

THE CAPE AND THE CAFFRES.



SOUTH AFRICA and its aborigines have of late been prominently and rather unpleasantly brought before the British public. Two grave circumstances—one, fortunately, unattended by sacrifice of human life, but nevertheless a great calamity, viz., the loss of the Union Company's steamer *European*; the other, the serious disaffection of some of the Caffres on our border—have caused considerable anxiety both to statesmen and merchants, and have thrust a notice of colonial affairs and feelings even on those who are for the most part indifferent to them.

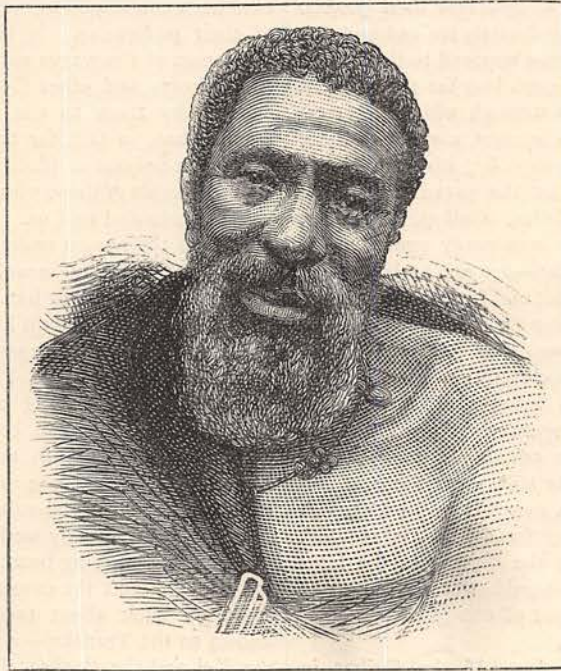
Until within the last ten years, our South African colonies have been the least known, the least inquired after, and by far the most backward of all our foreign possessions. The stubborn conservatism of the Dutch Boers, the absence of men of vigour and enterprise, the occasional visitations of drought and locusts, the desolation and ruin caused by frequent wars with the barbarians, all helped to produce stagnation, and hinder here that progress which every other country was so rapidly making.

A new era dawned, on the discovery of diamonds, in the year 1868. A few valuable stones had been found previous to that date, but it had not been generally suspected that such enormous wealth lay in those regions near the Vaal and Orange rivers as so shortly proved to be the truth. The whole country was, indeed, at this time shivering on the brink of hopeless insolvency. Government was almost in despair; farmers were deserting the colony for other lands and pastures new; no public works were being prosecuted; poverty, stagnation, and ruin were staring the settlers in the face. The impetus given to trade by the startling discovery of such riches in their midst at such a critical time was well-nigh incredible. From north, east, and west came crowds of eager fortune-

hunters, and with them came life, energy, skill, and progress. The Dean of Grahamstown, in a telling letter to the *Times*, had described the new state of affairs, and his letter was speedily copied into hosts of the provincial newspapers; and so the story spread, and was believed. Wealth came pouring into the country, and the Government, into whose coffers the Custom Duties teemed unwonted treasure, took a new lease of life, and bestirred itself for the public good. Harbour-works, railways, bridges, telegraph extension—none of these things were overlooked; and more strides in advance have been made during the past eight or nine years than were ever put forward in any two centuries before. This prosperous condition naturally opened out fresh and other channels for employment and for capital. Agricultural pursuits, which had in many localities been neglected, were now resumed. Ostrich-farming became at once a fashion and pretty certain source of money; and it has at length developed into a science. How long this industry may continue to be remunerative it is impossible to say. So long as women's vanity is gratified

by feathers, it is reasonable to suppose that commodity will command its price in the market; and for the sake of those who have embarked somewhat largely in the pursuit, it is to be hoped the fashion of such adorning may not speedily vanish away.

