves, or whether the people, whose national song's refrain was “Britons

never shall be slaves," was as a whole inclined to invade the liberties of other countries. The first augury was bad.

16. I am not now going in detail into the history of the year 1896. It is enough to point out how differently matters would have stood if instead of an enquiry that deliberately failed to probe matters to the bottom, and nominal penalties, the Jameson Raid had been followed by a serious investigation, and a degradation of Mr. Rhodes and his accomplices which would have convinced the Boer Government that our Cabinet ministers were not amongst the number of these accomplices, nor under their influence.

Doubtless the events of December, 1895, and still more the events of 1896, made the subsequent situation exceedingly difficult.

17. An occurrence of the following year was hardly more reassuring. The preamble to the 1881 Convention stipulated that the South African Republic should be under the "suzerainty" of England. What this meant was never defined, but its shadowy nature did not make the Boers regard the provision with any the less apprehension; it seemed rather to fill them with dread that it might be used to cover claims, however wide, at any time that might suit the convenience of the "suzerain power." It was the point about which they agitated most energetically, and when in 1884 they succeeded in getting a new Convention, modifying the old one in several particulars, the word "suzerainty" found no place in the new document.

The introductory clause of the Convention of 1884 lays down "that the following articles of a new

Convention shall be substituted for the articles embodied in the Convention of 3rd August, 1881," and Mr. Chamberlain subsequently contended that as it was stated that the new matter was to be substituted for the *Articles* of the old Convention, the Articles alone were superseded, and that the *Preamble* to the old Convention of which no mention was made remained in force and intact. Now it was the Preamble to the 1881 Convention that contained the provision as to suzerainty ; if this view were correct then, it followed that the suzerainty was not abrogated by the new arrangements of 1884.

At the time however, the Boer delegates returned to their country announcing without contradiction that the suzerainty claim had been abrogated, and the view was universal in this country that this was so. It is difficult to believe that this was not also the view of Lord Derby who negotiated the new Convention, and of his colleagues. If the contrary were the case their procedure savoured of trickery ; for what better term can be applied to the device of closing a troublesome controversy by allowing your adversary to think that he has obtained what he desires whilst you are all the while cherishing in your strong box a document to be produced when the advantageous moment arrives shewing that the strength of the legal position is yours ?

This would have been very much like deliberate treachery, and I think it more likely (extraordinary as even this explanation is) that the form of the new Convention was due to very careless drafting.

However that may be, nothing more was heard of the claim for 13 years, when in

October, 1887, the Colonial Secretary reasserted it. This action of Mr. Chamberlain's formed the second great link in the chain of proof which was to convince not only the Transvaal Boers, but the Dutch of South Africa generally that England wished to take back some of the liberties and privileges which it had granted 13 years before.

To the claim of suzerainty Mr. Chamberlain seems never to have attached any direct assertions of authority over the Transvaal other than those that were expressly contained in the 1884 Convention; for the justification of interference in the internal affairs of that country afterwards put forward rested rather on the general assertion that we were the paramount State in that part of the world, and that a small power within our "sphere of influence" was inhabited by a people who (to use Sir Alfred Milner's words) were in relations with the inhabitants of the British Colonies, "intimate to a degree which one must live in South Africa fully to realise." If then Mr. Chamberlain did not seek to found on the claim of suzerainty any immediate extension of our authority over the Transvaal, what induced him to take the unfortunate step of making such an assertion at all, at so critical a juncture?

There is an explanation of this, though the explanation furnishes no excuse for an action necessarily so provocative.

The reassertion of the suzerainty was made in reply to proposals from Pretoria for the initiation of a scheme of arbitration to settle the questions between the two countries. Mr. Chamberlain's view was that the two States were not on an equal footing, and that arbitration by an outside Power was inadmissible.

Now the position thus taken up seems to require some examination. Supposing in the first place, that he was right in regarding this sort of arbitration as inadmissible, what did he gain by the reassertion of the suzerainty? His object was to assert that the two States were not on an equal footing. Would not this have been attained equally well by making England's right to veto the Transvaal's foreign treaties the plea? This was admitted ground, and the cause of irritation, as it appears to me wantonly introduced, would have been avoided.

18. But in connection with this matter a further question arises of even more importance, because more radical principles of action are involved. Because of the incomplete international status of the South African Republic our Government refused proposals for international arbitration with them, and later on opposed the admission of their delegates to the Peace Conference at the Hague. The inference thus drawn seems to have received very general acquiescence, but appears to me anything but obvious. When one ventures to ask why all this must be taken so very much for granted, I have never succeeded in getting a more cogent retort than the following:—"Well, suppose a dispute arose between the Government and the County Council of Kent, would you suggest that that was a proper occasion for International Arbitration?" The analogy is obviously inexact. Whatever we may be trying to do now, we had not at that time incorporated the Transvaal as part of our territory; but apart from this, in this answer by analogy the real point is missed. In the case supposed nothing but a British tribunal would content the two parties, or be likely to be able to do justice; in the other case the parties are divided

by a difference of nationality which makes it almost impossible to look for impartiality in anything but an international tribunal. And what had we to lose by making generous and broad-minded concessions of this kind? If the Hague Conference was not more utterly a mockery and a sham even than was supposed at the time at which it was held, surely the very people to include within its consultations were those most likely to spring at each other's throats if left to themselves. If schemes of international arbitration which there found such universal praise from the lips of the delegates were to be of real service, where could their application be more useful than between those who were accumulating misunderstandings which, a year later, were to culminate in the bloody campaign through which we have been passing?

