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Publisher: Routledge

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Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House,
37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Royal United Services Institution. Journal

Publication details, including
instructions for authors and
subscription information:

[http://www.tandfonline.com/
loi/rusi19](http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rusi19)

On the Best Detail Formations for Infantry Attack

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Published online: 11 Sep 2009.

To cite this article: Lieut.-Colonel J. H. A. Macdonald (1878)
On the Best Detail Formations for Infantry Attack, Royal
United Services Institution. Journal, 22:96, 556-611, DOI:
[10.1080/03071847809418235](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071847809418235)

To link to this article: [http://
dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071847809418235](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071847809418235)

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Ebening Meeting.

Monday, February 11th, 1878.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR GARNET J. WOLSELEY, K.C.B.,
G.C.M.G., &c., &c., in the Chair.

ON THE BEST DETAIL FORMATIONS FOR INFANTRY ATTACK.

By Lieut.-Colonel J. H. A. MACDONALD, Queen's City of Edinburgh
Rifle Volunteer Brigade.

HAVING been more than once urged by military men, well versed in their profession, to prepare a paper for this Institution, which might be the means of evoking discussion on infantry tactics, in the present transition state of that branch of military science, I have undertaken to do so with some misgiving, for I cannot but feel that one who knows nothing of active military service, must appear as Fitz-James did to Roderick Dhu, a mere carpet knight, to those who have seen the tactics taught on parade, practically tested in the field. But I am encouraged by the kind and generous reception accorded to me by the profession, when I ventured before to write on a military subject, to hope that those friends who bade me come before you may not fall under your censure.

Modern weapons have made change in tactics an absolute necessity. While it was possible to come to close quarters, before either belligerent could inflict serious loss upon the other, close formations were permissible, and roundabout modes of movement might not be fraught with much danger. Large bodies could be moved directly by the word of command of one Officer, the mode in which the order was to be obeyed being inflexible, and the subordinate Officers having no other responsibility than that of seeing the command carried out with an exactitude as nearly mathematical as possible. On an order being given, the consequent words of command by the subordinate Officers were fixed and unvarying. The change to be effected was so precise, and the mode of carrying it out so strictly confined to movements in exact lines, and wheels on pivots, that its detail could be laid down absolutely on a

diagram. The battalion was thus practically the smallest tactical unit, falling into wings or divisions only in order to facilitate transition from one position to another, reconsolidation in one compact body in a new position, whether in line or column, being the immediate purpose of every movement. When the battalion was divided, the segments were jealously kept in one order, so that, on reconsolidation, the sequence of its parts should be exactly the same as before. From the moment of its formation on parade, it had a front nailed on to one side of it, by Her Majesty's orders, so that its commander was the slave of that front, and could not handle his battalion as he pleased, to suit the position in which he found himself. A regiment which happened to leave its private parade in what was called "right in front" might be able at once to take up its position in brigade, while another, arriving in what was called "left in front," might be unable to take its place till it had been put through a manœuvre as lengthy as and more complicated than a figure of a quadrille. In short, rigidity, as contradistinguished from flexibility, was the most marked characteristic of infantry tactics. And this, not only in our own country, but throughout the whole continent of Europe.

But within the last ten or twelve years, a great many of these features of complication and rigidity have been removed from the Field Exercise. The system of artificial fronts was most vigorously attacked, not only by amateurs like myself, but by professional soldiers, notably by one who has done much service in the field, Colonel Sir Lumley Graham, late of the 18th Royal Irish, whose denunciation of them as "arbitrary" is most just and pithy. And the result is, that now the parts of a battalion are moved so as to bring it as quickly and efficiently as possible into new positions, without regard to what company may come to stand in front, rear, right, or left. The Commanding Officer has no longer a double duty to perform, one, to bring his battalion into a position ordered, and the other, to keep his companies always in a fixed sequence. Time is not wasted in elaborate wheels, and a general tendency is evinced to go the shortest way from point to point. It may give some idea of the extent of change that has taken place in military opinion, to quote one passage from the Field Exercise and Evolutions of Infantry for the year 1833, viz., "The formation of *four-deep, though deemed inapplicable to battalion drill with reference to service, may, nevertheless, in certain cases, be applied,*" &c. How strangely this reads in the light of the changes made since that time. It may now safely be said that, although some movements are still retained which are performed by wheels, these are never made use of on service. When troops are out manœuvring, on a large scale, on ground not as flat as a barrack-yard, as on Salisbury Plain or Dartmoor, the convenient formation of fours is that which commends itself to everyone as the most applicable in almost all circumstances. Troops can be moved round obstacles, or led through gaps in fences, and the new formation be more rapidly reached, and as steadily completed, as under the old system.

But now that all this has been done, a new difficulty has arisen. The formations themselves are being found to require modification.

The column has lost its place in attack for ever, as no troops can live in it, under modern fire. And, although a line formation is still, and wisely, looked upon as the most efficient mode of finally forcing an enemy's position, it is on all hands admitted that troops cannot traverse in any solid formation whatever, the many hundreds of yards beyond the range of close quarters now covered by even small-arm fire. Means must, therefore, be found for pushing forward, bit by bit, the force which it is ultimately intended to concentrate in a line for the final effort, so as to enable the consolidation to be made without such losses beforehand as would practically shatter the force, reducing it to the condition of a weapon liable to break from sheer weakness in the attempt to make it strike with crushing effect. This is the practical problem to be solved in infantry tactics. If I may use homely language, I would describe it thus: How best to dribble in detail over the ground covered by long-range fire so as to retain sufficient strength and connectedness to be able to tighten together effectively, for the final blow which shall decide the day.

It can scarcely be said that any nation has as yet satisfactorily worked out a mode of detail for effecting this object; but there is more than one that has adopted a tentative system, and is elaborating it from day to day. It may suffice to refer to the Prussian and our own as illustrations of some of the principles aimed at, and the modes by which it is attempted to follow these out.

The Prussians have adopted as a fundamental principle that when the force which is to be pushed forward by sending a part out first, pressing forward other parts as may be required to solidify it and concentrate attack at close quarters, the process should be so regulated as to restore each unit to its integrity, and not mix the units together. And having adopted the company as the "sub-unit for battle," they work it in a company column, sending out a part of and then the whole of the first section, treating the next section as a support and the remainder as a reserve, all under the direct control of the company Officer, who can order up reinforcements as he sees fit. So strictly do they adhere to the principle of endeavouring to secure tactical restoration of the unit in its perfect form, that it is laid down in their system that the sections of the company forming its supports or reserve shall not, when brought up to the fighting line, be interspersed between the extended files already in front, but shall fill up intervals left, those already in front closing in to make room for them.

Our system is quite the opposite of this. The tactical unit is kept large, and support is not in the discretion of the company Officer. He must trust to his need of it being seen by another, and must hold out as he best can till it is sent to him. Whole companies are moved to the front at once, and concentration is obtained by extending and advancing other companies, their files getting in between those of the company in front. Orders for reinforcement are never given by the Officer in command of the company who is in the fighting line, but always by a field Officer. The result is that the whole line is reinforced at every point, but the companies are mixed up together indiscriminately. Thus the very thing which the Prussians so anxiously guard against

is a leading feature of our system. They sacrifice the advantages of reinforcement and a fresh supply of ammunition at every point of their fighting line in order to obtain tactical reconstruction; we obtain complete reinforcement at the expense of a total abandonment of consistency of tactical form. It is therefore plain that where the modes adopted for attack by two nations differ so fundamentally, there must be something that is faulty in one at least of them, and possibly that both may be open to serious objection. I am inclined to think that a critical examination for the purpose of arriving at a decision as to the things to be aimed at in framing infantry tactics to suit modern fire range, will demonstrate that in both the systems referred to faulty modes have been adopted for carrying out sound principles.

The first proposition I would lay down is, that *as the force which formerly went forward compactly must now be broken up into parts and again solidified, a mode should be devised, if that be possible, which shall make reconsolidation be the same thing as reconstruction.* That is to say, given a force that must disintegrate into thinner parts, and re-form a line again after ground has been crossed by the attenuated portions, a mode which would reproduce it as nearly as possible in the tactical form it held at first, would be preferable to a mode which merely formed a similar line, but in which the individual soldiers belonging to different units of command were interspersed together. I think no one can doubt that just as both horse and rider do best when they understand one another's ways, so Officers and men who know each other well are more to be relied on to do their work efficiently than when commander and men have little knowledge of one another. And it follows from this, as a necessary axiom, that the immediate command over men should be changed as little as possible during the course of an engagement. Casualties will occur, but this only removes the command from one known Officer to another, whereas the intermingling of companies necessitates command being transferred to comparatively strange hands, according to the accidents of seniority. This is not only objectionable as being a change, but may often result in men being ignorant at the most critical point of an engagement from whom their orders are to come, than which nothing can be imagined more likely to cause wavering or to convert check into disaster.

The next proposition, being an amplification of the first, is, that *the mode adopted for making reconsolidation spontaneously produce tactical reconstruction should, if possible, effect that result not only when reconsolidation is caused by the main body pushing forward to concentrate the attack, but also, and much more, when reconsolidation results from part of the force first sent forward being ordered or compelled to fall back towards the main body.* I speak subject to correction, but with some confidence, when I say that this is perhaps the most important point of view from which those on the outlook for a good mode of attack should make their observations. If a system can be devised which, from its nature, tends to prevent check from becoming disaster, a temporary disaster from becoming a rout, that system will be preferable to one formed on the assumption that as checks and disasters are

to be avoided, their possibility should be ignored. Tactics which are framed only for victory, and with no regard to preventing repulse from becoming destruction, are essentially faulty. Therefore if the first proposition—that reconsolidation should, as far as possible, be reconstruction of tactical units in pushing forward to success—is sound, it is manifest that the same rule must be in a higher degree applicable to the case of troops compelled to retire. If in falling back they were returning to their places in the tactical unit from which they had been pushed out, rallying and recovery would be made more likely, or if this were not possible, an orderly and on that account less hasty and disastrous retreat might reasonably be hoped for. It is in this particular that there appears to be most faultiness in both our own system and the Prussian. Under our mode of attack, a check and retrograde movement may mean the retirement of several units, mixed up in complete disorder, uncertain who is their commander, and with no tactical form, and therefore no integral cohesion. This is in itself demoralising. A state of things in which it is possible after ground has been lost, that each of two tactical units which were mixed up together, may be able to blame the other for giving way first, without the possibility of the superior Officer ascertaining whether one or the other, or both, were in fault, ought surely to be avoided if possible. But, apart from this, is it not plain that every unnecessary and avoidable disarrangement of units in an advance will have its counterpart in unnecessary but unavoidable disorganization in retreat, if retreat does take place, whether through fault or of necessity? The Prussian system, on the other hand, is based on the idea of reconsolidation taking place by the sections in the fighting line and the other sections being brought end to end, the original attenuated fighting line closing to make room for the parts by which it is to be consolidated, and these, to use the words of their own book, being pushed into the intervals. It is difficult to believe that this mode could ever work satisfactorily, particularly in retreat, and some of their own best authorities condemn it as impracticable. Major-General Newdigate, in his paper on the Prussian drill of 1876, quotes a paragraph which, as he says, indicates the weak point of the new dispersed order of fighting, as adopted by the Prussians, to be the risk of retiring movements degenerating into confusion. The paragraph is as follows:

“It must be rigidly enforced that retiring movements immediately after an attack are always carried out in step (not at the double), and that on these occasions taut hold of the men is never lost.”

This just means that a dread lest under this system retirement should not result in reconsolidation and accumulation of power, but should lead to confusion and disaster, compels them to expose men forced to retire to more loss from the enemy's fire than they were liable to when advancing. As General Newdigate truly says, “This short paragraph speaks with an eloquence which cannot be over-rated; for it touches the weak point in the dispersed order of fighting,” by which I take him to mean that in the systems adopted up to the present time, it is felt that the retreat is worse provided for from a tactical point of view than the advance, whereas, if it were

possible, the very opposite should be the case. There are no circumstances in which tactical cohesion and concentration are so vital as when a fighting line is being pressed back, and it is demonstrable that they are not the natural sequence of retirement of the fighting line, either on the Prussian system or on our own. The weakest point is found where weakness is most to be guarded against. Of course I am not to be understood as suggesting that any system that could be devised would make it unnecessary to use means to prevent hurry, and to keep taut hold of the men in retiring movements. All I am endeavouring to establish is that it is true that in retiring there is the greatest risk of men getting out of hand, and into a state of unsteadiness, which may become irremediable. This is in itself one of the most cogent reasons for endeavouring to obtain a system, the nature of which shall be such as spontaneously to produce a refitting together of the tactical unit, part of which has been sent forward to engage the enemy, when that part is made to fall back, either because of orders issued by an Officer in superior command for special reasons, or in consequence of the advanced position being for the time untenable.

The last general proposition is, *that the captain of a company being in immediate charge of the men in the fighting line, should have no greater extent of front than will admit of personal superintendence and close control over the men and that those who form the supporting body behind him should be at his command as he may require their assistance.*

The two points of this proposition involve a complete departure from our system, in which a whole company is dispersed in front, and the supporting body is moved by order from behind, issued by an Officer who has several companies to look after. The Prussians, on the other hand, strongly insist on both parts of the proposition as fundamental rules. With them the company is the unit for battle, the company commander having a certain amount of independence of action, and it is specially laid down that "the skirmishers are always supported by the companies to which they belong."

This proposition is insisted on for the following reasons:—

1st. A whole company extended, particularly in the present day, when broken ground and cover are sought for, is likely often to get out of hand. I appeal on this matter to the experience of those who saw the autumn manœuvres on Salisbury Plain, a country selected as being the most open and free from obstructions in England. How often, from the units in the front being too much spread out, did confusion and uncertainty result, corps losing their cohesion and getting helplessly mixed up with others.

2nd. The attempt of a captain to look efficiently after so long a front in broken ground would soon cause bodily exhaustion, weakening his efficiency in every respect. I believe this was the experience of the Kaffir War, where captains suffered terribly from over-exertion in the endeavour to look after their men, often being unable to do it at all.

3rd. Temporary support can be most efficiently used in circumstances which do not call for a reinforcement of the whole line. For example, a small part of the line having to advance down an exposed slope, might be efficiently helped by its own support being pushed up

to the back of the slope, and firing over it. Many other illustrations may at once occur to the mind when our own undulating country with its belts of trees, brushwood, dells, and strong hedgerows are called to mind.

4th. A temporary difficulty occurring at one point of the line can be more quickly and efficiently dealt with. This is too clear to require illustration, except to say in one word that to leave the supply of support entirely in the hands of a mounted Officer, who often may have to go a long distance round about to get forward at all, and who very often cannot by possibility have half his command within sight, appears to be out of the question, now that skirmishing is no longer a mere preliminary to battle, but is an integral part of the main battle itself.

5th. The moral effect of those immediately behind the men in the fighting line being part of the same unit with themselves, their daily companions in duty, and ready to come to their help at the order of their own Officer, would be most beneficial, both in filling the attack with vigour, and preventing a check leading to demoralization. There is an *esprit* of the company, as valuable in its degree as *esprit de corps*, which the new mode of fighting in dispersed order makes it most desirable to foster. If the company is to be a practical tactical unit, then it should be, to use a common phrase, as self-supporting a body as possible.

The points which have now been stated, in such detail as the time at my disposal permits of, as being important to be aimed at in framing a system of infantry tactics, may be summarised thus:—

Consolidation from dispersed order, whether in advancing or retiring movements, to be so effected as to tend to produce tactical reconstruction of units.

The company commander to have his portion of the fighting line so limited as to admit of direct personal superintendence even on broken ground.

The supports and main body in rear of the fighting line to be of the same tactical unit (that is of the same company) as the portion of the fighting line in front of them; the support to be primarily at the disposal of the company commander, as he may require assistance during the advance. The force has thus for its detail work a unity of command in depth from front to rear, without infringing upon the unity of superior command both in length and depth.

Now, in searching for a suitable mode of carrying out these principles, it seems natural to turn back from the subject of advance to attack, and to direct attention to the ordinary parade and marching movements which are used to bring troops into position for active duty. Because it is evident that, if a mode of arrangement already known to be suitable for these purposes, should also be found to supply the means of carrying out the attack in accordance with the principles laid down, a great advantage will be gained, as your system of tactics will be consistent with itself. The advance to attack need not be a departure from, but only a spreading out of, the normal formation; and the bringing up of a main body for the final effort will be but a recontraction into the solidity of the original in its

actual form—not a thing made up like it, but really composed of fragments whose relation to one another is new, accidental, and confused.

Turning, then, back to parade formations, the first that strikes one as being the most convenient for all general purposes, is that of four-deep. It is this formation which is found most suitable for practical work, whenever the level parade has to be left for ordinary ground. It embraces the three elements of simplicity, celerity, and convenience. It is the formation which best fulfils Sir Lumley Graham's desideratum, "total absence of constraint in the position of the soldier, both when halted and on the march, so that he may be able to use his arms and legs to the best advantage;" to which I would add, and in which he can move with least fatigue—all most important matters, when it is considered that fretting trifles tending to physical exhaustion may not only end in destroying bodily activity, but also may seriously affect *morale* in subordinates, mental activity in superiors, and may I not add, temper in all?

Fours being, then, the best general formation for all ordinary purposes, it is obvious that if infantry can be sent out to attack from that formation in such a manner as to fulfil the requirements which have been already insisted on, the whole system of infantry tactics will be simplified and made to have one formation for its basis. It shall now be my endeavour to show that this can be done, and done with advantage in every respect.

