

TRANSVAAL INDEPENDENCE COMMITTEE,
PALACE CHAMBERS,
9, BRIDGE STREET,
WESTMINSTER.

FOUR YEARS OF PROTEST

IN

THE TRANSVAAL.

A Poem

from the South African Blue Books.

BY

EDMUND H. VERNEY, Captain R.N.,

CHAIRMAN OF THE TRANSVAAL INDEPENDENCE COMMITTEE.

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WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY, W.

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THE TRANSVAAL.

THE Blue Books contain many graphic descriptions of the Transvaal. Lord Carnarvon speaks (C. 1814, p. 5) of its great natural resources, its admirable climate, its fertile soil, unsurpassed by any in South Africa, and its rich mineral wealth—a land of the richest promise.* At the time of the annexation, Sir T. Shepstone estimated the number of whites in the country at 8000 men capable of bearing arms, of whom about 6650 farmers were the producers whom the Republic had to depend on, and who constituted the military strength of the State (C. 1776, p. 126). The Boer population of the Transvaal consists of about thirty vast families (C. 2144, p. 99), numbering from thirty to forty thousand souls.

When Sir Bartle Frere visited the Boers he found the leaders to be, with few exceptions, men who deserved respect and regard for many valuable and amiable qualities as citizens and subjects (C. 2367, p. 56). In simple faith, in fidelity to all obligations of family, race, and kindred; in reverential observance of all spiritual obligations and precepts, as understood by them

* See also Sir T. Shepstone to the same effect (C. 1776, p. 127).

from the Word of God—their sole text-book and written authority—they strongly remind one of the Puritans and Covenanters of earlier days. In education, and in the refinements which go with it, they are obviously behind the better class of Dutch farmers in the Cape Colony, who belong to the same original stock. Comparatively few have had the advantage of a whole year's schooling of any kind, but this only makes more meritorious the amount of education, almost self-acquired, to be found among them, and more touching their earnest desire to give to their children advantages in the way of education which have been denied to themselves. They are extremely sensitive to ridicule and to opprobrious or slanderous imputations, feeling most keenly unjust charges brought against their race by any in authority.

Before the annexation they enjoyed what Sir Bartle Frere considered only too much of self-government (C. 2482, p. 18), but they showed no incapacity for such legislation as the circumstances of the country required. A strong and intimate connection in feeling, as well as blood connection (C. 2482, pp. 444 and 452), exists between the Transvaal Dutch farmers and their relatives, who form so large a portion of the Conservative country party in the Cape Colony.

Sir Garnet Wolseley expressed his high appreciation of the Dutch character, and (C. 2505, p. 111), said that among the Transvaal Boers

were many men who had inherited the best characteristics that had distinguished their Dutch ancestors in days gone by; who had, through education and other refining influences, conserved the best traits of their race, and also added to them the best characteristics of the other race with whom they had been brought in contact.

In 1879 the native population of the Transvaal was estimated at between 700,000 and 800,000 (C. 2584, p. 11) (C. 1776, p. 126), who had been attracted by the power to accumulate wealth, possessed only because they lived under the protection of a government of white people (C. 2740, p. 91). When the Boers first colonized the Transvaal they found the country free for occupation, and without any of the original inhabitants (C. 2740, pp. 5 and 90). In the northern districts as well as the southern, the original natives of the Transvaal had been entirely routed and dispossessed by neighbouring warlike tribes. In wisely governing the natives now settled in the Transvaal, and making largely available their free labour, is included the most valuable resource of the country (C. 1961, p. 71). But it is a task of extreme difficulty, especially on the borders. No country can maintain its own frontier in a state of prosperity and advancement if that frontier abuts on a barbarous race, who are under no government but that of force (C. 2740, p. 40). The wars and struggles

with barbarism which the pioneer Boers have encountered during the last forty years (C. 2367, p. 19) may well make us somewhat tolerant in judging of their dealings with the native tribes.

Charges of slavery and cruelty to the natives have been freely made against the Boers, and not without cause in some cases ; but blame or complicity on the part of their government is emphatically denied (C. 2220, p. 363). The fact is that the same charges have been made against the English colonists, and with quite as much cause.

For instance, in 1879 an official list was made of ninety-nine native men, women, and children indentured to forced servitude under the English flag (C. 2740, p. 54), for periods varying from one to fourteen years—a proceeding dangerously like slavery ; credit was taken for the younger children being, *as far as possible*, kept with their parents. In the same year it is stated, on Mr. Chesson's authority, that Kaffir women were caught by hundreds (C. 2482, p. 12) and sent down to the Western Province of the Cape of Good Hope, 700 miles from their families, and there virtually enslaved for three years and six months. Their children were taken from them. One morning there was a great commotion, and everyone was out to witness the unfortunate mothers who were leaving their young folks behind. All who were there that day confessed that it was a sad and sorrowful sight. There was an escort of

police armed with guns and swords. When the women were ordered to leave, they did not know their destination. When about ten yards from the depôt they raised such a cry as moved the heart of every spectator. Amidst the confusion and crying, one of the women took a knife and attempted to commit suicide. One of the police took the knife from her. No one could bear to look at the sight. In vain she cried out for her children; she was forced to go. Words fail to describe the harrowing scene (C. 2482, p. 199). The truth of this story has not been denied.

The indentureship system at the Cape is analogous to the system which exists among the Boers, and which has been the subject of so many indignant protests on the part of the British Government (C. 2482, p. 364). Mr. Chesson observed that Sir Bartle Frere's explanations on these subjects failed to refute the statements made. In the following year Mr. Chesson again complained that several thousands of Kaffirs have been indentured under circumstances which painfully remind one of the similar practices committed by the Dutch Boers, and which called forth remonstrances on the part of successive Secretaries of State (C. 2676, p. 1).

Mr. Sprigg, the Premier at the Cape, advocated that every year a number of the youth should be brought down from the frontier and placed in compulsory service in the western districts; even although the colonists would probably be charged

with attempting to re-establish slavery (C. 2482, p. 25).

It is quite possible that the treatment of the native races by the Boers is worse than by the British colonists, but the fact does not appear in the Blue Books. Where both are bad it is not easy to decide which is worse, and at the time of the annexation Sir T. Shepstone considered that in the Transvaal it was the white population that required shielding from the black (C. 1776, p. 109).

Excellent and well-intentioned men are saying, that in any terms of peace granted to the Boers guarantees must be exacted against their ill-treatment of the native population. The proposal is in the abstract good, but to whom are the guarantees to be given? There will not be much gained by the pot giving guarantees to the kettle.

Natives have not been and are not now allowed to hold land in the Transvaal (C. 2740, p. 84), (C. 2482, p. 4). Sir George Colley considered (C. 2740, p. 88) that to recognize native ownership of lands in the sense in which a white man holds land would be at once to place them at the mercy of every adventurer and land speculator.

For the right understanding of South African questions, it is necessary to observe that there are three classes of inhabitants: the Whites, the Adventurers, and the Blacks (C. 2367, p. 145), also (C. 2740, p. 89). Whether for purposes of cruelty or of kindness, there is never any

mistake about a Black; you know him when you see him, and you pet him or you pot him as the spirit moves you at the moment. The Whites and the Adventurers are always being mistaken for each other. Petitions, memorials, resolutions, or addresses of a company of Adventurers are often supposed to emanate from Whites; and Whites have often to bear the blame of cruelties inflicted on Blacks by mere Adventurers. The Adventurer is the disturbing element in South African politics.

II

ANNEXATION.

On December 20, 1876, Sir T. Shepstone wrote a somewhat cavalier letter to President Burgers, announcing his approaching visit with an armed escort, in terms not unlike those in which Sir Neville Chamberlain announced his visit to Shere Ali (C. 1776, p. 40). Its object was said to be to inquire into the origin of certain disturbances, to adopt measures to prevent their recurrence, and to confer. He was well received on the 22nd of January, 1877 (C. 1776, p. 88). Addresses were presented to him (C. 1776, p. 81), their tenor one and all being favourable to *confederation*. On the 26th the conference was opened, when Mr. Paul Kruger at once positively declined to enter upon the discussion of any subject that might involve in any way the Independence of the State as a Republic. As the conference proceeded, much information was gained which might well cause grave disquiet on behalf of the safety of the State (C. 1776, p. 107), and the President made up his mind to convene the Volksraad. The Volksraad met on the 13th of February, ostensibly to consider confederation (C. 1776, p. 111); but they soon saw into Sir T. Shepstone's designs on their Independence.