19. To this fatal chain of circumstance provoking to war, yet another link was now to be added. There was sent out as High Commissioner to South Africa, a man whose record gave his countrymen every right to expect that he would face the difficulties with which he was to be confronted in the South with great statesmanship. Unfortunately these hopes were not realised. Instead of becoming the mediator and the trusted umpire between the Dutch and the English, each event in the drama that followed made it more evident that (to use a schoolboy phrase) Sir Alfred Milner had definitely "taken sides." As the crisis became more acute it became more patent that, whether in his conduct of negotiations, the spirit animating his dispatches, or the bias that appeared in his public utterances, Sir Alfred Milner's attitude of mind was hardly distinguishable from that of the directors of the Chartered Company. Nor did the mischief end

here. Mr. Chamberlain's mind attuned itself as faithfully to Sir Alfred Milner's as one Marconi instrument responds to another at a distance from it; and from Mr. Chamberlain the contagion seemed to spread to the Cabinet, and very largely through the country, and even throughout our Colonies. To a large extent it was true to say that we had become a nation of partizans.

20. The effect of this unhappy sequence of events was two-fold: not only did it make the chances of a final rupture with the Transvaal infinitely greater, but it altered to our great disadvantage the probable conditions under which such a rupture might take place. It secured for the Transvaal the advantage of the unwavering support of the sister Republic. It tended to destroy the ripening loyalty to the British Government amongst the Dutch of the Colonies; and it introduced divided counsels amongst the politicians and the thoughtful men of our own country.

THE GRIEVANCES OF THE UITLANDERS.

21. So far I have been giving you a sketch of the growth of antagonism between the Transvaal authorities and those forces and powers which lay outside its borders. We must now retrace our steps to examine what was taking place within the State itself, for the particular way in which the liberties of the Transvaal were threatened was not primarily by attack from without, so much as by foreign growth within.

Since the discovery of the Witwatersrand gold fields in 1885, a very large white population, other than Dutch, had settled in the country. The population statistics given by different authorities are most conflicting, but the most reasonable estimate, so far as I can judge, places the Boer population 12 months ago at 125,000, the Uitlander population of English speaking origin at 120,000, and a further Uitlander population contributed by countries of other than Anglo-Saxon origin, at 64,000. The Boers in fact, saw their country invaded by an array of people out-numbering themselves, and likely in the near future to swamp them. They had long been alarmed at this menace to their nationality growing up from within which they regarded something as the Americans had regarded the invasion of California by the Chinese. It is probably fortunate for the world that they were unable to imitate the American precedent and forbid the immigration. Yet the new comers were probably almost as uncongenial to the old inhabitants in the one case as in the other, though there were more elements making for early relief in the African than there were in the American problem ;

for as Johannesburg grew older the disreputable elements associated with new mining centres, would become more and more leavened, perhaps ultimately replaced, by the better features of commercial life. The men of invention, of energy, of power of organisation, and of industry, would become predominant over the gamblers and the roughs. Again, nearer contact between the most enlightened of the Dutch ranchers and the best commercial element in the mining towns, would result in reciprocal influence and the growth of mutual esteem. But it is not surprising that at the outset assimilation grew very slowly—jealousy very fast.

22. It is sometimes said as a damning proof of the unfaithfulness and irreconcilability of the Boers, that no sooner was the London Convention concluded than they began curtailing the privileges of the Uitlander inhabitants, especially depriving them of the franchise conditions which were extant at the time of signing the Convention, and this, although President Kruger had publicly assured us that they would not be materially altered. But I think it may fairly be pleaded that the binding force of such an assurance as this is considerably modified if the whole conditions of life in a country are suddenly completely changed. Had the conditions in the Transvaal remained (as people at that time supposed they would remain) what they have done in the Orange Free State, there is no reason to suppose that these engagements would have been disregarded. But it is rather hard measure I think to say that a statesman is perjured because he neglects to carry out an arrangement, when contrary to the expectations of the parties to that arrangement, the whole of the conditions surrounding it are revolutionised.

The Convention of 1884 was followed by the discovery of the gold mines in 1885. It was not because of having obtained the liberties secured by the London Convention, but because of the threatening growth of a foreign population, that the conditions of burghership began to be straitened, and the status of the Uitlander hedged about with difficulties.