Let it be supposed that a line is standing on parade, not in two ranks, dressing by touch, but as it would be under the present system after the order "Fours-deep" had been given; that is to say, it would be standing in four ranks, with about arm's length intervals between the men. As regards ordinary movements, the whole would retain the same formation whether they were moved forward or back, right or left, having merely to turn in the direction ordered. Every man would be perfectly free from constraint in his movements, able to swing his arm, as the Prussians most properly make him do, and would have free circulation of air round him, in whatever direction he moved, small obstructions could be passed without throwing the line out, all counter-marching, all forming to front or rear, to the right and right-about, or left and left-about, would be rendered unnecessary, and there would be no difference as there is now in the mode of formation of fours, whether deep, right, left, or about. The front of a column could be reduced to one-half without any change of formation: column wheels would be much easier, and squares could be formed either four deep or two deep without a different division of the companies. The battalion would be in every way more flexible without there being any tendency to relaxation of strict drill, which is so essential to maintain steadiness and discipline. In a word, the system would be less cumbrous and more what tactics devised for actual use ought to be, as distinguished from tactics which are framed as if troops always moved on ground artificially levelled. To use the words of Major von Scherff, a distinguished German writer on tactics, we can "dispense with a number of close

"order formations, which are still much used, and which waste a great deal of time."

By this arrangement, the fours, if required for a temporary purpose to form two deep, could do so indifferently as to front, without the

FIG. 1.

slightest risk of mistake, by following one simple formula, viz: to form two deep the second and fourth men of each four would step to the left and up, and to get back into four deep, the man on the left would step back and to the right. And as the men of each group of four would be convertible units of that group, no confusion could arise. The accompanying diagram shows that the men will, by following this one simple formula, stand always in the same position to one another, whichever way they are turned. Fig. 1 represents the men facing the reader, figure 2 represents them turned about.

It only remains then to examine whether this formation, which recommends itself by its capacity for husbanding physical energy, promoting rapidity of movement, and increasing flexibility in changes of position, can be usefully applied to carry out the principles necessary to be observed in actual engagement with the enemy.

For this purpose it will be most convenient to take a single battalion for illustration. After detailing off from the battalion whatever proportion is necessary for a general reserve, let it be supposed that it

is drawn up in line, in "fours-deep." The best shooting men might be brought to the front, and any men brought into the company in equalising kept in rear. On the order to advance for attack being given, the first rank of fours would be marched off, the captain of each company going with it. In a company of 100 men, each captain would have twenty-five men out in front at one pace interval. Marksmen might be thrown out in front from this rank when ad

FIG. 2.

visible. The next rank of fours would follow as support, under subaltern officers, two or more intelligent non-commissioned officers going out as links in front, to guide the support correctly in rear of its own part of the fighting line, and to convey any orders from the captains which might be sent back to them. The remaining two ranks of fours forming the main body would follow, their connectedness with the support being kept up in a similar manner.

The units of frontage being moderate in size could thus be most efficiently handled, confusion and loss of connectedness prevented, support brought up for any temporary purpose for which it might be required, a thing of great importance, and specially in a much enclosed country like ours. The whole line could be kept firm hold of, the fire carefully controlled, injudicious and hasty advance restrained, and wavering or giving way checked. Every movement, whether of pushing forward reinforcement, or falling back on support, would tend to

reproduce in its regular form the tactical unit originally subdivided for the attack. The main body would fulfil von Scherff's requirement, as to which every one will agree with him that "in order to give the necessary impetus to the attack, it will be undoubtedly advisable that our main body should at least equal in strength the total of the two front lines." The arrangement will get rid of what he admits to be an evil, but sees no remedy for, the doubling up of section with section and company with company in a confused mass. Each company would, as such, remain under the same direct command from first to last, and the attack when concentrated by the bringing up of the main body, would be not only in form, but in actual fact, an attack of the line, precisely similar to that in use before the days of rifled breech-loaders. This system has moreover two special advantages. The one is that while it is thoroughly well adapted for use in open ground, it is also admirably suited for the very broken and intersected ground we have in this country, and would prevent the great confusion and loss of connectedness that so often resulted from this cause at our Autumn Manœuvres on ground much more open than is generally to be found in England. The other is of an importance that cannot be overrated, viz., that the mode of procedure is the same in every respect, whether the number of men to be moved is small or great. It is as applicable to a squad or company as to a battalion or a brigade, the procedure in all cases being the same.

Such are the main grounds on which it has appeared to me, and to others whose opinions, being those of men of professional experience, have intrinsic value, that the adoption of the four-deep formation as a tactical basis would be an advisable step. It would conduce to the attainment of the three great desiderata—simplicity, celerity, and convenience—while at the same time it would assist the maintenance of disciplined and regulated movement, and husband strength to a greater extent than any other system yet proposed, giving the best hope of physical power being maintained to the decisive moment, and thus indirectly, yet most really, securing the best chance to both Officer and men of being able to work with full vigour and rapid action of the intelligence without which much of the value of bodily energy and skilled training is necessarily lost. And last, but not least, it would make the dominant principle of advance and retirement the same, reconstruction being the natural sequence of either, thus preventing confusion of units in the order-obeying part of the force, and confusion of command in the order-conveying. These are advantages which might outweigh defects in other respects, but if they are found applicable to a system that is in itself unobjectionable, must necessarily turn the scale completely in its favour. Whether they are applicable or not, is a question which I leave with confidence in the hands of those whose professional skill enables them to give their opinion with authority.

APPENDIX.

As a guide to any Officer who will do me the favour to give the system a practical

trial, the general details necessary for the drill of a battalion or brigade are added.¹ I hope that whoever superintends the practice of this drill will keep constantly present to his mind the purpose it is intended to effect.

Troops when required to advance in order of attack have nothing whatever to do with scouting or searching for an enemy, protecting their own flank, or outflanking, or threatening to outflank him. Before an attack of the kind, for which I have endeavoured to suggest a suitable method, is commenced, it is to be understood not only that the position occupied by the enemy is known, but that the troops defending it have, for a considerable time, been exposed to a heavy fire of artillery, and possibly that attempt has already been made to carry the position by the advance of infantry. It is also to be understood that besides the troops to be employed in the direct attack, a separate body has been told off for the protection of flanks, or for operating against the flank of the enemy. Thus, the duty of the Officer in command of the troops told off for the direct attack is restricted to effect a single operation, that of advancing the troops under his command as rapidly as possible directly to their front, over from 2,000 to 1,000 yards of ground exposed to the enemy's fire, with the least possible loss, and the greatest possible power of finally concentrating for the charge, a line of soldiers formed in close file. Let it be supposed that the troops have been deployed in a four deep line and told off in groups of eight, which may be done by telling off the groups of four into "first, second"—"first, second."

At the caution of the General Officer in command "THE LINE WILL ADVANCE IN ORDER OF ATTACK," followed by signal to move, the Commanders of battalions will give the word "No. 1 ranks—quick march!" At this word these ranks will step off together in quick time, the "second" of each group of eight inclining to the right so as to come close alongside their "first."² When these men have gained from 150 to 200 paces, battalion Commanders will give the word "No. 2 ranks—quick march!" when it will move off in the same manner.

No. 3 and 4 ranks, whenever the nature of the ground makes it advisable for the main body to move, will receive the command from the senior Major "No. 3 and 4 ranks—quick march!"

In advancing in this formation No. 1 rank will be led by the Captain, assisted by the junior subaltern and two sergeants; No. 2 rank by the senior subaltern, assisted by two sergeants; and No. 3 and 4 ranks by the second senior subalterns and remaining sergeants or lance-sergeants.

The post of the Officers and non-commissioned officers of No. 1 rank will be in rear. The leaders of No. 2 and of No. 3 and 4 ranks will be in front, and the non-commissioned officers attached to these ranks will be in rear of the flanks.

The Captain will be attended by two corporals, who will be used as connecting links to communicate with the supporting ranks and main body.

The post of the Lieutenant-Colonel will be 30 paces in rear of the centre of the line of supporting ranks. He will be accompanied by the junior Major, the Adjutant, and three corporals.³ The junior Major and Adjutant will act as *aides* in communicating with the leading ranks, and in passing orders along the fighting line and line of supports. The corporals will act as links to communicate with the reserve ranks No. 3 and 4. The post of the senior Major will be 20 paces in front of the line of the reserve ranks (3 and 4). He will be accompanied by the sergeant-major.

In all cases of reinforcement, the link corporals should meet the flanks of the reinforcing rank or ranks in rear of the fighting line, the non-commissioned officers on the flanks of the reinforcing ranks going out in front to lead them up correctly to the position marked by the link corporals. The men should be carefully trained in rapidly finding their own group.

Captains should be instructed to bring up their own second rank temporarily, where the nature of the ground may make it advantageous or advisable.

The above may suffice for a trial of the system, the advance under musketry fire,

¹ Added since the paper was read.—ED.

² Some may think it better to put them behind in file, but I am inclined to think that to put them close alongside one another is the best arrangement for securing intelligent work or mutual help.

³ On service, grooms for the horses would be necessary.

reinforcing, charge, &c., being conducted generally on the principles laid down in the "Field Exercise."

Colonel FLETCHER, Commanding 2nd Battalion Scots Guards: Before discussing the questions involved in the paper we have just heard read, I may perhaps be allowed to say how much we of the Regular Army are indebted to Colonel Macdonald for bringing his valuable opinion to bear upon this important subject. Very often extra-professional criticism is most valuable; it spurs on the profession to fresh study, and it also brings minds that are possibly not to a certain degree narrowed by looking at the subject from one point of view, to bear upon the matter in question. If therefore I at all criticise what Colonel Macdonald has said, I do it with the utmost diffidence.

In the first place I think a portion of that great stiffness which Colonel Macdonald alluded to, and which characterised our drill a very short time ago, was not so much in consequence of tactics arising from the weapons we then used, as in consequence of the long period of peace. I remember perfectly well about seven years ago meeting the late Field Marshal Lord Tweeddale; he was talking about the reforms then being made in the Army, and after having discussed them he said: "There is 'nothing new in them to me; these are the very things I learned under Sir John 'Moore.'" The truth is, after a long peace, we get into certain fixed habits, and forget that the dry bones of tactics have to be infused with the real spirit of service, in order to make them of any real value.

I think there is also a certain danger (much as I value the Prussian books that have been written), of our getting too much into a German system, for however applicable a German system may be to Germans, and however applicable a French system may be to the French, I think we as English are bound to have a system of our own which will suit our troops, will suit our organization, and will suit our discipline. With reference to the system of attack which is now promulgated in the Field Exercise Book, I would venture to say that it has been a little hardly dealt with by Colonel Macdonald. There is greater elasticity allowed in the Field Exercise Book than has been allowed in the lecture. If I remember rightly, not only may a company be sent forward, but it is also perfectly allowable to send forward a section and to reinforce that section successively by others. I think also it will be found that not only may the supports be ordered up by the Field Officer, but they may be also ordered up by the Captain commanding the supports. I speak from recollection without having referred very recently to the book. The truth is that the new order of attack has apparently been somewhat of a compromise, and seems to contain certain contradictions. I am rather glad for one that there are contradictions, because it allows greater latitude in carrying it out. When your men are in extended order, you must rely upon previous teaching and discipline, and upon what the Germans call "fire discipline." You must have educated your battalion so that when once *lancé* to the attack it may to a certain degree be able to act without the supervision of the Colonel. You must have taught your Officers according to their grades and also your non-commissioned officers, and you must have instructed them so far as possible individually, so that they may take command, and be prepared to act as occasions may present themselves without the direct supervision of the senior Officers.

With reference to the four-deep formation, I think I may compliment Colonel Macdonald on having attacked the present formation of fours which very few regular Officers would have done. We have got the present system so imbued into our minds that we never think of forming fours differently than according to the present method, and Colonel Macdonald has put before us another way of doing it which appears at first sight simpler and better. But with regard to using the four-deep formation as the means of open order attack, I think there is this difficulty. As long as you are acting on a smooth surface, or where everything is perfectly regular, and where the different units fit into their proper places, all goes well; but suppose as you are marching forward to the attack, with your front line of fours, you see a position on your right or left which it is necessary to seize (and this will be often found to take place not only in action but also

on field days over rough ground where you have a supposed enemy in front of you), the Officer using his own discretion moves the support to right or left; immediately the whole system of attack is upset, and confusion becomes worse confounded. Doubtless under the present system there must be confusion: and what you must do is to educate your Officers and non-commissioned officers to act in confusion. You must imitate confusion continually, and you must teach them the habit of commanding men in front of them although these men may be intermingled and of different companies. I think this is the criticism I will venture to make upon the four-deep formation. With regard to the retirement after an attack, you must depend upon having a certain portion of your force well in hand to cover retreat, as I think it is almost impossible to rely upon a beaten force falling back upon the several four-deep formations as shown in the diagram. But supposing this formation were carried out, it would require also a different system of disciplining your company. If your men are to act in four lines in the way indicated, you must divide your company up into four similar sections, so that each of your sections shall be commanded properly according to their formation, and not as at present when standing in line; for nothing can be more important than that your section should be properly and intelligently commanded by their own sectional leaders; and also it is of immense importance that the men who stand together, should act and work together both in field and camp. Therefore, to carry out the four-deep system a new disciplinary formation as well as a new tactical formation would be required. I do not say this as an argument against the system, but point it out as a corollary that should necessarily ensue from its adoption.

Lieutenant-Colonel BLENDALL, Grenadier Guards: Gentlemen, we must all, I think, agree with Colonel Macdonald in his aim of attempting reconstruction when the line is formed for the final rush, if it is possible, but I for one doubt its being possible. I have had a good deal of practice in skirmishing companies, not in the field but on parade, and I must say I think it quite uncertain if you divide a company (when several companies are acting in line together in extended order), I consider it quite uncertain, if you divide a company and let one-half company support the other half, whether, when you want to reinforce the half company in front, its own half company will reinforce it: you find there is a certain drifting of the line, there is smoke and confusion, and my belief is, if a Captain of a company wants to command his company properly, he should be in the rear of the centre, and that the whole company, not too long, should be in one single line. He has then perfect control, no matter how long it is, he passes orders along the rear, whereas if he has to be hopping between the half company in the front line and the other half company, perhaps a couple of hundred yards behind, the chances are he will lose one, perhaps both. I think we should be very careful about the use of terms. A great deal has been said about the Prussian "company." Now, I contend that there is no doubt the Prussians gained a great advantage by the use of that large company of 250 men, but it was not because it was a "company," but in spite of its being a "company." It acted as a battalion, and they gained their advantages by using small battalions. Their companies became, in fact, small battalions. It has always been considered in the British service that a company of 32 files is about the handiest body you can use, and you find that four "companies," of 32 files, will not differ much from the strength of the Prussian "company"; that is to say, one British half battalion, of four companies each of 32 files. It is as perfect a unit as you could possibly have to use in the field; and if you identified the Major with his half battalion in practice as much as he is in theory, you would at once have what you may term a Prussian "company" if you like the word, but better organized, and, in reality, a battalion composed of four integers, each under, suppose we term them, Commanders, and we similarly styled the Sub-Lieutenants, Lieutenants. I believe that would be the very best arrangement, and I think with our attack formation you would at once arrive at that, if in distributing the companies at first you so arranged it that when your battalion was all thrown out, the reserves reinforcing the fighting line, you had your right half battalion on your right and your left on your left. To this extent I believe reconstruction is possible; the book permits it but it does not suggest it as the normal formation. Then there is another point I should like to mention. Even before the Crimean War, it was a

matter of indifference in what order the battalions stood in the brigade. You might invert them to any extent. It was all perfectly natural, but, at the same time, the companies in a battalion, except in light division regiments, were rigidly kept, as Colonel Macdonald very properly observed, to their particular order. Now, the order of companies in a battalion is a matter of perfect indifference; they change their order at any time and no inconvenience is felt. I believe we have arrived at a time when we must go beyond this. I believe it is a perfect matter of indifference in what order a man stands in his company. I believe you may take a company of men who are properly drilled, and without any telling off at all, you might give them the word "fours right," give them the caution to take their time from the right, just as they do in dressing, and you would find the company would form fours without any telling off at all. That is what we have to make the men understand, that there is no real danger in Smith being on the right of Brown, any more than in Brown being on the right of Smith. We find that custom lingers long everywhere, especially in the Army. It is the commonest thing possible to find a man who would bolt his front door with two bolts, lock it, put a chain upon it, and, at the same time, leave the window within two or three yards of it with the latch undone. That is no doubt custom, the remains of the time when the weak point in all houses was the doorway. So in the Army: in old times the great danger to infantry was a cavalry charge, and the infantry was obliged to be prepared to form hollow square to resist cavalry, with the least exposure to artillery. Now there is no occasion for anything of that sort. The only chance cavalry can have against unshaken infantry is to catch them by surprise, and when infantry is caught by surprise, you may just as well form quarter or close column, or rallying squares, as anything else. The necessity of forming hollow squares was the only reason for being very particular in maintaining the proper order of men in a company, or companies, in a battalion. The last has gone and we ought to accommodate ourselves to existing circumstances in the former.¹ With regard to the formation of fours that Colonel Macdonald has suggested, it appears to be a very simple one, but I think it is a matter of comparative indifference, whether a company, before it commences to advance, is two deep or four deep. I think it is a pity we do not retain the formation of threes for moving upon roads not wide enough for fours.

Captain E. VAUGHAN-JONES, London Irish Rifle Volunteers:² I thought Colonel Macdonald's desire for reconstruction was good, but that his scheme for effecting it would be unworkable in a real attack, because the confusion and loss of direction, incidental to troops moving in extended order over broken ground, would prevent his third and fourth ranks (forming his reserve) finding their own companies, as we must bear in mind the great depth between them and the front, and the probability is, that when they arrived at the front (in hot haste), they would be absorbed just where they came up, and that it would be almost impossible that men would arrive so exactly at their places as to reconstruct the companies.