On the 22nd a resolution was passed empowering the Executive to take the necessary measures for the maintenance of the Independence of the Republic (C. 2128, p. 12). It was harvest-time; the Volksraad was prorogued, and the members were dismissed to their farms: but from that day to this the Volksraad has never been dissolved. Its next meeting took place on the 13th December, 1880 (C. 2794, p. 4).

President Burgers' term of office was about to expire; he was a candidate for re-election; his opponent was Paul Kruger, and party-feeling ran high (C. 2220, p. 363). President Burgers had many difficulties to contend with; his administration had not been a success, and his political opponents declined to support the scheme of reform which he hoped would have secured for him another term of office; and so they bore with equanimity (C. 1883, p. 27) the anarchy of the moment which they trusted Paul Kruger would soon replace by more vigorous and able administration. Paul Kruger himself expressed a strong hope and confident belief that all would come right in time (C. 1776, p. 109).

This moment of political disunion was seized by Sir T. Shepstone to say plainly that the only remedy lay in accepting the Queen's supremacy: he refused to accept the hopes of President Burgers or of Paul Kruger that either of them would be able to right the State: he dwelt on the empty treasury; the

political disunion and strife of factions (C. 1776, p. 125); the dangers from immense masses of native warlike tribes, who had received the thrilling intelligence that the supremacy of barbarism was no longer hopeless. He pronounced the Transvaal bark unseaworthy, and drew a gloomy and alarming picture of its state of helpless confusion (C. 1776, p. 107). To the Home Government he represented that the possession of the Transvaal would enable Her Majesty's Government at any moment to checkmate the Zulus (C. 1776, p. 128). But when Her Majesty's Government did try to checkmate the Zulus, we became involved in a bloody and disastrous war, and that war was, in the main, the outcome of the annexation (C. 2584 p. 196). Previous to the annexation, it is emphatically denied that the Boers were in danger of a Zulu invasion. No such fear was felt by the Government or people of the Transvaal; and up to the time of the annexation, isolated border farms were occupied by the Dutch farmers without the least apprehension of danger (C. 2128, p. 7).

Addressing the Executive Council in February (C. 2367, p. 100), he disclaimed all wish to use violence, but significantly added that it might be his duty to return to Natal and make room for "the men of the sword," in which case it would be very painful to him to use violence towards men he respected and towards a people whose fathers he had known. At the same time infantry

and artillery were massed on the frontier (C. 1776, p. 104) with orders to be in readiness to proceed at *any time to any place* in the Transvaal to carry out *any request* made by Sir T. Shepstone.

At length matters seemed ripe for the final act. On the 9th of April Sir T. Shepstone wrote to President Burgers that he had determined on annexation (C. 1776, p. 155). On the 11th Sir T. Shepstone received two protests against this high-handed act. That of President Burgers recites, that whereas he has not the power to draw the sword with good success for the defence of the Independence of the State against a superior power like that of England, and hesitates to involve its white inhabitants in a disastrous war without having first employed all peaceable means to secure the rights of the people, therefore in the name of the Government and People he solemnly protests (C. 1775, p. 155). The protest of the Executive Council was to the same purport (C. 2128, p. 13), but further described the annexation as an act of violence: pointing out that it was a breach of the Sand River Treaty of 1852, and that the people, by memorials or otherwise, had by a large majority plainly stated that they were averse to it. At the same time the Executive Council appointed a Deputation, consisting of Mr. Kruger and Dr. Jorissen, to proceed to Europe and lay before Her Majesty's Government the desire and wishes of the people.

At eleven, on the morning of the 12th, the Secretary to the Mission, accompanied by other gentlemen of Sir T. Shepstone's Staff, walked down to the Square, and there read the Proclamations of Annexation to a small crowd of the inhabitants, mostly English (C. 1776, p. 153). There were two Proclamations and an Address; the first Proclamation was long, and set forth all the reasons for annexation; it contained those promises of self-government which were never fulfilled (C. 2481, p. 15); the second was short, and merely formally annexed an Independent State. The Address was to "*My Friends, the Burghers of the Transvaal;*" it complained that they had not proved a blessing to their neighbours, or a strong centre of Christianity and Civilization (C. 1776, p. 160), and told them, moreover, that Her Majesty's Government would gladly have avoided the task of interference if it were not for the positive danger to Her Majesty's subjects and possessions in South Africa. A mild and parental spirit pervaded it; the farmers were to remain at home and be protected from the natives, or, as Sir T. Shepstone playfully put it, the bee was to be left to make its honey; while he assured them that the act of annexation was dictated solely by friendship and solicitude for their welfare. The Address concluded by exhorting them not to let mere feeling or sentiment prevail over judgment, and by assuring them that they would soon find by

experience that annexation was a blessing not only to them and their children, but to the whole of South Africa.

President Burgers was, however, by no means convinced that the Boers would accept as a blessing even to themselves and their children the deprivation of their Independence, and on the same day issued a Proclamation for the preservation of order and prevention of bloodshed (C. 1776, p. 156), reminding the people that their Government had only resolved to submit under protest *in the first place*, while a mission was sent to Europe to endeavour in a peaceable way to settle the matter, and he exhorted the burghers to refrain from any deed of violence whereby the mission might be made fruitless.

The collapse of the Republic was in great measure owing to the functionaries of the State being for the most part foreigners or adventurers. At the time of the annexation there was not a single man in high office who was a native or a genuine Boer of the Transvaal (C. 2367, p. 57). The country was sold and betrayed by foreigners and fortune-hunters (C. 2367, p. 145). The towns and villages may have in some degree desired British rule, because in them the mercantile interest prevailed (C. 1776, p. 109), but they did not constitute more than an eighth part of the entire population (C. 1776, p. 126).

As soon as the annexation became known in the

Cape Colony, its injustice as well as impolicy called forth a strong expression of public feeling there. In June a petition to the Queen was signed by 5400 landowners and other inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope, which expressed their grief that the act had taken place at a moment when it was known that the population at large was loth to part with its Independence, and their fear that in future violence was to take the place of conciliation (C. 1883, p. 28). The pride of the people was offended by the taunt, that the country had been taken by an elderly gentleman accompanied by only twenty-five men, and that not a blow had been struck to save it. Added to these considerations was the traditional, but deeply-rooted, hatred of the English name, which still exists in many families in the Transvaal. But underlying all these was a feeling that could not but command respect, of mortification at failure in attaining an object which history appears to show has been steadfastly kept in view, from the taking of the Cape by the English to the Sand River Convention of 1852, when it was believed to have been accomplished (C. 2144, p. 97).

Sir Bartle Frere landed at the Cape of Good Hope on the 31st of March, 1877. The annexation was practically determined on before this; it was carried out on the 11th of April, before his arrival was known at Pretoria; he need not therefore have incurred any of the responsibility of it; he

might have left the Colonial Office to form their own conclusions as to the wisdom or justice of the step; he might even, if he had thought fit, have pointed out to Lord Carnarvon the injustice and impolicy of it, and that Sir T. Shepstone had exceeded his powers. He followed neither of these courses; on the contrary, he heartily supported Sir T. Shepstone's action (C. 1883, p. 10). He wrote home there was nothing to show that Sir T. Shepstone had exceeded his powers, and that there was no other course open to him than that he adopted as the only mode of extricating the country from its difficulties. He added that all persons with any stake in the country acquiesced in the annexation as a blessing to the country, and naturally his strongly-expressed opinion carried great weight. Every functionary who endorses the action of his subordinate, unquestionably assumes a share of responsibility for it, and, with Lord Carnarvon and others, Sir Bartle Frere must be held responsible for his part in the annexation.

III.

FIRST YEAR, 1877.

We are not, we never have been, and we never will be British subjects (C. 2783, p. 65), (C. 2505, p. 117), (C. 2794, p. 8).