23. At the same time the new problems of government thrust upon the Boers were discharged extremely inefficiently, so that as I before noticed, their limitations as a governing race went hand in hand with a patriotism which though narrow, was genuine enough of a sort, to create the situation of tension which our statesmen had ultimately to deal with.

24. When we are seeking to define the cause or causes of the war, we find that the claim of an ill-defined suzerainty is important not because England would have gained any definite advantage by its establishment. So far as I can see, its author, Mr. Chamberlain, has never definitely asserted that it gave us any rights other than, or beyond those secured by the Convention of 1884, and the stipulations of this had been consistently acknowledged by the Transvaal. The claim however, was doubtless immensely important as a fertile cause of irritation, suspicion, and ill-will. It would be too heart-breaking to suppose that it was this shadow that constituted the *casus belli*.

25. Still more out of the question is it to suppose that the war was one to determine the treatment and rights to be meted out to the native races. Native questions no doubt incidentally appear, but they are regarded throughout either from the point of

view of the jealousy of a sovereign state with regard to the obligations of a citizen, or from the point of view of capitalist employers, anxious concerning the sources from which their supplies of labour may be drawn; never I think from the points of view important to the natives themselves.

26. What then we were really fighting about in the main was undoubtedly the Uitlanders' grievances, and the details concerning these clearly demand examination.

Mr. Bryce distinguishes three classes of Uitlanders, and remarks that each of them had their grievances. First and most important were the middle class of the Rand, amongst whom the "Reformers" were to be found. Mr. Bryce says:—

"Thinking of South Africa as practically one country, they complained that here and here only were they treated as aliens and inferiors. Both they and all the other Uitlanders had substantial grievances to redress. Food was inordinately dear, because a high tariff had been imposed on imports. Water-supply, police, sanitation, were all neglected. Not only was Dutch the official language, but in the public schools Dutch was then the only medium of instruction. . . . It was these abuses, rather than any wish to bring the Transvaal under the British flag, or even to establish a South African Confederation, that disposed them to revolt against a Government which they despised."

It will be observed that some of these grievances are the grievances that any people would suffer in a country subject to high protection. They were doubtless inconvenient and irritating, and the more so because in consequence of the

corruptness of the administration the monetary burdens as well as being oppressively heavy, would be uncertain and unfair in their incidence.

The enforced use of the Dutch language in the schools is a somewhat complicated question, details of which would take a long time to enter into; the upshot however was, that those who wished to go to State-aided schools had to go to schools in which Dutch was the medium of instruction, or to schools which received a Government subvention on the condition that non-Dutch speaking children should during the first two or three years of their school life learn Dutch, and afterwards use it as the school language. Now although this must undoubtedly have been felt oppressive by those Uitlanders who were not Dutch-speaking, it does not appear to me to have been the unbearable hardship that it is represented to be. In the first place, although this was a hindrance to obtaining free education there was no hindrance to other schools being set up in which English should be used. It appears that a prohibition of this nature was at one time contemplated, but fortunately it was not actually imposed. With regard to the use of Dutch in the schools, one can hardly say that a country deprives aliens who come to dwell within its borders of their civil rights because it does not provide them with free education in their own tongue. They were at liberty to start their own schools and in point of fact did so. It is a curious circumstance that of the children instructed in these, quite half were of Dutch parentage, so that after all, for quite a large number of the children of the Rand, the education regulations of the Government were not inappropriate.

The middle class reformers formed before the Jameson Raid a Union for the purpose of Political Reform, and their grievances seem to have been at once the most real and the ones urged in the most constitutional and reasonable manner. It is to be noticed that they had no wish at all to change the flag of the Transvaal for the British flag; all they desired was that the political methods employed in the Transvaal should be changed.

We leave then this group of Uitlanders for the other groups in which the grievances, in my opinion, were far less real, and in which less serious efforts were made to remedy them.

27. The second class of Uitlanders mentioned by Mr. Bryce, is that of the working-men. Their conditions were somewhat similar to those of the middle class, but they pressed less hardly upon them, for one had to place against the impositions of the tariff extraordinarily high wages. We find further that in 1895, at the time of the proposed rising, the Cornish miners, whom one is not accustomed to think of as a particularly craven or poor set of men, instead of wishing to join in the rising, which they assuredly would have done had the grievances been vital, or of the first importance, quietly left the country for a holiday until the matter was settled.

28. Finally we come to the Capitalists. Here, again, we find the tariff system and certain checks on the mining industry, the matters put forward as being of the greatest importance.

Mr. Bryce says:—"The vista of deep-level mining, which had now opened itself before them, made their grievances seem heavier. Before they entered on a new series of enterprises, which

would at first be costly, they wished to relieve mining from the intolerable burdens of a dynamite monopoly, foolishly or corruptly granted to a firm which charged an extortionate price for this necessity; of a high tariff both on food stuffs involving large expenses in feeding the work people, and on mine machinery; of extravagantly heavy railway rates for coal; and of a system which, by making it easy for the Kaffir workers to get drunk, reduced the available amount of native labour by one-third, and increased the number of accidents in the mines. These burdens made the difference of one, or two, or three per cent. on the dividend in the best mines, threatened the prospect of any dividend on the second best, and made it useless to persevere with the working of a third class, where the ore was of a still lower grade."

