

The Transvaal War

BOERS OF THE TRANSSVAAL.

RELATIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE DUTCH REPUBLICS.

(From the London Times.)

The facts of Transvaal history show that the Boers of the Transvaal are not to be confused with "the brave, patient, industrious, orderly, and religious people, the cultivators, the defenders, and the tax contributors of the country," whom Sir Benjamin d'Urban described in 1837 as forming part of the great emigration from Cape Colony. The majority of these settled in the Orange Free State and Natal, and have shown a general satisfaction in their relations with Great Britain. That the Free Staters should now espouse the quarrel of their countrymen is an effort not of British oppression, but of the natural instincts of race relationship.

The Boers of the Transvaal were the roughest, most adventurous, and most turbulent residue of a militant party who fought against British authority, first in Natal and then in the Free State. They withdrew across the Vaal and received a grant of independence from Great Britain, and for 25 years occupied themselves almost exclusively with fighting. They fought with the Free State. They fought with each other. They fought with the natives. The only people they did not fight with were the British. But they broke with impunity all the conditions of their charter of independence. In their wars with the natives they were little better than slave-raiders. They mixed freely with native women, and they lived their hard-fighting, semi-barbarous existence, cut off from the rest of South Africa without any of the outward appliances of civilization. For nearly twenty years there was not a bridge built over one of their rivers, and there was scarcely a road in the country. The consequence was a separation between them and their fellow Dutchmen in the neighboring colonies and the Orange Free State, and an approximation of their character and habits to the character and habits of the Kaffirs. This is a feature of the situation which up to the time of the present war was keenly felt by the other South African Dutch.

This isolated people lived for five and twenty years carrying on their hand to hand duel with the natives, and were only just beginning to turn their thoughts under the enlightened rule of President Burgers to some of the initial requirements of civilized government when they found themselves in danger of being wiped out of South Africa. The native tribes all around them were in arms. Their own levies were melting from the field. They had neither men to fight as volunteers nor money to pay for a military force raised on modern lines. Their own people refused to pay taxes. They were deeply in debt. In this extremity they turned to Great Britain and asked to be taken under her protection. The condition of protection was annexation, and a petition in favour of annexation was signed by nearly half the male population. The Executive Government and principal officials and practically all the reflective part of the population were in favour of the change.

The annexation of the Transvaal to Great Britain was proclaimed and the change was effected in absolute peace. No force was used or displayed. The principal officials of the Transvaal Government, including Mr. Paul Kruger, took office under the British Government. The new Government restored the finances of the country, fought the Zulus, fought Sikukuni, and broke for ever the power of surrounding native tribes.

Then, when the advantages of annexation had been reaped, when the dangers of bankruptcy and annihilation had been averted, and the militant energies of the Boer people had had time

to recover, the bargain with Great Britain was repudiated. Annexation no longer seemed desirable. Revolution and a declaration of independence followed.

Great Britain, from the beginning of her relations with the Transvaal, had shown the clearest desire to abstain from interference. Under somewhat modified conditions, she has displayed in her relations to the Dutch Republics the same spirit of tolerance and respect for local wishes which has rendered possible within within the Empire the unique growth and development of our great self-governing colonies. If the Transvaal had been willing, as our colonies have been willing, to take freedom, of which itself should set the measure, and to give loyalty to its engagements in return, there need have been no more friction between us and the Dutch outside the Empire than there has been between us and the British colonists within the Empire.

The grant of independence to the emigrant farmers in 1852 without any trial of strength and purely was an act of grace, dictated by a policy which desired to assume no further responsibilities in South Africa. The flagrant and habitual violation of the conditions under which independence was granted had been passed over without remonstrance. It was not until the hostile attitude of the Zulus and other native tribes threatened the Transvaal with extinction and presented a serious danger to British South Africa that any thought of intervening in Transvaal affairs was entertained. Intervention then was made in response to an invitation from the Transvaal, and that this was so in fact as well as in name was demonstrated by the absolutely peaceful manner in which annexation was effected.

We spent upwards of £6,000,000 on the Zulu war, as well as many British lives. Having done that, having restored industrial and financial prosperity to the country and found at the end of our exertions that a change in public opinion had taken place, and that the Boers of the Transvaal desired that the independence of their country should be restored, we gave it back subject only to certain conditions which were judged to be essential in order to prevent the recurrence of a similar crisis at any future date.