This mysterious and unintelligible sentence has been for four years the cry of the Transvaal Boer. Secretaries of State, High Commissioners, Administrators, and Generals in the field have in vain puzzled over it. Volumes of despatches and memorials have been written, in the unsuccessful attempt to translate it into diplomatic language that a trained diplomatist could understand; deputations have been sent to explain it, but it still remained an unread enigma of national life.

But now when it has been set to the deep music of artillery, and the shrill treble of the rifle bullet, when from the wild heights of the Drakensburg it is wafted over the green plains of Natal as the triumphant death-song of the yeoman fighting for freedom; only now, at last, does it find an echo in Free England mourning the flower of her chivalry dead in South Africa.

We have already seen how the first Deputation was ordered by the Executive Council (C. 1883, p. 2), who had been authorized by the Volksraad to resist

annexation to the utmost (C. 1883, p. 10). On their way to England through Cape Town the Deputation had an interview with Sir Bartle Frere, who did his best to discover whether they really represented any considerable section of the Transvaal population, but failed to discover anything of the kind (C. 1883, p. 15); on the contrary, he held that there had been no expression of opinion in the Transvaal itself, from any class whatever, indicating the slightest desire to undo what had been done. Bearing a letter of introduction from President Burgers (C. 1883, p. 16), they reached England in July, and in several interviews urged on Lord Carnarvon the objects for which they had come. In his reply of the 18th of August (C. 1961, p. 33), he expressed his opinion that only an extremely small minority of the Transvaal community was opposed to acceptance of the Queen's rule, and assured the Delegates that since they had left their country, the enthusiasm for Sir T. Shepstone had, with the vast majority of the people, increased to the extent of apparently absorbing all other feelings. They were not in a position to contradict this statement (C. 2100, p. 28), and so with this answer returned to the Transvaal.

But when they reached their homes they found the spirit of dissatisfaction among their countrymen more determined than before. The failure of their mission caused considerable excitement among the

Boer population (C. 2144, p. 97). In January, 1878, Paul Kruger, who had formed one of the Deputation, wrote a grave letter to the Government Secretary at Pretoria (C. 2100, p. 25), warning him that not a few of his countrymen were very excited, and prepared to regain their liberty with their blood, but he was inducing them to reach their Independence by a peaceful course. At a mass meeting held on the 7th of the same month, to receive the report of the Deputation, it was resolved that it appeared clearly that the loss of their Independence was entirely and solely due to false and incorrect representations given by people who acted from selfish motives. They say they "cannot yet believe that it could be England's will and desire to reign over a people that will not be subject to any power whatsoever" (C. 2128, p. 14), and they forthwith circulated a memorial in favour of the restoration of their Independence, which was signed by 6591 out of the possible 8000 qualified electors in the country. These numbers virtually represent the whole of the adult males of the Dutch population, and were freely given (C. 2220, p. 363).

IV.

SECOND YEAR, 1878.

When the unsuccessful result of the first Deputation became known there was much agitation and indignation (C. 2220, p. 362) among the Boers who had confidently counted on the sense of justice of the English people and Government, while the vigorous language of the petition now being circulated and signed aroused the sense of their wrong (C. 2144, p. 97). Sir T. Shepstone's proclamation to put down the right of public meeting and discussion (C. 2100, p. 83), dated March 11th, 1878, still further incensed them. In defiance of it a mass meeting was held at Doornfontein on the 4th of April, when the idea of force was abandoned, and a second Deputation to England was resolved on (C. 2144, p. 18). On the 6th this Deputation, consisting of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, was selected, and a sum of £1960 was then and there subscribed (C. 2128, p. 11). The object of their visit to England was that the act of annexation should be cancelled (C. 2144, p. 100), that the national Independence, and the flag which was its symbol, should be restored (C. 2144, p. 146), and also to present the petition of January 7th, which has

already been mentioned (C. 2220, p. 363), (C. 2144, p. 75).

On the 14th of May, before setting out on their journey to England, the Deputation addressed to Sir T. Shepstone an earnest letter (C. 2144, p. 128), in which they implored him to give such advice to the Prime Minister as would be conducive to avert the threatening danger and general ruin which, in their opinion, could only be achieved by justice being done to the country and people.

Having arrived in London, the Deputation sought an interview with Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who had succeeded Lord Carnarvon as Colonial Minister (C. 2144, p. 152), to present their memorial signed by the 6591 burghers, and to complete the mission entrusted to the Delegates of the previous year. They were received by him on the 10th of July. On this day they addressed to him an able and temperate letter (C. 2128, p. 15), in which they summarized the three reasons given for the annexation (C. 2128, p. 4)—

1. That the majority desired it.
2. That they had disappointed the hopes of the English Government that they would spread Christianity and Civilization.
3. That their country was poor and defenceless—and pointed out the fallacy or injustice of each argument.

To this letter Sir Michael Hicks Beach replied, on the 6th of August, in a long despatch recapitu-

lating the Colonial Office arguments (C. 2128, p. 16), and stating that he was unable to regard the memorial as representing the true and deliberate opinion of those inhabitants of the Transvaal who were capable of forming a judgment. He said also that he could not believe their fellow-countrymen would attempt to resist by force the duly established Government, more especially when that Government was just and considerate, and preserved to the utmost those customs and institutions to which the people were attached. But in the concluding paragraph, he unwittingly admitted that the promises to preserve the old constitution had *not* been carried out.

The Delegates promptly replied that they could hold out no hope that the policy he indicated would tend to soothe or satisfy the prevailing discontent, and on the 23rd of August wrote a long reply to the Colonial Secretary, dealing in detail with every point brought forward in his despatch of the 6th (C. 2220, p. 362). In reply to the hopes he held out to them of more liberal institutions, they pointed out that their countrymen have at no time contemplated an acceptance of even the most ample fulfilment of the promises of Sir T. Shepstone as the price of their Independence. To this Sir M. Hicks Beach answered that it was the object of Her Majesty's Government to secure to the Transvaal to the utmost practicable extent its individuality and powers of self-government.

From 1877 to 1881 this object was not, however, to the smallest extent carried out, and no Constitution ever was granted to the Transvaal, or any power of self-government.

The Deputation left England on the 24th of October, but before starting addressed another letter to Sir M. Hicks Beach, expressing their great disappointment at being unable to carry back with them the least hope or prospect for their countrymen in respect to the future (C. 2220, p. 368). The Legislature, the voice of the people, and the Government itself had been set aside, they said; and they were convinced that it was only by the redress of its wrongs and the re-establishment of its Independence, that the Transvaal could co-operate for the permanent welfare of South Africa.

During this time calm did not prevail in the Transvaal. On the 18th of July a numerously signed petition was forwarded to Sir Bartle Frere at the Cape, from a Committee in the Transvaal, whose secretary was a Mr. Gunn, of Gunn. This petition set forth in detail (C. 2144, p. 270) the all but universal failure in the fulfilment of the promises made at the time of annexation, and appears to have emanated to a great extent from those who had acquiesced in the annexation in 1877. It complained that Sir T. Shepstone had utterly failed to give the people the promised protection against the natives, that he had abolished trial by jury, that he had summoned no represen-

tative deliberate Assembly, and that to overawe the mass meeting held in January, 1878, troops had been massed and artillery had been trained upon the people. It maintained that the political, financial, and commercial condition of the country had become worse than it was in the days of the Republic; and concluded by suggesting that Sir T. Shepstone should be promoted to some other sphere of political usefulness.

After the return to the Transvaal of the second Deputation, another mass meeting to receive their report was held at Rietvallei, on the 10th of January, 1879. After thanking the Deputation for their self-denial and pains, the meeting resolved to continue protesting against the injustice done, and to concert further measures towards the attainment of their object (C. 2260, p. 72). They accordingly appointed Mr. Joubert as a Deputation to have an interview with Sir Bartle Frere.

Grieved and disappointed at the failure of their two Deputations, but not disheartened, the leaders assumed a more defiant and peremptory tone (C. 2482, p. 14), and the Boers in large numbers signed, in January, 1879, an oath, known as the Wonderfontein Agreement. There is a simple solemnity about it as of men not to be lightly turned aside from a fixed resolve (C. 2316, p. 1).
“In the presence of Almighty God, the Searcher
“of all hearts, and prayerfully waiting on His
“gracious help and pity, we, burghers of the

“ South African Republic, have solemnly agreed,
“ as we do hereby agree, to make a holy covenant
“ for us and for our children, which we confirm
“ with a solemn oath.