Although undoubtedly the profits of the mines were heavily taxed, can we really say that the Country was not justified in raising revenue in that particular way? If we take up that position, what can we say, for example, of the Mining Industry in New Zealand? I will quote from the speech of the Chairman of the London and New Zealand Exploration Company at its Annual Meeting, August 12th, 1899:—

"Employers are hampered and expenses are increased in a quite unnecessary manner, while the direct and indirect taxation which mine owners have to bear is far greater in degree than any that prevails in other British Colonies. The incidence of the chief item of this taxation is in itself objectionable, for in New Zealand an impost of 2s. per oz. is placed upon the gold produced, not you will observe upon profits, so that a mine may be worked at a loss, and still the Government seizes one

fortieth of its output, and that while the State is receiving a rental for the mining leases, a yearly tax on the nominal capital, an income tax on profits, and numberless indirect contributions levied in the course of carrying on mining business."
 "So obnoxious have these burdens proved to English capitalists that nearly all the great exploring companies formed to carry on operations in New Zealand have entirely abandoned that Colony, and betaken themselves to more favourable spheres." (Speech of Col. R. Parry Nisbet),—one of "the more favourable spheres" certainly being the Witwatersrand.

With regard to the labour conditions the doctrine that a State must legislate to make labour cheap, is one that has long been obsolete in this country, and it is one that the great bulk of our people would hardly be prepared to make a battle-cry, even though the employers were our fellow countrymen and the labourers black people. Yet this is one of the grievances we are asked seriously to consider. In the neighbouring territories of Rhodesia this attitude of mind towards the coloured labour question had led to results which are thus described by Mr. Bryce:—

"The white men, anxious to get to work on the gold-reefs, are annoyed at what they call the stupidity and laziness of the native, and usually clamour for legislation to compel the natives to come and work. Some go so far as to wish to compel them to work at a fixed rate of wages, sufficient to leave a good profit for the employer. Others go even further, and desire the infliction of the lash. Such monstrous demands seem fitter for the mouths of Spaniards in the 16th

century, than for Englishmen in the 19th. The difficulty of getting labour is incident to a new country, and must be borne with."

It is not difficult to show that the very same ideas are growing up in the minds of the capitalists of the Rand, who are indeed in many instances identical with the Rhodesian employers of labour. Refer for instance, to the speech of Mr. Rudd, one of the Directors of the Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa at the 1899 annual meeting of that Company, which shows how it is proposed to "improve" the native:—

"A good deal is said just now as to civilisation, but civilisation is based on progress, and progress must be based on labour." "If we can only get one-half the natives to work three months of the year it would work wonders." "We should try some cogent form of inducement or practically compel the native, through taxation or in some other way, to contribute his quota to the good of the community, and to a certain extent he would then have to work. I am not advocating slavery, as in everything else there is the use and abuse of labour, and there is constantly the deliberate misuse of the word slavery by those who want to raise it as a bogey. If under the cry of civilisation we in Egypt lately mowed down 10,000 or 20,000 Dervishes with maxims, surely it cannot be considered a hardship to compel the natives in South Africa to give three months in the year to doing a little honest work. We have in power to-day a strong Government, but there is a morbid sentimentality among a large section of the community on the question of the natives, and Government require the support of the majority of their countrymen. Mr. Rhodes started what was known

as the Glen Gray Act, tending to the regulation of native labour. I know that Sir Alfred Milner, whom we all trust so well, has travelled throughout the country, and is therefore able now to form a pretty good opinion with regard to the natives, and I consider that if Mr. Rhodes and Sir Alfred Milner would put their heads together the effect would be that they would be able to propose something practical in this direction which would make for the general welfare and prosperity of the country."

The efforts to keep the natives from the, to them, maddening results of strong drink seem at first to bespeak our sympathy, but one reluctantly comes to the conclusion that here too there is no higher motive than to improve the labour supply; that the welfare of the native himself is a care neither to the Boer, nor to the Uitlander master's mind. Legislation conceived in this spirit is almost certain to be brutal, and what we actually find is that under pressure from the Uitlanders the Transvaal Government passed a brutal liquor law, but that their police failed to enforce it in the outlying districts. The complaint of this non-enforcement is one of the Uitlander grievances.

Hear what Mr. H. R. Fox Bourne, the secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, says in his pamphlet "Blacks and Whites in South Africa" on the Liquor Law.

"This very drastic measure imposes a penalty of £500, or a year's imprisonment, on anyone who sells or gives any wine, spirit, or malt liquor, including even 'Kaffir beer,' to any 'coloured person'—that is, any 'African or Asiatic native, or coloured American person, Coolie or Chinese, male or female.

