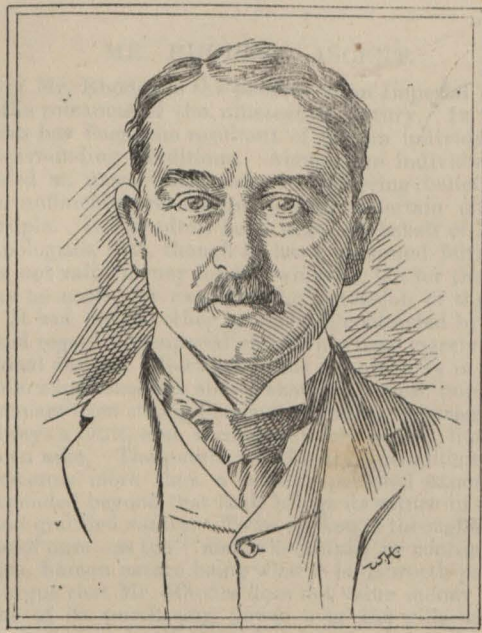


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MR. RHODES AND THE EMPIRE.



THE RIGHT HON. CECIL J. RHODES.

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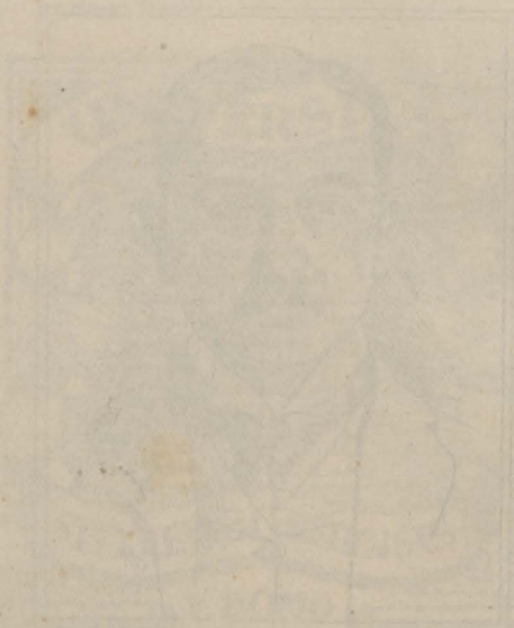
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MR. RHODES

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THE EMPIRE



THE MIGHTY MR. RHODES

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MR. RHODES AND THE EMPIRE.

I.

MR. RHODES'S ASCENT.

THE ascent of Mr. Rhodes to the position of an Imperial factor may well be classed among the romances of the nineteenth century. In his case, as in all others, his career has been the resultant of certain individual forces working upon certain surrounding conditions. Among the individual forces must be specially included an unwavering and overmastering belief in the power of money, and an unflinching resolution to gain a certain end, irrespective of difficulty or scruple. It has often been urged on behalf of Mr. Rhodes by his admirers and apologists, that, though he has a profound faith in the power of money, he does not value money for its own sake, but for the sake of the ends for which it may be used—for example, the extension of the imperial rule of Great Britain. It has, on the other hand, been contended by his severer critics that his professed regard for imperial objects has been merely assumed as a cloak for purely personal designs. Both criticisms are probably in a degree true and untrue; for while experience has shown that it is almost impossible to promote imperial causes apart from strong personal ambition, experience has also shown that there is always a limit, and a comparatively narrow limit, to the love of money for its own sake. The purchase of luxury, including even the luxury of vice, cannot consume more than a certain personal expenditure. What is amassed and expended beyond that limit brings its return in the shape of social consideration and gratified vanity. To be spoken of throughout the globe—this very small globe of ours—as the “man who thinks in continents” is to attain a notoriety which, human nature being what it is, is worth paying for. Those, therefore, who argue that Mr. Rhodes does not value money for its own sake, but for the sake of its purchasing power over the wills and imaginations of other men, are doubtless justified in their contention. But when they have proved this, they have proved nothing more beyond what every one knew, and have left altogether untouched the ethical problems involved in their hero's methods.

As regards the surrounding circumstances on which Mr. Rhodes's individual forces have been able to work, they can without much difficulty be described. Mr. Rhodes has gained his influence in the world by his dominance in South Africa. This has been partly owing to the fact that his period of activity has coincided with the uprising of a universal interest in the affairs and the future of the African continent. Mr. Rhodes has not been the only person alive to the fact that, the surface of the earth being limited in extent, “expansion was everything.” The partition of Africa among European States has been the leading feature of the world's history during the last quarter of a century. Thus it came about that those who represented, or professed to represent, British interests in Africa had an advertisement ready-made to their hand. As for the secret of Mr. Rhodes's domination in South Africa it is readily explained. South Africa is essentially a poor country. It is a country in which, apart from

certain special mineral deposits, life is difficult, in which enterprise is slow and laborious, and in which even the wealthiest men have had to be content with narrow incomes. Establish in such a country one excessively wealthy man or corporation, and you create at once a powerful disturbing influence that is bound to exercise a cyclonic effect upon everything around it. In a community in which wealth was more evenly distributed—such, for example, as the United States—this could hardly happen. At any rate, it has been found there that the competition between millionaires, as millionaires, stands in the way of any one millionaire absorbing to himself political as well as commercial power. In South Africa—unfortunately, in this connection—millionaires are scarce. Hence it has come about that the man who has secured an overmastering financial predominance has had leisure enough to enable him to turn his attention to the acquisition of political predominance, a political Triton among shoals of awe-struck minnows.

The stages by which this predominance has been gained are easily traced. Born in 1853, the fourth son of the rector of Bishop's Stortford, in Hertfordshire, Mr. Rhodes, in common with not a few other Englishmen, owed his first connection with South Africa to a weakness of the lungs. In 1871, in consequence of his delicate state of health, he was sent to Natal, where his elder brother, Herbert Rhodes, was engaged in an attempt at cotton-growing—one of the numerous industries that have been tried and abandoned in the Garden Colony. Really, the moist, semi-tropical atmosphere of the Natal coast lands was about the worst that could have been chosen from a medical point of view; and it is in no way surprising that the future Premier of the Cape Colony returned to England very little better for the change. The climatic conditions at Kimberley, which he next selected as an abiding place, are entirely different from those prevailing in Natal. The dry air of the South African Karroo, which is met with at an elevation of three to five thousand feet above sea level, exercises a marvellous healing power upon pulmonary disorders. In spite of the rough life at the then newly opened diamond fields, Mr. Rhodes regained his health and laid the foundation of his fortunes.* Those were the days in which separate "claims" were worked in the open mine—days in which the man who worked and watched his opportunities could extend his interests quietly as weaker competitors dropped out. Claims began to be consolidated into companies, the flotation of which afforded enlarged opportunities for money making. Still, in 1881 Mr. Rhodes was an almost unknown man, the position of "diamond king" being rather held by Mr. J. B. Robinson.

In was in the early "eighties" that Mr. Rhodes began his political career, having in the meantime taken his degree at Oxford, by being returned to the Cape Parliament for Barkly West,† his election coinciding with the incorporation of the district of Griqualand West with the Cape Colony. One may with considerable safety discount the stories told by later biographers of his dreams of coming greatness. The story, for example, of his habit of pointing to a map of South Africa, and prophesying a British occupation up to the Zambesi, is not only obviously a later myth, but falls far short in respect of its ambition of the earlier dreams of Sir Bartle Frere, who was in the habit of urging the claims of a British occupation of the African continent "from the Cape of Storms to Guardafui." It was, however, just about this time that Mr. Rhodes showed his first interest in the control of newspapers by finding the money to purchase, from the late Mr. Saul Solomon, that old-established Capetown paper, the *Cape Argus*. How little his mind was really set upon the future South African developments with which his name has been identified is illustrated by the fact,

* "Cecil Rhodes." By Imperialist. p. 3.

† Ibid. p. 20.

if his biographers are to be believed, that it was at one moment in 1884 a toss-up with him whether he remained in South Africa or went with Gordon to Khartoum.* The offer of the position of Treasurer-General in the Cape Ministry decided him to remain in South Africa. He only held the office, however, for a few months, the Ministry resigning on defeat shortly after his appointment.

It was probably about this time that Mr. Rhodes, having resolved to remain in South Africa, began to take an interest in the future of the interior of the continent, German annexations in South-West Africa having raised the question of the ultimate fate of the "hinterland." It was mainly in connection with this question that he undertook the duties of Special Commissioner in Bechuanaland, where, owing to the influx of irresponsible Europeans in the guise of allies of native chiefs, a somewhat complicated position had arisen. In his action with regard to this matter, Mr. Rhodes distinctly took the side of the Dutch supporters of the Cape Ministry,† as opposed to the more Imperialistic views of Mr. Mackenzie, who had been appointed Deputy Commissioner for Bechuanaland by the Imperial Government, and Sir Charles Warren, whose expeditionary force was believed by many to have been really intended for an invasion of the Transvaal.