“ Fully forty years ago our fathers fled from
“ the Cape Colony to become a free and indepen-
“ dent people. Those forty years were forty
“ years of pain and suffering.

“ We established Natal, the Orange Free State,
“ and the South African Republic, and three times
“ the English Government has trampled our
“ liberty and dragged to the ground our flag,
“ which our fathers had baptized with their blood
“ and tears.

“ As by a thief in the night has our Republic
“ been stolen from us. We may nor can endure
“ this. It is God’s will, and is required of us by
“ the unity of our fathers, and by love to our
“ children, that we should hand over intact to our
“ children the legacy of the fathers.

“ For that purpose it is that we here come
“ together, and give to each other the right hand
“ as men and brethren, solemnly promising to
“ remain faithful to our country and our people,
“ and, with our eye fixed on God, to co-operate
“ until death for the restoration of the freedom of
“ our Republic.

“ So help us Almighty God.”

V.

THIRD YEAR, 1879.

The object of Mr. Joubert's visit to Sir Bartle Frere at Pietermaritzburg was to carry to him the minutes of the mass meeting, and to give him further oral information as to the spirit and the views of the people (C. 2260, p. 70).

The interview took place on the 4th of February (C. 2260, p. 73), when Sir Bartle described Mr. Joubert as singularly well-informed, energetic, and persevering in pursuing what he considered patriotic objects (C. 2260, p. 69). His demand was in brief simply a repetition of former demands for a reversal of the Act of Annexation, and a distinct expression of the determination of the people to regain their Independence. He said the unanimous feeling of the people was that they would have their own Independence, that they would be satisfied with no concession, and that they would have only their own, and ask nothing else from anyone. He repeated that the unanimous desire of the Transvaal public was to regain their Independence, and that when they began to sum up their grievances, they found not a few facts that were as thorns and pricks in their hearts

(C. 2260, p. 75). Sir Bartle Frere closed the interview by expressing his disappointment that there should be nothing now more definite to reply to him as regarded practical measures for the good of the people.

On the 18th of March a mass meeting, said to have been attended by five thousand Boers (C. 2367, p. 58), was held at Kleinfontein to receive from Mr. Joubert the report of this interview. He then told the people that if he looked to the power of England it was as impossible for him to advise resistance to it as it would be for him to touch the heaven with his hand. But that he looked to a Higher Hand above, and that although England was so strong she could crush him to dust, he would, with God's help, rather allow himself to be crushed than give up his liberty, but that he should continue to work for it by law and order. A letter was read from Mr. P. Kruger declining Sir Bartle Frere's invitation to take part in the war against the Zulus (C. 2367, pp. 18 and 61), (C. 2454, p. 44).

On the 24th of March a Deputation waited on Colonel Lanyon at Strydom's Farm, to claim on behalf of the people the Independence which they alleged belonged to them of right. He pointed out to them the benefits and advantages promised by the British Government, to which Mr. Joubert answered that the experience since the annexation had not tended to show that any of these promises

would be fulfilled, that the people wanted nothing but their Independence, and for that were ready to make any sacrifice required of them (C. 2316, p. 88). He further added that no Constitution Sir Bartle Frere could offer, however liberal it might be, would, if it deprived them of their Independence, compensate for the violation of the Sand River Convention (C. 2816, p. 92). In Colonel Lanyon's report of this interview he gave it as his opinion that the men who formed the Deputation were far from representing either the intelligence or the vested interests of the Transvaal, although there were doubtless some men amongst them who really were actuated by the high and noble wish to regain their Independence. He attributed the agitation of the past two years to men who were nearly all foreigners to the soil, with little or no property or vested interests in it, and asserted that if it were not for their evil influence by far the greater portion of the people would gladly accept the peace and sense of security of Her Majesty's rule (C. 2367, p. 59).

We now come to Sir Bartle Frere's visit to the Transvaal, which he had given notice of in December, 1878 (C. 2367, p. 2). He was met by an address of welcome from the Doornfontein Committee (C. 2220, p. 367), who assured him that while they had no doubt the object of his visit was the honourable one of promoting their prosperity and welfare, they attached very little value

to any benefits he might obtain for them if their freedom and Independence were not restored; and that if his object was to confirm British rule, no co-operation was to be looked for from enforced and unwilling subjects like themselves, who formed the pith of the nation. On his way through the country, Sir B. Frere found that the idea that the British Government would be somehow compelled or induced to abandon the country was one which had taken great hold on the minds of some of the more intelligent men he met (C. 2367, p. 52).

The meeting between Sir Bartle Frere and the Boer Deputation took place at Erasmus Spruit, on the 12th of April, and what passed was taken down by a shorthand writer (C. 2367, p. 84). Their arguments were thus summed up by Sir Bartle Frere (C. 2367, p. 83):—

“They maintain that their Independence was
“unjustly taken from them by the Act of Annexation, an Act which they allege was grounded on
“incorrect representations of the state of the
“Transvaal, and of the feebleness of its Government.

“They desire that their Independence may be
“freely and unreservedly restored to them.

“They desire nothing more in the shape of
“concession, and they cannot be content with anything less.

He added that their representations were worthy

of the earnest consideration of the Secretary of State.

In compliance with Sir Bartle Frere's request the Boers also presented a memorandum summing up their wishes (C. 2367, p. 144):—

“ 1. The great majority of the population is
“ against the annexation.

“ 2. The people have of their own free-will
“ united in a meeting for four weeks in order to
“ express their wish to his Excellency, from whom
“ they desired the restitution of their rights.

“ 3. The people desire the annexation to be
“ annulled.

“ 4. The people are not content with anything
“ except the complete restoration of the Indepen-
“ dence as recognized in the Sand River Conven-
“ tion of 1852.

“ 5. If the Convention of 1852 be restored, the
“ people abide by the resolution of the Volksraad
“ of 1877 to enter into a closer union with Her
“ Majesty's Colonies for the benefit of South
“ Africa.”

In reporting this interview to the Secretary of State, Sir Bartle Frere says that he has been shown a stubbornness of a determination to be content with nothing less than Independence, for which he was not prepared, by the general testimony of officials who had been longer in the country, and who professed to believe that the opposition of the Boers was mere bluster, and

that they had not the courage of their professed opinions. He was convinced, he said, that in both respects the information he had generally received had been based on an erroneous conception of the Boer character (C. 2367, p. 56). He was assured that the majority of the Committee felt very deeply what they believed to be a great national wrong, and that if they refrained from attempts to attain their objects by force, it would be, with most of the leaders, from higher motives than any want of courage or self-devotion. He also recognized the present risk of civil strife which the Executive was too weak to prevent; that there was then no real protection for the peaceably disposed, and that the Government of the country was virtually in abeyance, or on sufferance, everywhere outside the capital.

There can be no doubt that Sir Bartle Frere's reply to the Boers, giving them so little hope of their Independence, almost led to an outbreak (C. 2367, p. 76), which was only averted by the firmness of their leaders. On the 17th they came to take leave of Sir Bartle. Their manner was much more cordial than on previous occasions, when it had been simply courteous. One of the Elders took hold of Sir Bartle's hand, and pointing to Colonel Lanyon said, "If we had been talked to in that way from the first all this trouble would never have occurred." The last words of Messrs. Pretorius and Kruger to Sir Bartle

Frere were striking. Mr. Pretorius, who had himself been present at the making of the Sand River Convention (C. 2367, p. 146), said he did not intend again to trek; that one great "trek" awaited him, and when the time for that arrived he hoped to be found ready to go. But that as long as he remained he should strive for his country. Should the Administrator not do what he considered right, he would fight much with him. But his opinion was that England should do them justice (C. 2367, p. 151).

Mr. Kruger asked Sir Bartle Frere not to entertain any other thought than this, that the people first want justice done. He said that he had seen in England that they loved justice, and therefore had a stronger hope than his colleagues.