I then stated there were many advantages possessed by the old line formation (which I pointed out), and that I thought it was quite capable of being developed to meet the circumstances of the time, by, as it were, engrafting upon it a workable revised system of attack, and I most respectfully submit, with all deference, the following suggestions (as stated in my paper). Allow the troops to move over a portion of the space between them and the enemy in the old line formation, but with scouts out, which will afford proper command by the senior and more experienced Officers, and when the edge of the zone of musketry fire has been reached (say at 1,000 yards from the enemy, or earlier if annoyed by his shell fire), unleash by halting the left companies (2, 4, 6, and so on) which will form reserve under the senior Major, the right companies, still moving on, form single rank from the right (the direction, touch, and command is then obtained as before). When this single rank arrived to within 700 or 800 yards of the enemy (or earlier if exposed to shell-fire), halt the rear rank men, who will form supports and keep their

¹ It is not intended to advocate disorder, but to urge that when disorder occurs, as it inevitably must, the situation may be accepted with composure.

² The following is a précis of a written statement handed in by Captain Jones.

extended order (the Lieutenants to be in charge of these, and the junior Major having general charge of the whole). The front rank men move on, being then in extended order, and form the fighting line under the Captains.

In such a formation the whole would be "in hand," the Captains would have their commands in two ranks (one the fighting rank and the other the supporting rank), with a front of 50 paces for 32 files, instead of 128 paces as at present. The rear-rank men to conform to the movements of the front, so that when the Captains send their links (buglers or sergeants) for reinforcements, they shall be able to fit into their places, or at least join their own companies. These supports could be echeloned or partly so (if found necessary for flank defence); the same must be said of the reserve, it should be in line for the most part, but where a flank is exposed, then the order in which it should stand or move must be determined according to circumstances, but I do maintain that the reserve should be composed of companies in their entirety, as they are then better fitted for flank defence, or indeed any duty.

In the event of a retreat, the front rank and rear rank would alternately retire, each supporting the other, and the reserve would so dispose itself as to check the pursuit.

If the fighting line got good cover whilst under fire, it would be quite possible to restore the old line formation, by moving up the rear ranks and causing the right companies to form two deep on the right and the left companies to move into the intervals, you would then be able to pour in a concentrated fire.

Under such a system as this, men would be held in command and comrade would join comrade (when reinforcing). Every man would be under his own Officers, and all the confusion and clashing of commands, such as at present take place, would be avoided.

Lieut.-General OLPHERTS, U.C., C.B.: I came here this evening quite unexpectedly, and had not the slightest idea of venturing to speak before a company which contains, I am certain, Officers who are far more capable of speaking on the subject than I am. I may, however, state that during the time I was in India, where I had the opportunity of commanding brigades and divisions, an Officer named Lieut.-Colonel Bigge, of Her Majesty's 5th Fusiliers, brought to my notice a system of attack which I tried in the Barcilly (or Rohilkund) Brigade and the Lucknow (or Oude) Division, where it answered admirably. I quite agree with the spirit of what Colonel Macdonald has said, and I am not presuming to say the system I wish to point out to you is better than his; but I desire to mention it to you. It is, in some respects, similar to Colonel Macdonald's. It is based on the company system, but the difference is instead of acting by fours Colonel Bigge acted by sections, and the advantage of that was, as a speaker in front of me said, that the men of each section were under the immediate command of their own non-commissioned officers, and knew them better than they would others. I think that is an advantage. I used to call it the telescope system, it shut up so very conveniently, closed, and became a compact formation, as Colonel Macdonald advocates. I have not read much lately about subjects of this kind, and I am not able perhaps to use all the technical terms that would convey my meaning to you so well as others, but I have simply wished to mention to you as a fact that Colonel Bigge did produce that system, I believe, before any other similar one, and that I found it answer in practice remarkably well.¹

¹ As an example I give the following plan:—No. 1 Section (it does not signify which section goes out first) covers the front of its own company in extended order; the next or any other section as ordered forms the support, the files being opened out as required; the remaining section forms the reserve. The Captain is usually between the front line and support, with connecting links and intelligent men to convey orders. An advantage of this system over the four-deep one appears to be that by having the support and reserve more compact and in hand, you can protect a flank and reinforce any particular point in the front line more effectually. I have also found it very handy and effective in retiring movements. At the same time I can quite understand that the four-deep system may be an equally useful and practicable one. What is required is that all should act together with one mind to fulfil

Lieut.-Colonel GORDON IVES, 36th Middlesex Rifle Regiment: I am not perfectly clear whether Colonel Macdonald intended the original formation to be four deep or to form four deep from the original formation of two, because there is a very considerable difference. [Colonel MACDONALD: It was four deep from the very first, the normal condition.] That, then, avoids telling off. Some two years ago I happened to be attending the manœuvres in Germany, and I worked this question out with various friends of mine at that time. I had not read Colonel Macdonald's book, but we all thought a four-deep formation was capable of being worked up into a drill which should recommend itself by its simplicity; but in order to make use of it, it appeared to me to be necessary to make a very great change in the system adopted of dividing the company into four parts. If you adopt the four-deep formation to start with, of course you avoid telling off altogether: you form two deep with the greatest possible ease, but then you have a disconnected line, consequently it is necessary to divide that line in some form or other. If you divide it into sections in the way it is done now, you mix up the men in an inconvenient manner; but if you take it that each line forms a section, 1, 2, 3, 4 sections, each line is a section in itself, it obviates this entirely, and each line forms a competent body in itself. If you subdivide this again, making the men tell off from one flank to the other, you avoid all telling off that is not done by the men themselves, and in various ways you can get one of the first principles of the drill of the Prussian Army, which is the group of eight to twelve or sixteen, each group commanded by a leader, which is the foundation of their first line. The difference between the Prussian line of attack and that of other countries, as far as I have seen, is that they subdivide their line entirely into groups of eight, twelve, or sixteen men, generally commanded by a sub-officer, whose duty it is to superintend the doings of these men. When the reinforcement of the front line takes place, what with us would probably be a section, would with the Prussians be really and truly probably nothing but a group, which being very small is easily sent into the front line; whereas a large section in companies of 80 to 100 men, if subdivided into sections, is no longer a small body of men to bring into the front line, and requires a gap difficult to form and fill up, or as is now done the men are all mixed up. A very important part of the Prussian system is its perfect uniformity. Go from one end of Germany to the other and you will see exactly the same drill. Our drill-book leaves us so much liberty of action that at the last moment, when at manœuvres, we are going to attack an enemy, it may be by the right, left, or centre, but nobody has ever been able to tell me for certain where the centre is, whether the centre of a brigade, division, battalion, or company. What we seem to want is not to be told how a thing can be done, but to be told exactly what we are to do. Commanding—never mind what—a battalion, a company, two men if you like—I do not want to be told I can place two men 5 yards or 100 yards apart: I want to be told exactly

a particular purpose, while each individual develops, as far as possible, his own special qualities, like as a pack of wolves, guided by instinct, collectively and separately follow up and attack those they pursue and seek to devour; while bodies of men, guided by reason and actuated and animated by discipline and principle, endeavour to frustrate and overcome each other's designs by masterly and scientific combinations, in which the power of the superior mind, which directs the whole, increases in proportion to the greater amount of individual intelligence which it reflects.

Rough Sketch of Company advancing to the Attack.

No. 1 Section.

.....

No. 2 as Support.

.....

3 and 4 Reserve.

.....

what I am to do with my two men by my superior Officer. And if that is applicable to the two men, how much more applicable is it when you come to your 50,000, 100,000, or 200,000 men. How impossible it is to imagine the confusion that will arise unless every individual knows what he is to do. It is no good talking of discipline unless a man knows what to do; however willing he may be, he cannot do it. What we want, is not to be told to advance by right, left, or centre, but to advance under a general rule, any deviation from which rule to be such an exception as will make a mark upon our minds. I do not know that these remarks are very relevant to the exact question before us, but what is relevant is to get a system of drill which cannot be deviated from except in rare instances, carrying with them great responsibility. It is perfectly true, as Colonel Macdonald said, that in former days each company had its particular place, and there was, in my opinion, an advantage even in that; and there would be still if each company or each man knew what he had to do. I doubt not but that the result of this discussion will be that my suggestions will be considered by the many distinguished Officers present, and finally settled, so that when we have to face the enemy we shall know what we really have to do, and then I feel perfect confidence that there are very few of us who will not do it.

Captain WOODHOUSE: Colonel Macdonald has confined himself almost entirely to the consideration of the subject as it affects the smallest tactical unit, viz., the company. This must be my excuse for venturing to make a few remarks in the presence of so many of my seniors. As a company Officer I wish to thank Colonel Macdonald for the boon he would bestow upon us. There is not a Captain in the Army who would deny that under the present system the moment of victory is one of inextricable confusion; what the upshot would be if, when the men fix bayonets, quicken their pace and charge, defeat, and not victory should ensue, the drill-book does not inform, nor the orthodox parade instruct us. Officers, however, have a shrewd suspicion. The commander of a skirmishing company labours under many disadvantages at the best of times, but not till he has been reinforced once, twice, and thrice by successive supports, and not till fresh men and strange faces have been wedged in between his own men, and he himself is surrounded by Officers and non-commissioned officers of other companies, can he really be said to have reached the climax of helplessness. The "four-deep" system seems to remedy most of these evils by diminishing the front which he has to control, by giving him undivided command over each reinforcement as it arrives, and by ensuring mutual acquaintance between each unit of the fighting line and its particular commander. No doubt actual experience would induce modifications here and there, but for the proposal and for the principle of the scheme the thanks of all company Officers are due to Colonel Macdonald.

Colonel RADCLIFFE: Sir Garnet Wolseley, I have very few words to say on this subject. I had the privilege some years ago of reading a pamphlet by my friend Colonel Macdonald on this very subject, and I thought then, and I have always thought since, that a great deal ought to be made of this system of fours deep, and I cannot say that I have heard anything this evening which has altered that opinion. Colonel Macdonald's lucid explanation of the system made it quite clear to us all that there was a great deal in it, and I do think it is well worthy of the military authorities' consideration when they bring out a new drill-book, which I suppose will not be very long—a very few months—it is some months since we had a new drill-book. I do think that this matter requires very great consideration on their part before they dismiss it. The important part to my mind always has been, in this formation, that it does give the Captain a command over his company which he gets under no other system. Colonel Macdonald's principle is that the Captain should go out with the fighting line, which should not be an unmanageable line. It is all very well to talk of the Prussian company of 250 men and the Captain commanding that, but you must remember the Captain of that company is a mounted Officer, and pretty nearly takes the place of one of our Majors. In these days of firearms of precision it is decidedly a very great objection to have too many Officers mounted. Those of us who have the privilege of being mounted would I think keep as far out of the fighting line as possible if we did not obey the order of the present drill-book, which is to dismount under fire. I certainly should obey most implicitly that order myself, and I think all other Officers who look to their duty of superintending the troops

under their command would be wise to do the same. Now, as our Captains at present are not mounted, it is a most important thing that they should not have to double up and down a line over which they can have no possible control unless they are really ubiquitous. The great advantage of this system is that the Captain can call up his support by the connecting links whenever he finds it necessary; he can also call up the company reserve, the Officer commanding the battalion reserve having the same control over it as under the present system. But I think there cannot be the slightest doubt in any reasonable mind that it must be much better for the first support and the first reserve to come from men of the same company, and that there would be much less likelihood of the men getting into confusion. There would be the greater probability of their quickly rallying, if they belonged to the same company, than if they belonged to different companies even of the same battalion. It has been said to-night you would have men drifting off in one direction or another, and, therefore, that your supports and reserve would not come up and support in the right places. Does not that equally apply to the supports and reserves under the present system? If a commanding Officer at a distance can send up supports and reserves to support the fighting line under the present system, surely a Captain calling up his own supports and reserves with his own connecting links will do it much more satisfactorily. I do not think, however, that this is a perfect system; it will require a great deal of working out. Colonel Fletcher, of course, knows a good many of the difficulties there would be in the interior economy of the companies as to section commanders and so on, but no doubt those difficulties could be very easily got over; I do not think there is anything that could not be got over by half an hour's steady thought and working out. I was very glad to hear from a gentleman on the other side of the room (Colonel Blundell) that he had such a very high opinion of soldiers in general, and I hope also of Volunteers, that telling off was quite unnecessary, and the men would form fours simply by taking the time from the right. I should be very glad to see any battalion do it. I doubt whether Colonel Fletcher would like to call upon his regiment to do that sort of thing at a moment's notice. I know I should be very sorry to call out my battalion and ask them to do it. I am very glad to hear it can be done; of course, if so, it is a very great advantage, a very great thing indeed.

Colonel BLUNDELL: I shall be happy to do it with any company of your battalion.

Colonel RADCLIFFE: I am very glad to find you have so good an opinion of my battalion. I should be very sorry to do it myself, but I think it is a very great thing that such a thing can be done. Of course, as long as we have the present system, we have to go through a great deal of difficulty about numbering and telling off, and if we can simplify the system it would be a very great advantage. If this lecture tends to help us over these difficulties we shall be very much obliged to Colonel Macdonald; at any rate, we are very much obliged to him for the lecture he has given us.

Major-General A. CUNNINGHAM ROBERTSON, C.B.: I venture to say a few words because I have actually tried Colonel Macdonald's system. Some time ago he published a small pamphlet in which the principles of his system were very clearly laid down, and which I read with great interest. About the time the Cannock Chase camp was going to be formed, I thought it would be a good thing to try the system recommended. As a matter of drill in a barrack square it works with the greatest ease—you can form your company four deep, send forward successive ranks, reinforce, and reconstruct to the front, or retire and reconstruct to the rear. It is a very easy matter; but I never had had the opportunity of trying it over half a mile or a mile of rough ground, so that I really do not know whether the difficulty caused by the drifting of the ranks in rear would be very considerable or not. That would be the chief difficulty; but I do not see any impossibility in overcoming it by throwing out a sufficient number of connecting links between the fighting and supporting, and between the supporting and reserve ranks. Concerning the objection Colonel Fletcher made that it would clash with the squad system, I think in small companies not exceeding 100 men the squad system is not a very real system. The nominal roll, it is true, is divided into squads, but the men themselves are differently divided. For tactical purposes they are told off in half companies, sections, and

four; for the purposes of supervision and discipline they are told off sometimes by rooms, sometimes by tents, sometimes by billets, and sometimes by messes, but neither do the tactical nor do the administrative fractions ever correspond with the divisions of the squad roll. Considered as a tactical formation there can be nothing more distinct than four ranks, the men of a company can work in four ranks as well as they can if you divide them into four sections. For tactical purposes the company should always be treated as an integer; the relation between the Captain and the individual soldier should be direct. The Captain of 100 soldiers should be the commander, not of four sections, but of 50 files. When it is necessary to form the men of a company or more than a single alignment, it is better that their change of formation should be effected by opening the ranks of a four-deep line than by forming column of sections, opening, and extending. As regards the opinion held by many Officers that because it has become expedient in formations for attack to form lines of infantry with intervals between their files, therefore it will be a tactical advantage to increase the strength of the company from 100 to 200 men, and to diminish the number of the Captains of a battalion from eight to four. This opinion, whether correct or incorrect, does not at all effect the discussion of the advantages of Colonel Macdonald's system, which may be applied with exactly the same facility to strong companies as to weak.¹ It is one of the great advantages of the system that the strength of the company being given, whether it be 20 or 50 or 100 files, it provides means for securing intervals between files without increasing the extent of the front of the company even by a single pace. The objection that the interval between the files is not sufficient, and that the men are too thick, is I think just. Some months ago I printed a little pamphlet in which I suggested a modification of Colonel Macdonald's system, whereby this defect would be remedied and the intervals between the files trebled. This pamphlet may be seen in the Library of the Institution. During the summer of this year I hope that all modifications of the system of four-deep formations may be thoroughly tested at Aldershot and elsewhere by forming first single battalion and then brigades in lines, advancing rapidly without halting and keeping up a brisk fire over 1,500 yards of ground, and then halting and reinforcing. If by means of connecting links, or by any other expedient, the advance of the supporting reserve ranks can be so conducted as to prevent drifting, so that on the command to reinforce, the four ranks of each company are reunited and the company reconstructed without confusion, this will be a conclusive test of the success of the method, and will prove that it is well suited to the exigencies of war.

General McMurdo: I have very few words to say. I do not stand up with the intention of entering into the details of this discussion, or of Colonel Macdonald's proposal. I wish only to express my great pleasure, first of all in seeing my gallant friend Colonel Macdonald after so many years separation, and to find that he still has that active and intelligent interest that he had in former years in the tactical formation of the British Army as well as of the Volunteers. He possesses the instincts of his name—the name of John Macdonald, the Adjutant-General at the head

¹ It is very difficult to understand by what process of reasoning any one can arrive at the extraordinary and paradoxical conclusion that one special effect of the change from a compact to an extended formation, is to render it *tactically* advantageous to increase the strength of the company and to diminish the number of companies in a battalion. The extent of the front of a company of 100 men formed in two ranks at close order is 33 yards, that of a company of 200 men formed for attack, as directed by existing regulations, with intervals of four paces between files, is 166 yards—that is to say, the effect of the proposed change in the organization of the company and battalion would be to decrease the ratio between the number of Captains and the number of yards in the front of the line-of-battle in the proportion of one to eight, to commit to the supervision of a single Captain the same extent of front for which, in the close order formation since the time of the Romans, eight Captains have been considered necessary. To maintain that such a change is a *tactical* advantage must surely imply some confusion of thought regarding the true conditions of the question discussed.