For some years after this incident Mr. Rhodes was little heard of in the political world. His time and energies were, indeed, fully occupied in bringing about that amalgamation of the Kimberley diamond-mining companies which placed him in the position of the wealthiest and most influential of South African settlers. The difficulties and the cost of working the diamond mines had so increased that, notwithstanding continual amalgamations on a smaller scale, operations were ceasing to be profitable, while the want of control over the output led to perilous fluctuations in market prices.‡ Amalgamations had proceeded so far that, in 1888, the mining companies were represented by two leading groups—the De Beers Consolidated Mines, controlled by Mr. Rhodes, and the Kimberley Diamond Mining Company, controlled chiefly by Mr. Barnato. As the result of a "deal," the De Beers group took over and absorbed the Kimberley group, paying a single cheque of over five and a-half millions sterling for the transaction.

It was in this gigantic transaction that the political career of Mr. Rhodes had its origin. The trust deed of the new company was drawn in such a way that its directors were left free to engage in almost any and every kind of enterprise,§ being at the same time specially empowered to employ a certain amount annually as a secret service fund. That the amalgamation saved the diamond mining industry is probable, for it rendered possible such a control of the output as would keep up the market price. But though the mining industry may have been saved, Kimberley as a town was ruined, the monopolist company, in furtherance of its own interests, taking upon itself the greater part of the burden of those commercial transactions upon which Kimberley subsisted. The change was perhaps specially felt in the adoption of the "compound system" for the Company's native employees. It is true that the Cape Parliament sought to protect the interests of Kimberley traders by making it illegal on the part of the Company to supply its own employees. The Act, however, has remained practically a dead letter, except in so far as it incidentally sanctioned the use of the "compound system." Almost simultaneously with the great amalgamation at Kimberley came the founding

* "Cecil Rhodes." By Imperialist. p. 34.

† Ibid. p. 33.

‡ Ibid. p. 12.

§ Ibid. p. 233.

of the Consolidated Goldfields Company in Johannesburg, a company which has gone on exercising powers of absorption similar to those exercised by De Beers in Kimberley. From the loins also of the magnified De Beers sprang the British South Africa Company,* while Mr. Rhodes succeeded in impressing the English mind with his importance by presenting a cheque for £10,000 to the cause of Irish Home Rule†—a transaction which his more enthusiastic biographers pass over in silence.

All this financial expansion, magnificent as it undoubtedly was, was not sufficient for Mr. Rhodes's ambition. Matters were already in train for his accession to the Cape Premiership, then held by Sir Gordon Sprigg, by virtue of the support of the Afrikander Bond. In 1885, under conditions described elsewhere, Mr. Rhodes had been a convinced anti-Imperialist, sharing in this respect the views of nearly all classes in South Africa, including the High Commissioner himself. Sir Hercules Robinson's anti-Imperialism, however, was not quite appreciated by Lord Salisbury's Government, the want of appreciation going so far that his expected re-appointment as High Commissioner did not take place. A more imperially-minded successor was appointed in the person of Lord Loch. The arrival in South Africa of this official, unacquainted with the affairs of the country, gave Mr. Rhodes the opportunity which he wanted. The Sprigg Ministry was led into a financial trap and defeated, leaving the way open for Mr. Rhodes to claim the Premiership. The value of this position lay chiefly in the fact that, in the following of what was on the whole a commendable custom, Imperial policy in South Africa was based on the views of the Cape Ministry, representing, presumably, a majority in the Cape Colony. Thus Mr. Rhodes, having in 1885 joined hands with those who aimed at "eliminating the Imperial factor" from South Africa, in 1890 himself became the Imperial factor by virtue of his control over an inexperienced and imperially-minded High-Commissioner, appointed by an imperially-minded Cabinet in London. The accumulation of dignities in the person of Macbeth was trivial as compared with the accumulation of dignities in the person of Mr. Rhodes in the year 1890. Cape Premier, managing director of the Chartered Company, head of De Beers Consolidated Mines, head of the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa—these various offices, conjoined in his own person, and coupled with the political and financial ascendancy he had secured in England, placed in his hands a power which few men indeed would be capable of using without most seriously abusing it.

In undertaking the duties of the Cape Premiership, it was of course necessary for Mr. Rhodes to secure the support of a majority in the Cape Parliament. This involved the necessity of securing the adherence of the Afrikander Bond, upon terms and under circumstances related later on. There can be no doubt that both parties to this agreement thought they were striking an advantageous bargain. Mr. Rhodes hoped to obtain the support of the Bond for the advancement of his own schemes; members of the Bond hoped for the assistance of Mr. Rhodes in securing local legislation to their liking. There can be no doubt that what chiefly attracted members of the Bond party was the prospect, ostentatiously held out by Mr. Rhodes, of securing Cape control, and appointments for young Cape colonists, in the new countries being opened to the north. It was this prospect that induced them to tolerate, or even approve, the attitude of hostility to the Transvaal which Mr. Rhodes began to manifest immediately on his accession to office.‡ This hostility was manifested in a

* "Cecil Rhodes." By Imperialist. p. 46.

† "Life of Charles Stewart Parnell." By R. Barry O'Brien. Vol. II., p. 185.

‡ Mr. Rhodes assumed office on the 17th July. Before the end of the month, what was practically an ultimatum to the Transvaal on the Swaziland question, was presented to the Government in Pretoria.

marked manner in 1890 in connection with the discussion of the Swaziland settlement, a matter which Mr. Rhodes cleverly mixed up with an attempt to force the Transvaal to free Cape wines and brandy from import duty by entering into a Customs Union. The hostility became even more marked in the year 1891, when the High Commissioner, at the instance of Mr. Rhodes, sought to make the Transvaal Government responsible for a projected "trek" of farmers from all parts of South Africa—not from the Transvaal alone or indeed chiefly—into Mashonaland. The hostility between Cape Town and Pretoria died down in 1892 and 1893, partly because Mr. Rhodes was seeking the assistance of the Transvaal in thwarting the commercial ambitions of Natal, and partly because Mr. Rhodes was engaged in taking possession of Matabeleland. The hostility, however, revived again in 1894, in view of the early completion of the railway from Delagoa Bay, and the resolve of the Transvaal Government to permit railway extension from Natal, incidents both of which threatened the railway monopoly enjoyed by the Cape Colony since 1892. All this time, too, the political sky was darkening round the Transvaal. Rhodesia was arming; Johannesburg was agitating; the Cape Government was threatening; the execution of some *coup d'état* at Delagoa Bay, in the interest of the Chartered Company, seemed to be impending. What wonder if the Transvaal Government became alive to the necessity of preparing for defence? And all this time there was a Liberal Ministry in office in England, with Lord Ripon, fairest and most considerate of men, in charge of colonial policy. If, under pressure from Mr. Rhodes and Lord Loch, Lord Ripon became remonstrative, what might be expected if a Tory Ministry came into office?

The Tory Ministry came into power in July, 1895, with Mr. Chamberlain at the Colonial Office. Was there any previous understanding between Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Chamberlain? The question is naturally suggested by the ease and readiness with which Mr. Chamberlain assented to all the arrangements that favored Mr. Rhodes's plans. For example, there was the suggested attack upon the Transvaal, on the joint responsibility of the Imperial Government and the Cape Colony, on the basis of the trivial "drifts question." There was the arrangement for a "jumping-off place" for Jameson's column of attack. Then came the raid and the attempted revolution—the revolution paid for out of Mr. Rhodes's pocket,* assisted by De Beers; the Raid, with Mr. Rhodes taking an active part in endeavouring to mislead public opinion in England by means of a forged letter. Then came the collapse of the Raid, followed by the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry—the Committee that so earnestly neglected to inquire where inquiry was most necessary—the Committee that received Mr. Rhodes's admissions of complicity in direct contradiction of his previous denials. Since then we have had the complete revolt from Mr. Rhodes of the Afrikaner Bond. We have had the triumph of the anti-Rhodes party—as it has by force of circumstances become—in the Cape Colony. We have had the stirring up of fresh agitation in Johannesburg. We have had the carefully organised campaign of misrepresentation and calumny against the Transvaal Government. We have had the Bloemfontein Conference, with its threats and its infelicities. We have had Mr. Chamberlain's speeches, with their aggressive and irritating language. We have had the unhappy ultimatum of the Republics—an ultimatum not the less unhappy for the fact that the conditions were such as to render the Republican Governments well-nigh desperate. We have had our terrible and unexpected revelations of the strength and determination of the enemy we have provoked. We have had our dearly-bought successes in the field. We are coming into the enjoyment of a greatly augmented taxation, coupled with the distrust—to use no stronger term—of the whole civilized world. We have had all this; we have recognised

* Report of South Africa Committee, Commons Papers. No 311 (1897).

the truth that, if this war has been inevitable, it is Mr. Rhodes who has rendered it inevitable, with the aid of his newspapers both in South Africa and in England. And, finally, we have the picture of Mr. Rhodes in Kimberley,* truculently impatient, loftily insubordinate, reviling those who were endeavouring to aid him, insulting those who were responsible for the safety of the place which his presence had imperilled, greedy for dividends in the midst of human distress, living in luxury in the midst of starvation. Is it necessary to elaborate the picture further ?