On the 6th of May Sir B. Frere sent to the Secretary of State a statement of the measures he had devised for the better administration of the country (C. 2482, p. 13). This letter admits many grievances. There was an entire absence in the Executive of any element representing the Boer or burgher class, so that the great majority of the resident landed proprietors could neither know what the Government was doing, nor feel that they had any influence or share in its acts. The administration was a pure autocracy. There was no legislative machinery. What had been an independent Republic was ruled by legislation by proclamation (C. 2584, p. 222). There was only one judge, and no

provision for appeal against his individual opinion. Trial by jury was abolished. Men paid taxes when and how and pretty much what they pleased. Some of the taxes were most injurious in their operation and mode of collection. There was no provision for appropriating to their legal purpose taxes levied for special objects. So wrote Sir Bartle Frere, and estimated that red-tape would require not less than a year and a half before a permanent Constitution for the Transvaal, sanctioned by the Home authorities, could possibly be expected. These were some of the blessings of British rule in rejection of which the ungrateful Boers, goaded to desperation at length rose in arms.

But they did wait a year and a half.

On Sir Bartle Frere's promising to send home to Her Majesty's Government (C. 2454, p. 45) the people's memorial, the meeting broke up and they returned quietly to their homes, believing that a favourable answer would soon be returned (C. 2367, p. 145), (C. 2794, p. 7); but the dispersion was only temporary, to allow time for the reply.

A petition to the Queen (C. 2367, p. 97), dated Koolfontein, April 16th, 1879, is one of the most pathetic appeals that has ever appeared in a Blue Book:—

“The undersigned, Her Majesty's humble
“petitioners, lay their humble petition at your feet,
“with all the earnestness of men who for two years
“have fought for their rights with weapons of

“ order and passive resistance, and who still
 “ persevere therein.

“ They now look to your Majesty as the source
 “ of justice, and request of you their right; they
 “ implore this with a humility well-nigh equal to
 “ that with which we bow ourselves in the dust
 “ before Almighty God.

“ Two years ago, on the 12th of April, 1877,
 “ our free independent South African Republic was
 “ annexed, in the name of your Majesty, by Sir
 “ T. Shepstone: this terrible fact, this trampling
 “ down of a poor, weak, but quiet people, is with-
 “ out a parallel in history.

* * * * *

. . . “ Sir Theophilus Shepstone sent untrue
 “ accounts to England, and made it appear as if
 “ the people were in favour of an annexation; the
 “ truth is that crafty deceivers led many to sign
 “ addresses who did not understand it; they are
 “ people whom we cannot better describe than in
 “ the words of the High Commissioner (Sir Bartle
 “ Frere), foreign fortune-hunters who feel nor
 “ have any interest in the country. They betrayed
 “ the country.

* * * * *

“ When at length His Excellency (Sir Bartle
 “ Frere) appeared, the people intimated their
 “ unanimous will, but His Excellency declared
 “ that he had no power to undo the annexation.

“ What His Excellency offered us in your

“ Majesty’s name may be expressed in one word;
“ they are priceless liberties, but they do not con-
“ stitute ‘Liberty,’ and this we desire to have
“ restored. They are precious liberties, without
“ which even a free people is still unhappy, but
“ they are just the liberties which we possessed up
“ to the 12th of April, 1877, and of which Sir
“ Theophilus Shepstone deprived us. No people
“ having any self-respect can allow its ‘Liberty’ to
“ be bought for a partial return of that which it
“ once possessed.

“ We appeal to the report of this interview with
“ Her Majesty’s High Commissioner in order to
“ show the earnestness, the sacred will of the
“ people.

“ What else can we do? Must we draw the
“ sword? Your Majesty, we cannot conceal from
“ you what is happening at the present moment in
“ Pretoria, the old capital of our Republic. It is
“ an open town, full of families, women, and
“ children. A handful of your Majesty’s troops
“ is there. Your representatives there have given
“ orders or permission that in the open streets
“ barricades and breastworks should be erected;
“ private residences are pierced with loopholes.
“ Why? and against what enemy? Against us,
“ the true people of the South African Republic.
“ Is there any clearer evidence needed that the
“ annexation is contrary to the will of the people,
“ if after two years the capital of the country

“ must be protected in such a way against the
“ people?”

“ Must it then, your Majesty, come to war? It
“ cannot be your will, just as it is not our wish.

“ Your Majesty cannot desire to rule over
“ unwilling subjects. Unwilling subjects, but
“ faithful neighbours we will be. We beseech
“ you, put an end to this unbearable state of
“ things, and charge your High Commissioner in
“ South Africa to give us back our State.”

* * * * *

On the 18th of April the Boers sent out an address to the colonists of Natal, of the Cape Colony, and to the Orange Free State (C. 2454, p. 54). Setting forth the injustice and the impolicy of the annexation; they say that they have now appealed to the Queen, and that their fate lies once more in Her Majesty's hands. They exhort their brethren to support them by addresses to Her Majesty, requesting that the wrong done shall be repaired, and that their Independence shall be given back to them. The Volksraad of the Orange Free State, in reply, adopted, by a large majority, a report expressing sympathy with the desire that the late Transvaal Republic should be restored (C. 2454, p. 105). Their President saw the possible awkwardness of the situation, and desired to address the Volksraad on the subject, but by a large majority they refused to hear him.

In July landowners and other inhabitants of the

Cape of Good Hope addressed a petition to the Queen in favour of the Independence of the Transvaal, pointing out that the Boers had constantly kept within the bounds of legality, and were far from being hostile to Her Majesty's Government (C. 2482, p. 37).

A speech made by Sir Bartle Frere at a public dinner at Potchefstroom early in May called forth an indignant letter from Mr. Pretorius. He complained that after Sir Bartle Frere had forwarded the people's representations saying that they deserved the serious consideration of the Government, his words at Potchefstroom declaring that the country certainly would not be given back to the people anticipated the decision of the Queen. "When your Excellency, in spite of our plain statements, in spite of our memorial to Her Majesty the Queen, with your own declaration that our representations deserve the serious consideration of the Government, still believes that the Transvaal is to be pacified by anything short of a complete restoration of our Independence, then our language must be inadequate to express it" (C. 2482, p. 52).

On Sir Garnet Wolseley's arrival, the Committee addressed to him a letter, dated September 25, complaining that no answer had been received to their petition to the Queen, nor did it appear that their memorial, the grave protest of a free people, had ever been made the subject of discussion in the

English Parliament, and so they inquired whether the answer of the Queen was in his possession (C. 2482, p. 337). In prompt military fashion Sir Garnet Wolseley at once fired off a Proclamation, dated the 29th of September, (C. 2482, p. 343), making known the will and determination of Her Majesty that the Transvaal territory should be, and should continue to be for ever, an integral portion of Her Majesty's Dominions, and with abrupt courtesy informed the Committee on the following day that he thought that was the more suitable form of reply on so grave a question (C. 2482, p. 338).

On the 8th of November a strong and influential Deputation waited on Sir Bartle Frere at Cape Town (C. 2482, p. 446). Their objects were to draw his attention to the fact that the state of affairs in the Transvaal was most serious, and dangerous to the peace and good government of South Africa in general, that the annexation had taken place under great misapprehension, that unquestionably the great majority of the people desired Independence, and that it would be very difficult for the Committee much longer to restrain the people from fighting. Sir Bartle Frere, in reply, did his best to reassure the Committee, observing that when things came to the pass at which they had arrived there was only one thing to be done; the soldier must follow the policeman, and soldiers upon other soldiers until the law was obeyed; and

that these things constantly happened in the freest country in Europe (C. 2482, p. 452).

The answer to the memorial of the Boers was written by Sir M. Hicks-Beach on the 20th of November (C. 2482, p. 378). He resisted the request for independence mainly in the interests of the quiet and contented native population, and the peaceful and industrious residents at Pretoria and other centres of population. He again offered to the people a constitution, and said he did not believe the great majority of those who had been represented as desiring the reversal of annexation had really intended to demand more than this.