The forces engaged on the British side at Majuba numbered less than 500 men. We had 12,000 men upon the sea. There can be no reasonable contention that that concession was in any way forced from us by the issue of so unimportant a skirmish in arms. We gave the Transvaal back her autonomy after Majuba because the development of events had convinced the British statesmen responsible for the conduct of affairs that the revolt which had culminated at Majuba was not the mere insubordination of a faction but expressed the sentiment of Dutch South Africa. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate our desire to act in accordance with that sentiment. Lord Kimberley's explanation, given the other day, adds nothing to and takes nothing from this view.

In view of all that the annexation of the Transvaal cost us we had a right to safeguard the future peace of South Africa and the future position of Great Britain by imposing certain conditions upon the retrocession. It is difficult to imagine conditions less onerous than those which were embodied in the terms of peace of the Convention of 1881. But the Transvaal had no sooner been given back than these conditions were broken.

Great Britain was the party aggrieved. Nevertheless, Great Britain agreed to revise the conditions of 1881, bringing them more into accordance with Dutch wishes. Accordingly a fresh convention embodying important concessions was negotiated in 1884. Within a year a breach of the new conditions necessitated the despatch of the Warren expedition at a cost of nearly £2,000,000 to this country. The very liberality of our terms of internal independence to the Transvaal made it essential that the territorial limits within which that independence should be exercised should be clearly defined. The Convention of 1884 defined the boundaries of the Transvaal. The Transvaal Government bound itself faithfully to observe the frontier limits then laid down. There is not one of its frontiers on which it has not attempted to extend its limits. In two cases it has made the attempt with conspicuous success. There is scarcely a provision of the Convention which the Transvaal Government has not either broken or attempted to break. It has openly defied the provisions intended to secure the equality of white men within its borders. It has subjected British subjects to humiliating disabilities. It endeavoured in 1895 to close its frontiers to British trade. It has steadily pursued an anti-British policy. It has openly declared the intention of protecting the interests and cultivating the friend-



WAR MEDALS AND DECORATIONS OF THE BRITISH ARMY.—[Boston Globe.]

ship of foreign nations in a spirit of opposition to Great Britain. It has spent enormous sums in preparing itself for an armed conflict with Great Britain. It has finally thrown off the mask and, having drawn the Orange Free State, which had not even the shadow of a quarrel with Great Britain, into an alliance, it has declared the design of inducing British South Africa to throw off its allegiance to the Queen.

The one occasion during 50 years of mutual history in which the part of the Transvaal has not been that of aggressor or suppliant for favors is the unfortunate incident of the Jameson raid. No justification can be offered for what actually occurred on that occasion. In the circumstances Dr. Jameson had no right to cross the frontier. But it has to be remembered that this action, however unjustifiable, was a consequence and not a cause. The internal revolt in which his co-operation had been sought had been induced by conditions for which the Transvaal Government alone was responsible. It was the willingness, not the readiness, of the British Government to intervene which threw the foreign population of the Transvaal on its own resources; and, though it has been sought to attribute to the mistrust and irritation caused by the Jameson raid the policy which has culminated in the armament

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A WRONG IDEA OF... DYSPEPSIA

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A DUTCH COLONIST'S LETTER

These are extracts from a letter from a young Dutch colonist, who has succeeded in making his escape from Bloemfontein:

"Ever since the battle of Magersfontein, in which the Dutch here admit having lost 473 killed, and about 700 or 800 wounded, I had been feeling very uncomfortable, so made up my mind to clear before we were all made prisoners.

"President Steyn looks about 30 years older than he did before the commencement of the war; I am told

that he had a nephew and two other relations killed at Magersfontein.

"Our men are tired of the war, as they are half starved, in addition to being thoroughly disheartened through the loss of hundreds of relatives and friends. By the time the war is over every person living in the Free State and the Transvaal will be seen in crape and I am afraid that black will be the colour of our flag in the future, if we are allowed to have one.

"Talking about flags, I had a bit of fun on Christmas eve, the night I bolted. I got old 'Sannah' to help me to make a Union Jack, which I fixed onto

a fishing rod and tied to a telegraph pole in front of the Volksraad building. I hear that this caused a fearful row, and the President offered a reward of £20 to anyone finding out the perpetrator.

"It makes my heart sore to see all the big crops of wheat and forage rotting on the lands for want of reaping. All the Dutch farmers will be ruined this year; some families are already starving."

"Fortune favors the brave." It is also favorable to those who purify their blood at this season by taking Hood's Sarsaparilla.

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