II.

MR. RHODES AND THE AFRIKANDER BOND.

In order to understand the precise nature of the relations, past and present, between Mr. Rhodes and the Afrikaner Bond, it is first of all necessary that the Bond itself should be understood. At the present moment, thanks to the prevailing tendency to accuse everyone of disloyalty who declines to hold up both hands in support of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner, the Afrikaner Bond is written and spoken of as though it were anti-British, both in its origin and in its designs. That, however, is altogether a misconception, and in some cases a wilful misconception. It was probably with a view to supporting the misconception that Mr. Rhodes the other day denied that he had ever worked with the Bond, though professing to be always anxious to work with the "loyal" Dutch. The Afrikaner Bond, then, had its first origin in the conviction of certain men of position, chief among whom was Mr. Reitz, then Chief Justice and subsequently President of the Free State, that it was necessary to provide for the control of South African affairs by the people of South Africa, and without interference from England. The Bond, in fact, was originally the assertion of a principle which has long been recognised and acted upon in both the Australasian and Canadian groups of Colonies. The idea did not, at the outset, spread very rapidly. In the meantime there was existing in the Cape Colony an organisation known as the Farmers' Protection Association, which, with Mr. Hofmeyr at its head, aimed at conserving the interests of agriculture as opposed to the interests of commerce. Like all organisations of the kind, it favored a protective policy, and, as its members were many of them interested in the business of wine-farming, it was opposed to the imposition of an excise duty upon spirits. A good many of its members, moreover, cherished a belief—a belief which prevails largely also among colonists of British origin—in the necessity of being able to visit the neglects of native servants with corporal punishment.

Mr. Hofmeyr quickly saw the political value, in a self-governing Colony, of the idea expressed by the founders of the Afrikaner Bond, and induced the Farmers' Protection Association to adopt its principles and its title. From that time, although still existing in other parts of South Africa, the Afrikaner Bond came to be chiefly identified in the public mind with party politics in the Cape Colony. In this aspect of its existence, it was purely party and absolutely loyal, though at the first there were those who, for party purposes, misunderstood, or professed to misunderstand, it. It soon made its weight felt in the Cape Parliament, for, owing to the strong identity of their practical interests, its members worked together with remarkable unanimity.

* See *Daily Telegraph* for 26th March, 1900.

The support given by the Bond to the Scanlen Ministry was extended to the Ministry that succeeded it, first under the Premiership of Sir Thomas Upington and subsequently under the Premiership of Sir Gordon Sprigg. It made its influence felt in a very marked manner in connection with the settlement of Bechuanaland, succeeding in putting a check upon the anti-Dutch policy of Mr. John Mackenzie and his supporters in the Aborigines' Protection Society in England. It was because Mr. Rhodes had taken a somewhat prominent part in inflicting this check—a matter which forms a distinct chapter in South African history—that the Bond, in 1888 and 1889, was disposed to look with favor upon his new schemes in the interior. Thus, when in 1890, in accordance with a settled plan, Sir Gordon Sprigg was betrayed into wrecking his hold upon the Bond by propounding an extravagant scheme of railway construction, it was both natural and necessary that Mr. Rhodes, before undertaking to form a Ministry, should seek to come to terms with the Bond. There were three conditions imposed on Mr. Rhodes as the price of the Bond's support. These were: (1) A protective policy in respect of agricultural industry; (2) no excise duty upon spirits; and (3) the legalisation, through what was known as "the Strop Bill," of corporal punishment of native servants for neglect of duty.

Mr. Rhodes took office, with the support of the Bond, on these conditions in 1890. So strongly did he manage to appeal to the local interests of the members of the Bond in the Cape Colony that in 1890, and again in 1891, he induced the colonial section of the Bond to support him in an anti-Transvaal policy, first in connection with the settlement of Swaziland, next in connection with the proposed independent "trek" of farmers—from the Cape Colony and the Free State as well as from the Transvaal—into Mashonaland. Mr. Rhodes, in fact, managed at this time to divide the Bond against itself, the Cape Colony section supporting Mr. Rhodes against the Transvaal, while the rest of the Bond supported the Transvaal against Mr. Rhodes. Meantime, during the next year or two, the co-operation between Mr. Rhodes and the Bond—co-operation which began to be spoken of as "the unholy alliance"—was giving great concern to the advocates of a liberal and progressive policy in the Cape Colony. Various proposals were discussed with the view of organising a progressive party, of which it was hoped Mr. Rose-Innes might become the leader. Among those proposals was one for such a scheme of redistribution as would give more representation to the towns, and thus counterbalance the Parliamentary influence of the Bond party. What puzzled and disheartened those who could see below the surface was that so many members of the Bond party were apparently blind to the anti-Transvaal designs of Mr. Rhodes. The remark perhaps specially applies to Mr. W. Schreiner, who was more than once warned of the tendency of his leader's designs. It does not so much apply to Mr. Hofmeyr, whose perception of those designs, there is every reason to believe, led to his retirement from public life in the early part of 1895.

Then came the Jameson Raid, with its astounding revelation to members of the Bond party of the duplicity of the man they had been trusting. The different sections of the Bond reunited in opposition to Mr. Rhodes, who, having made use of the Bond party and grossly deceived it, is now reaping the natural consequences. It is with the object of averting those consequences that Mr. Rhodes has done his best to kindle a general conflagration in South Africa.

III.

MR. RHODES AS ANTI-IMPERIALIST.

In the latter part of the year 1891 the following remark was made, in one of the Pretoria clubs, by a professional man from the Cape Colony, the owner of a well-known Afrikaner name, then practising in the Transvaal capital: "The Afrikaner Bond will not a second time prevent a Warren expedition from invading the Transvaal."

The remark was significant, for several reasons. It illustrated, for example, the strength of the anti Transvaal feeling which had come over the Afrikaner Bond in the Cape Colony as the result of its political alliance with Mr. Rhodes. Beyond this, it testified to the reality of the belief in Dutch colonial circles that the effect of Sir Charles Warren's expedition had been neutralised, as against the Transvaal, by the action of the Bond. Reference to this belief brings us at once to the threshold of the controversy that was raging some fifteen years ago over the settlement of Bechuanaland. Now, with regard to this controversy, great caution has to be observed. What is most generally said about it rests chiefly on the authority of the Rev. John Mackenzie, whose book, "Austral Africa," made some little stir in 1887. Mr. Mackenzie, however, is not an impartial authority. His book was a justification of himself, and an attack upon those with whom he had been in antagonism, including the then High Commissioner—Sir Hercules Robinson—and, in an especial manner, Mr. Rhodes. Sir Charles Warren sided with Mr. Mackenzie, and the fact that at that time they were bitterly opposed to both Sir Hercules Robinson and Mr. Rhodes is at the present moment very liable to be lost sight of. How difficult the controversy has become may be illustrated by two references. In a dispatch to Sir Hercules Robinson, dated 20 March, 1885, and printed at page 160 of the second volume of "Austral Africa," Sir Charles Warren distinctly declared that the money spent on his expedition would be thrown away if Mr. Rhodes were allowed a free hand in Bechuanaland.* On page 33 of "Cecil Rhodes," by "Imperialist," published in 1897, Sir Charles Warren's expedition is represented as the result of Mr. Rhodes's policy, and Mr. Rhodes is, in fact, given the credit for anything that Sir Charles Warren's expedition effected.