On the 17th of December a public dinner was given at Pretoria to Sir Garnet Wolseley and his Staff; his health was drunk with much applause, and (C. 2505, p. 109) he addressed the guests in a long speech. He alluded to the Boers as ignorant men, led by a few designing men, talking nonsense and spouting sedition on the High Veld. He told them that no Government—Whig or Tory, Liberal, Conservative, or Radical—would dare, under any circumstances, to give back the country; they would not dare, because the English people would not allow them. Under no circumstances whatever, he said, could Britain give back the country.

On the same day he issued a Proclamation to stop discussion and public meetings, on the phraseology of which he rather prided himself (C. 2482, p. 477), and which certainly was not wanting in

vigour. It had much the same effect as Sir T. Shepstone's Proclamation in March, 1878; it did absolutely nothing to prevent the fifth great mass-meeting on the 10th of December, but it aggravated the angry and despairing feelings of the Boers.

On that morning, an eye-witness thus describes the assembling: Barely were the horses of the four hundred horsemen from the Vaal River Ward off-saddled, when a dense cloud of dust rising on the eastern hill excited our curiosity. Four hundred and four horsemen, riding two and two abreast at suitable distances soon approached. They were from the Highveldt, Middelburg district, and were preceded by Daniel Schutte, for whom as standard-bearer numerous hurrahs were given. They rode round the camp at a trot, and like those who had preceded them, they drew up in the form of a crescent in front of Mr. Kruger's waggon. The crowding was immense. Here one wanted to secure a place in order to catch the words which were to be uttered, there another had seen an old friend and pressed through the crowd to shake hands with him, and your "own" also, who had at once on hearing the bugle sound rushed to the spot, had hard lines of it, and could scarcely find room to adequately wield his pencil.

Nicholas Smit, one of the foremost, a man still in the vigour of life, then addressed the assembled multitude very nearly in these words, "Men, the flag which waves here is the flag of our fathers,

“dear to them and doubly dear to us. Let us
“respect this flag, which once floated over a free
“country, let us beneath this flag remember the
“sacred duties for which we are assembled here;
“if necessary, let us sacrifice our blood in order to
“plant it again in free soil.” (C. 2505, p. 113.)

The proceedings of this meeting were excited, and the record of them is of great value as showing the determined and patriotic mind of the people. Propositions to immediately hoist the national flag and proclaim the Republic, met with great favour, but it was ultimately determined that if the Government continued to suppress their Independence the Boers should dissociate themselves as much as possible from the English; that they would burn all English books, remove their children from English schools, allow no English to be spoken in their houses, and refuse all hospitality to Englishmen. They say, “The time for memorials to the
“English Government is past; in that way no
“deliverance is possible. The officials of . . . the
“Queen . . . have by their untrue and false repre-
“sentations closed the door to Her Majesty and
“to Parliament. . . . Again and again would they
“approach the Queen of England, for the people
“believe, as certainly as the sun shines, that if the
“Queen of England and the English nation knew
“that a free people is oppressed here, they would
“never allow it. England has been the protector of
“liberty everywhere, and would also protect our

“liberty, which is now being suppressed. But Her Majesty’s officials in South Africa who continue to defend the necessity of the annexation, conceal the truth, and smother our voice. We cannot therefore address ourselves to England; nobody there replies to us” (C. 2505, p. 117). And then follow ten resolutions, the first of which declares that the people have never been and never wish to be Her Majesty’s subjects, and that every one who speaks of them as rebels is a slanderer. The other resolutions point to definite steps to be taken to re-establish the Republican Government. The meeting then adjourned until the 6th of April following, and peaceably dispersed.

VI.

FOURTH YEAR, 1880.

This year opened with the arrest of Mr. Bok, Secretary to the Boer's Committee, on the 3rd of January, and of Mr. Pretorius on the 5th on a charge of high treason (C. 2505, p. 138).

Their arrest caused no little excitement among the Boers (C. 2794, p. 7), and a party, with about thirty waggons and 300 horses, gathered near Potchefstroom; but on the 10th of January they were visited by Mr. Kruger, who dissuaded them from attempting to use force, and they returned to their homes (C. 2584, p. 83).

Their offence consisted in forwarding to Sir Garnet Wolseley a copy of the instructions given them by the people, informing him that it was resolved to re-establish the Republican Government without the consent of the present Government; this in the opinion of the Attorney-General amounted to treason (C. 2505, p. 130), and Sir Garnet gave orders for the necessary proceedings to be at once instituted. This vigorous action met with the cautious approval of the Secretary of State (C. 2505, p. 139). But he could hardly have anticipated that in the month of March Mr. Pretorius, while still under a charge of treason, would be invited

to come and visit the High Commissioner at Pretoria, who would then and there offer him a seat on the Executive Council of the Government. Sir Garnet Wolseley thought it possible that some misapprehension might have been created by the course he pursued in this matter, and the despatch he wrote to remove this possible misapprehension is perhaps one of the most curious among the gems to be found in the series of South African Blue Books (C. 2676, p. 34). He said that to the body of the Boers any change in the legal aspect of the charges against Mr. Pretorius, which might result from an offer to the accused of public employment would be unintelligible, but that the least educated Boer would see in the action of the Government a desire to enter into sympathy with him, to conciliate his feelings, and to give a place in the administration to those of his own party whom he had long looked up to as leaders. It is much to be feared that the least educated Boers failed to see the conciliatory policy, it was hoped they would see, and that the best educated Boers saw exactly the contrary, for when the story of the imprisonment and trip to Pretoria was made publicly known, Mr. Pretorius was publicly thanked for having shown himself true and faithful to land and people, in spite of all adversities and temptations (C. 2676, p. 28).

After three years' experience of what Sir Bartle Frere called purely autocratic government in the

Transvaal (C. 2482, p. 15), it is instructive to see how far British rule had been that blessing, not only to the Boers and their children, but to the whole of South Africa, which Sir T. Shepstone had assured them they would by experience find it to be (C. 1776, p. 160). On the 10th of March, in addressing the Legislative Assembly (C. 2584, p. 210), Sir Owen Lanyon stated that the province was utterly destitute of the public institutions essential in a civilized community; that there was not a civil hospital within its confines; that no provision existed for medical assistance in the out-districts; that the gaols as a rule would be a shame to any community; that the aged and paupers were very inadequately provided for; that the only asylums for lunatics were the gaols; that the public buildings were wholly inadequate for the objects required of them; that the whole territory was unsurveyed, the maps of it being mere guess-work; that there were absolutely no public works of any sort, the rivers being unbridged, and the roads mere tracks formed by ox-waggons. The system of education was acknowledged to be unsatisfactory, and the results far from commensurate with the expenditure. This was the Administrator's description of the state of the country after three years of military despotism, without even the excuse of Parliamentary obstruction.

But now, when to all appearance the way to a friendly settlement seemed to be closed, there

came to South Africa the echoes of voices raised in behalf of the Boers by ex-ministers, by members of Parliament, and by the whole nursery of sucking-politicians that the prospect of a General Election gives birth to. For the voice of the Liberal Party was that Justice must prevail over Expediency, that the standard of national morality must not be below that of individual morality; the conscience of the nation was aroused, and those who had grieved it were to be swept from power; all this was but faintly appreciated in the Transvaal, but still it re-opened a door of hope, and the mass meeting that had been adjourned to the 6th of April was summoned to assemble at Wonderfontein on the 8th of March (C. 2676, p. 28). There was one name that thrilled the heart of every Boer, one man known to the whole civilized world as the uncompromising foe of oppression, the unfailing friend of freedom, William Ewart Gladstone, and the words addressed to the Scotch Presbyterians of Mid-Lothian in unqualified condemnation of the invasion of the Transvaal were like cold water to the thirsty souls of the Puritan Boers. A letter was sent to him on the 11th, thanking him for the great sympathy shown in their fate, and expressing the hope that if there were a change of Government the injustice done to the Transvaal might find redress. It was further determined to send Messrs. Kruger and Joubert as a Deputation

to the Cape, and the necessary expenses were forthwith subscribed.