But other events concurred to bring the colony into notice, besides its own prosperity. Mr. J. A. Froude, the historian, as an emissary from Lord Carnarvon, twice took a journey there; Sir Garnet Wolseley has described his deeds and travels through means of the press; Sir John Coode, the eminent marine engineer, has made plans for harbours, and visited the ports him-



THE CHIEF KRELI.

self; and, lastly, Mr. Anthony Trollope has recently returned from a wander through the eastern and western provinces. It is, perhaps, a little unfortunate that this gentleman should have paid his visit while a kind of panic was prevailing, and while misfortune threatened the country. At present there is danger to be apprehended in two remote parts. The Gaikas, who own Sandilli as their chief, urged by the

importunate requests of the Gcalekas under Kreli, have at length risen in open rebellion, and are carrying fire and destruction far and wide. These Gaikas are located within the colonial border, and dwell in the heart of British Caffraria. Since they really mean mischief, it is a considerable consolation to know that they are quite incapable of forming any organised plan of working or of attack. It is fearful to contemplate what might so easily be accomplished by these wild men, could they only adopt any systematic or wisely pre-arranged tactics. The proportion of black to white is so immensely in favour of the former that, were the intelligence of each alike, the farmer's doom would be sealed in a single night.

The other peril lies in the recently annexed Transvaal territory. It is no new cause of strife. A strip of country had for years past been claimed alike by Boers and the great Zulu chief Cetewayo. In taking over the republic as part and parcel of the British colonial empire, we naturally took over existing troubles and liabilities, and, *inter alia*, this bone of contention. It is satisfactory to be told that great confidence is rested in the wisdom and judgment of Sir Theophilus Shepstone and his advisers, and there is good hope an open rupture with Cetewayo may be avoided. A quarrel that came to blows would be serious enough. An army of not less than 300,000 warriors, fairly armed, and moderately trained and disciplined, could very shortly be opposed to the British forces; and if it be remembered how far the possible scene of strife is from a port through which reinforcements and supplies could be brought, a war with these Zulus will appear indeed an appalling disaster.

It would almost seem that the prevailing notion in this country is that Zulus, Gaikas, Gcalekas, Tambookies—all whom we commonly group under the generic name of "Caffres"—are one and the same people, differing only in dialect and in party allegiance. This, however, is far from being true. The character of the Zulu is as distinct from that of the Amakosi, or Cape Colony Caffre proper, as the Celt from the Saxon, or the Turk from the Russian. It is quite true that, when open warfare is begun, when blood has been smelt, and cattle have been seized and roasted, and when success with one sable tribe over the common enemy and prey, "the white man," is bruited abroad, a sort of sympathetic ardour for fighting is aroused. But these same people, like the objects in the fable of the discontented apes, would war to the knife against each other in the event of one gaining a prize in which each did not share.

This is the situation to-day. If the Gaikas in British Caffraria are stimulated by the paramount Amakosi chief, Kreli—who has even now sought the shelter of his subordinate compeer, Sandilli—to prolong the strife, a protracted and lamentable contest may be expected. If, at this present juncture, Sir Theophilus Shepstone fail in conciliating the Zulu chief, Cetewayo, then the risk on our side is more than doubled. One half of our available forces will have to fight with an enemy 600 miles from the field where the other half is striving with the Amakosi.

Telegrams from Madeira lately informed us that an order has been issued for disarming all the natives. This is indeed an illustration of "locking the stable door when the horse is stolen." To-day it is an absolute impossibility to disarm them. The obvious blunder lies in the fact that the natives possess firearms at all. The customs law respecting the admission of guns into the colony is most stringent—nay, it is absurdly severe as regards the Europeans. A tax of £1 per barrel is levied upon every weapon that is passed through the custom-house, and as much as ten shillings per chamber of each revolver! The writer of this paper, visiting the colony for the first time solely for sporting purposes, paid no less than £16, according to the Government tariff, for his weapons of the chase. Clearly the primary object of this law was to keep firearms, as far as possible, out of the hands of the natives; but in sober truth and in effect it has been simply ridiculous. It is true a Caffre is required to have a *permit* before he can be supplied with a gun, but this is obtained somehow or other by the trader, and without the least difficulty, for any one who can afford to pay for his fancy. During the last four or five years thousands upon thousands of guns have been bought by natives, and openly carried through the towns and villages; nor does it seem these have ever been challenged or compelled to give an account of their possession. It is indeed notorious that a large part of the wages earned by *blacks* employed on the railways and other Government works has been applied by them to the purchase of guns. The country has, in fact, for the sake of filthy lucre, and from false notions of philanthropy, been putting arms into the hands of those who have, as was likely enough, turned again and rent us. Fortunately these weapons are not of the newest make or of the best quality, and the Caffres are by no means good shots. An assegai is far more dexterously handled by them than a rifle or smooth-bore. But we all know in close quarters these shooting-irons are dangerous enough, and a tyro learns to aim in time. The colonial press sounded the note of alarm long ago, but the warning was unheeded. Government, cosily at ease in Cape Town, 600 miles from Sandilli and from Kreli, like Gallio, "cared for none of these things." And now we cannot tell what sad and deplorable tale any mail may bring to us; indeed, already we have heard of murders, and of farmsteads having been burnt.