It also subjects to not more than three months imprisonment or 25 lashes, any native found in possession of the prohibited articles, unless he is carrying them for his employer's use, and with that employer's permit, and the Public Prosecutor is in all cases where natives are charged with drunkenness, to institute a most searching enquiry into the causes of the drunkenness, and the place where, and the person by whom, the liquor is supplied. The law was passed in deference to an Outlanders' agitation, on the ground that the value of the native labour in the gold mines was lessened by a quarter, if not a third, in consequence of their drunkenness; but since its passing the authorities appear to have been unable or unwilling to give effect to it."

It will be observed that under this law, if any cultured Indian (Hindoo or Muhammadan) were, in the Transvaal, in the possession of a bottle of claret for his own use, he would be subject to receive 25 lashes. It appears that women are subject to the same penalty. Mr. Fox Bourne remarks:—

"No one can deny that in their dealings with natives and with native questions those responsible for the administration of affairs in the South African Republic have been guilty of many grievous sins, both of omission and of commission. But whether the natives would have received much better treatment, or any, if the Outlanders and their champions in Cape Town and Downing Street had been masters of the situation, is, to say the least, very doubtful. All that these Outlanders desire, and the object of nearly all they claim, is power to use the natives in any way that pleases them for their own profit."

29. When complaints of, for instance, the commandeering of our "native fellow-subjects" come from such a tainted source as this, one receives them with very grave suspicion. One wonders, if we become masters of the country, whether "our coloured fellow-subjects" will not become "the niggers" again.

30. One should, perhaps, notice one more of the grievances of which complaint is made, viz. :—that though the Boers habitually carried arms the Uitlanders were forbidden to do so. On this point I am an enquirer, as I have not been able to ascertain whether the regulation dates further back than 1895-6. If not, we cannot I think make great complaint that the threatened armed rising at that time should have been followed by a prohibition to carry arms. However that may be, the complaint was put in the fore-front of the petition to the Queen, adopted at the great meeting at Johannesburg, December 24th, 1898, but Mr. Edmund Fraser, our acting agent at Pretoria, commenting on the resolutions in a dispatch to Sir Alfred Milner (December 28th, 1898) says "the difficulty of obtaining revolvers for self-protection alluded to in the first paragraph, is exaggerated, as Government Officials have always told me here that such permits will be granted at once to anyone who is not known as a dangerous character; the fact that the police carry revolvers, although a dangerous fact, is not surprising, at least as regards the outskirts of Johannesburg, when one remembers the disorder that has attended the establishment of any gold-field."

31. So far you will observe I have said nothing whatever of what some people may have considered

the most serious allegation of all those made against the Transvaal Government, viz. : that life itself was not safe under its protection. Last summer we heard a good deal about what is called the "Edgar case," and on this, and the case of the death of Mrs. Applebee, seems to have depended the whole of this sort of accusation. These cases were used very freely to inflame the passions of our countrymen at a critical time; Mr. Chamberlain himself I remember, did not scruple to call the death of Edgar a "murder," and insisted that murder and no other word was the one applicable, and a letter which appeared and attracted a great deal of attention in the "Spectator," which was regarded by many people as forming a sort of charter of the Uitlanders' grievances, put the Edgar case almost in the fore-front of its allegations.

The best way to form an opinion on this matter is carefully to read the account given of the occurrences in the blue books themselves (for those to whom these are not accessible a very good summary is provided in the pamphlet, "The Truth about the Transvaal," published by the Manchester Transvaal Peace Committee: see Chapter 4, especially pages 28, 29, 30 and 31). The whole story is too lengthy to be repeated here, but although, now that the facts are authoritatively published, one very seldom hears mention of the cases, it is impossible not to feel indignant at the unscrupulous use that was made of these trumped-up charges at the beginning of the war. For a responsible minister and a leading newspaper to have given their sanction to the wholly misleading accounts of the circumstances that had been put about by the Rhodesian press of South Africa was little short of disgraceful.

32. We now, I think, have fairly before us the *casus belli* that had arisen between the two countries, and we have taken a survey of the surrounding circumstances, perhaps sufficient to enable us to judge of its importance. It is suggested that our right of interference arose under one or more of three relationships—(a) our duty to protect our subjects from outrage, even though resident in a foreign country; (b) our rights under the Convention of 1884; (c) the special obligations that fell upon us as the paramount State in South Africa.

Now, our duty, or even our right, to intervene on the first of these grounds I deny; such a right would arise, no doubt, if our fellow-subjects were suffering intolerable wrongs, but an examination in detail of the Uitlanders' grievances does not permit of their being placed in that category; rather they must be classed as grave inconveniences. Let us imagine a parallel case, and that a colony of 100,000 Englishmen had settled themselves on the banks of the Caspian to work the petroleum springs, there are few, if any, of the disagreeable experiences which have been suffered by the Uitlanders that they also would not have had to undergo. But if we ask ourselves if that circumstance would constitute a *casus belli* with Russia, I think there will be general consent to a negative answer.

33. Nor can I persuade myself, by a careful reading of the Convention of 1884, that its articles bestow a right of interference in the circumstances that had arisen.

