

SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY.

(Reprinted from the "Morning Leader.")

- 1652.—A settlement formed at the Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch East India Company, as a "half-way house" on the route to India.
- 1685.—A large number of families of French Protestant refugees, driven from France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, arrive at the Cape. It is owing to this immigration that so many French surnames—such as Joubert, Du Plessis, Marais, Du Toit, &c.—are to-day found among the "Boers" (i.e., farmers) of the Free State and the Transvaal.
- 1795.—Cape Colony temporarily taken possession of by the British. Restored to Holland at the peace of Amiens in 1802.
- 1806.—Cape Colony again seized by the British, the Dutch settlers, some of whom were dissatisfied with the arbitrary rule of the Dutch East India Company, making but slight resistance.
- 1812.—As the result of an attempted rebellion against British authority, five Dutch farmers are hanged, under circumstances of exceptional inhumanity, at a place called Slaghters Nek. The incident has never been forgotten among the Dutch in South Africa.
- 1814.—Great Britain confirmed, by European consent, in the possession of the Cape Colony.
- 1834.—Many Dutch farmers in the Cape Colony practically ruined by the sudden abolition of slavery. Gradual abolition they were quite prepared to accept. The sudden abolition, coupled with the utter inadequacy of the compensation provided by the British Government, left them practically penniless.
- 1834.—A great rising of natives in the Eastern part of Cape Colony. Hundreds of homesteads are devastated and burnt, and the settlers and their families reduced to desperate straits. Ultimately the forces of civilization prevail, and the natives—warlike tribes closely allied to the Zulus and the Matabele—are defeated.
- 1835.—The British Government, ignoring the sufferings and sacrifices of the settlers, and misled as to the facts of the case, issue a proclamation undoing the results of the severe struggle against savagery, and replacing the native tribes on their former lands.
- 1835.—This year is marked as the beginning of the most remarkable event in South African history, usually spoken of as "The Great Trek." A large number of Dutch families, finding it impossible to live under the British Government (which was then, it must be remembered, under the control of arbitrary and unsympathetic military governors), determined to quit their homes and go out into the then unknown wilderness to the north of the Orange River, the principal boundary between the Cape Colony and the territories to the northward. These families are sometimes spoken of as "the emigrant farmers," sometimes as "the emigrant Boers" (which means the same thing), sometimes only as "the voortrekkers," a Dutch word which might be translated into English as "pioneers."

- 1836 to 1838.—Several parties of "voortrekkers" set out from the eastern districts of the Cape Colony. One of the most important is under the leadership of Andries Pretorius (after whose son the town of Pretoria is named), and with this party goes Paul Kruger, then a boy about ten years old. Another important party is under the leadership of Gerrit Maritz and Pieter Retief. This latter party, going eastward through what is now the Free State, descend the Drakensberg Mountains into what is now Natal, where they make a treaty with the great Zulu chief Dingaan, uncle of Cetuyayo. Retief and others are treacherously massacred by Dingaan, who tries to extirpate all the party. The "voortrekkers," however, managed to hold their own against enormous odds, and on 16th December, 1838, totally defeated the whole Zulu army, the day being still kept among the Dutch as a day of thanksgiving. These events led to the founding of the Republic of Natal, the capital of which—Pietermaritzburg—is named after the two leaders. Meantime, the party of "voortrekkers" under Pretorius has to struggle against the power of the Matabele chief Mosilikatze, the father of Lo Bengula, whom they finally compel to retire from what is now the Transvaal into the more northerly territories now known as Rhodesia. The independent Governments of the Orange River Free State and the South African Republic are formed, the capital of the latter being at first at Potchefstroom.
- 1842.—The British Government at Cape Town, sending an expedition round by sea, overthrow the Dutch Republic of Natal and take possession of the country, many of the original Dutch settlers retiring into the Free State and Transvaal.
- 1848.—The British Government proclaims its authority over the Orange Free State, establishing that authority after a battle has been fought with the Dutch Settlers at Boomplaats.
- 1852.—The independence of the South African Republic is acknowledged by Great Britain in a document known as the Sand River Convention.
- 1854.—British rule is withdrawn from the Orange Free State, the independence of which is also recognised by Great Britain.
- For some twenty years both these Republics enjoy their own uneventful existence, uninterfered with by Great Britain. In the Transvaal, after some internal dissensions, a settled but simple form of Government is firmly established, the town of Pretoria being founded as occupying a central position. About 1870, however, the discovery of diamonds near the Orange River, and the reports of gold discoveries in the Transvaal, bring about a reversal of British policy. The farms on which diamonds were discovered, and on which Kimberley now stands, are claimed as British territory on behalf of a native chief who, it is alleged, had ceded his claim to the British Government. Ultimately the Free State Government is, under protest, ousted from the diamond fields, receiving from the British Government the sum of £90,000 as compensation.
- 1872.—Mr. T. F. Burgers elected President of the Transvaal.
- 1874.—The second Beaconsfield Ministry comes into office, Lord Carnarvon being Secretary of State for the Colonies.
- 1875.—Lord Carnarvon formulates a scheme for South African confederation, which is to include, if possible, the two Republics.
- 1876.—A policy of irritation and fault-finding commenced against the Transvaal by Lord Carnarvon, the Transvaal being accused on one hand of maltreating natives, and on the other hand of being in danger of being wiped out by native tribes.