To understand the cause of the present trouble, we must go back about twenty years. The country known as the Transkei—viz., the region lying between the Kei and the Bashee rivers—was then cleared of natives. The Caffres, as punishment for repeated transgressions, were banished, and the country was for some years guarded by a small band of mounted police, at that time more commonly known under the designation of Sir Walter Currie's Police. It had been the intention of Sir George Grey, Her Majesty's High Commissioner, to parcel this land out in grants of farms to European settlers. British Caffraria, lying south-west of the Kei, and between that river and the Keiskamma, had been already granted in lots,

averaging 2,000 acres in extent; while at the same time large districts were distributed to various Caffre chiefs, within these same boundaries. Sandilli, the Gaika, is one such chief; Kama, the Christian chief, was another; Toise is another. The benevolent hope was entertained that these coloured people might, by living near and among the Europeans, profit by the civilisation of their neighbours, and be leavened with industry and humanity. But the scheme, although doubtless prompted by high motives, would appear to have been a failure.

Meanwhile, the Transkei was left unoccupied, and in the year 1861 Sir Philip Wodehouse was appointed Governor of the Cape of Good Hope. The country was still looked on as a land of promise. The new governor declared his intention of distributing grants, and there were many eager expectants for farms. After considerable delay, a proclamation was made that applications for land in this desired Canaan would be received at the Colonial Office; but the conditions on which farms were to be granted were so prodigiously unreasonable and extravagantly absurd, that not one single application was made. A quit rent more than double that imposed on farms in the cis-Keian territory; a personal occupation with as niggardly a

leave of absence from home as a sailor gets from his ship in a foreign port; the maintenance of at least one white man fully equipped for war: these were some of the terms, only in compliance with which, grants would be made. The whole was manifestly a travesty of Sir George Grey's intention. At length it occurred to the administrators in Cape Town that it was a pity such a fine country should lie unpeopled and unpastured. The resolution was arrived at to make it over to the natives. The Fingoes, formerly slaves of the Caffres—their "dogs," as the

word implies—had multiplied so fast that their country, in the Peddie district, was too small to contain them. An exodus was sanctioned, and thousands of these people were located in the Transkei, having the *northern* division assigned them as their new territory; and to them was guaranteed British protection. At the same time, Krelie made complaint from across the Bashee that his country was too circumscribed; and the wily Galeka chief and his people were allowed to come and occupy the *southern* division of the Transkeian territory. Roughly speaking, the main road leading from the principal ford across

the Kei to Butterworth and Clarkebury is the boundary-line between Fingoes and Galekas. Magistrates, or British agents, were appointed from Cape Town to each of these races. The Fingoes are a fairly industrious people, and take more kindly to civilisation than do their quondam masters, the Galekas, who are jealous of the wealth and success of the "dogs." The haughty Krelie is indignant that their kennels should be so near his august majesty, and fierce raids have been made on the stock and homes of the hated race. The Government was, of course, now bound to care for the rights and persons of its own protégés—hence the present troubles. So far as tidings have as yet reached us,



A CAFFRE WARRIOR.

the troops, police, burghers, and volunteers have done their duty readily and well; but even if Krelie is surrendered in person, and a large indemnity in cattle as well, there is no certainty we may not be imbroiled in constantly recurring and desolating wars, unless a sound native policy is adopted, and a firm but just control exercised over all the Caffre tribes. Philanthropy is admirable, but then philanthropy should be tempered with prudence and with common sense.

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