The hopes of the Dutch population at the Cape also turned at the same moment in enthusiastic affection and hope to Mr. Gladstone, and signatures came from Dutch Boers in all parts of the colony to an address dated the 8th of March. They claimed to address him in right of the splendid services he had rendered in the cause of human liberty, without distinction of race or creed (C. 2695, p. 12), of his undeviating loyalty to conscience, whether in affairs public or private, and of his decided condemnation of the treatment to which their brethren of the Transvaal had been subjected. They informed him how, even then, the Boers of the Transvaal could with great difficulty be restrained from taking up arms, however hopeless such a proceeding would be ; they reminded him how on two occasions already they had drawn the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the sad state of affairs, but had on neither occasion been favoured with a single word of acknowledgment or reply ; they told him that their only hope was now in himself and in those of his compatriots who never hesitate to come forward as the champions of the injured and oppressed. Finally they thanked him for the noble words uttered at Edinburgh, and on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, and prayed him to bring his powerful influence to bear

on the cause of the restoration of Transvaal Independence.

The importance of the burning words spoken in the Mid-Lothian campaign was not unheeded by Sir Garnet Wolseley, who telegraphed to England on the 9th of March for authority to contradict the rumours being circulated by designing persons (C. 2584, p. 208); and on the following day was directed to fully confirm explicit statements made from time to time as to the inability of Her Majesty's Government to entertain any proposal for the withdrawal of the Queen's sovereignty.

It is not difficult to imagine the joy and hope with which the Boers received the news of the change of Government in England. Heard that Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister, and had included in his Government, almost every illustrious statesman who had won his spurs in the cause of liberty. It was with no little assurance of a welcome and sympathetic hearing that Messrs. Kruger and Joubert penned from Cape Town their letter of the 10th of May (C. 2676, p. 46a). They reminded him that heretofore every effort of the Committee of the People had been in vain, and that at the close of the previous year they had resolved not to send any more petitions to England, but themselves at the proper time to restore their own Government. "Nothing has happened to alter those resolutions of the people. The people

“is waiting for the proper time The people
 “is at rest, not because it is satisfied, but because,
 “knowing what is resolved upon, they can wait.

“There was, and still is, among the people a
 “firm belief that truth prevails. They were
 “confident that one day or another, by the mercy
 “of the Lord, the reins of the Imperial Government
 “would be entrusted again to men who look for
 “the honour and glory of England,—not by acts
 “of injustice and crushing force, but by the way
 “of justice and good faith.

“And, indeed, their belief has proven to be a
 “good belief.”

* * * * *

“We trust that, after due consideration
 “you will feel at liberty to rescind the annexation
 “of our poor country, and to reinstate in its full
 “vigour the Sand River Treaty of 1852, a real
 “treaty of peace made between the representatives
 “of Her Majesty the Queen of England and those
 “of the Boer emigrants, founders of the South
 “African Republic.”

Let us see what was the latest information as to
 the state of feeling in the Transvaal in the pos-
 session of the Colonial Office at the time Mr.
 Gladstone received this letter.

On the 2nd of March Sir Garnet Wolseley had
 reported a growing desire among the Boers of the
 Transvaal for the conclusion of the agitation
 against British Government (C. 2676, p. 32).

He said there was every reason to be satisfied with the effect produced upon the political condition of the Transvaal by the arrest of Messrs. Pretorius and Bok on the 3rd of January. That as a consequence of the conviction thus established of the unyielding resolution of the British Government, there was a growing desire for the conclusion of the agitation which now began to seem to the malcontents a fruitless and dangerous trouble (C. 2584, p. 191). On the 10th of April he wrote that the opinion he had then formed was fully corroborated by the state of affairs: that after the meeting at Wonderfontein had broken up, indefinitely postponed, feelings of relief and gratification had begun very evidently to manifest themselves in the country. That the telegram from England of the 10th of March (C. 2584, p. 208), emphatically affirming the resolution of the Government to retain the Transvaal, contributed largely to the withdrawal of general confidence from the designs of the agitators. That reports from all quarters of the Transvaal sustained the opinion that the people were thoroughly weary of opposition to the Government, and had determined to renounce all further disturbing action. That the taxes were now being paid, and that the revenue of the country, so long disturbed and in part suspended, was flowing steadily in the natural course (C. 2676, p. 32).

On the 12th of April, Sir Owen Lanyon reported on the peaceful state of the district of Standerton,

which he said had hitherto been one of the most disaffected against British rule. The Landdrost of Standerton reported that his district reposed in a state of tranquillity not experienced since April, 1879 (C. 2676, p. 33).

This seems to have been the latest information as to the state of public feeling in the Transvaal laid before Mr. Gladstone by the Colonial Office when he had to consider what reply to send to the letter of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert. There was among the responsible men high in authority, whose advice he was bound to regard, but one opinion, namely, that the re-opening of the question of the annexation might lead to a renewal of disorders, with disastrous consequences not only to the Transvaal, but to the whole of South Africa. He might have contented himself with a simple acknowledgment and a reference to the Queen's Speech of the 20th of May, but he replied courteously and at length. Still he felt it his duty, whatever may have been his own wishes and sympathies, to adopt the views held by the responsible officials of the Colonial Office, and on the 8th of June he wrote a despatch containing these words: "Our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish her sovereignty over the Transvaal" (C. 2676, p. 466).

On the 29th of November, Mr. White moved in the Legislative Assembly at Pretoria, that the Government as at present constituted had failed to

secure the confidence or support of the inhabitants, and that a representative form of government had become necessary (C. 2783, p. 28).

Mr. C. K. White was one of six gentlemen nominated by Sir O. Lanyon to the Legislative Council, on the 5th of March, as men who from their position and character would fitly represent the general interests and classes of the Province, and command the confidence of their fellow-countrymen (C. 2584, p. 192). He made a gallant speech, describing the existing form of government as the closest form of government that could possibly exist, pointing out that the so-called Legislative Assembly was powerless to do good and powerful to do harm. He said that since the annexation, the country had gradually but surely got into a worse state; he urged that the country never would be prosperous and never could be prosperous until those who were capable had some voice in the government.

He could not even get a seconder to his motion.

On the 9th of December, a deputation from a public meeting held at Paarl waited on Sir George Strahan, the Administrator at Cape Town. Their object was to consider what steps could be taken to prevent bloodshed in the Transvaal. They maintained that the Transvaal Boers were not rebels, but were a wronged community, who had acted in a constitutional manner to obtain their rights (C. 2783, p. 62). They said that it would

be an evil day for South Africa if what Sir Bartle Frere said about the soldier going to the police-constable's assistance should be realized in the Transvaal. For the Transvaal it would be destruction—ruin ; in the Cape Colony it would cause exasperation and mischief ; they were closely connected with the Transvaal. Their suggestion was that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Transvaal, and that one, if not the principal question to re-open and discuss, would be that of the annexation ; but when the deputation left Government House they had received no assurance from the Administrator that he would act in any single respect in accordance with the views they had urged upon him (C. 2783, p. 64). And it must be remembered that President Brand's alarming telegram of December 6th was at this time in his possession (C. 2783, p. 19).

And so, while everyone else was alarmed at the prospect of civil war, the responsible officers of the Crown alone seemed to have no anxiety. On the 10th of April Sir Garnet Wolseley had reported in strong terms that the agitation amongst the Boers in the Transvaal was dying out (C. 2676, p. 32). On the 28th of November Sir Owen Lanyon did not feel much anxiety regarding the result (C. 2740, p. 122). On the 13th of December Sir George Colley still trusted he would be able to avoid any collision (C. 2783, p. 54).

At the opening of the Legislative Council at Natal, on the 19th of October, Sir George Colley declared that the movement in the Transvaal was apparently settling, that everywhere law and order reigned, and that the taxes were paid by natives as well as the white inhabitants. Immediately the people gathered, and from all sides declarations were signed by the burghers, that they should either pay no longer taxes, or alone under protest, exercising thereby their rights as an independent people that may be silent for a time, but reserves its rights (C. 2794, p. 7).

It is very usual to find the crisis of discontent brought on by a tax-gatherer. On the 8th of December, sixty-nine burghers gave notice that they would no longer pay taxes unless they were received under protest (C. 2740, p. 123). The first open defiance of the law occurred near Potchefstroom, on the 11th of November, when an attempt to levy execution on a waggon for taxes alleged to be due was successfully resisted (C. 2740, p. 110). A subsequent judgment proved this claim for taxes to have been unfounded (C. 2783, p. 69). The incident aroused the whole country; hearing that matters were serious, Mr. Kruger hurried to the spot on the 25th, and found them even more serious than he had expected (C. 2783, p. 25). The arrest of Mr. Celliers, who had printed a notice from the Boer Committee, exasperated the people, as interfering with the

liberty of the Press. Mr. Kruger did all in his power to calm and control them (C. 2783, p. 22).