34. The third ground of interference was the claim of Paramountcy. Though perhaps the least definite of the three, it was in some respects the strongest,

for we were interested in the affairs of the inhabitants of the Transvaal as being so closely interwoven with those of their neighbours, whether Dutch or English, in our own colonies and territories. Not only were we concerned with their internal affairs, but as being the power which had overwhelmingly the most important interests to look after in that part of the world, we claimed that in the last resort the voice of our nation must be the one to decide the main course of events. The claim thus set up closely resembles that set up by the United States on the American continent under the Munroe doctrine. Most of the provisions of International Law have as their aim the putting of some restraint upon the forces of the strong as against the weak, but here we have a doctrine that appears to be forcing its way to recognition that goes back pretty much to the primitive doctrine of "might is right," or, at any rate, "might, if coupled with juxtaposition, is right." It would justify many things in the later history of Europe that we have been accustomed to reprobate, such as the partitioning of Poland, and the absorption by Germany of Schleswig and Holstein. At the present time it would seem to give justification to Russia in her suppression of the Finnish constitution, and it seems questionable whether it would not justify the absorption by the same country at any time that might be convenient to her, of the Balkan and Scandinavian peninsulas, of Persia and Afghanistan, and of so much of the Chinese Empire as she can lay her hands upon.

To the present writer all this appears exceedingly dangerous teaching. Of this nature however were the grounds on which we justified to ourselves our intervention in South Africa.

35. I have, in the earlier part of this paper, recounted some circumstances of the years 1896, 1897 and 1898, which appear to me to have launched the enterprise to which we were thus committed, under circumstances far less promising for success than ought I think to have been the case. It remains to glance at the diplomacy of the summer of 1899, and to remark certain crucial points which determined the course of after events.

THE DIPLOMACY.

36. Chiefly I suppose by Sir A. Milner's advice, the determination had been arrived at to attack the work before us not directly, but indirectly. Instead of formulating a list of Uitlanders' grievances, and demanding their redress, it was considered a plan likely to be sounder in the long run, to place the Uitlanders themselves in such a position in the State that they would be able to secure a proper and permanent position for themselves in the times of shifting circumstances and swift developments that seemed to lie ahead. All this it was hoped to do, through granting them the franchise, and securing to their communities a full representation in the Raad.

And so it came about that the diplomacy of 1899 mainly circled around questions of naturalisation, of franchise, and of redistribution of seats. The Boers appeared to grant any concession in these matters at first with the greatest reluctance; still, by dint of pressing and coaxing, they were induced to enter upon a course of alteration of their laws governing these matters, which became more rapid with the march of events, and towards the middle of the summer had become almost bewildering. The concessions which they had granted however, did not appear to us adequate, though Mr. Chamberlain remarked in one of his dispatches that—"happily, each new scheme seems to have been an advance and improvement on that which preceded it."

I do not think it will be advantageous to us to enter into all the details of fence and counterfence which lead up to the important event of August 15th.

37. On this date the following important news was received at the Colonial Office:—Mr. C. Green, our Agent at Pretoria, had been approached by the Transvaal Government with proposals far in advance of any that had preceded them. A memorandum of them had been written on paper and initialled both by Mr. Green and Mr. Smuts, who was acting for the Transvaal Government. There was also a good deal of conversation between these gentlemen outside the initialled memorandum. Mr. Green sent two telegrams to Sir Alfred Milner marked “A” and “B.” “A” containing the particulars of the initialled memorandum, and “B” some further particulars outside that memorandum, but which he considered agreed upon in conversation. These two telegrams were clearly of a very different amount of authority, but they were unfortunately sent on to London without any explanation that this was the case. About a week later came the official dispatch from the Transvaal which differed from what Mr. Chamberlain had before him in several respects, one of which at least was very important, for it substituted for words implying that the suzerainty controversy would not be pursued, words almost implicitly stating that the English relinquished their claim to the suzerainty. Now, however futile we may think the claim in itself, it is clear that it had been insisted upon as a point of the first importance by Mr. Chamberlain, and great weight was attached to its resistance by the Boers; it was, therefore, obviously most unfair for the Boers to try to obtain this concession by a side-wind as it were. It is indeed inconceivable that they could have expected that the provision would go through unnoticed; and it is difficult to explain the motive that lay behind their action; it can only be described as hopelessly stupid.