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of that department of the Army which is charged with formation and movements is well remembered at the Horse Guards at the present day, and I am delighted to see his nephew coming forward in the same line. I will confine myself simply to the question of the principle of attack. I entirely agree with Colonel Macdonald in his principle that the attack should be made by bodies that will be capable of being consolidated and formed at the point of attack in the order in which they start, or that if compelled to retire, they should do so, so as to reform equally in the same order. That I conceive to be the one great principle. Although, as a soldier, I am delighted to carry out any order of attack that may be given me, to instruct troops under my command, still, as we are here discussing the subject, I must say that I do not approve a principle of attack that culminates in confusion even if we are successful, and that might end in disaster if we are not successful. In regard to the details of Colonel Macdonald's proposal, I do not wish to enter into them. It appears to me that they are very cleverly conceived; though it strikes me the order is rather close for carrying out under fire. We should like to be a little more extended. He did propose, however, that the first line on going into action might be eliminated, by the best shots being sent forward and so a looser order might be gained; but on the whole I think that it is rather close order. However, that is a very minor point, and it can be modified and altered according to men's minds; but the principle I entirely approve of, which is, that of keeping to, or at least easily regaining, our regular order of formation.

Major-General WARRE, C.B.: There is one point I think Colonel Macdonald has omitted to mention, and that is, the question of non-commissioned officers; for, however perfect his formation may be, I do not think he can command it without the aid of non-commissioned officers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Lord ELCHO, M.P., Commanding London Scottish Rifle Volunteers: I can assure this distinguished company that if it had not been for some sort of command, some sign made to me by Sir Garnet Wolsley, I should not have ventured to have spoken, more especially as several Volunteer Officers have already spoken, and I am sorry to say we have not had as much criticism as one hoped to hear from Officers of the Army on this most important question. It would be most impertinent in me to pretend as a civilian to criticise what the military authorities, after many years' gestation, have produced in the way of the last form of attack; but I hold myself, not having seen it in practice, but simply having read it on paper, that what General McMurdo has said appears to be the truth with regard to it, that in success it will culminate in confusion, and if unsuccessful in disaster. Where companies are mixed up, where even if you are in brigade, battalions will be mixed up when they come to reinforce the originally extended battalion, it appears to me, as Colonel Macdonald has said—speaking as a civilian with no experience of actual warfare—you must more or less tend by this system to inaugurate confusion at the very commencement. As the matter stands between the two systems, there may be no doubt objections such as Colonel Fletcher has mentioned with reference to Colonel Macdonald's proposal; but of the two it appears to me to be founded on a much sounder system than the one which has been published as the new attack, and to be simpler in itself. Colonel Fletcher made one remark which struck me very much, and it was this: he said the whole secret of the new attack was to educate your men individually. Now I think what one ought to recollect is this: that you have a very young army to deal with, consisting in a great measure of recruits and boys, and if you have a system which, according to General McMurdo, even in success will culminate in confusion, there is still greater danger of disaster, considering the elements with which you have to deal. I know that Sir Garnet Wolsley is quoted as an authority for preferring young soldiers to old soldiers. But there are young soldiers and young soldiers, if I may so say, and though I hear General Sir Garnet Wolsley quoted as an authority in favour of young soldiers, I should be very much surprised, if I were to hear him say that by "young soldiers" he meant raw boys of from 16 to 20 years of age. I rather gather, when his authority is seized upon in defence of sending these boys into the ranks at this early age, that he means that he would prefer a soldier of 20 or 30 to a soldier of 40, and that he looks upon the Prussian military age as the best age, beginning with soldiers at 20 and taking them to 32, and that he means

by that young soldiers. I think that is a matter that ought to be considered, that you should as far as possible adapt your system to the troops, and that the system at present laid down is one likely to lead to confusion by the mixing up of units, and that the sounder principle is that advocated by Colonel Macdonald. I must apologise for what I have said, but that is what strikes a civilian, in looking with a common sense eye at these simply military questions.

Lieutenant-Colonel HENRY BRACKENBURY, R.A.: May I venture, although not an infantry Officer, to make one or two remarks on this subject? I quite agree with Colonel Fletcher, and I think every one here will, that we should not adopt anything simply because it is German. That danger, I venture to say, is Scylla; and on the other side there is Charybdis, which is the danger lest we should reject anything, simply because it is German, and there is a little tendency, I think, in a good many minds to do so. The Germans, I think we must all admit, are an eminently practical people, especially in military matters; and having seen something of the German troops during their war with France, and having had opportunities of conversation with German Officers, I venture to say there is one great principle—not a matter of detail, but a great principle—which pervades their whole system of infantry formation and infantry attack; and that principle is the division of responsibility. Just as our battalion is divided into companies, so are their battalion and company divided and subdivided, the great essential principle being that no matter how small a group is separated from the force, it is an organized unit. They subdivide their company into groups; each of those groups is trained to work together under a non-commissioned officer, who is constantly and permanently with it, who knows every one of the men composing it, and to whom they are always accustomed to look. I tried many times during the war of 1870 to get past a German outpost. I have gone with all the papers imaginable in my hands, but I never could succeed in getting at once through an outpost. Every time I was met by precisely the same rigid formula:—"There you must halt till my non-commissioned officer has been called." My non-commissioned officer comes and he says, "Here you wait under charge of two of my men till my officer has been called," and "my Officer" referred me with an escort to the Field Officer commanding the outposts, perhaps a couple of miles back. I have gone through French outposts without such formality over and over again, and I am certain the one thing that makes the German outpost system so complete is that the chain of responsibility is absolutely complete. It is exactly the same thing in fighting. No line, with a front of 25 men, I venture to think, can possibly advance over broken ground, for anything like the distance which men have to advance to the attack, without getting broken up into fragments. And I should be extremely glad if Colonel Macdonald would point out to us how he proposes to divide his company, as it there is, into sections, or into fire groups, so that there shall be complete control by the non-commissioned officer in charge of each of those groups? In the ordinary formation in two ranks, both ranks advance together, and if a section or group of 12 or 8 men advances, it advances all at the same time, and its leader advances with it. But suppose we have a group of 12 men under this system, they are in four ranks. Three men advance from the front rank. Is the non-commissioned officer to go with them? Three men follow—is he to go with them, or is he to remain with the six behind? I shall be very glad if Colonel Macdonald will explain to us, in some way, how he proposes this subdivision of responsibility under his system.

Colonel MACDONALD: I am sure I use no mere words of course, when I express to this meeting my thanks for the extremely kind and generous way in which they have received my paper, and I cannot help thinking the principles I have advocated have been highly honoured by receiving criticism from the gallant and distinguished Officers who have taken the trouble to come here to-night and to address this meeting. I cannot help feeling that in one thing which Colonel Fletcher said I agree, though in quite a different spirit, namely, in what he said about the allowable things in our drill-book, and about a great many things in our field exercises book being matters of compromise. Speaking as a Volunteer, I am sure I express the opinions of every Volunteer Officer, by saying that one of the greatest misfortunes about our drill-book is that it contains so many compromises; you are given two or three

ways of doing a thing, and you have the fear very much that you may choose the one which your inspecting Officer does not like, and, accordingly, you generally take the old one, and the new one, which is infinitely better, but does not please the old minds, is practically set aside. I will give you a practical instance of that. There was introduced, some years ago, a substitute for the old gate-wheel, a process of forming by which the men came up much more rapidly, as accurately and as neatly in the end, into the position into which they were to be brought, instead of being made to do the most insane thing on the face of the earth—to touch one way and look another. I venture to ask any gentleman in this room, whether, within the last six or seven years, he has ever seen anything of the kind done, except on some occasion when his corps was turned into some place that was not flat, and when, though he gave the order to wheel, the result was the forming process. No doubt it is a valuable thing to have experiments on, but I think they should be tried before their publication by Her Majesty's authority, and when a mode is found of doing a particular movement, it should be decided, either that it is preferable and is to be substituted for the old mode, or it should be decided that you are not quite satisfied with it and will leave it out altogether.

As regards the difficulty suggested by Colonel Blundell, about the Officer commanding so many men in front, who are out in the attacking line, and the difficulty he would have in hopping backwards and forwards between those men and the men behind, I rather think that proceeds from a mistake. The men in support and the men in reserve have nothing to do but to wait till they get orders, and the orders can be as readily sent to them, by word of mouth, or by a note written upon a piece of paper, if that be necessary, as by the Captain hopping back himself to do it. I certainly would highly disapprove of his doing so. He can take hold of them the moment they come up near him, but as long as they are behind, they are simply like people waiting until a message is sent to them, and they have to obey that message. When they are brought up by the Officer on the spot to the front, then they fall at once under the direct command of the Officer taking charge in front. I may here just say a word with reference to Colonel Brackenbury's reference to my not having stated anything as to the detail of adjusting commands. No doubt that is a very important matter, and it is one about which my experience did not enable me to make efficient suggestions; but what I would say is this, that it does not appear to me, after hearing Colonel Brackenbury's question, that there would be any more difficulty in effecting good grouping under this system than under any other. It occurs to me in this way. Of course, if you have men out in front and the men who are to come up behind, both in the support and in the reserve, those men may be practically one group, although they are individually for the time separated from one another because they can have a thoroughly integral cohesion. The only separation between them is one of space, but the whole concentration of the minds of those men who are behind, and of whoever is in charge of them for the time must be upon this, that their future position is alongside of the men of their own group, and, therefore, I do not think that would create a practical difficulty. Take, for example, the case of our 25 men of a company of 100 thrown out first. As men came up from the support they would fall each into his own group; the non-commissioned officer out in front would just receive and put them into his group, exactly in the same way as he took charge of the men already up. That was my idea of it, although I cannot profess to state it in detail.

Then, as regards drift and loss of direction, I think it is rather hard that anything should be said against a proposed system on that ground, because I have not heard it suggested that any system has ever been devised that has prevented drift and loss of direction. But I am rather inclined to have the courage to claim for my idea the prospect of less general drift and loss of direction than results from any other system.

Colonel Brackenbury said, with great truth, that the thing that is wanted is that every man and every non-commissioned officer and person in charge of the men should know exactly what he had got to do. In our old system the thing was, as was said by one of the speakers, you had to advance by the centre, right, or left. I think the day for that is completely gone. That is a bowling-green principle, utterly inapplicable to broken ground. What you want is such directions given as

that the flank of a battalion shall be brought up to a particular point ahead, and the other flank up to another point ahead, and then you cannot drift unless you disobey those orders; you may get a little thicker at one place and a little thinner at another place, but there can be no drift of your main body at all. I am inclined to think that we make a mistake in making our support follow, in parallel line, with our advanced line, and I have often wondered whether it would not be a much better plan that the support should have its two ends moving in a kind of echelon of men, so as to be keeping up its connectedness at one end with part of the force in front, and at the other end with the reserve in the rear. Of course the flank from which you advance from the support would depend very much on where your enemy's artillery were, but I cannot help thinking that if some connectedness were kept up in that way, you would prevent two things, first, loss of connection, and second—

Colonel GIPPS, Scots Guards: Take this to be the right of your support, what is your right hand man doing while your left hand man is keeping up there?

Colonel MACDONALD: As long as he is standing still there he is the luckiest man of the whole, because he is beside the reserve which is supposed to be under cover.

Colonel GIPPS: In taking positions there will not be cover for every man who has to stand still. Take the man next to the right hand man, there cannot be cover for him too; you cannot have them all under cover.

Colonel MACDONALD: Each man will be exposed according to the position in which he is, and it is perfectly obvious if you put them in a diagonal instead of a parallel, they cannot all be in equal danger.

Colonel GIPPS: The object is to get the men up to the front.

Colonel MACDONALD: When you want to push them up into the line they will all go as fast as they can. I do not see that working it in a diagonal would expose any man a bit more than he is exposed now. On the contrary I was going to suggest, when Colonel GIPPS put the question to me, that it is perfectly certain that if your support can be fired upon at all, and you keep it parallel with the front line, your enemy has only to know the distance that your support is behind your advance line to fire upon it with very great certainty if he has opportunity of doing so with his artillery, whereas if you worked it alternately, pushing up this side and then the other side, the enemy would not have a chance of doing so. But, however that may be, I think the question of keeping up the connectedness between your advanced line, your support, and your reserve is the same, whatever system you adopt, with this difference only, that in cases where the support and reserve belong to the same tactical unit as the advanced line you have the interest to keep up a careful connectedness—you have the interest of common comradeship to keep it up, whereas in the other case you have nothing of the kind. It is quite certain if any mistake occurs it is less likely to cause serious damage because a mistake will only extend along a line of twenty-five instead of a hundred men. With twenty-five men you are pretty certain to have them well within reach and call, whereas with a hundred men, seventy or eighty may be completely out of your sight, and may be gone, and you will never find them for the rest of the day. I was present at the autumn manoeuvres in 1872, and there were two engagements on successive days, on which I should have felt very much ashamed of myself, for before I had been three-quarters of an hour in action, I had only about two companies out of my whole regiment, if it had not been that the battalion of the Rifle Brigade close beside me was exactly in the same predicament. Referring to what Captain Jones said about the shoulder to shoulder, and the electric sympathy between men rubbing shoulders together, that is all very well as long as they are rubbing shoulder to shoulder; but if the effect of your bringing them shoulder to shoulder is that they are reduced practically down to being at four deep interval, and with only two ranks, your electric effect is gone and half your force is gone too.

General Olpherts spoke of the telescope principle, but I think my telescope is a better one than his, for this reason. In my case each group of four men is a telescope; the first man in the front pushed out, when the next follows him and the next follows him; each group is a telescope, each company is a telescope, each battalion is a telescope, and the whole brigade is telescoped exactly on the same principle throughout; whereas if you take the sections of a company and divide

them, you are just clubbing in exactly the same way, only in a less degree as you do if you club companies or battalions.

General OLIPHANTS: Mine was more on the binocular principle.

Colonel MACDONALD: Let me say in conclusion, that if the paper I have been able to read to night contributes to a full discussion of the question I shall be fully rewarded for my trouble, and I beg to express my thanks to you for the great and kind attention you have given me.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, Colonel Macdonald began his very interesting lecture by apologising for his presumption in addressing an audience composed not only of Volunteers like himself, but also of regular soldiers. I venture to concur in all the remarks that were made on this point by Colonel Fletcher, because I think it is of the greatest possible advantage to the Army generally, that questions like that at the present moment under our consideration, should be considered and should be thought and written about and talked of not only by professional soldiers but by all Militia and Volunteer Officers; in fact, I would go further and say, that if you look back to all the great reforms that have been effected, not only in our military administration, but I might say in our tactical formations, a very large proportion of them have been at most forced upon the Army by outside pressure, and that outside pressure has within the last fifteen or sixteen years almost invariably come from the Volunteer force. Now, like Colonel Radcliffe, who told us he had some years ago read Colonel Macdonald's pamphlet on this subject, I also read it, and with the greatest possible attention and interest, and it struck me then, as it strikes me now, as being a most simple solution to a very great and difficult problem, the problem which is now of most interest to all armies in the world, and especially to us at this present moment, that is, the problem of what is the best formation to adopt whilst engaged in getting over the space, especially if there is no cover, that must intervene between your line of battle and that of your enemy. As far as I have able to follow the lecturer and understand the process by which he means to solve this problem, it is a very simple one. Hitherto we have been in the habit of sending out companies, and extending them to very great distances, whereas he, on the other hand, has adopted the very simple process of sending out the successive ranks of his companies as skirmishers, supports, &c., each of which ranks covers the same extent of front as the company itself when deployed. By this means he secures a great unity of action for the company, and he also provides for the great desideratum which I believe is essentially necessary in these matters, viz., that the Captain should be able to exercise due and efficient command along the extent of front over which his men are acting. I think of all the great mistakes which can possibly be made in tactical formations, the greatest is to send out a Captain and tell him to look over a company of 100 or 125 men, extending over 150 or 200 yards. As far as I can make out, the system laid down in the drill-books at the present moment is that two companies are sent to the front, and are told to spread over an extent of country representing what a battalion deployed in line would occupy. It is however, I am glad to say, also laid down that there are alternative measures open to the colonel commanding a battalion. I do not quite fully concur in the remarks made by some speakers upon that subject, when they said it was absolutely necessary that it should be laid down in the drill-book in the most stringent manner that you should always do a certain thing at a certain moment. I believe nothing could be more fatal than if a Commanding Officer's hands were tied, and he was told that under all circumstances he must always employ the same formation. I think it is open to complaint, as that complaint has been made this evening, that the drill-book as now published recommends to the Officers of the Army a system that I believe it would be absolutely impossible to carry out in the field. I do not myself believe it would be possible for any man to command effectively a company extended over 100 or 150 yards. During my career I have had several opportunities of commanding skirmishers in action under the old system of leaving three or four paces interval between the files. During the Indian Mutiny my company numbered over 100 men, and I can say most positively, that upon every single occasion when it was employed in skirmishing order, before I had been long in action I had lost about one-third or one-half of it, not killed or wounded, but lost sight of altogether for the time being. I could exercise no influence over the skirmishers at a distance from me; they dis-

appeared, got into hollows, into ditches, and behind houses, and I was able to give them no impulse whatever. I commanded the small number of men that were round me, but the others disappeared altogether. I found them at the end of the day, but during the action they were entirely lost. That was so thoroughly impressed upon my mind that when I hear now-a-days gentlemen who are blind worshippers of success, and blind worshippers of the Prussian system, I always feel inclined to ask them, "Have you ever commanded 100 men in action?" because if you have commanded 100 men, extended in the old skirmishing line, I am quite convinced you would never recommend that a Captain should be told off to command 250. If there is one thing more true than another it is the principle that has been recommended by Von Scherf and others, which is that all formations for tactical purposes should be in depth and not in breadth; that whether it is a Colonel, or a Captain, or a Brigadier, the great thing is to contract the extent of front over which he is to exercise immediate command. Give him any depth you like, let him have two, three, four, or five lines, one behind the other, but let the extent of front over which he is personally to direct his troops be as narrow as possible. And to come down from great things to small things and take companies, I think what was said by General Robertson is most true, that it is most desirable in laying down a drill for our regiments to accept the principle that we should have small companies, and that a company should never extend over more than 50 or 60 yards. I believe that distance can be almost laid down by physical laws; your voice does not extend during a great row and noise over more than that distance. You can scarcely see in action more than 50 or 60 yards, therefore I would lay that down as the general limit of extent to which companies should extend in action. If that is true, the system recommended by the lecturer, of having four lines, is a most simple one. I do not know whether any gentlemen here are well acquainted with the American system of skirmishing, but it comes very much to the same thing as that recommended by Colonel Macdonald. It is not exactly the same principle of formation to begin with, but it amounts to very much the same thing in the end. They tell their men off in fours; each No. 1 goes out to skirmish. The next man who goes out to support him is No. 2; then No. 3, and then No. 4, each leaving his rear-rank man behind him. When, therefore, the whole of the front rank is in the skirmishing line, the rear-rank men in rank-entire still remain as a support. When the front rank, whilst so skirmishing, wants support, each No. 1 of the fours of the rear rank goes to support him; if further support is required, then No. 2 and so on. It is very much the system that Colonel Macdonald recommends, except that it is partially inverted, the *modus operandi* being somewhat different. I think Colonel Macdonald's system of fours is a very simple one. With reference to the Americans, most of their formations are in fours. For many years past they have adopted a great simplicity of drill, which I am glad to see the authorities of England are becoming alive to the necessity of our adopting also; indeed, that great rigidity of movement, which we had borrowed from Prussia, is, I think, gradually disappearing from our drill-book; and I, in common with a great number of others who are thinkers upon these subjects, congratulate the Army upon the fact. Still I must admit that I am a great advocate for drill. I often hear people say drill is of no use. Now I think drill is of the greatest possible use, but I am all for drill of a very simple, practical, and instructive nature. I contend that it is quite possible to make a recruit into a drilled man by drilling him to useful formations and in movements of common occurrence during war, and that it is an absurd waste of time to occupy the hours daily devoted to drill, by putting him through evolutions that he never can possibly use on active service. The more you make your drill resemble the manœuvres and evolutions you must employ in the field, the better; and as I believe the days of all stiff movements are over, I think we ought to consider what takes place in action, and reasoning back, adapt our drill to meet that contingency. Hitherto we have had some preconceived extraordinary notion of what battles ought to be, and we have drilled up to their fancied requirements; but we ought to do exactly the reverse; we should find out what an action really is like, and then modify and adapt our drill to provide for these tactical realities. Now I certainly believe the culminating part of any action is utter confusion. I do not care whether the soldiers are Germans, French, or any other nation; the actual culminating point, the decisive

tions with the natives, and the responsibilities which are involved in the extension of British dominion that has now taken place.