These views are obviously irreconcilable; they cannot both be correct. As a matter of fact, both are inaccurate. The best light that can be thrown on the situation proceeds from the practical common-sense dispatches of Sir Hercules Robinson, one of which is very usefully printed at page 159 of Mr. Mackenzie's second volume. Those who follow Sir Hercules Robinson's guidance will find reason for concluding that, granting all Mr. Mackenzie's honesty of purpose, his missionary antecedents made him a singularly unfit person to hold an official position in Bechuanaland, and that whatever Sir Charles Warren's ability as a soldier, he had by no means the essential qualifications for success as a civil administrator—a fact of which the people of London became aware a year or two later. It will not do, therefore, to quote Mr. Mackenzie and Sir Charles Warren as against Mr. Rhodes. The salient fact is this—that during the anti-Imperial movement that pervaded South Africa between 1885 and 1890, Mr. Rhodes was a leading anti-Imperialist, openly bent upon that "elimination of the Imperial factor" which was then regarded

* Sir Charles Warren's exact words were as follows:—"I have noticed with much concern that your Excellency has somewhat supported Mr. Rhodes in his action in Stellaland. . . . I have also to point out that there is great danger that the money spent on this expedition will be entirely thrown away if the interested policy of Colonial politicians (i.e., Mr. Rhodes as representing the Cape Ministry) is permitted to make way against the Imperial policy."

throughout South Africa, by British and Dutch alike, as a most proper and legitimate aim.

In a debate on Bechuanaland on the 15th July, 1884, Mr. Rhodes is reported in the Cape papers to have said: "The Imperial factor against which he had last year warned the House had been introduced into Bechuanaland . . . They should at once negotiate with the Imperial Government and with the people of the Transvaal, and, first and foremost, they should try and remove the Imperial factor from the situation. He believed that, if they did not, there was on the border of the Transvaal great danger for South Africa." (Blue-book C—4194, pp. 88, 100.) This is quite consistent with Mr. Rhodes's anti-Imperial policy on other occasions, *e.g.*, his strong support given to the handing over of Swaziland to the Boers in 1894; his strong objection to the retention of Imperial influence in Khama's country in 1895; and the successful resistance of his party in the Cape Parliament in 1896 to the substitution of the Imperial Government in Rhodesia for that of the Chartered Company, a change petitioned for by the Boer Republics and many of their friends in the Colony who are now said to have been conspiring against British power.

Mr. Mackenzie and Sir Charles Warren were, in 1885, bent upon establishing the Imperial factor in South Africa by means of their settlement of Bechuanaland. Mr. Rhodes, whatever his ultimate aims, was then bent upon eliminating the Imperial factor. The accusation is distinctly made against him by Sir Charles Warren in the dispatch already alluded to. Mr. Rhodes, backed up by the High Commissioner and by the Cape Ministry, more or less got his way. He got his way so far that whatever threats against the Transvaal lurked in Sir Charles Warren's expedition—and the belief in the reality of those threats was general at the time—evaporated, and Cape Colony politicians were able to boast, as they did boast, that they had saved the Transvaal from a British invasion. For, be it noted, Mr. Rhodes, when in his official capacity as Special Commissioner in Bechuanaland he incurred the hostility of Mr. Mackenzie and Sir Charles Warren, was an ex-Minister who had been supported in the Cape Parliament by the Afrikaner Bond, and was acting in harmony with a new Cape Ministry which also had the support of the Bond.

Anti-Imperialist Mr. Rhodes, then, was in 1885, in fact, rather more anti-Imperialist than those Cape Ministers whom to-day he denounces as trucklers to what he calls "the Pretoria gang." But why was Mr. Rhodes then anti-Imperialist? The obvious answer to that question is that he had his own interests to serve. He wished to conciliate the Afrikaner Bond, and he did effectually conciliate the Bond by opposing Mr. Mackenzie, the missionary. There were other things, too, that the Bond, acting through Parliament, could do for him. There was then looming in the near future the problem of establishing the "compound" system in Kimberley. The Bond party, a year or two later, obliged Mr. Rhodes by incidentally legalising the compound system in one of the sections of the "Payment of Wages Act"—an Act levelled against the truck system, and, as is shown elsewhere, consistently ignored by De Beers whenever it is thought convenient.

Mr. Rhodes is now regarded as an Imperialist. He is quoted at large against all "Little Englanders" as the great Englishman—someone (surely not Mr. Stead?) once called him "one of God's Englishmen"—who is deputed by Providence to paint all maps as red as possible,* an enterprise in which he appears to be succeeding. To-day, Mr. Rhodes poses as an Imperialist. It better suits his own purposes now that the Afrikaner Bond has cast him off. It suits him to be able to rely on those British soldiers whose commanding officers he makes the object of his unmannerly abuse. But does anyone think Mr. Rhodes will be an Imperialist a day longer than it suits him? Have people

* "Oceil Rhodes." By Imperialist, p. 50.

in this country forgotten that speech of his in which he threatened to "cut the painter"—i.e., to proclaim South African independence—if his views were disregarded? Do not the Rhodesian journals in South Africa—those in Great Britain have to observe a little more decency—teem with scarcely veiled threats of a British revolt if a sufficient measure of repression is not applied to the Dutch? There is only one thing, apparently, to which Mr. Rhodes owes and maintains allegiance—himself. To this sovereign he will be true, and this sovereign he will serve by every means, scrupulous or unscrupulous, in his power.

IV.

MR. RHODES AND THE WORKING MAN.

Those whose memories carry them back to the days of the Jameson Raid will call to mind how the European miners in the employ of various gold companies were ordered to take up arms in aid of the abortive revolution, with the alternative of dismissal and forfeiture of wages due. They will also call to mind how a considerable number of European miners, rather than be forced into fighting, quitted Johannesburg, undeservedly bringing down upon themselves the reproach of cowardice.

These incidents serve very well to illustrate the nature of the attitude of the Rhodesian mind towards the European working man. Industrial employment for Europeans, it has to be remembered, is not easily to be found in South Africa. A certain amount is furnished by the various railways, either in the workshops or in connection with the working of the traffic. The men thus employed are for the most part Government servants; the one exception has been in the Transvaal, where the railways are owned and worked by a private company. Apart from the railways, almost the only openings for industrial employment are at Kimberley, in the service of the De Beers monopoly, and at Johannesburg, in the service of some one or other of the mining companies. At Johannesburg there is—or there was—a certain limited degree of competition for European labour. At Kimberley there is no such competition. Industrial service must be rendered to De Beers, or it cannot be rendered at all, and the man who does not like to give his labor to De Beers may as well quit Kimberley at once, for there is no other wage-paying concern to employ him.

Under any circumstances such a state of things would be regrettable. The employer of labor has quite enough inclination to tyranny as it is, without the necessity of any special temptation being put in his way. Even the well-meaning capitalist might, under the pressure of such temptation, be led into a harsh exercise of his power and authority. Does De Beers represent the well-meaning capitalist? Or does De Beers, under the inspiration of Mr. Rhodes, yield to the temptation to treat its European employees as though they were serfs? Let us take a glance at the ordinary life of an employee of De Beers.

There is one thing that an employee of De Beers learns very soon—that is, if he wishes to remain in his employment. It is that the interests and wishes of the company are everything, and his own individual interests absolutely nothing. There is, he finds, an organisation running through the concern from top to bottom, commencing in the personality of Cecil Rhodes, and descending to the most casual drudge who, in utter want of a job of any kind, undertakes the thankless office of a convict guard. The Colonial Government hires out its native convicts to De Beers; the usual work of a convict guard is to sit for twelve hours a day—from six in the morning till six at night—on an empty paraffin tin, in sun or storm, prohibited from the relaxation of a book or a newspaper, and watch a gang of native convicts as they turn over the diamondiferous soil deposited on the "floors"—the wide level spaces where this soil is

left to dry and disintegrate in the sun. As in all probability the convict guard has his lodging a couple of miles or more from his "work," the twelve hours comes out at very much more like fourteen.

If the servant of De Beers is employed in one of the mines, it is the same arrangement of twelve-hour shifts, lengthened out by the time occupied in getting to or from the mine, accompanied by the underground risks—no light ones—and the risk of pulmonary disorder resulting from the sudden changes from the close and heated atmosphere of the mine to the cold piercing air of the winter evening at 4,000 ft. elevation above the sea-level. If he is in the shops, or in the electrical department, there are the same hours. And, be it observed, in every department, the same atmosphere of repression, suspicion and espionage prevails. No man can safely trust another. An insubordinate or complaining word carelessly spoken, and in all probability the next time the utterer goes for his wages he is met with the fatal yellow envelope, the symbol of dismissal. There is no appeal; there is no reason given; still less is there any prospect of a recommendation to another employer. He has sinned against De Beers, and that is enough.