But the unfortunate thing that now has to be noted is that almost every one of the *dramatis personæ* in what was to prove the tragedy, became from about this time, as it would seem hopelessly possessed with a spirit of unreason. Immediately on receipt of the Transvaal dispatch Mr. Chamberlain telegraphed briefly noting the discrepancies between the Boer dispatch and the Green notes that he had before him. It was not Mr. Chamberlain's fault, but it was none the less unfortunate, that in noting these discrepancies he too materially departed from the initialled memorandum, including for instance the demand that the Uitlanders' Raad members should be allowed to use their language in debate, a provision which had not been agreed upon; for this error our representatives in South Africa seem to have been responsible. I suggest that the proper and straightforward course to have taken from this moment would have been to have confronted the Boer Government with their initialled memorandum, and to have held them absolutely strictly to that as a basis of settlement. Further concessions, such as the language-in-debate matter (which seems in the first instance to have been overlooked by Mr. Green) might have been obtained subsequently by mutual agreement with the Boers on a give-and-take principle. It does appear to me that if diplomacy had been pursued with absolute firmness on straightforward lines such as these all might have ended well. Instead of this a most extraordinary series of errors of judgment occurred on all sides. On August 23rd, at 4 p.m., Mr. Chamberlain sent his telegram noting the discrepancies; two hours later he sent another telegram instructing Sir Alfred Milner to deliver the dispatch of July 27th, if that had not already been done. This is a mysterious incident, for

although the dispatch was a written one a full telegraphic summary had been sent at the same date, *i.e.*, nearly a month before; and if both the telegram and the written dispatch had been kept back by Milner it is impossible to conceive why he should have been instructed to deliver them on that particular day, for the dispatch (one of great length) was calculated to raise up in the Boers' minds all the irritating and vexatious elements of the case, which it would seem most desirable at this particular juncture to keep in the back-ground. Five days later Chamberlain's reply was sent to the Boer proposals. The discrepancies were noted of course, and quite properly so; but he seems to go out of his way to assure the Boers that however hard they may try to come to a settlement they would not be out of the wood, when he adds the following sentence:—"Her Majesty's Government also desire to remind the Government of the South African Republic that there are other matters of difference between the two Governments which will not be settled by the grant of political representation to the Uitlanders, and which are not proper subjects for reference to arbitration. It is necessary that these should be settled concurrently with the questions now under discussion; and they will form, with the question of Arbitration, proper subjects for consideration at the proposed Conference."

On August 31st, Milner sent a telegram not calculated to make things easier:—"I am receiving representation from many quarters to urge Her Majesty's Government to terminate the state of suspense."

38. On September 6th, Sir Alfred Milner telegraphed an important dispatch from the Republic.

The blame once more at this juncture must be placed upon its shoulders, for in reply to Mr. Chamberlain's communications, some of which, it is true, were unreasonable, but most of which were justified, they withdrew the offers of August 15th, and said they wished to revert to the state of things immediately preceding this offer. It should however be noticed in connection with this dispatch that the evil nature of the matter was largely counterbalanced by the manner; it was extremely conciliatory in tone, and seemed to invite in every phrase a reopening of negotiations on the August 15th basis. We must not stop to consider such side-influences occurring at this time as the dispatch from Sir Alfred Milner received on September 8th, urging that in the settlement on the franchise "other questions" must not be lost sight of, or the Johannesburg resolution that the concessions they had once agreed to accept as satisfactory would no longer satisfy them; but these incidents would certainly not be helpful to a peaceful issue. Mr. Chamberlain, it seems to me, still had before him the course that I have before indicated; it was surely most unfortunate that he did not pursue that line, but if he had determined against it, there was still the alternative of reverting to the state of things immediately preceding the August 15th proposals. The telegraphic dispatch of September 8th, 1899, seems to me to be most unfortunate in its treatment of both these possible courses. Her Majesty's Government, he says, "cannot consent to go back on the proposals for which those in the note of August 19th are intended as a substitute." The explanation put forward for the attitude thus taken up is that Mr. Chamberlain had in the meantime examined the concessions in question (known as The Seven Years' Franchise Act), and found the

provisions so complicated as to render the law practically useless, but what Mr. Chamberlain goes on to say in his dispatch is: "ESPECIALLY as they are satisfied that the law of 1899, in which these proposals are finally embodied, is insufficient to secure immediate and substantial representation." Now, if I say "I shall not go out to-day, *especially* as it is snowing hard," I imply that if it were not snowing at all I still should not go out. Mr. Chamberlain would have given good reason for not reverting to the seven year's Franchise Law, if he had said that he had satisfied himself that the law was unworkable, but by saying *especially* as he had satisfied himself on that point, he as much as said that *in any case* he would not have consented to revert to the Franchise Law which was contemplated early in August, that Franchise Law itself having been at that time, regarded as a possible basis of settlement. In other words, Mr. Chamberlain had put up his terms, and he justified himself for doing so by pointing out that the Boers' (August 15th) proposal had shewn us that they were squeezable. Finally, of these (August 15th) terms he expressed his willingness to accept those that unmitigatedly told to our advantage, but if the reply were negative or inconclusive he reserved for us the right to reconsider the situation *de novo* and formulate our own proposals for a final settlement.

39. The dispatch in reply was, of course, unsatisfactory, and on September 22nd, we said, "we are now compelled to consider the situation afresh and to formulate our own proposals for a final settlement."