- 1877.—The annexation of the Transvaal declared at Pretoria by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, President Burgers contenting himself with a verbal protest.
- 1877.—A deputation of Transvaal burghers, including Mr. Kruger, visit England to protest against the annexation. They are told it is irrevocable.
- 1878.—A second deputation sent to England, including Mr. Kruger and Mr. P. J. Joubert. They receive the same answer.
- 1879.—The Zulu war commences, at the instance of Sir Bartle Frere, then High Commissioner at the Cape. The official theory of the war was that the Zulus were supposed to be threatening the Transvaal, and that if the Zulus were subdued the Boers of the Transvaal would gratefully acquiesce in the British annexation. The Zulus, after having utterly annihilated a large portion of the British force at Isandhlwana (22nd January), are finally defeated in July at Ulundi.
- 1880.—Mr. Gladstone comes into office. Misled by official representations from South Africa, he considers the annexation of the Transvaal irrevocable.
- 1880.—December.—An attempt by the British Administration in the Transvaal to levy taxes leads to open revolt by the Boers. A detachment of a British regiment marching to Pretoria is intercepted by a Boer force at Bronkhorstspruit, and after a short action compelled to surrender. (This is sometimes spoken of as a "massacre"; Sir Evelyn Wood has always declared that it was "a fair fight.")
- 1881.—Sir George Colley tries to force the Boer position at Laing's Nek but is repulsed and cut off from his line of communications. A few days later, in endeavouring to restore those communications, he is again defeated at Ingogo. Efforts made, both in England and South Africa, to bring about a suspension of hostilities are partially successful. On the 27th February, 1881, however, Sir George Colley, having seized Majuba Hill with a small force, is a third time defeated, losing his life in the action.
- 1881.—(23rd March).—Terms of Peace agreed to, Mr. Gladstone declaring that he could not commit the country to "bloodguiltiness." These terms of peace are confirmed by the Pretoria Convention, dated 3rd August, restoring independence with considerable limitations. The Boers, through their National Assembly (Volksraad), accept the limitations under protest, and with a promise from the British Government that if the Convention is found to work badly it shall be revised.
- 1884.—London Convention signed, superseding Pretoria Convention, and abolishing all limitations on Transvaal independence except the right of the Queen to veto foreign treaties concluded by the Transvaal which might seem opposed to British interests.
- 1887.—All South Africa prosperous and contented, the bitterness created by the war of 1881 forgotten, and everything making for a political union of the South African States and Colonies.
- 1887.—The value of the goldfields at Witwatersrand, first discovered in 1886, becoming more and more apparent.
- 1888.—Amalgamation of the Kimberley diamond mines carried out by Mr. Rhodes, with the financial assistance of the Rothschilds.
- 1889.—Messrs. Rhodes and Beit, having become South African millionaires through the Kimberley amalgamation, obtain from the British Government the grant of a charter to the British South Africa Company, with two dukes and a prospective earl as life directors.
- 1890.—Mr. Rhodes, with the support of the Dutch party in the Cape Colony (generally spoken of as the "Afrikander Bond" party), becomes Premier in Cape Town.