The De Beers' employee, however, is not merely an industrial worker. He is a voter. If he can claim a vote in no other way, he can claim it on the lodger basis. And, of course, he claims it—or, rather, it is practically claimed for him. Kimberley returns four members to the Cape House of Assembly. It is part of the gospel of De Beers that those four members must be De Beers representatives, and nothing else. "I don't want your support when you think I'm right," Mr. Rhodes is known to have said once to a semi-independent candidate; "I want your support when you know I'm wrong." It was part of the agreement when the great De Beers amalgamation took place that the late Mr. Barnato should sit in the Cape Parliament as one of the members for Kimberley. The agreement was observed during Mr. Barnato's lifetime, and no one was more adroit in supporting De Beers' interests while professing an attitude of greater liberality. Apart from Mr. Barnato, the representatives of Kimberley are strictly and solely De Beers nominees, elected to order by the dominating vote of De Beers employees. Once, at a by-election, Mr. Richard Solomon, the present Cape Attorney-General, who held the position of standing counsel for De Beers, was returned. But he was too lukewarm for Mr. Rhodes. At the next general election the De Beers employees had their orders to elect, as the fourth candidate, Dr. Rutherford Harris, who is now seeking to replace Mr. Albert Spicer, M.P., in the representation of the Monmouth district. They knew nothing about Dr. Rutherford Harris, but those were their orders. And if they had disobeyed orders? Well, the consequence of disobeying was very clearly stated on behalf of the company at a public meeting presided over by the general manager of De Beers. Those who did not, by voting according to order, consult the interests of De Beers, could not expect De Beers to find employment for them when work was slack.

V.

MR. RHODES AND THE NATIVES.

In dealing with any aspect of the native question in South Africa, care must be taken to guard against the acceptance of any extreme or, as it might be called, hysterical view. It has always been found easy to exalt natives at the expense of Europeans, just as it has always been found easy to exalt Englishmen at the expense of Dutchmen, and far too many blunders in South African policy have been the result of one or other of these varieties of prejudice. The South African native, it must always be borne in mind, is morally and intellectually neither so black nor so white as he has been popularly painted. He is

neither the monster he was described to be when the late Sir Bartle Frere was preparing the way for a Zulu War, nor is he anything like the angel depicted in missionary records and sermons.

Following out this line of argument, it may be said that equally false are the popular notions of Dutch cruelty towards natives, and the popular notions of British justice towards natives. Take the case of the Zulus as an example. For 35 years—from 1838 to 1873—the Zulus, under their chief Panda, lived under the protectorate of the South African Republic, the relations between Boers and natives, in spite of occasional disputes, being always perfectly friendly. On the other hand, the history of British policy with regard to the Zulus during the ten years from 1878 to 1888 forms one of the blackest pages in the history of the relations between civilisation and so-called savagery.* In order to get a fair notion of the true path of native policy one has to gain access to the well-balanced views of such men as Bishop Colenso and the late Mr. Saul Solomon—men whose sense of justice extended to all races, and who never could have conceived the possibility of benefiting the black by vilifying the Boer.

Steering clear of extremes, it may certainly be granted that the white race is under responsibility towards the black in South Africa. But the mistake of Mr. Rhodes and of those who accept his views with regard to South African policy is that they regard the natives merely as a passive supply of available labor, which must, in the interest of the European, be forced into activity. It is a mistake that has already produced results so hideous, so inhuman, so degrading to white and black alike, that no words too strong can be used in its condemnation. Some of those results were forcibly depicted in Olive Schreiner's book, "Peter Halket." That book has sometimes been condemned as exaggerated. Unfortunately, there is not a word of exaggeration in it. It is too sadly photographic—as sadly photographic as the record of brutality presented in the frontispiece. Men could be named who, even in days before the horrible suppression of the Matabele revolt in 1896, used to boast of their success in "potting niggers," exceeding far in wanton slaughter that which, in the days of the Frere regime, suggested the following couplet in a political alphabet:—

M is Martini, of arms an inventor,
And N is the Native, much used as a centre.

Praise is sometimes given—carelessly given—to the care bestowed on the natives in Mr. Rhodes's Kimberley compounds. The native is kept from drink, he has a swimming bath whereby to keep himself clean, he has medical attendance if he is injured or is sick. Well, yes; but the dogs in any well-ordered kennels are as well cared for. It is one of the results of our strenuous philanthropy that we think we have fulfilled the whole of our duty to our neighbor when we have cut him off from alcoholic liquor. But for whose benefit are all these regulations of the Kimberley compounds? For the benefit of the native? No; for the benefit of De Beers. A native incapable of work is a loss to the concern. It is exactly the spirit of the Mississippi planter over again. The ruffian Legree's neighbors disapproved of his knocking his plantation hands about, not on the score of humanity, but because the picking season was just coming on. De Beers natives are, in the estimation of Mr. Rhodes, animals. They live like animals; they are utilised as animals for the benefit of the company. Major Leonard, in his graphic and amusing book, "How we Made Rhodesia," remarks about Mr. Rhodes's anger at certain horses having been over-ridden on dispatch service. "In his anxiety for the horses, however," says Major Leonard, "no thought of the men entered his head, and it

* See "The Ruin of Zululand," By Frances Ellen Colenso.

struck me that it was not so much an anxiety that arose from humane motives as from the sound principle of hard and practical common-sense.* An observant major, certainly.

Further evidence of Mr. Rhodes's attitude towards the South African native is supplied by Sir Richard Martin's report on the conditions of native labor in Rhodesia, the frequently-expressed views of Rhodesian capitalists interested in Johannesburg, the Glen Grey Act, the Strop Bill. The Strop Bill, supported by Mr. Rhodes as part of his compact with the Afrikander Bond, was a bill legalising the corporal punishment of native servants for neglect of duty. The Glen Grey Act, described by his admirers as "designed to protect, educate, and elevate the black man," is really an Act providing for compulsory native labor.† What the Johannesburg mine owners want, we know. They want compulsory native labor, coupled with greatly reduced wages, and the animalism of the compound system. As for the enforcing of native labor in Rhodesia, Sir Richard Martin's report, to be found in the Parliamentary Blue-Book C-8547, is probably the most condemnatory document ever written by a British official with regard to the conduct of British settlers.

The Glen Grey Act—to particularise a little—is a monumental example of the manner in which compulsion can be applied to a native population under the guise of an anxiety for its welfare. All through colonial South Africa, Natal as well as the Cape Colony, the cry of the European is that the native must by some means or other be made to work. The argument is invariably mixed up with all kinds of consideration for the native, who, it is held by the European who does not himself wish to work, must learn to appreciate "the dignity of labor." The motive of the Act was succinctly stated by Mr. Rhodes himself when he said, "if they could make these people work they would reduce the rate of labor in the country." The Act goes to work first of all by breaking up the communal lands of the tribes in the Glen Grey and other districts to be afterwards proclaimed, into allotments. For each allotment a native must pay between £4 and £5 in fees, and in addition an annual quit rent of 15s. The result, of course, is to break up the communal existence of the tribe which before had been a self-contained unity, using no money, supplying its own demands and living its own life. To earn his rent and his allotment fees the native must leave his district and either work for some white farmer or serve a term in Kimberley Compound. But the Act even goes further than this. It requires every able-bodied male native who is not the owner of an allotment, and cannot prove that for three months in the twelve he has been in service beyond the borders of his district, to pay a labor tax of 10s. per annum. The penalty for non-payment is "imprisonment with hard labor for a period not exceeding twelve months." It is difficult to see in this Act anything but a not very specious disguise of forced labor. Fines and imprisonment are expressly provided to compel the native to work. The object of the whole Act was, in short, as Mr. Rhodes frankly admitted, to stimulate the supply of labor for Kimberley and so reduce the rate of pay if possible to 2d. a day.

An examination, too, of the report made by Sir Richard Martin on the conditions of labor in Rhodesia serves to show that, under Mr. Rhodes, the principle of compulsory labor by natives for the benefit of Europeans is the rule rather than the exception. It is significant of the temper of the Chartered Company in respect of this matter that Sir Richard Martin should have to refer to the difficulty he experienced in getting private individuals to give information, any information he obtained from such sources being always coupled with the condition that the name of his informant should not be made public.‡ Of

* "How we Made Rhodesia." By Major A. G. Leonard. p. 103.

† "Cecil Rhodes." By Imperialists. pp. 301 to 306.