It will be well known to many that prior to the annexation of the Transvaal and of Griqualand West, the native border abutting on the British possessions in South Africa was limited to that adjacent to the eastern province of the Cape Colony where the war is now occurring, and to the northern and southern boundaries of Natal. Of the first it may, I trust, be said, that the present campaign will finally end all serious difficulty in that quarter, and of the latter that it is from the northern boundary alone that future trouble need be apprehended, the Zulus being naturally a warlike and aggressive people, while those on the south, the Amapondas, live in an exposed country, are more peaceably inclined, and are too much hemmed in by the adjacent British colonies to render them a source of much danger.

The Zulu nation need also have afforded no occasion for much fear, for they, too, were in an enclosure which laid them open to attack from all sides—Natal on the south; the Transvaal and their hereditary enemies, the Amaswazi, on the west; the Portuguese settlement with their enforced tributaries under Nozingele, on the north, and the Indian Ocean on the east. Thus surrounded, and with rival claimants to the throne within the dominion, the Zulu King Cetewayo has known but too well hitherto what the result of offence on his part would be to venture upon disturbance. Recent events may, perhaps, have tended to change his position in some respects; but of this, as well as of the measures necessary to restore the previous status, an estimate may, perhaps, be formed as I proceed.

But by the annexation of the Transvaal, and of the Diamond Fields or Griqualand West, we have now, besides absorbing an enormous native population, acquired a territory with an exposed border of from 1,200 to 1,400 miles in length, the country adjacent to which is in the occupation of native tribes.

The importance of this point cannot, I think, be over-rated, for the questions which may in future arise from it admit of infinite radiation, and, if the past history of the Cape frontier be taken as a guide, may assume a character which will specially affect those to whom the protection of British interests are more immediately confided. It would, therefore, be well that in this early stage of the country's history, and in initiating measures for its future government and defence which are intended to be permanent, every consideration should be given to it.

I propose, after giving a short sketch of the past history of the Transvaal, to speak of the population, viz., Dutch Boers, the Europeans, and the natives, alluding, by the way, to the questions which may occur to me as incidental to each, and to conclude with remarks upon native policy, and the future government of the country.

The Transvaal, or what was formerly known as the South African Republic, is situated between the 22nd and 28th parallels of south latitude, to the north-west of and adjoining the colony of Natal, and is separated from the Indian Ocean on the east by the Portuguese settlement of Delagoa Bay, and the country of the Zulus. In size it is

approximately equal to the combined area of Great Britain and Ireland, or about 120,000 square miles, and contains a population which is widely estimated at from 300,000 to 1,000,000 souls. Of these about 30,000 to 35,000 are Boers, or South African farmers of Dutch extraction, 5,000 English or other Europeans, and the remaining large proportion native blacks.

It was originally colonized by the Boers, who, being dissatisfied with British rule at the Cape, had, from time to time, pushed on from thence towards the interior. It was in or about 1835 that a more organized movement took place, which in the end led to the occupation of what is now called the Orange Free State and of Natal; and it was while settling down in what was then an unoccupied tract near the northern border of the former country, that they aroused the fear or the jealousy of the neighbouring potentate Moselikatse, who, crossing the Vaal River from the north, attacked them unawares and murdered a considerable number of their party, carrying off at the same time large numbers of their cattle and some of their children. In resenting this unprovoked attack, the Boers in the following year gained a complete victory over this chief, who with his people then fled beyond the Limpopo, and established themselves in the country between that river and the Zambezi, where they have since then continued to reside. By right of this conquest the Boers claimed and exercised dominion over all the territory which had previously been under the rule of Moselikatse, and which may be generally taken to include the tract lying between the Limpopo and the Vaal Rivers. After securing the submission of the few tributary chieftains who remained behind, and who had long suffered from the inhumanity of the expelled tyrant, they then entered into occupation and set about establishing a Republican form of Government, in accordance with a patriarchial system of their own. For many years after this their position as an independent and self-governing people remained unrecognised by England, who looked upon them only as so many filibusters or renegade British subjects; but in 1852 Kafir wars at the Cape, and complications in home politics, seem to have produced a change in public feeling with regard to them. Owing to these causes philanthropic sentiment, which is somewhat liable to abnormal accumulation during long periods of repose, was for a time withdrawn, and a reaction having set in, the resolution was arrived at in England in that year to reverse the previous policy, and to acknowledge the independence of the Boers.

A Convention was accordingly entered into between the British Commissioners, Messrs. Hogge and Owen, and the Boer Representatives, by which that independence was formally guaranteed, and in which, as if with the object of more distinctly affirming the changed views in regard to native policy, a clause was introduced disclaiming, on the part of the British Government, all intention of interference thenceforward in native matters north of the Vaal. No definite boundaries were in this deed assigned to the Republican territory, except with regard to the southern border, which separated it from the Orange River Settlement, an omission which left the inference open that, to the north and in other directions, the Boers would be

allowed, as far as England was concerned, absolute liberty of range. This inference, at least, they were not slow in adopting, for, acting upon the rights thus assumed, and in the belief that the promise of non-intervention would be kept, a proclamation was at one time issued, declaring the northern border to extend as far as Lake N'Gami; but a protest against this extension having been lodged by the Cape Government, the effect has been to reduce the actual exercise of jurisdiction to the limits which, by common consent, had been accepted as the boundary of the country.

These, as I have before said, may be taken to embrace the territory bounded north-west and north by the Limpopo, and south by the Vaal River. Additions to the east were subsequently made, by treaty or purchase, from the Zulu and Amaswasi kings, and, on the south-west, a tract was also obtained as compensation for losses occasioned by war; but, with regard to these latter, disputes have arisen which have not yet been determined, and which now await a settlement under the auspices of the British Government.

From this description it will be seen that the Transvaal occupies an entirely inland position, the Portuguese territory intervening between it and the nearest harbour at Delagoa Bay. It is at the present time dependent for its communication with the coast upon the distant and difficult route by Natal, through which all produce and merchandize have to be carried by the tedious and expensive process of transport by oxen. It is by this route, also, that the troops, with their baggage and artillery-trains, have at present to travel, when proceeding to the country.

The natural port of the Transvaal is, however, that of Delagoa Bay. It is the only safe harbour between this part and Simon's Bay, and in this respect has, of course, immense advantages over the open roadstead and unapproachable bar of Natal. Its position, too, is opposite a central part of the country, and at a moderate distance, as compared to the other, while, for the purposes of railway construction, the superiority of this line over that from Natal is beyond all dispute. Hitherto, the existence of the tsetse fly, which is destructive to domesticated cattle, upon a portion of this route has militated against the opening of traffic—a difficulty which it is to be hoped will ere long be overcome by the more pachydermatous motive power of the railway engine. An objection has been raised to the opening of this route, as being prejudicial to the interests of Natal, and as tending to benefit a foreign possession, but it is to be hoped that so narrow a view will not ultimately be allowed to prevail. There is a very laudable and patriotic feeling which pervades a certain portion of the colonists of Natal, and which would seem to indicate an opinion, if not that the world was created for its special benefit, at the least that the interests of the Transvaal should be made to give way to its own, and that, in spite of the superior advantages offered by the Delagoa Bay route, the railway should be carried through the territory, and to its port of Natal; but as this would involve a sacrifice of almost vital import to the Transvaal, the latter may perhaps be excused from holding a somewhat different view. From the inland position of the country,

the question of railway communication as a means for developing its internal resources is not one which can admit of doubt or discussion. It is in this case one of imperative necessity, both to enable it to support an independent existence and to provide for its defence.

A large portion of the Transvaal lies at an elevation of from 4,000 to 6,000 feet above the sea, rising to its greatest height along the Drakensberg range, where the peaks reach to 7,000 or 8,000 feet. With these great differences in altitude there are, as will easily be conceived, corresponding varieties of temperature, the more elevated parts being cold and bracing, and the lower levels, again, quite tropical. On the whole, it may be said that the climate is exceedingly healthy, and also that it is a country in which the European race will not suffer deterioration from climatic influences.

Owing to the differences in temperature at its successive elevations, the Transvaal is also capable of a great variety of animal and vegetable production. Horned cattle and horses, as well as sheep and goats, are reared with success in different parts. Cereals of all kinds, tobacco, vegetables, and almost every variety of fruit thrive remarkably well, and sugar and coffee, though not as yet extensively grown, promise to become lucrative articles of export.

Of minerals, too, the country has a plentiful store. Coal, of good quality and near the surface, is found over an area of 10,000 square miles, at a moderate distance from the coast, and on the line of the projected railway. Iron, also, exists in great quantities, mines of hematite, of good quality, having for years past been worked by the natives, while in the north there are actual mountains of magnetic ore. Lead and copper are also found in various parts, both associated with each other and apart, the former being now successfully worked at Marico, and mines of considerable depth affording proof of the latter material having been excavated by natives in times past. Diamonds at the south-western and gold in the north and north-east parts of the country have also been discovered, though not as yet in any very large quantity, and a cobalt mine, near Middelburg, has lately been opened, and it is said is proving a profitable speculation to the proprietors.

Owing to the heavy cost of land carriage, there are, however, few of these products that can be made available for export until improved means of transport have been provided. At the present time the staple articles of commerce are confined to such as, from their value, will bear these heavy payments, such as wool, hides, ivory, ostrich feathers, and cobalt.

It will be seen, from what I have said, that the Transvaal has within itself all that is required to make it a self-sustaining State. It is admirably watered over the greater part; the climate is good, and the seasons regular—the rains falling, as a rule, during the summer from October to April, and the winter months being generally dry.

A great portion of the country, and especially that at the higher levels, is, owing to its plentiful water supply and the quality of its soil, capable of supporting a large population, and thus affords a prospect of its being utilized, in course of time, as a field for emigration. The neighbourhood of New Scotland, in particular, with all the high

table land along the water-shed, from Leydenburg, on the one side, to Wakkerstroom on the other, and, with the slopes leading east and west from that line, is specially adapted for English settlement. The greater part of it lies at an elevation of from 5,000 to 6,000 feet above the sea, dropping rather abruptly towards the coast, and inclining very gradually again towards the interior. At the summit it forms a great woodless plain, with lakes, some of fresh and others of brackish water, and of sizes varying from half a mile to ten miles in length. The absence of wood, however, is compensated in some measure by the coal which is found all over this region, and which is of very superior quality. Unfortunately, the land throughout the Transvaal is almost all held by private owners, and thus the Government will be unable to organize any extensive emigration, or provide for other public objects, as is done to other colonies through this means. The emigrant will therefore have to resort to private purchase in order to obtain his land, but for this, owing to the very large amount in the market consequent on over-speculation, there is every advantage in his favour, the present prices ruling far lower than are to be found in any other colony. Any systematic emigration, however, must depend upon the line of railway being constructed, as without a prospect of easy communication with foreign markets, there would be little hope of success in farming.

The Government of the Transvaal has, until the last year, been carried on under a Republican form, and virtually controlled by the Dutch emigrant farmers, or Boers, whose numbers, as I have before said are about 35,000, and who thus stand in the proportion of seven to one of the rest of the white population. Owing in part to defects in the Constitution or the fundamental law of the country, to their want of education, and of acquaintance with the principles of political economy, but perhaps, most of all, to the absence of a competent leader, the administration of the country has for many years past been declining in efficiency, the result of which has been to bring it to the extremity which has ended in its collapse, and has made annexation, if not a necessity, at least a matter of easy accomplishment.

But it has had other and perhaps greater difficulties to contend with. Small in their numbers, compared to the mass of barbarism by which they have been surrounded, the energies of the people have been withdrawn from legitimate industry, and have had to be directed mainly to maintaining their authority over the black population, which has been surging in since their occupation of the country. With no other means of raising a revenue than from internal sources, and subject, not alone to a charge of from 10*l.* to 20*l.* a ton for the transport of all articles of foreign merchandize, but also saddled with the payment of heavy Customs dues to the Cape and Natal for which they got no return, it has been impossible for them to provide the means of carrying on an effective Government. On the other hand, every trifling lapse of justice or act of irregularity, though in general only the result of their weakness, has been visited on them in a manner to still further paralyze their efforts, and to strengthen the hands of their adversaries.

But notwithstanding these almost insurmountable drawbacks, a

steady advance, not alone in material prosperity, but also in civilization, was taking place. The old animosity against the English, dying out as the causes of irritation were forgotten or removed, the latter were gradually received into their counsels, and influencing their Government; and the time was being looked forward to when, with mutual goodwill and by a more natural transition, the change which has now taken place might have been effected. This result, it was also hoped, would have been materially hastened by the opportune discoveries, which caused an immense influx of British subjects from the Cape and elsewhere to the diamond fields, a portion of which were within this territory. It was felt that it was only by English migration that the population could be materially augmented, and thus that the question of the change was only one of time, and that, if left to the natural action of self-interest, the desired solution would follow in due course. To those similarly situated to myself, who were living in the country, and had every desire to promote its interests, the possession of the diamond fields was looked upon more as a burden than as a valuable acquisition; and if the population could have been separated from the glittering stones they would have gladly sacrificed the latter. But it was the population they wanted, and these were doomed to be withdrawn, and a policy entered on which has been the chief cause of all subsequent trouble.

The first effect upon the Government of the Transvaal of the measures then adopted by the English Colonial authorities in South Africa, and which resulted in the annexation of the diamond fields, apart from the distrust and aversion to the English which it revived or stimulated among the Dutch inhabitants, was that of weakening its authority over, not alone those whose cause had been espoused in order to sustain the claim to the land, but over the whole body of the native population within and adjoining the State. And this was not all, for at the same time firearms, which by Treaty with us the Boers were prohibited from selling to the natives, were here thrown open to the latter to an unlimited extent, and it is estimated that in a comparatively short period upwards of 200,000 guns were purchased by the natives living at the northern and western borders of the Transvaal. Earnest appeals and protests were made, but with no effect. The colonial revenues were profiting by it to the extent of 10s. to 17. a barrel; and the guns costing in Birmingham 4s. to 5s., selling at 6l. to 7l. 10s. each. It was perhaps natural that at the time those reaping so large a profit, and who were unaffected by the consequences, should raise no objection, and be deaf to appeal, but an estimate of the feelings of the Transvaal residents on the occasion may be formed by referring to the following extract from a Natal newspaper of late date, and written since the threatening aspect of affairs on their border have made the question of the sale of firearms to natives one of close personal interest to that colony. The editor says:—"We cannot find words sufficiently strong to denounce the wicked cupidity of the Europeans who can be so lost to all sense of right and patriotic feeling as to take part in or connive at such a traffic. We do not hesitate to say that any man who is privy to such transactions, or

"who directly or indirectly knowingly shares in the profit is guilty of criminality of the deepest dye. Were their guilt to become known it would be the duty of the whole community to shun and execrate them." On this I will only remark that it can hardly be a matter of surprise, at least to the Natal editor, that the Boers should now shun, if not execrate us.