Even at this crisis good diplomacy might conceivably have averted the catastrophe. If we were going to put forward our own proposals as a

possible basis of settlement, why did we not do so? It would be ungenerous to suppose that they were not definitely formulated in Mr. Chamberlain's mind long before this. Why not then put them forward to the Boers and give them their chance such as it was? Instead there followed a three weeks' diplomatic silence on this head, during which period however we proceeded with our preparations for pouring an army into South Africa, massed troops on the Transvaal frontier, and called out our Reserves. In the face of all this it is considered a fair statement to make that the Boers by their ultimatum of October 10th, began the war!

40. This has been a long narrative and it will be perceived that I do not attempt to shield the Boers from blame. There is little doubt that if the question were asked was the war unavoidable from the Boer side, the answer would be "No!" But if my view of the case is a correct one, the blame rests on our own shoulders in a still greater degree, and with the advantages that we enjoyed of far larger diplomatic experience and, so to speak, knowledge-of-the-world, ought to weigh on us more heavily. Had Mr. Chamberlain allowed the incomprehensible claim of suzerainty to continue to rest where it had slumbered for 13 years it appears to me probable that the difficulties would not have assumed an acute form. Later if the diplomacy of himself and his agents had been more sympathetic, less involved, and more skilful, it appears to me that we might have passed by even acute difficulties in safety.

It does not require the qualities of a diplomatist or a statesman to lay down certain very

simple rules if you are engaged in controversy with an opponent, and seek a peaceful issue, for these rules are familiar to us in daily life as those that it is necessary for individuals to observe if they wish to avoid quarrels or litigation with their neighbours.

“The objects stated to be aimed at should be really vital.”

“Do not be content with knowing that your spirit is conciliatory, but let your adversary clearly see that you have no desire to be unreasonable.”

“Neither shall you hastily conclude that your adversary is irreconcilable. That is an easy position to take up, but it is one that is fatal to a peaceful issue.”

“If you are so fortunate as to come within an ace of settlement take immediate measures to close the small gap remaining between you and your adversary. Such a moment as that is one rather to abate than to enhance one's claims.”

Not one of these maxims has been observed by England in the present quarrel.

CONCILIATION OR EXASPERATION ?

41. There is no particular satisfaction in insistence at length on the doctrine that we have to bear our full share of the blame for this war. Yet conviction on this point would have its effect on the attitude of mind in which we approached current events. We should come to the question of the settlement after the conflict with humbler minds, and be more susceptible to every reasonable overture for peace.

42. In August of 1899 we did not profess to want, I do not think that we really wanted, to deprive the Republics of their independence. There is no real reason why we should not go back to the things we wanted at that date, and make them our treaty terms; if certain conditions would have secured justice then, to have gone beyond those conditions would have been injustice, and neither the mere lapse of time, nor the superior power of our arms suffices to convert injustice into justice.

The plea that to go back to such terms as these would "rob us of the fruits of our victory," ignores the fact that we might secure all those ends for which we professed anxiety at the outset of the war. If we go far beyond these only because we have the power to do so, we prove ourselves little better than brigands.

43. We should remind ourselves moreover of the danger of despising and neglecting in our calculations, the strength of the sentiment of nationality.

It is extraordinary how often Englishmen will reply to the plea of nationality with the counter-plea of the necessity for good government. Our

imagination was not so dull a hundred years ago. Poland before its disruption, was extraordinarily badly governed. Austria and Germany, probably even Russia, had something to urge on the plea that in the partition they were substituting the reign of law for chaos. Yet Englishmen had no difficulty in identifying themselves with Polish national sentiment. Our imagination on the point would certainly be quickened to-day if there were any danger of an improved system of government being introduced in any part of our dominions, with Germans at the head of the governing machine.

44. When our victories are finally won, if we snatch too greedily at what appear to many to be present advantages, we may be preparing for ourselves future difficulties and even disasters, of which the new century will not see the termination.

We are being urged to a policy of *exasperation*. The electors of Great Britain have the opportunity of saying "nay" to this suggestion. They and they alone have the power of insisting that in the final settlement the sentiment of nationality shall be respected; that the English Government shall restore confidence in its impartiality by refusing any longer to be conducted in leading-strings by the Chartered Company, and that the agents of this country entrusted with carrying out the pacification of South Africa shall be those that the Dutch inhabitants of those regions, as well as the English, can trust and honour.

45. If a contrary course is pursued, the punishment on our own heads, though at present but dimly discerned, will be inevitable. Our country

will be crippled by the maintenance of an enormous army of occupation engaged in the ignoble duty of holding down a courageous people. Fresh encouragement will be given to the military party in this country, and we shall be subjected to the drainage of our manhood, our treasure, and, above all, our liberties, which to-day makes Germany, in spite of its magnificent population and splendid educational system, in many respects an unhappy country.

[NOTE.—*Much of the substance of this Paper was delivered as an Address to the Cardiff Impartial Society on March 19th, 1900; the progress of events since that date however has necessitated additions to the Lecture as it then stood.*]

“The love of justice is one of the rarest among all good qualities. . . . I should almost dare to say there are five generous men for one just one.”

W. E. Gladstone.