The first man in high position, who at all took in the critical and dangerous aspect of affairs was President Brand, of the Orange Free State. On the 6th of December, he telegraphed to Sir George Strahan, the Administrator at Cape Town :—

“ I read with very deep concern the account of
“ the very serious aspect of affairs in the Transvaal.
“ The gravity of the situation will I hope be
“ accepted by your Excellency as an excuse for
“ the liberty of asking your Excellency whether
“ your Excellency will not devise some means by
“ which a collision, which seems imminent, may
“ be averted, a collision which will have the most
“ disastrous results, and seriously imperil the
“ *prestige* of the white man with the native tribes.”

To this the Administrator replied : “ I much
“ regret to learn that you regard the aspect of
“ affairs in the Transvaal as very serious. I have
“ not information sufficient to enable me to form
“ an opinion of the situation independently. Under
“ any circumstances, although I am desirous at all
“ times to exercise my influence in the cause of
“ order, the powers of the Governor of this Colony
“ do not now extend to the Transvaal. I shall be
“ glad to telegraph to the Governor of Natal by
“ first opportunity your message to me and this
“ my reply” (C. 2783, p. 19). These telegrams
he did not consider of sufficient importance to

telegraph to Lord Kimberley, so he sent them in an ordinary despatch.

The Republic was proclaimed at Pretoria on the 13th of December (C. 2794, p. 4).

On the 16th the first shot was fired at Potchefstroom, and the Republic was proclaimed at Heidelberg.

The time of Protest was at an end.

In the tragedy of *The Cup*, by Alfred Tennyson, the Queen of Galatia receives a message that the Roman Emperor, with his army, is at hand, and she is counselled to submit. Her reply is to this effect—

“Sir! if a State submit at once
She may be blotted out at once
And swallowed in the conqueror’s chronicle.
Whereas in wars of freedom and defence
The glory and the grief of battles won or lost
Solder a race together. Yea, though they fail,
The names of those who fought and fell are
Like a banked-up fire, that flashes forth again
From century to century, and at last
Will lead them on to victory.”

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

THE SAND RIVER CONVENTION.

Minutes of a Meeting held in the place of Mr. P. A. Venter, Sand River, on Friday, the 18th day of January, 1852 between Major W. Hogge and C. M. Owen, Esq., Her Majesty's Assistant Commissioners for the settling and adjusting of the affairs of the eastern and north-eastern boundaries of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, on the one part, and the following Deputation from the emigrant farmers residing north of the Vaal River:—

- A. W. J. Pretorius, Commandant-General.
- H. S. Lombard, Landdrost.
- W. F. Joubert, Commandant-General.
- G. J. Kruger, Commandant.
- J. N. Grobbelaar, Raadslid.
- P. E. Schlotz.
- P. G. Wolmarans, Onderling.
- J. A. van Aswegen, Veldcornet.
- F. J. Botes, ditto.
- N. J. S. Basson, ditto.
- J. P. Furstenberg, ditto.
- J. P. Pretorius.
- J. H. Grobbelaar.
- J. M. Lehman.
- P. Schutte.
- J. C. Kloppers.

On the other part.

The Assistant Commissioners guarantee in the fullest manner, on the part of the British Government to the emigrant farmers beyond the Vaal River, the right to manage their own affairs, and to govern themselves according to their own laws, without any interference on the part of the British Government; and that no encroachment shall be made by the said Government on the territory beyond, to the north

of the Vaal River; with the further assurance that the warmest wish of the British Government is to promote peace, free trade, and friendly intercourse with the emigrant farmers now inhabiting, or who may hereafter inhabit, that country; it being understood that this system of non-interference is binding upon both parties.

Should any misunderstanding hereafter arise as to the true meaning of the words "The Vaal River," this question, in so far as regards the line from the source of that river over the Draakenberg, shall be settled and adjusted by Commissioners chosen by both parties.

Her Majesty's Assistant Commissioners hereby disclaim all alliances whatever and with whomsoever of the coloured nations to the north of the Vaal River.

It is agreed that no slavery is or shall be permitted or practised in the country to the north of the Vaal River, by the emigrant farmers.

Mutual facilities and liberty shall be afforded to traders and travellers on both sides of the Vaal River; it being understood that every waggon containing ammunition and fire-arms, coming from the south side of the Vaal River, shall produce a certificate signed by a British Magistrate or other functionary duly authorized to grant such: and which shall state the quantities of such articles contained in said waggon, to the nearest magistrate north of the Vaal River, who shall act in the case as the regulations of the emigrant farmers direct. It is agreed, that no objection shall be made by any British authority against the emigrant Boers purchasing their supplies of ammunition in any of the British colonies and possessions of South Africa; it being mutually understood that all trade in ammunition with the native tribes is prohibited both by the British Government and the emigrant farmers, on both sides of the Vaal River.

It is agreed, that so far as possible, all criminals and other guilty parties who may fly from justice, either way across the Vaal River, shall be mutually delivered up, if such should be required, and that the British Courts, as well as those of the emigrant farmers, shall be mutually open to each other for all legitimate processes, and that summonses for witnesses sent

either way across the Vaal River shall be backed by the magistrates on each side of the same respectively, to compel the attendance of such witnesses when required.

It is agreed, that certificates of marriage issued by the proper authorities of the emigrant farmers, shall be held valid and sufficient to entitle children of such marriages to receive portions accruing to them in any British colony or possession in South Africa.

It is agreed, that any and every person now in possession of land and residing in British territory shall have free right and power to sell his said property and remove unmolested across the Vaal River, and *vice versâ*: it being distinctly understood that this arrangement does not comprehend criminals, or debtors, without providing for the payment of their just and lawful debts.

This done and signed at Sand River aforesaid, this 17th day of January, 1852.

(Signed) A. W. J. PRETORIUS, *Commandant-General*.
 H. S. LOMBARD, *Landdrost*.
 W. F. JOUBERT, *C.G.*
 G. J. KRUGER, *Commandant*.
 W. I. HOGGE, *Assistant Commissioner*.
 C. MOSTYN OWEN, *Assistant Commissioner*.
 J. N. GROBBELAAR, *R.L.*
 P. E. SCHOLTZ.
 P. G. WOLMARANS, *Ouderling*.
 J. A. VAN ASWEGEN, *V.C.*
 F. J. J. BOTES.
 N. J. S. BASSON, *V. Cornet*.
 J. P. FORSTENBERG, *Veldcornet*.
 J. P. PRETORIUS.
 J. H. GROBBELAAR.
 J. M. LEHMAN.
 P. SCHUTTE.
 J. C. KLOPPERS.

In presence of;

(Signed) JOHN BURNET,
Clerk to the Civil Commissioner of Winburg.
 (Signed) J. A. VISAGIE, *Secretary*.

APPENDIX 2.

LIST OF BLUE BOOKS QUOTED.

| OFFICIAL NUMBERS. | s. | d. |
|----------------------|----|----|
| C. 1776 | 1 | 10 |
| C. 1814 | 0 | 2 |
| C. 1883 | 0 | 7½ |
| C. 1961 | 5 | 6 |
| C. 2100 | 1 | 3 |
| C. 2128 | 0 | 2½ |
| C. 2144 | 3 | 10 |
| C. 2220 | 6 | 6 |
| C. 2260 | 1 | 2 |
| C. 2316 | 2 | 0 |
| C. 2367 | 2 | 9 |
| C. 2454 | 3 | 0 |
| C. 2482 | 7 | 3 |
| C. 2505 | 7 | 0 |
| C. 2584 | 2 | 6 |
| C. 2676 | 2 | 4 |
| C. 2695 | 3 | 0 |
| C. 2740 | 1 | 5 |
| C. 2783 | 1 | 0 |
| C. 2794 | 0 | 2 |