The troubles of their Government did not end here, for before the excitement and irritation which had been caused by these measures had had time to subside, further difficulties arose in the north. Thefts of cattle having taken place, and the delinquents being harboured by the chief Sekukuni, it became necessary to declare war against the latter, and here again for some inscrutable reason the cause of the savage is espoused—the war declared unjust and aggressive—and the chief to have the rights of a belligerent, British subjects residing in the Transvaal being at the same time prohibited by proclamation from taking part against him. This injunction, however, did not, I am happy to say, have the effect of deterring Englishmen from doing their duty there, as elsewhere, but by the moral support it afforded to the rebel chief it inflicted another severe blow on the country. These were some of the chief causes which led to the disorganized state of the Transvaal, in which it was found on the arrival of Sir Theophilus Shepstone at the commencement of last year. But there were other circumstances which also greatly influenced this position. The war with Sekukuni had been entered on without preparation, and on a far larger scale than is suited to the patriarchal Boer system. Without any knowledge of military matters, the President had constituted himself chief, and had taken personal command of the expedition; and after many months of fighting found himself not alone unable to penetrate the almost impregnable natural fortresses in which the chief protected himself, but also reduced to great scarcity both of food and ammunition. In almost absolute want, or receiving uncertain supplies of these necessities, it was but natural that in the end confidence in him should fail. Disaffection thus soon showed itself, and before long open defiance.

As the summer season was now about setting in, bringing with it the annual horse distemper, the volunteer army summarily dispersed and retired to their homes, arranging among themselves to return before the following harvest, when the native crops, which were grown on the plains, would be exposed to capture; and thus that though unable to follow their enemy into the caves, they would endeavour to defeat them by starvation. This movement on their part was at once taken up and commented on by adverse newspaper and other correspondents, who not alone magnified it into a defeat, but also falsely represented that Sekukuni was in full pursuit of the flying army to Pretoria. This was also the tenor of the misleading telegrams to England, which to all appearance were the immediate occasion of Sir Theophilus Shepstone's mission.

The President's term of office having also now nearly expired, and a new election being about to take place, the country had, in addition to its other complications, then to decide on the choice of a successor; a

matter upon which the people were on this occasion more than commonly divided. It was at this particular juncture that the British Commissioner, leaving a large body of troops near the border, entered the country and took up his residence at the seat of Government. Meanwhile rumours were in circulation, that peaceably if possible, but if necessary by force, annexation was intended. The English or European inhabitants who preponderate in the towns flew to the standard, and the President himself offering no rallying point, opposition was disarmed and annexation became easy. The apparent apathy or indifference of the Boers on the occasion of this singular assumption of their Government by a foreign power is thus to some extent explained. They had been taken at a disadvantage, the imminence of the dangers that surrounded them exaggerated and dwelt on until they themselves seemed almost to believe in their reality, and in the end they surrendered to what they were told was "the inevitable."

At the crisis considerable anxiety was felt as to the result, and much fear was entertained that hostility with the Boers would be provoked; the relief was therefore also much appreciated at the peaceful termination of the proceeding, and great credit was given to the Commissioner for the management he had displayed; while those who regretted the necessity or condemned the policy of his action seemed too thankful to allow themselves to hamper him with futile expressions of dissent.

In endeavouring to convey an account of the causes which led to the annexation, and the manner in which it was carried out, it has not been my object to dwell upon the grievances of the Boers more than is necessary to enable us to form an opinion as to the feelings which they, who constitute the great majority of the white population, may be expected to entertain towards us, and as to the measures, if any, which it is necessary to take in order to induce their harmonious co-operation with us for the future. And I have also desired to take this opportunity of protesting against the habit of looking upon the annexation of the Transvaal only with feelings of gratulation or pride,—and referring to a sturdy Englishman and twenty-five policemen having effected this object without so much as saying, "By your leave,"—and not taking into consideration what were the causes that led to the weakness and demoralization of the Boer Government, or what the responsibilities which have now been undertaken by our own.

A deal of obloquy has been thrown upon the Boers, emanating chiefly from those who were endeavouring to bring about the fall of the Republic. Speculators who hoped by the substitution of British rule that their lands would rise in value, besides a large portion of the colonial press and others, were engaged in systematic misrepresentation to bring about the desired end. Even in the published blue books on the subject, we find pages taken up with anonymous letters and newspaper articles giving exaggerated accounts of the defencelessness and distress of the white population, and at the same time, with palpable inconsistency, of their tyranny and oppression of the blacks. A long correspondence also appears on the subject of the use of explosive bullets, and of the massacre of women by the Boers; and notwithstanding the refutation of these charges, and the entire absence

of evidence to support them, the stigma has most ungenerously been allowed to remain.

But the Boers are not all the monsters they have by some been represented. Fortunately for them, their country has of late been visited by two eminent writers, who both bear testimony, without disguising the harsher features in their character, to those that do them credit, and both tend to show that whatever their defects may be, they are but the result of the circumstances which for generations have controlled their lives; and also that these are, to say the least, no greater than characterize those who have been similarly placed in other lands. It is my own feeling that instead of condemning them, as is often done, for faults which owe their origin chiefly to their long isolation, they should have every praise for having kept themselves as free as they have done from the contaminating savage influences which have for so long surrounded them, and that Englishmen at least should not forget in how far they may be due to the effects of British rule or British neglect.

Having now occupied so much time in treating of the Boers, a few words will, perhaps, suffice to allude to the remaining portion of the white population. These have been estimated at about 5,000, and are composed chiefly of home and colonial born British subjects, with a few Dutch, German, and other foreigners. This body, though small, exercised considerable influence under the late Republic, owing to their generally superior education and progressive tendencies. It is from their ranks that, as a rule, all departmental offices of Government have been filled, and by them that the trade of the country is chiefly carried on. They had also of late been elected in increasing proportion as members of the Legislature, the Boers preferring as much as could be to devote their attention to their own more congenial pursuits, and thus the former were gradually acquiring an important control over the affairs of the State.

The native population has always been estimated at from 250,000 to 300,000, though in the reports of the present Administrator I find that he considers the number who are legally subjects of the State, and which I conclude must be taken to mean those who live within its acknowledged limits, to be no less than 800,000. No census, however, has at any time been taken, nor do even any approximately accurate data exist, as far as I am aware, for calculating them; the first-mentioned estimate of about 300,000 being, I believe, the result of guess-work of missionaries and travellers. Upon what the later calculation has been based I have no means of ascertaining, and though I should have thought this estimate excessive, yet the position of Sir T. Shepstone entitles his opinion to much weight. The native population, however, whatever its numbers may be, consists of various small tribes, the great majority of whom occupy the country near the northern and western borders. As has been the case in Natal and the Orange Free State, the security to life and property derived from the presence of the whites has caused a vast accession to the black population by migration from the countries exterior and adjacent to it. In Natal the British Commissioner, who was sent up to annex on that

occasion, reported the number of natives in 1843 to be about 10,000. It has since then, under British rule, advanced to upwards of 300,000. In the Orange Free State, Moshesh was, in 1840, an insignificant chieftain with a small following, and glad to shelter himself under the Boers, though but a few years later he was able to defy the British troops, and afterwards to cause infinite annoyance to those under whose protection he had gained wealth and strength. So also in the Transvaal. When Moselikatse fled before the Boers in 1836, he left the country almost denuded of inhabitants. The father of Sekukuni had previously been driven out of his fastnesses by him, and the remaining small tribes who had been the dogs or slaves of the great chief, were glad to acknowledge their subjection to, and accept the protection of, the Boers. Gradually, however, by the return of individuals to existing tribes, as well as of whole clans who had been expelled by Moselikatse, these also have gained in strength. Of the latter, the Chief Sekukuni occupies perhaps the position of most prominence, as fortified by the natural strongholds to which he had returned, and by the possession of firearms before alluded to; it was the war with him which was the immediate cause of the collapse of the Republic, and it is he who is now occasioning alarm to the present rulers of the country. The natives of the Transvaal, though forming a large aggregate, are more divided into separate nationalities than in Natal or near the Cape; and for this reason they do not constitute so great an element of danger. To keep them thus separate, and to avoid giving rise to combinations either from motives of political interest, or for the purposes of war, will, it is to be hoped, be the endeavour of the present Government, as it is only by this means that in the absence of a large military force, or until the white population is greatly increased, we can look forward to any permanent peace. Large masses of natives, as they are found in South Africa, have always been a serious bar to the progress of the colonies they inhabit or adjoin. It is not only their savage restlessness and their proneness to war, by which such colonies are periodically thrown back so many years, as to leave them practically at a stand-still, that constitutes their disadvantage, but it is that their presence always necessitates a heavy increase in expenditure, for which they cannot or do not pay their due share; and that owing to their idleness they do not form an element of wealth as a European population would do. Of the natives of the Transvaal, however, it may be said that they are less warlike and thus less a source of danger, and have in themselves more aptitude for civilization, than any of the tribes in and adjacent to Natal or the Cape. They are more ingenious, imitative, and progressive than is the Zulu; though, on the other hand, perhaps more openly untruthful, and flagrantly dishonest; and, in short, there is in these respects but little fear of their suffering much from the contagion of civilization. They also show a greater desire to accept Christian teaching than do any of the other native tribes; and it is a singular fact, and one well worthy of being noted, that notwithstanding the well-known opposition of the Boers to missionaries, it is only among the natives here, or those on the western border, that Christianity is tribally professed, and that a

desire is shown to adopt European clothing and habits. The Boer has a contempt for the heathen worthy of the Israelite of old; he almost denies him the possession of a soul, and tells him that the skin he wears is too good to cover him, and yet whether it is owing to his spirit of contradiction—to his imitative nature—or whatever the cause may be, it is among these alone, of all the South African tribes, that the native encourages and supports the missionary, and with the creed affects the clothing, habits, and even language of his civilized invader. In the English colonies we have to make laws to compel the natives to cover their nakedness on entering the towns; we offer every encouragement to missionaries, who on their part lay before them every kind of inducement to take up the profession of religion, and we only succeed in repelling them. The natives seem to suspect a sinister design when such persistent efforts are used to make them accept what they are at the same time told it is a privilege to have, when, in fact, it is made too cheap to them. And here I would ask whether it is not, perhaps, in this very fact that much of the evil lies which has brought about the disrepute so often attached to missions, and to their so-called converts. That the latter, as a class, do not enjoy a good name cannot be denied; with the Boers the dislike to them is universal, and the English colonist also points to the rebellions that have had their rise among them, to the gaol returns, and to the open immorality at their stations. It is, however, a tender subject to speak upon, as Lieutenant Cameron found to his cost at the meeting of the Geographical Society; but it will not do always to evade the question, for there is certainly something radically wrong, both in this and as regards our system of dealing with black races generally; and if we wish to ascertain where the evil lies, or what the remedy, we should not, as was done in his case, content ourselves with flat denial.

Baron Hubner, in his "*Promenade Autour du Monde*," after passing a high eulogy on the English as colonizers, bears strong testimony to their failure as compared to the Spaniards and Portuguese, if, as he says, colonization means carrying civilization into the heart of a native population. "Wherever the Spaniards have reigned," he says, "we find Indian tribes who have embraced Christianity, and adopted in a measure our habits and ideas. The greater part of the politicians whom we see at the head of the Republics are of Indian origin. I have had pure red-skins as colleagues, and I have seen ladies of the same colour dressed by Worth delighting in Patti's *roulades*. I do not quote these personages as models of statesmen, or these fair critics as great authorities in music, but the fact is none the less significant. Well, this is the work of Spanish colonization. Can we say the same of the effect of English emigration? Evidently not. I set aside all question of India, which I have not yet visited. But everywhere, especially in North America, the contact of the Anglo-Saxon race with semi-barbarous savages is fatal to the latter. They only adopt European vices; they hate and fly from us, and that is the wisest thing they can do, or else they perish miserably. In every way they remain what they have always been—savages."

In South Africa, or rather in Natal, it has not been the case that they have perished miserably—they have too much vitality for that—but though they have not done so, we have everywhere failed to make contented subjects of them, or materially to improve their condition. In the Portuguese settlements in Africa, that I have seen, the European seems to be welcome to the savage. They work along happily together, and civilization diffuses itself among them, it may be slowly, but yet by an apparently easy and natural process, and without any of those shocks which occur with us. So also with religion. They do not proselytise and preach as we do, nor do they offer material inducements in any shape, but their church door is open, and they are ready and willing to teach when required. The result is that their chapels are full, and that, when they do make a convert, he is a sincere one.

On the other hand, the system which has prevailed at many of our missions is one that could not but be productive of much evil. By allowing the free use of land on the stations as the reward, so to say, of church attendance, the effect has been to encourage, not alone idleness, but hypocrisy. While, by debarring them from acquiring an interest in the soil, through the possession of landed property, and, by keeping them as tenants-at-will, and thus in a state of dependence or virtual vagabondage, the result has been but too often to make of them discontented and rebellious subjects.

Another evil connected with large mission stations as they have existed, as well among the native tribes as in the civilized parts of South Africa, is that of the segregation of a class in the community. Separated in feeling, as well as in position, from their non-professing brethren, and, in general, assuming to be their superiors, they acquire separate interests, and, by their numbers as well as their unity, become a source of danger. The missionary, too, in such cases, in his joint capacity of proprietor and priest, obtains over the people, and through them in the State, an amount of influence which, as has been proved in times past, is liable to much abuse. Other circumstances may also affect the character of different missionary stations, and which arise from the mode of teaching or, it may be, of the doctrines taught, for at the one you will meet an honest cheery-looking lot, who are glad to see you and will salute you with respect, and, at the other, a sullen scoundrel, who seems at once to put himself on the defensive, lest you should be deceived into thinking you were as good as he; but of these matters it would not do to say too much. What I have mentioned are however, I believe, some of the chief causes of the unpopularity and disrepute in which missions have been held, and which have excited the distrust and jealousy of the civilized man, as well as of the savage.

The Transvaal, with the population such as I have described, and with inherent wealth to entitle it to rank as a valuable possession, has now passed into a British dependency, and it is with these materials that the foundation has to be laid for the establishment of a Government, and by them that its future destiny will be controlled. The questions as to the form of government that is to be introduced,

and as to the means by which this new acquisition is to be utilised and the country to be made self-supporting, are, I have no doubt, engaging the attention of those in authority, but I confess to being somewhat sceptical as to their receiving an early or a satisfactory solution. If the Boers, who form seven-eighths of the white population, should continue, as I trust may not be the case, to maintain their present attitude of passive resistance, it would, of course, be folly to suppose that there can be any continuance of the self-governing powers that prevailed prior to the annexation; and thus that, unless some measure is devised for securing their good-will and co-operation, there will be no other alternative than that the responsibility of its government should fall upon the Crown alone. This, however, is an issue which is at variance with the promises made on taking over the country, and I should therefore think has not hitherto been contemplated or provided for by those concerned in the annexation; neither, I imagine, was it anticipated that the new colony should for long remain a burden on the home country, either for its administration or defence.

It may naturally be expected that after having so far made a display of all that seems adverse to a solution, I should myself be prepared to indicate a line of action by which the difficulties could be met, and the various interests in some degree united. But without a knowledge of the ultimate views which have dictated the policy thus far, or of the means available for carrying them into effect, it is impossible for me to do more than touch upon such matters as to myself may appear important, though they may in effect be but superficial as regarded from another stand-point.

Before going into the consideration of the question I have here mooted, namely, that of the means by which harmonious co-operation among the white inhabitants is likely to be promoted, I think it is necessary first to enquire as to another which is of equal, if not prior, importance—that of revenue.

One of the chief difficulties of the Transvaal has hitherto been that of obtaining a revenue sufficient to provide the machinery necessary for its effective government and defence, arising from the absence of that which in most countries is the chief source of supply, viz., Customs duties; and this difficulty must inevitably continue until such time as the white population is increased, and its mineral and agricultural resources can be utilised, or until taxation of the native population can be enforced. At the present time, without markets for their produce, and having to pay heavy Customs dues, which are expended for the benefit of the neighbouring colonies, it is impossible to expect that a population numbering at the utmost 10,000 adult men can provide the means, not only for their own personal government, but for the control of 800,000 blacks, and for the defence of a border of 1,200 miles.

This great want may in some measure be met by requiring the Cape and Natal to refund the proportion of Customs duties obtained from imports destined for the Transvaal; but this is a concession which has hitherto been resolutely denied, and even should it be eventually obtained through Imperial pressure, considerable time must elapse

before it can be made available. The expenditure of the country, on the other hand, has also now materially increased, owing, not alone to the military occupation which has become requisite, but also to the necessarily extended machinery of government required by British rule. Formerly many services were performed gratuitously, such as apprehension of criminals, police duty, &c.; but this system being liable to abuse either has been, or soon will be, discontinued. The late Government being limited in credit, as well as in means, were bound to cut their coat according to their cloth; and a necessary consequence of this poverty has been that crime often remained unpunished, and that irregularities occurred on its distant borders, and collision with natives which have from time to time brought upon them the thunders of Exeter Hall. As an instance of this I may mention that I recollect on one occasion the Government being goaded into an expenditure of 2,000*l.*, or what was then one-tenth of the annual revenue, on a single prosecution, in order to satisfy the demands made by the Colonial Office under the influence of such pressure. But it is unnecessary to go into further detail, for from what I have shown I think it will be sufficiently evident that if the defects of the previous Government are to be remedied, and the peace of the country permanently secured, it must be by the exercise of Imperial authority and with Imperial means.

Before reverting to the subject of the Boers, I wish to draw attention to some matters involved in the act of annexation itself.

The main or ostensible object of that measure—setting aside the under-current of pressure brought to bear on the public mind by the Humanitarian Societies at home—has been to secure the peace of that and our adjoining colonies, and has, I conclude, been based to some extent on the assumption that “the reputation of British rule stands high with all the tribes, and that they would hail its introduction as “a positive blessing;” and to quote further from the same despatch, written prior to the annexation, “that we have paramount influence “with the most warlike of the native powers outside the Transvaal “boundary, and that the position of the two most likely to give “trouble—the Zulus and the Amaswazi—is such that the possession “of the Transvaal by Her Majesty’s Government would at any “moment checkmate them both.”