‡ Blue-book C. 8547, p. 43

the fifteen Native Commissioners who sent in reports, eight admitted "in unhesitating language" that compulsory labor existed,* and only two stated that no practice of exacting compulsory labor was in force. Seven out of eight Native Commissioners for Matabeleland admitted that when they could not obtain labour by fair means they had recourse to coercion.† There was a general agreement that such labor was obtained for mining companies and private persons, as well as for public works.‡ The principal conclusions at which Sir Richard Martin felt compelled to arrive were (1) that compulsory labor did undoubtedly exist in Matabeleland, if not in Mashonaland; (2) that labor was procured by the various Native Commissioners for the various requirements of Government, mining companies, and private persons; and (3) that when the Native Commissioners failed to secure it through the native headmen they obtained it by force.§ Sir Richard Martin's general impression of the situation, and of the conduct of the Chartered Company and its officials, can perhaps best be expressed in his own words. After dwelling on the military character of the Matabele race, Sir Richard Martin says that "considering the character and habits of the Matabele, and the short time that had elapsed since the country had come under European control, and the vital importance at that stage of using every endeavor to conciliate the native to their rule, common prudence alone ought to have been enough to deter the Government from introducing a practice, which, viewed in the most lenient light, can only be interpreted as a mild form of compulsory labor, and which, to the raw and hitherto independent Matabele, would have seemed nothing less than slavery itself."||

Nor was this all. The manner in which labor was obtained "appears to me," says Sir Richard Martin, "to be as much open to blame and as imprudent as was the practice itself."¶ That the natives of Matabeleland were naturally averse to going down into mines can be well understood. Nevertheless, labor for the mines must be obtained, because the Chartered Company's finances depended on its fifty per cent. share in all mining properties exploited. "There is," says Sir Richard Martin, "reason to believe that much undue pressure was brought to bear" upon natives to induce them to work underground.** This undue pressure was largely exercised by the native police, against whose conduct and powers Sir Richard Martin strongly protests. At a time, he says, when it was necessary to create confidence in the Government, the native police were "let loose" among the Matabele, "free to give vent to all their natural greed and passion."†† He found it universally admitted that the native police were guilty of many acts of cruelty and extortion, "and I cannot but think," he significantly adds, "that the Native Commissioners must have been aware of the conduct of their men."‡‡ A peculiar hardship was in many instances imposed by forcing natives to come and work for Europeans at the very time when their own crops, on which they and their families depended for sustenance, were requiring their attention.§§ It is shown in the course of Sir Richard Martin's report that natives were called in to work at wages ranging from 10s. to 30s. a month, while their work at home during the cultivating season would be worth to themselves as much as £5 per month.||||

There should be little difficulty, on the strength of the above-mentioned facts, in forming a sound and accurate conclusion as to Mr. Rhodes's attitude towards the native population of South Africa. According to his own declaration, he "prefers land to niggers," the "nigger" being only deserving of consideration as a means for bringing, for the benefit of the European, labor on to the land. He has acted consistently on that principle. And in what spirit?

* C-8547, p. 5. † C-8547, p. 6. ‡ C-8547, p. 6. § C-8547, p. 6. C-8547, p. 7.

¶ C-8547, p. 7. ** C-8457, p. 8. †† C-8457, p. 8.

‡‡ C-8547, p. 8. §§ C-8547, p. 8. ||| C-8547, p. 33.

Major Leonard supplies us with a sketch of the scene when the native driver of Mr. Rhodes's Cape cart could not be found. "The effect of this," says Major Leonard, "was truly colossal, and put Rhodes into a terrible rage; he used very strong language against natives in general, but his own in particular, saying they were all alike and ought to be severely flogged. Then he told me that should the offender turn up during the day I was to arrest him, and on no account whatever to give him any food; and he kept on alternately abusing and repeating the order. It was hardly colossal," Major Leonard adds, "to act as he did.* But what would you? Scratch a Colossus, and you find a slave-driver!

A striking leaflet just issued by Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner makes clear the policy of the owners of the Kimberley compounds. Vice is an inevitable consequence of the unnatural life which the native miners are forced to lead—cooped up in their prisons, separated from wife and child and tribal tradition.

During these months of incarceration the natives are separated from their women folk and families. The consequence is one of the most striking and shocking features of the compound system. A number of the lowest, drink-besotted, colored prostitutes, estimated at about 5,000, have collected at Beaconsfield, where, so to speak, they constitute a colony, occupying a revolting, sad quarter of that once beauty-thronged and happy township. When the natives come out for a short spell these unhappy women receive them. It is no doubt convenient, from the standpoint of the company, to have them there; it probably prevents the natives from going away, for most of them come long distances. This moral cancer is one of the direct and inevitable outcomes and concomitants of the compound system. If it were rigorously put down, I have no doubt it would react "injuriously" on the supply of native labor.

The men who own these Kimberley compounds are also the financiers who control the Rand. Their object in this war is to reproduce in Johannesburg the economic and social conditions which rule at Kimberley.

VI.

MR. RHODES AS LAW-BREAKER.

What Mr. Rhodes did, or sanctioned, in connection with the Jameson Raid is pretty widely known. The irregularity and illegality of his conduct was severely commented on in the report of the South African Parliamentary Committee—the report which Mr. Chamberlain threw overboard after having signed it. It has sometimes been argued that the irregularity and illegality of Mr. Rhodes's conduct on this occasion were special and abnormal, and did not supply any real key to his character. So far, however, is this from being the case, that, quite apart from the Jameson Raid, Mr. Rhodes can be shown to have acted on at least three other occasions in absolute defiance of the law.

The first of these cases arose in connection with Mr. Rhodes's agreement with the Matabele chief, Lo Bengula, for a mining concession over Mashonaland. For this concession Mr. Rhodes was willing to pay a price, part of the price consisting of 1,000 rifles, with corresponding ammunition.† Now, as it happens, since the year 1879, or thereabouts, there has been in force in the Cape Colony a stringent law as to the supply of guns and ammunition to natives. The law was passed as one of the results of native troubles on the eastern

* "How we made Rhodesia." p. 104. † "Cecil Rhodes." By Imperialist. p. 45.

frontier, and was the cause of the war between the Cape Colony and the Basutos, who were found to be singularly well armed and singularly expert in the use of the rifle. Under this law it was made absolutely illegal to supply arms or ammunition to any native tribe, either within or outside the Colony. In spite of the law, the 1,000 rifles and ammunition were smuggled across the colonial border and into Matabeleland, the agents of the Chartered Company simply ignoring the Cape officials, who very probably found it worth their while to wink at the violation of the law.

Another instance of illegal action on the part of Mr. Rhodes arose in connection with the introduction of the compound system into Kimberley. The compound system was incidentally legalised by the Payment of Wages Act,* an Act the main object of which was to prevent the introduction of the "truck" system into the Kimberley compounds. The Kimberley merchants and tradesmen naturally felt some alarm when Mr. Rhodes proposed to introduce the compound system. Up to then they had found a very considerable trade in the wants of the natives employed in the mines, and they did not see why this trade should be taken away from them. Their fear was that De Beers Company would engage in trade on its own account, and undertake the supplying of the wants of the natives in the compounds. A special clause was therefore introduced into the Act, requiring the Company to deal with the local traders, and not to become a merchant on its own account. The Company, as not a few suspected would be the case, deliberately ignored this provision of the Act. At the annual meeting of the Company in 1894, held at Kimberley, Mr. Rhodes frankly admitted that the Act had been ignored, and admitted that the Company had engaged, as a trader, in supplying the natives in the compounds. He intended, however, he declared, to make use of the profits resulting from this trade for the benefit of Kimberley. Really, the profits went, there is good reason to believe, into the political fund of De Beers, the Kimberley traders being deprived of their statutory rights for the sake of better enabling the monopolist Company to carry out its own political objects. It is true that the law might have been put in force against the Company. But who was to put it in force? Mr. Rhodes was Premier, and his own Attorney-General was not likely to proceed against him, while the Kimberley traders, fearful of finding themselves placed in even a worse position, dared not move.