- 1890.—The Transvaal Government, with the view of assisting the gold industry, proposes and carries important reforms, including the construction of railways, the improvement of the mining laws, and means for the gradual admission of the newcomers to a share in the government of the Republic.
- 1890.—Mr. Rhodes, acting through the High Commissioner, tries to draw the Transvaal into a quarrel with the Imperial Government with regard to Swaziland. Mr. Hofmeyr, the leader of the Cape Dutch party, intervenes, and the difficulties are got over.
- 1891.—Mr. Rhodes again tries to involve the Transvaal in a quarrel with England over the alleged intention of Dutch farmers from various parts of South Africa to migrate into the Chartered Company's territory. Mr. Kruger stops the movement by a proclamation.
- 1894.—Mr. Rhodes, desiring to secure a monopoly of Johannesburg trade for the ports and railways of the Cape Colony, again raises friction with the Transvaal Government, which aims at securing alternative railway routes from Natal and Delagoa Bay.
- 1895.—Lord Ripon retires from the Colonial Office, and is succeeded by Mr. Chamberlain.
- 1895.—The railway dispute between the Cape Colony, with Mr. Rhodes as Premier, and the Transvaal, leads to the closing of the "drifts" (i.e., fords) across the Vaal River by the Transvaal Government. Mr. Chamberlain is discussing with Mr. Rhodes the propriety of going to war over this matter, when the Transvaal Government withdraws its proclamation. (The contention that the closing of the drifts was a breach of the London Convention is more than doubtful.)
- 1895.—Agitation stirred up in Johannesburg against the Transvaal Government, and a long list of grievances prepared by the Transvaal National Union. Arms imported, and revolution threatened.
- 1895-6.—Dr. Jameson with an armed force crosses the Transvaal border. Is intercepted, defeated, and, with his force taken prisoner, the Transvaal Government agreeing, at Mr. Kruger's instance, to hand over the prisoners to the British Government. The Afrikaner party in the Cape Colony withdraw their support from Mr. Rhodes, who resigns office. Investigation shows that the firms in Johannesburg representing Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit, found the means both for Jameson's raid and the attempted revolution in Johannesburg.
- 1897.—Committee of the House of Commons, after investigating the history of the Jameson Raid, condemns Mr. Rhodes. Mr. Chamberlain, in discussing the Committee's report in the House of Commons, declares Mr. Rhodes to be free from stigma.
- 1897.—Lord Rosmead (Sir Hercules Robinson) retires from the Cape Governorship. Is succeeded by Sir Alfred Milner.
- 1898.—Mr. Rhodes's party in the Cape Parliament is defeated, and Mr. Schreiner forms a new Ministry. Although at first able to command only a bare majority in the Cape House of Assembly, Mr. Schreiner finds his majority substantially increased by the action of a Redistribution Bill, brought forward originally in the interest of Mr. Rhodes.
- 1899.—The South African League, a pro-Rhodes and anti-Transvaal organisation, starts a vigorous campaign, largely through the Press, against the Transvaal Government, Sir Alfred Milner and Mr. Chamberlain assisting and approving.
- TO-DAY.**—War imminent, involving a racial conflict in South Africa and a terrible expenditure in blood and money on the part of Great Britain.