Now, I say in regard to the first that the reputation of British power may stand high, though I do not admit that its *rule* does so; but I argue from the very fact of the higher estimation in which its power is held, that the Zulus and other tribes, finding themselves thus surrounded, would have greater cause of apprehension, and thus be far more likely to make a common stand than when confronted with a power they did not so much fear. And, on the other hand, I cannot see that the control we would have over the Zulu nation (for the Amaswazi, being old enemies of the latter, cannot be classed with them here) would be insured by indefinitely extending the line requiring protection. The past history of the Cape does, at all events, not tend to encourage the belief that the predictions here held out would be verified. Facts are, however, now taking the place of surmise and argument for we find that both the Zulu King and the Chief Seku-

kuni are assuming to-day towards us the same attitude which they had previously taken up towards the Government of the Republic. The course which events appear now to be taking show in fact only a repetition of the story told by Sir George Clerk, and which I quote from a very able article in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1877, on British policy in South Africa. Writing as High Commissioner from the Cape in 1854 on the "motives and history of the successive acts of territorial extension in that colony," Sir George says: "One of the reasons for extending British dominion in South Africa has been to prevent the extinction of the rights of the natives. The knowledge that the British dominion has been thus enlarged proves acceptable in England. The extension manifests our power, the motives our benevolence. After a while the measure becomes costly. Enquiry follows; and then it is evident that the conquest has been the mere occupation of wastes, almost uninhabitable, attended with constant inconvenience and dangers to the State, arising from nothing less than the extinction of the rights of the natives, to protect whom was the pretext of the extension of our authority."

When these native rights, whatever the expression may be taken to mean, were lately placed in antagonism to those of the Boers—the latter tried on their part, but unfortunately have failed to extinguish them. We have now succeeded in effacing those Boers' rights, and everyone who is not disloyal must now devoutly hope that the brave men who are serving their Queen out there will enable us to repeat the operation upon the Chief Sekukuni, and, if necessary, upon the Zulu King also, "to protect whom" (if I may be excused the repetition) "has been one of the pretexts of the extension of our authority."

I now return to the question as to the mode in which the mixed population is to be governed, and how their interests are to be reconciled to our rule, which to use plainer language means, is it necessary, and if so, what is it advisable to do in order to lead the Boers to abandon their present sullen attitude, and to accept, in the spirit in which it has been meant, from England at least, the hand which has been held out to them? From what I have said at the commencement it will be seen that the grievances of the Boers are of old standing. To quote again from the article I have before mentioned, Sir George Clerk, writing to the Duke of Newcastle in 1853, says: "Your Grace is no doubt aware that in reviewing the former policy of the British Government one cannot escape from the painful conviction, with reference to the interests and feelings of the Dutch inhabitants of the Cape Colony, that the measures which, with few exceptions, it has pursued towards them, and the neglect or disdain with which it has habitually regarded them, have engendered a spirit which leaves them by no means desirous of remaining under British dominion." I have mentioned what has taken place with regard to them subsequently to that time, and I think it will be admitted that since to that neglect or disdain have been added the overt action I have attempted to describe, it cannot be expected that their feelings towards us will have improved in the interval.

But notwithstanding the strong reasons we have given them for

their aversion to our rule, I do not by any means despair of their being brought round to a better feeling, provided the desire is properly manifested on our part. The Boers are, as Mr. Trollope remarks, a grateful people—often indeed thankful for very small mercies. The slightest attention or civility on the part of those in authority is keenly appreciated, and when it occurs, becomes a theme of continual praise. So also on any of those occasions that any act of otherwise than supercilious kindness or sympathy has been performed towards them by a neighbouring colony or Government; and, in spite of all that has happened, there still lingers with them the conviction that England's Government and England's Queen are great and good. But what has in the past, and does still rankle in their hearts, are the acts of injustice or contempt from which they have suffered—at the instigation of, it may be, a colonial official—or of a pseudo-philanthropist at home. The manner in which Lord Carnarvon's general colonial policy has been received by them is an instance of this, for their appreciation of his sympathy, and of his efforts to harmonise the different provincial interests in South Africa, has been sufficient to sustain their feeling of admiration and respect for his person in spite of their aversion to the measures he had of late been led to adopt with regard to them personally. The main point of difference between the Boers and the Government of England as it has hitherto been administered in South Africa, and one upon which they have the sympathy in a great degree of their English fellow colonists, is that of native management. It is the question that has been at the root of all their discontent, which drove them from the Cape, afterwards from Natal, and now has brought about their political collapse. But here I apprehend there will be some difficulty in obtaining a practical or a dispassionate consideration of the matter—for it is also one upon which those who are totally unaffected by its results, except as a matter of sentiment—will claim to have a voice in the decision. Past experience has shown that a colonial question of this nature—unless it involved a point of home interest—would in all probability, when brought before Parliament, have the effect either of clearing the House, or it would be controlled by those who have constituted themselves the champions of savagedom, and whose proceedings in this respect have caused more hostility between the races and more permanent injury to blacks than I think can be traced to any other special cause. It is therefore much to be feared that the definite settlement of the question will not be arrived at until those most concerned in its effects are in a position to act independently of such control.

The first and most essential point to be determined is as to whether we have any right in the country of the savage at all; and it is one upon which, though practically decided long ago, there is still a want of absolute concurrence of opinion. In taking possession of such land we have, as if it were with the desire of avoiding the admission of an apparent injustice, always tacked on a high and beneficent motive, conveying, it may be said, the further admission that, but for that motive, the act would be unjustifiable. In a similar course, one by

one, each native right is extinguished, but always again with a preamble in which the motive excuses the act. Now the Boer arrives at exactly the same result, but by a much straighter cut—or, I should rather say, he commences about where we end—which is in saying that when they meet, the savage has to go to the wall, that is, that the right of the latter to govern, and *his* right to the soil, ceases or becomes subordinated to the will of the superior. It may be that, after this stage, we can lay claim to rule with greater lenity, or what it pleases us to call justice; but this is mainly due to the knowledge of our strength, for it is that which enables us to be generous. Severity on the part of the Boers towards the natives has been in a great measure only the necessary result of weakness, and it is only with the removal of that weakness that the evils incident to it can be expected to disappear. This has received a recent illustration in the measures it was found requisite to adopt in Natal, in order to subdue the rebel Chief, Langelibalele.

If, then, we are agreed thus far, the next question is as to the position which we should assume towards the aboriginal barbarian. Our policy in this respect has never been defined or consistent, and consequently often both irritating and distracting to the natives, who are much puzzled to follow the thread of our principles through the maze of the alternate toleration of liberty and of licence, the acquisition and abandonment of territory, and the punishment or otherwise of different forms of vice. This also is the question upon which, not only the future goodwill of the Boer is almost wholly dependent, but the welfare and happiness of the native himself; and I will therefore venture to say a few words upon it, and to state, as far as I can, what the measures are which a colonist, whether Boer or English, desires.

In deciding upon the future management of natives in the Transvaal, the circumstances of the Cape, as they are in no way analogous, do not afford us much guide, and the example furnished by Natal is only of advantage as showing what should be avoided. In the latter there has, indeed, been no policy except that of inaction, and the perpetuation of native customs, native laws, and native autocracy. It has simply been the substitution of a white chief in the place of a black one; and a system which, as it was almost wholly dependent upon the ability or tact of an individual, could have no permanence or succession. With the exception of a very small number, the natives of Natal are all refugee Zulus and their offspring, and are regarded by the Zulu King as his renegade subjects, and it is to the fact of his near neighbourhood that Natal is mainly indebted for the immunity from insurrection which she has so long enjoyed. Since the late rumours of Zulu disturbance it has, I see, been proposed in a leading Natal paper, that that chief's country should also be annexed, in order to put a stop to the trouble which his threatening attitude so often occasions; but I trust these counsels will not be followed, for to do so would be to produce a unity of interest among the Zulu race which might be most prejudicial to white supremacy.

To return, however, to native management in the Transvaal. It is my opinion that, assuming that we have decided the question of our

right to be there in the affirmative, the next step is to declare that we have a right to rule and to control the savage; and, further, that it is our duty so to control him, as to wean him from his barbarous habits, and incline him to those of peace and industry. In his state of tutelage he should not be consulted any more than a child would be; he has to be *ruled*, with justice, of course, but also with firmness, and we should not omit to demand from him the same unquestioning obedience to authority to which he is used. If we do not adopt this principle, it would be far better for him, as well as for ourselves, that we kept away from him. We should also compel him to pay his fair proportion towards the maintenance of the Government, and not only with that view, but also with the express object of making him work for his taxes, and thus keeping him from idleness. Some who have lately written on the subject, and other kind sympathisers at home, see no reason why Kafirs more than other people should be required to work if they can live without it; but they do not, perhaps, reflect that idleness in the savage does not mean the same as in the civilized man. I doubt if either can be absolutely idle; but I know that the tendency of the savage, if not at healthy labour, is to do mischief, and for that reason, as well as to make him a more useful member of society, I should use all reasonable means to force him to work. I know it will be said that I want to annex his labour, and thus that my motives may be suspected; but here I am quite content to rest in the company of those who have carried on a somewhat similar operation, though on a much larger scale. Neither is sufficient importance attached to the fact that the presence of a large native population, most of whom have come into the country since the occupation of the whites, not only necessitates an increased outlay for their control and government, but also has the effect of preventing the importation of labour from England.

It is on the principles involved in these questions that the Boers, as well as English colonists, have ever been at issue with Imperial authority, and upon which depend all future relations.

There may be much in the Boer system to be reprehended, but in part of its theory it is undoubtedly correct. It is more direct and consistent, and thus less liable to distract and irritate the native than our own. When the former come into contact they understand one another then and there, and if an encroachment is made it is over at once. With us, though the process is more gradual, the encroachment is not the less sure. It is my belief that the right line lies between the two systems, and that if we will only accept as a foregone conclusion what experience shows is the inevitable result of our contact with African natives, and take upon ourselves boldly the position and the responsibilities to which we are entitled and bound, the future rule will be productive of more happy results to all concerned than have been obtained in the past. The problem has in any case now to be worked out in the Transvaal; with a material perhaps more favourable to deal with; but also upon a far larger scale than has hitherto been known in Africa; and the effects for future good or evil will mainly depend upon the manner in which the commencement is made.

One more word before concluding. I have already mentioned the

difficulties that will exist in raising a revenue sufficient for the proper government of the country, arising from the smallness of the white population, and the absence of facilities for the export of produce. To remedy this evil there is but one course open, which is, that a line of railway should be constructed from Delagoa Bay. The Portuguese Government have signified their willingness to undertake their portion, and had entered into a treaty with the Republican authorities by which they allowed the Transvaal a remission of duty almost amounting to free transit, and all that is now required is that our Government should undertake to extend the line from their boundary in the first instance for about forty or fifty miles, which would bring it to a central spot within the eastern frontier. For this distance the line is almost level, and crosses only two small rivers, so that the expense would be comparatively trifling. But there are other reasons why this important work should no longer be neglected. A pledge was given in the proclamation of annexation that all contracts entered into by the previous Government would be maintained, and it is to the apparent lapse or non-continuance of the arrangements which had been made to carry it into effect, and to the fear of Natal influence prevailing to deprive them of a long-hoped-for benefit, and cause a sacrifice of their interests to its own, that much of the present discontent in the Transvaal is to be traced.

The proposed railway is, however, of such vital importance both in regard to the financial interests of the country, and to the advantages it will offer in case of any necessity for military operation in the rear of the Zulus, that it would be wrong to suppose that any but the most serious objections will be allowed to delay its execution.

MR. DONALD CURRIE, C.M.G. : I have listened with much pleasure to the lecture with which Mr. Moodie has favoured us. I know Mr. Moodie very well, and every one acquainted with South Africa must be aware of the deep interest which he has always taken in the development of the country. I suppose no one living in the Transvaal has traversed the territory to a greater extent in order to discover the best means of communication. Mr. Moodie, with the late President, Mr. Burgers, made the arrangement for transferring the railway concession which he had got from the Portuguese Government from Delagoa Bay to the boundary of the South African Republic. At that time the President went with Mr. Moodie to Portugal and received from them a new concession for the line of railway, and also there was a treaty of commerce; but owing to the annexation we are now face to face with a great difficulty. I do not see where the capital is to be found, or where the revenue is to come from which is to make it safe to undertake the construction of an extensive line of railway. I see very clearly the immense advantage of such a railway to the Transvaal. I should like to ask Mr. Moodie whether it is true that the Portuguese Government have withdrawn their promise to establish a railway; have they agreed to construct it, or are they only promising that if the capital is provided up to their boundary, they will subsidise it?

MR. MOODIE : That is all.

MR. DONALD CURRIE : Has there been any change in the mind of the present Government in Portugal as compared with the late Ministry?

MR. MOODIE : The same Ministry exists now; they have returned to power.

MR. DONALD CURRIE : They were extremely favourable to the line of railway before Mr. Burgers gave up the Presidency, and we all know that the Republic made some arrangements with the Cockerell Company of Belgium with a view to laying down a railway. Since that time I understand that Her Majesty's Government have not seen their way to undertake the responsibility of carrying out the project.

of the Cockerell Company. Where is the capital to be got to form the line of railway? If we could get the line of railway established and that country opened up, there would certainly be developed immense resources for the benefit of mankind. But what sort of assistance would the Government be required to give to enable it to pay? No doubt the country is boundless in its natural wealth; it has mineral, agricultural, and other resources of the most plentiful character, but the line of railway is necessary. The difficulty appears to be that it would have its terminus in a foreign port. At Delagoa Bay we have forty feet draught of water, while at Natal we cannot pass the bay with our steamers drawing ten feet, and a very large sum of money will have to be expended to make Durban a serviceable port. No doubt the great secret of the dissatisfaction in the Transvaal at this moment is owing to the fact that the people interested are in doubt whether they are to have the line of railway. I went to the Government with Mr. Paul Kruger, and the other Delegates from the Transvaal Boers. They returned to South Africa satisfied with the kindness shown to them by Lord Carnarvon, but the people who sent him here are not satisfied. Unless some satisfaction is given to the inhabitants, either in material assistance or otherwise, there may be difficulties which I think Mr. Moodie comprehends very well. Then come the relations with the colonies as to taxation for traffic which passes through. A percentage is charged by way of duty on importations, and as there are no means for establishing Custom-houses along the frontier, if drawback is to be got, it is not easy to arrange a bonding system at present. The Boers do not like direct taxation, and the difficulty is how money is to be obtained by way of revenue. Is there any enlightenment to be given on these points by those who know by personal knowledge, as Mr. Moodie does, what has been occurring in the Transvaal? Those are the points which occur to me. The great want for South Africa is white population. If people get out there, there is plenty of occupation; but when they arrive, they are confronted by an inert and idle Kafir population. There is no question as to the Transvaal being one of the richest countries in the world. The wheat grown there is equal to South Australian wheat, and the mineral resources of the country are boundless. I should like to have some practical statement from Mr. Moodie or any one who can say what is to be the outcome of this question of the establishment of a railway, for the development of the country requires it.

Colonel HENRY CLINTON: I should like to ask whether the Governor is aware that he can do that which you do in private life: when you have property that you cannot get at, you are apt to go to a lawyer and ask him to negotiate a private loan. Is that possible in this case?

Mr. SANDERSON: I, for the most part, agree with the paper which Mr. Moodie has read. I consider it a most valuable contribution to the subject to which it relates, and, as Mr. Donald Currie has suggested that I should say a few words on the subject from a Natal point of view, I will endeavour to do so. There are a few points that struck me in Mr. Moodie's paper on which, as a resident in the colony of Natal, I may be able to put the facts, perhaps, in a somewhat truer light. Mr. Moodie says the Transvaal has no return from Natal nor from the Cape, of a large amount drawn by those colonies in the shape of Customs duties. I would beg to remind Mr. Moodie that Natal keeps up good roads at a very heavy expense. It has already spent not very wisely, but it has spent 200,000*l.* in the improvement of its harbours, and is now engaged in making railways at great expense. In all these advantages the Transvaal participates, and, therefore, to a certain extent, at all events, it is a *quid pro quo* for the Customs duties that are claimed. Mr. Moodie told us that when Her Majesty's Commissioner went to Natal in 1843 he reported the natives to be 10,000 in number. That is correct, but at that time the Commissioner had no means of knowing the real number of the population in the remote parts of the colony, and a more correct estimate was to place it at 100,000. There were 80,000 to 100,000 natives at the time the country was taken possession of by the English Government, and the large increase which has taken place since, is due partly to natural increase and partly to the return of tribes who had fled before the conquering Zulu, and to a very considerable extent, I admit, to the cause which Mr. Moodie spoke of as being the sole source of increase, namely, an influx of natives from surrounding territory. It is only fair that those other facts should be borne in mind,

because a very unfair impression is apt to be conveyed by the idea that the native population has increased under British rule from 10,000 to something like 300,000 or 400,000. As regards the segregation of the natives in Natal, and the dangers to be apprehended from that, I entirely agree with Mr. Moodie. I think that has been the source of much of the trouble we have in Natal, and will be, perhaps, more remotely, less directly, the source of the troubles that are now threatening us in the Transvaal and the Zulu country. The question of firearms has been referred to by Mr. Moodie, and with what he said on that subject I perfectly agree; but I would ask any intelligent audience whether it is a thing creditable to an English Government that their sole representative in the Zulu country should be the man who is importing at the rate of something like 10,000 stand of arms every year for sale among the natives? That is the fact, and it is well known to the Natal authorities, and yet they either will not or dare not dismiss that man and put another man in the position of their representative in the Zulu country. Mr. Moodie spoke of Sekukuni, and here it strikes me he was somewhat inconsistent, somewhat at variance with himself; he spoke of the Boer Government declaring war against Sekukuni. Now, a State does not usually declare war against its own subjects; it may treat them as rebels, but it does not declare war against them. The Boer Government did declare war against Sekukuni, and yet professed to regard him as a rebel. Now, Lord Carnarvon has expressed his conviction that the Boers had no right to regard Sekukuni as a subject, and, therefore, no right to treat him as a rebel. That opinion I had previously arrived at for myself from the most careful investigation I could form. The treaties upon which the Transvaal Government professed to found their authority over Sekukuni were simply in Lord Carnarvon's opinion and in my humble judgment, waste paper, and I very much fear that the same thing will be found to be the case with regard to the treaties which are alleged to subsist between the Zulu people, with whom we are now threatened with trouble, and the Transvaal Government. I am not in the least degree surprised that those troubles should now be threatening, because for twenty or twenty-five years Sir Theophilus Shepstone, as representing the head of affairs in Natal, has been supporting Cetewayo and his father, the former King, in their position with reference to the Transvaal Boers. The Transvaal Boers have been represented as encroaching year after year upon the Zulu country, and the Natal Government, of which Sir Theophilus Shepstone was, in regard to native affairs, at the head, appears to have supported the Zulu King in the position he assumed. But, no sooner is the country annexed and become English territory, than Sir Theophilus Shepstone, in my opinion, takes up the very position which he had condemned when assumed by the Transvaal Government. I ask whether it is to be wondered at, that Cetewayo the Zulu King should resent that and feel perplexed. No wonder he is arming himself at every point against what he fears to be an encroachment on the part of his former friends the English, or rather I should say he no longer regards Sir Theophilus Shepstone as an Englishman. He therefore looks to the Natal Government and the Queen for the maintenance of that support which he formerly received from Sir Theophilus Shepstone. I scarcely agree with Mr. Moodie with reference to the native population of Natal not being contented. I think the fact that something like 15,000, or at the very outside 20,000, white people have been living in the midst of 200,000 or 300,000, or as it is now said sometimes 400,000 blacks, and that there has been comparatively little crime of any kind either against property or life among that native population, shows that they are more contented than Mr. Moodie appears disposed to allow. That the feeling among the natives is less satisfactory now within the last two or three years is a lamentable fact, and to my thinking it is not at all to be wondered at. Mr. Moodie referred to the affair of Langalibalele, and without going into that very long and complicated question, I think there were circumstances connected with that which probably account for the feeling of alarm and distrust with which the natives in Natal are now disposed to regard the Government. That the natives generally in the very remote parts of South Africa are inclined to regard British rule as a blessing is an unquestionable fact. It was only a few years ago—a year or two before the Langalibalele trouble broke out—that messengers arrived from nearly all the more important native tribes from a great distance beyond the Transvaal country asking to be taken under British protection.