The most flagrant instance, however, of Mr. Rhodes's disregard of the law is perhaps to be found in connection with what has been known as the "Countess of Carnarvon" incident. This incident, which occurred in 1891, had reference to the desire on the part of the Chartered Company to obtain a hold over the Portuguese possessions in the neighborhood of Delagoa Bay. Considerable interest had been aroused by the discovery of a navigable entrance to the Limpopo River—a river which, after circling a large part of the northern frontier of the Transvaal, finally debouches into the Indian Ocean a little to the north of Delagoa Bay. Negotiations had been on foot in London, Lisbon, and Pretoria to secure the neutralisation of this navigable stream by agreement between the British, Portuguese, and Transvaal Governments, the Chartered Company ostensibly acting as intermediaries between all three parties. While, however, keeping the Transvaal Government in play with a show of negotiation, the Chartered Company dispatched the small steamer "Countess of Carnarvon" from Port Elizabeth, laden with guns and ammunition for the chief Gungunhana, a vassal to the Portuguese, with the view of inducing him to revolt against Portuguese authority. To secure secrecy the "Countess of Carnarvon" violated the Cape law by sailing without a legal clearance. But what did that matter? Mr. Rhodes wanted the thing done, and Acts of the Cape Parliament, even though he was himself Premier, might be ignored. The "Countess of Carnarvon"

* The Act was passed by the Cape Parliament in 1888

was not, however, altogether successful in this piratical expedition, being seized by a Portuguese gunboat on emerging from the river.* The matter was patched up somehow between the British and Portuguese Governments, and one of Mr. Rhodes's employees, who took a leading part in the expedition, was rewarded with an appointment, made in defiance of all regulations, in the Cape Civil Service. It was Mr. Rhodes, who might do what seemed to him good, even though driving a coach-and-four through any or all the Acts of the Colonial Parliament.

VII.

MR. RHODES ON HIMSELF.

One of Mr. Rhodes's warmest admirers thus expresses himself: "The downright, bluff, English sincerity of the man slips out in his speeches as well as in his conversation, and sometimes makes his utterances injudicious."† It is, perhaps, fortunate that the world is in possession of some of those utterances, though for the word "injudicious," many persons would probably substitute "brutal" or "insulting." One of the most famous was that in which Mr. Rhodes referred to the British regard for law and morality as "unctuous rectitude." The expression contained both a sneer and an admission—an admission that, so far as he himself was concerned, rectitude was not a thing to be valued; the sneer conveyed the implication that the regard for rectitude on the part of a British Government or a British official was not real, but only pretended—that, in fact, whereas Mr. Rhodes resembled his own countrymen in respect of unscrupulousness, he differed from them in not deeming it necessary to appear virtuous. It is significant, startlingly significant, that Mr. Rhodes's warmest admirer in print specially applies this famous expression of his to the conduct of the Lord Chief Justice of England when presiding over the trial of Dr. Jameson and his fellow-raiders. "It was not," says this disciple and admirer of Mr. Rhodes, "the attitude of Mr. Labouchere, whom he regards as, at any rate, an open, if virulent enemy, but the attitude of the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Russell, that Mr. Rhodes's celebrated phrase of 'unctuous rectitude' was intended to describe."‡ On the same page this admirer says: "It has been left to the Lord Chief Justice of England, apparently through fear of foreign opinion and a feeble anxiety to pose as perfectly impartial, to treat the English officers and their gallant leader, when they appeared before him, as though they had been criminals instead of honorable Englishmen who had merely erred through excess of devotion to the Empire."

It will strike most people that these attacks on the highest judicial authority made in the interest of Mr. Rhodes, are damaging rather to those who make them than to those against whom they are directed. It is worth while to point out what this gentleman, who accuses his countrymen at large of rascality *plus* hypocrisy, himself did to set the standard of public morals. No one will make the mistake of accusing of rectitude the Colonial Premier who wilfully deceived both his colleagues in office and her Majesty's representative; the Privy Councillor who took an active part in preparing hostilities against a country with which his own Sovereign was at peace; the gentleman who made use of a forged letter to mislead the English public. These things remain and cannot be got over, in spite of Mr. Chamberlain.

* The facts connected with this adventure were recently before the English law-courts in the case of "Chaddock v. The British South Africa Co."

† "Cecil Rhodes." By Imperialist, p. 273. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 174.

There is that other famous utterance or maxim of Mr. Rhodes, to the effect that "every man has his price." It is not altogether new, but Mr. Rhodes deserves credit—or discredit—for having stated the principle in its barest and most repellent form. It is a doctrine, too, on which he has acted, and which has, unfortunately, received only too much support from actual fact. It has reaped confirmation from the support of politicians, the laudations of writers, the blessings—the fact cannot be disguised—of churches. It carries with it as its complement the profession of the blackmailer, who naturally does not see why the power to injure, equally with the power to help, should not be reduced to the level of a monetary equivalent. It is a doctrine that comes from the bottomless pit, a doctrine that absolutely denies the existence of honor or principle in either man or woman. It is not true; it is damnably false: but the extent to which it has secured acceptance—acceptance that has gone so far as to assent to the placing of a mere monetary value upon the national flag of Great Britain—serves to show how terribly degrading are the influences that come in wherever Mr. Rhodes is allowed to take a lead.

This habit on the part of Mr. Rhodes to betray himself has not been without its value in immediate connection with the present war. On the 17th March last the *Daily Mail*, a journal warmly devoted to his interests, published, above the signature of "Julian Ralph," what purported to be "A talk with Mr. Cecil Rhodes," immediately after the relief of Kimberley. Here is an extract, professing to give Mr. Rhodes's own words:—

"Glad to have Kimberley relieved? Of course, we are all glad; but, in Heaven's name, why was it not done sooner? What was the good of all that messing about at Rensburg and Colesberg? Why did they not do at first what was so readily done at last? The earlier plans were different, you say? I should think they were! There is little use telling you what General Buller's plans were, I suppose; you people in England have such wonderful ideas about his generalship. Do you know what his orders to Lord Methuen were with regard to Kimberley? They were these: Methuen was to come here, relieve the town, carry all the people away out of it, and then fall back to Orange River. . . . I say that it is scandalous. It would have been a disgrace upon England had it been carried out. Take all these people away, leave the town, and fall back to Orange River! I don't refer to the abandonment of the town as a disgrace, but to the falling back to Orange River. Why should an English General plan a retreat, arrange to fall back? It is simply monstrous!" *

Thus Mr. Rhodes speaks for himself. Thus the great Imperialist sneers at the military commanders whose reputation and success are so dear to his own countrymen, improving on the sneer by declaring, to the same friendly interviewer, that the numbers of the enemy were exaggerated "simply because by doing so we account for bad generalship without confessing it."† It is the same friendly interviewer, who on Mr. Rhodes's behalf, makes complaint that even after Kimberley was relieved the military demanded the arrest of the editor of a Kimberley newspaper, merely for saying, "It was time Kimberley was relieved," Mr. Rhodes being himself the writer of the article. "It was in Mr. Rhodes's presence," says Mr. Julian Ralph, "that General French was asked to make the arrest. The general would have nothing to do with the matter."‡

The true inwardness of the situation, however, has been further revealed by another journalistic servitor of Mr. Rhodes, who, in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 26th March, writing from Kimberley as the "resident correspondent" of that journal, made plain the prompting causes of Mr. Rhodes's state of mind. The general idea of this communication can be gathered from its

* *Daily Mail*, 17 March, 1900. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*

opening sentence :—“ One of the first fruits of the deliverance of Kimberley from its trying and protracted siege was that Mr. Rhodes's constant attempts to hold the annual meeting of De Beers Company were finally crowned with success.” Some might have been disposed to think of the interests of the thousands of non-combatants, suffering for months, and largely on Mr. Rhodes's account, from the perils of the siege and the insufficiency of food. But no; in the eyes of Mr. Rhodes's apologists it is Mr. Rhodes first always. His great monopolist company had been annoyed through the postponement of its annual meeting. Let us quote again :—

“ The third attempt to hold the meeting was on Dec. 5. Mr. Rhodes, who was evidently piqued by the delay at the Modder River, waxed somewhat sarcastic on this occasion. He said it was not their fault that these constant adjournments had taken place. He believed the British troops were on the Kimberley side of the Modder River, and the distance from Kimberley to the Modder River was twenty miles; but he would not be justified in saying how long it would take a military force to cover that distance. Again the shareholders adjourned. On Dec. 12, the morrow of the disastrous engagement at Magersfontein, the fourth attempt was made. Mr. Rhodes apologised upon this occasion to the shareholders, and said that he did not think it had been entirely his fault; he had been, if he might put it so, too trustful. The proceedings were, thereupon, adjourned *sine die*, and no further attempt was made to hold the meeting during the siege.” *

Nothing about the terrible loss of life. De Beers meeting was delayed; Kimberley could not wait; Mr. Rhodes became sarcastic; nothing “exasperated him more . . . than the reports which reached him in some mysterious fashion of the existence of a very strong feeling in military and political circles at home in favour of leaving Kimberley to take its chance, and concentrating the western portion of the British forces upon the invasion of the Free State from the Orange River.” There was, perhaps, something which exasperated Mr. Rhodes still more. It was that Colonel Kekewich, the Imperial officer charged with the direction of the defence of Kimberley, “treated Mr. Rhodes as a simple civilian.” † A terrible error! Mr. Rhodes should have been treated as omnipotent. It was because of this error that he did not hesitate to violate the law under which he was living by writing an article in the only paper he allows to exist in Kimberley, reflecting on the conduct of the military authorities, and calculated to cause that alarm and despondency which are so dangerous to a post undergoing a siege. This is what Mr. Rhodes did in return for being treated “as a simple civilian,” and this is how his admiring apologist comments on the situation he created :—

“ I have seen it stated, even in a leading South African journal, that the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* was suppressed by the military authorities. This is not the case. Colonel Kekewich was not in a position to take such a drastic measure, as the views expressed in the leading article evoked such universal public approval that the suppression of the paper would have given rise to a very dangerous state of popular feeling.” ‡

This is something a good deal more than causing despondency. It is a threat of absolute mutiny under conditions which would have rendered such mutiny high treason of a peculiarly aggravated description. Did Mr. Rhodes, directly or indirectly, make at the time any such threat as, if his apologist may be trusted, he was prepared to make if his dignity were too much encroached upon? And is this your Imperialist, with regard to whom such questions have to be asked?

* *Daily Telegraph*, 26 March, 1900. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*

VIII.

WHAT MR. RHODES HAS COST US.

The fact seems to be at last dawning on a good many minds that Mr. Rhodes is, as regards the Empire, a somewhat expensive luxury. How expensive a luxury he is an effort will now be made to show.

It was in 1888 that Mr. Rhodes obtained the charter for the British South Africa Company. By 1893 it was pretty plainly seen that the company was a financial failure. Its shares were quoted at barely above par,* and it had become clear that there was no gold worth speaking of to be obtained in Mashonaland. At the same time reports began to be circulated that though there might be no gold in Mashonaland, there was plenty to be had in Matabeleland. About the same time, moreover, reports began to be circulated that the Matabele chief Lo Bengula, whose conduct up to then had been universally praised,† was getting "cheeky," and would have to be settled with.

By methods which are well understood in South Africa, and which ought to be now better understood in England, a pretext for a quarrel with Lo Bengula was manufactured. By means of organised misrepresentation and the judicious use of the telegraph it came to be believed in this country that the settlers in Mashonaland were in imminent danger of being wiped out by a "horde" of savages. ("Horde" is a very effective word in connection with enterprises of this kind.) The Chartered Company's forces invaded Matabeleland, and by great good luck managed to seize Bulawayo with trifling loss. The event, according to the enthusiastic language of the leading newspaper in Rhodesia, "changed the face of heaven and earth."‡ A brisk business was immediately done in Chartered Company's shares at an enhanced price, while in England the additional capital that was needed to mend the rents in the company's financial garments was raised without difficulty.§ The fact that some thousands of Matabele lost their lives, as well as a detachment of gallant Europeans, was of little importance in the opposite scale. Such an appearance of prosperity was created that the chief holders of Chartered Company's shares were able, a little later, to unload them upon the public at a heavy profit.

The Jameson "plan" and the Jameson raid, designed to reinforce the Chartered Company at the expense of the Transvaal, followed, to be succeeded in turn by the Matabele rebellion. Then the damage to the Empire began to accrue. It was still for the most part moral damage—the damage that comes to a great State when, under the shelter of its flag, acts are performed which not even the most cynical can describe as honorable or salutary. Meantime the Chartered Company was again in an impoverished condition, struggling to maintain an appearance of prosperity and of financial stability, but, so far as the general opinion of the world was concerned, struggling very much in vain.

The hope for the Chartered Company still lay in the Transvaal—in the goldfields that had been gradually brought nearer and nearer to the realisation of such a monopoly as some years before had overtaken the diamond fields. There was, however, only one way in which the Transvaal goldfields could be utilised. As a war had been necessary—a war on a manufactured pretext—for the seizure of Matabeleland, so a war on a manufactured pretext was necessary

* *Rhodesia Herald*, 27 Oct., 1893.

† *Ibid.*, 10 Dec., 1892.

‡ *Ibid.*, 10 Nov. 1893.

§ *Ibid.*, 17 Nov., 1893.

for the seizure of the Transvaal. But, as the Chartered Company was not in itself strong enough to manage the business, the Imperial Government had to be lugged in. Thanks to Mr. Chamberlain and his peculiar relations with Mr. Rhodes—relations which yet remain to be explored—this was not a matter of very grave difficulty.

Let us look at the matter squarely. Here is the salient fact—that but for Mr. Rhodes and his newspapers, and his alliance with Mr. Chamberlain, there would have been no war. Twelve months ago—in March, 1899, long before the Conference met at Bloemfontein—everything was in train for a friendly and pacific settlement of Transvaal difficulties. Johannesburg and Pretoria had exchanged friendly calls; the basis of an agreement had been decided upon; all that was wanted was the sanction of the London representatives of Johannesburg finance. These heads communicated with the Imperial Government. The Imperial Government vetoed any settlement not brought about by itself. The negotiations thereupon collapsed.

Negotiation began again at Bloemfontein, not, as it must be feared, with the view of arriving at a peaceable settlement, but rather with the view of rendering a peaceable settlement impossible. Thanks to the manner of the negotiations, the policy of calculated irritation pursued by Mr. Chamberlain, the country (as the *Times* put it) avoided the peril of a pacific settlement. The chief Rhodesian journal, of course, wanted war because Mr. Rhodes wanted war. And Mr. Rhodes and his newspapers got what they wanted.

And now what? We see the old design coming up again—the old design of restoring the shattered constitution of the Chartered Company by means of the new blood of the Transvaal goldfields. This is not what the Outlanders want. They know too much of Mr. Rhodes's methods in Kimberley and in Rhodesia. They do not desire a rule of industrial terrorism, nor are they unmindful of the 50 per cent. burden upon the gold industry in the Chartered Company's territories. They begin to see that they have been subjected to the worry and losses of a war, and that in the end, if the chief contriver of that war has his way, they will be left infinitely worse off than they were before. If they could have foreseen this, would they have allowed themselves to be used as cat's-paws by Mr. Rhodes? Of course not. They would have come to a friendly settlement with the Transvaal Government, and there would have been no war.

For let no one lose sight of this fact—that though the war now devastating South Africa is, so far as Imperial responsibility is concerned, Mr. Chamberlain's war, it is, in respect of the intrigues that have so astutely led up to it, Mr. Rhodes's war. When, shortly after the Jameson Raid, Mr. Rhodes declared that his career was only beginning, and expressed his intention to proceed in future by constitutional means, there were those who plainly foresaw the end he was aiming at. If he could regain his reputation in the Cape Colony, if he could once more secure the support of a majority in the Cape Parliament, he could again direct, in a manner which it was not difficult to guess, the course of Imperial policy in South Africa. It was in furtherance of this end that he forced a Redistribution Act upon the Cape Government, under the impression that the new elections would result in his favor. In spite of the corrupt practices which the Colonial Courts subsequently exposed and severely censured, his hopes were disappointed. The Schreiner Ministry, which had become an anti-Rhodes Ministry by pure force of circumstances, still maintained and more than maintained its lead. It was when this fact was finally apparent that the stories of insecurity in Johannesburg and of an anti-British conspiracy in the Cape Colony began to gather force. It was here that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner gave the necessary push to the rock which Mr. Rhodes had set rolling. The results are now with us.

Mr. Rhodes wanted war, and, with the assistance of Mr. Chamberlain, he

has got it. Here, then, is what Mr. Rhodes has cost the Empire up to the present time (April) some sixty millions in cash and some seventeen thousand in killed and wounded, not to speak of the ill-will of foreign States and the risks and expenses involved therein. An expensive empire-maker, truly!

This is what Mr. Rhodes has cost the Empire up to the present moment, without taking into account the degradation of national sentiment and national ideals that has resulted from the unhappy ascendancy he has managed to attain. But what he has cost the Empire already is nothing to what he will cost the Empire unless he is nationally disowned and discredited. The future of South Africa has still to be settled, and what all true Englishmen must pray is that that future may be settled, not in the spirit of violence and greed animating Mr. Rhodes and his applauders, but in the spirit of that conciliatory statesmanship which has played so large and worthy a part in the building up of our Colonial Empire. Mr. Rhodes and his methods have occupied the public attention far too long already. It is time that they were thrust aside. The power of money is great, no doubt; it is probably greater at this moment than at any previous epoch of British history. But it is not everything. There is an element of sanity and justice in the British race that has more than once risen up to correct and repair the errors committed under false and hasty impressions. That element of sanity and justice is still with us, and will infallibly assert itself. When it does so assert itself, the country will awake, like Titania, to marvel at its extraordinary infatuation.