I think I had it on the authority of Sir Theophilus Shepstone himself that a very large proportion of the tribes beyond the Transvaal asked to be taken under British authority, and if there is any change in their feeling now towards the English, it will be from such causes as those to which I have adverted in the case of Sekukuni and Cetewayo the Zulu King, that the policy of the English Government has changed, and they see they cannot rely as they had been taught to do upon the straightforwardness, the justice, and the fair dealing of the English. I cannot sit down without expressing the fervent hope that now that the territory has become English soil, something will be done to advance a country which has such boundless capabilities. I had the pleasure of visiting the Transvaal twenty-seven years ago, in fact I entered the country on the very day the treaty was concluded by which its independence was guaranteed, that independence which has now on very slender pretext been taken from it. At that time the mineral wealth of the country was scarcely even suspected. It was known that there were lead and silver, but beyond that little was known of it. However, I saw enough of it then, and I have heard enough of it since, to feel sure that it is a country the capabilities of which as an agricultural country, and also as a mineral country, it is almost impossible to over-estimate. I trust something will be done, whether by railways or otherwise, perhaps by the aid of the English Government, to advance its interest. Although I am a Natal colonist I shall certainly not plead guilty to entertaining that narrow feeling to which Mr. Moodie adverted of not desiring to see a railway to Delagoa Bay, if that will forward the interests of the Transvaal. I think the interests of the whole Empire are so interwoven that no one part can prosper except to the advantage of the whole.

MR. BECKER: I gladly endorse everything that has been said by Mr. Donald Currie; I wish also to thank Mr. Moodie on behalf of my friends in the Transvaal. Mr. Donald Currie put the question, how are we to raise the money for the purpose of constructing this railway? As far as I know, during the administration of Mr. Burgers, a rate was levied of 30s. on each farm situated in the territory of the Transvaal. I believe there were about 25,000 farms altogether, and that revenue would cover the interest. The late President tried to raise the money and partially succeeded, but owing to the war with Sekukuni, and other causes, the negotiations came to nothing. Mr. Donald Currie remarked that he thought there would be some difficulty on account of the dissatisfaction at present existing amongst the Boers in that country. As far as I know—I have been there many years—a great deal of that dissatisfaction is caused by the authorities having failed to carry out their promises. I know that verbal promises were made to individual Boers about the railway to Delagoa Bay, &c.; those promises are entirely ignored and the Boers feel it considerably, that is one of the principal causes of this dissatisfaction. It is the same story over again. If you recollect, three years ago there was nearly a revolution at the Diamond Fields. What was the cause of it? The people represented the case to the Imperial Government, and very fortunately the Government sent out a British soldier and a gentleman, Colonel Crossman. That gentleman investigated matters and restored order, and the unpopular Governor then administering the Government was superseded by Major Lanyon. The present happy result is a proof of his administration. Why could not that be done with our country? Instead of sending an independent gentleman, disconnected with local politics, they have filled the offices with men from Natal. We gave up our independence, and I with hundreds of others hailed annexation with delight, hoping for a better state of things, but when I left there was a great deal of discontent and disappointment owing to the bad administration.

THE BISHOP OF PRETORIA: I really do not rise to occupy ten minutes, but to ask a question, but perhaps before I do ask the question you will allow me to express my gratitude that this Institution opens its doors to outsiders, and to Mr. Moodie for giving an outsider an opportunity of hearing his very excellent lecture. I am sure all those who, like myself, want to understand the question, must be grateful for such a lecture. We have heard from a previous speaker that the representative of the British Government in the Zululand is the great offender in a matter of the vastest importance, in introducing into that country firearms for the use of the natives. I should like to ask if any steps, and if so, what, have been taken or could be taken

to bring such a fact to the notice of the Home Government who might act with some more decision than it appears the Government in the colony has shown, because it strikes me, as one hearing it for the first time, that it is an act of the deepest importance, and the grossest injury to all our South African possessions, and that, therefore, some steps should be taken, and I should be very glad to hear that some steps are about to be taken to put down such a very grievous evil as that seems to me to be.

Mr. CAMPBELL JOHNSTON: To answer the question just now put, I recollect to have seen a little while ago in one of our newspapers an extract from a letter which was written by the Society for the Protection of Natives. It was written to the Colonial Office, bringing before it the fact that our representative in Zululand was the greatest offender in the introduction of arms. I believe it was acknowledged, but with what results I have not heard.

The CHAIRMAN: The introduction of arms by whom?

Mr. CAMPBELL JOHNSTON: By this gentleman; his name is Dunn; there is but one, therefore one does not offend by mentioning his name. He is the right hand man of the Zulu Chief.

Mr. SANDERSON: Might I be allowed to add one word? Mr. John Dunn is the emigration agent of the Natal Government in Zululand, and he is paid a salary of 300*l.* a year for his services in that capacity. The Natal Government simply disclaim any responsibility for his acts outside the particular office for which he is paid 300*l.* a year.

Mr. MOODIE: I have to express my gratitude for the very lenient criticism gentlemen have passed on what I have said. In regard to what has fallen from Mr. Sanderson with respect to the native population of Natal, I notice that in Mr. Trollope's book he puts the number of aboriginal natives at the time of the English occupation even lower than I have, viz., at 3,000. I had not before heard that subsequent estimates had been made as stated by Mr. Sanderson. At the time of my arrival there in 1844, Langalibalele was not in Natal, nor many of the other principal tribes, the main aboriginal body being the fish-eating natives on the coast, and some few outlying ones in other parts, so that though my estimate may be low, I am not at all inclined to put it down as high as Mr. Sanderson at 100,000.

Mr. Currie asked where the capital for the railway is to come from. I think that has been answered by the gentleman who said a word or two on the subject, and I agree with him that if the Transvaal was regarded as a man's own private property, and its resources placed at my disposal, I would soon find the means of carrying out a work so palpably necessary for making it reproductive. I have not, however, considered that a question for an outsider to enter upon here in any special way. As to Sekukuni, when the Transvaal Boers drove Moselikatse out of the country, the territory now claimed by him was unoccupied. The father of Sekukuni had with his tribe been driven out of the country before that time by Moselikatse, and it was only after the Boers came into possession that he returned to it. The present Government are placed in a rather anomalous position from the fact of their having, prior to the annexation and while the Boers were at war with Sekukuni, declared the latter to be an independent chief, and to have the rights of a belligerent power, and now, as in the case of the Zulus, reversing their attitude and enforcing payment of the war indemnity which he undertook to pay to the Boer Government, as a condition of their ceasing hostilities at the peace which was patched up at the last moment.

With regard to John Dunn, nothing has pleased me more than to hear the remarks that have fallen from different gentlemen on that subject. It has been a crying shame for long. I was at Delagoa Bay myself in the early part of last year, and while there Kafirs arrived from Dunn. I saw his own letters, and 1,100 guns were sold in one day to take home to the Zulus, and it is through this means that Cetewayo is holding his present position. It is, however, manifestly unjust to blame the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay for this, or to expect that they shall put a stop to the traffic, while unlimited supplies have been allowed to the natives from our own colonies. I beg in conclusion to return you my thanks for the kind attention you have given me.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, it would be wrong for me to detain you long

after the very interesting lecture that has been given by Mr. Moodie and after the very intelligent criticisms that have been made upon it. But having accepted the position of Chairman, I think it but fair that I should show that I know something of the subject. I agree with many of the points that Mr. Moodie has brought before us, but with some of them I cannot entirely coincide. I had the honour of commanding the united troops of South Africa, and therefore it was my province to learn as much of the country as possible. I had also the honour of sending the troops into the Transvaal at its annexation, and therefore a large amount of correspondence concerning that annexation naturally passed through my hands. Now I think it but fair in the first place to observe why we annexed that country, and I wish to state in a few words what were the reasons for our doing so. There had been some dissatisfaction on the part of the Boers and others who carried on the Government at Pretoria, in consequence of the import of arms which was being allowed by the Cape Government and the Natal Government, and which were being sold to the natives of South Africa. That has been one of the great reasons of the troubles that have arisen. During the time I had the command of that country, and which has been for four years and a half, I believe 400,000 stand of arms have been sold to these natives. I cannot entirely agree with Mr. Moodie in condemning the merchants who sold them, because I think it is the province of the parent Government always to give laws and directions to its subjects, and to tell them whether they have a right to sell arms or not. It is a very hard case that our merchants should be accused of want of patriotism in selling arms, while the laws allow them to do so; laws are meant to be obeyed, and if it was considered by the Government that it was deleterious to the interests of England that arms should be sold, it was in my opinion the duty of the Government to prevent that sale, and which they had ample power to do.

As regards the climate of that wonderful country, the Transvaal, I certainly concur in what Mr. Moodie has said, as to its being, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary colonies that England has annexed to itself. It consists of three separate areas. The south-easternmost part is generally called the High Veldt, and that, as Mr. Moodie has told us, averages from 4,000 to 7,000 feet above the level of the sea. That country, therefore, is not a corn-growing country, but it is very rich in minerals, and in the eastern part there is a large amount of gold. I had the pleasure of travelling twice over that eastern section for military reasons, and I saw the greater part of the centre of the Transvaal. The climate is most excellent in consequence of the great height of this portion. Whenever we approach the tropics, the health of the country, and its salubrity for the British constitution, depends very much upon its height. This country is exceedingly salubrious. In it I selected a spot for the cavalry of my division, in order that the horses might remain healthy through the summer. The central portion of the Transvaal is rich for corn-growing and also in minerals. Esterling is a great gold field, from which much ore has been extracted, but the extreme northern part is a low country and deleterious to health. In one portion of it you find the tsetse fly, that destroys horses and makes it so difficult to enter there with troops. It is difficult for Europeans to live in the Low Veldt; it is tropical and is covered with tropical plants. The high range of country lower down, and here (*pointing to the map*) was our happy hunting ground, for my aide-de-camp and myself, while passing over it, killed, in about sixteen days, sixty-nine head of large deer, of which more than twenty were the gnu, of which you may see specimens in the Zoological Gardens; When this country was annexed, I set up a fortified station on the south-eastern borders of the Transvaal, in a position which would be extremely valuable; and as regards Cetewayo and Zululand I give my reasons for building that fort. The town is called Newcastle (and very appropriately so), as immense quantities of coal exist there. The fort in that position, at the neck leading to the Transvaal, would check any movement that the Zulus might make into the colony. We built barracks at Standerton, on account of the high ground, for the health of the cavalry; besides which, it is in an excellent position for communication with Utrecht and also Pretoria, in case of any difficulties arising amongst the Boers, but which I do not anticipate. Hence troops could easily be sent to Middeburg, should Sekukuni think proper to endeavour to do any mischief in the

Transvaal itself. I will not, however, occupy your further time in stating the military reasons for the works which I undertook. I think it is best to stick to the point which has been presented to us in the paper, with reference to the future of the Transvaal, and as so much has been said on the question of railways, it only would be right to say a word or two upon that subject. The question has been raised whether the railway should start from Delagoa Bay, or whether it should pass through Natal, or whether it should go from East London, through Queenstown and the Orange Free States, and so towards the north, or whether it should go from the Cape itself by Beaufort West. In a railway, a great deal depends on the port from which the railway starts, and unfortunately in South Africa we have no good harbours; Sir John Coode's estimate for making a harbour at Port Elizabeth was 900,000*l.*, and that is no small sum. At East London he estimates the cost of making such a harbour as is now required at 400,000*l.*, and at Durban, in Natal, at 400,000*l.* The ports are distant from the Transvaal: I do not say that the money should not be spent upon them, but the question Mr. Moodie has brought before us is especially the Transvaal, and, therefore, I think that is what we should regard especially this afternoon. Delagoa Bay is undoubtedly the best harbour in South Africa, and it is the nearest to the Transvaal. I agree in one thing, that the difficulties in starting a railway from that port would be very great so long as it belongs to the Portuguese, therefore, I sincerely trust some arrangement will be made with Portugal by the British Government that will enable it to become British property. It is not that I should not wish to see a railway through the Cape Colony or Natal, but I should like to see a railway from Delagoa Bay into the Transvaal. The difficulties, as far as the climate is concerned, are not so great, especially looking at the energy that has been shown in the construction of a railway through the Isthmus of Panama, where, some say, that one hundred men per mile died in making it. I believe there would be no such difficulty in the construction of the Delagoa line, for it is only to a certain distance from the coast that the low unhealthy country exists. The high part of the country lies 4,500 feet above the lower or coast level; when once this is surmounted, it is almost a level plain until you arrive at Pretoria, the same thence to Potchefstroom. As regards the annexation of this country, we annexed it in order to prevent the native tribes from attacking it; we felt as long as the country was inhabited by white people, the paramount State, England, the most powerful amongst the white colonies of that country, must protect it, and, therefore, if the Boers, in their folly, or their conceit, determined to annex, as Mr. Moodie said, a considerable amount of Cetewayo's country, whether they had a right to treat with Cetewayo to do it or not, still if Cetewayo determined to attack the Boers, we felt that he would easily have overrun the Transvaal; and, had we not taken action when we did, he would have burnt Pretoria, and Heidelberg, and every station on the eastern side of this country. We, therefore, took the initiative, and sent a small force there (the name of England goes a long way in that country); he was thus prevented from carrying out his intentions. I think it was the wisest measure that could have been adopted for Lord Carnarvon to choose for that particular duty his Excellency Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who is an exceedingly clever man, has a perfect knowledge of the Dutch language, and also of the Zulu language, and is intimately acquainted with Cetewayo, the King of the Zulus. His appointment was one which commanded general confidence. In my opinion he performed his very arduous duties in a judicious manner; his position was certainly difficult, he was said by some to have turned against his son, Cetewayo, and why? Because, when he was Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, he had to guard the interests of Natal, and so keep the Zulus as quiet as he could; and he was supposed rather to take the part of the Zulus than of the Boers; but as soon as we had annexed that country, his business was to endeavour to be even-handed, and, therefore, it looked as if he was playing false with Cetewayo. An observation has been this afternoon made, why did we not put down Cetewayo? Gentlemen, I can assure you war is a very serious thing; from the mouths of the head men of Cetewayo, I ascertained that Cetewayo has at least 20,000 men in arms, 15,000 of whom have muskets, and at least 2,000 of those are breech-loaders. He has no cannon, though he has tried to get them. In my experience in South Africa, I

found the 2 cwt. small guns of the greatest utility, and it behoves us to take care to prevent the natives getting cannon. An observation has been made with regard to Mr. Dunn, and it has been said, why do not we prevent Mr. Dunn from assisting Cetewayo? I beg leave to observe that Cetewayo's country is as independent of Great Britain as Madagascar, or as any other part of South Africa. We have no claim over that country, we make treaties with them, but we cannot say to Cetewayo "You shall not buy arms;" we can only, by our influence, try to prevent it. John Dunn has as good a right to buy muskets at Delagoa Bay, as England has to buy them of Belgium, or anywhere else. Cetewayo has now got a large army, and he has a clever commissariat entirely administered by the women of the tribes. These women carry many days' food for their husbands on their backs; they think nothing of running twenty miles of a night to carry them their food, and, therefore, Cetewayo could easily make a raid into our country of, say 150 or 200 miles, and his troops would be supplied by a commissariat nearly as perfectly for their requirements as our troops are, by the transport carriers. We should, therefore, be very cautious in saying that Cetewayo could not do this or that, or that we could put him down. I believe Sir Edward Bulwer has adopted the wisest course in causing the arbitration which is going on at this moment, and which I have every reason to believe and hope will end in the most satisfactory way, and that an arrangement will be come to by which we shall avoid a war in that country. If we could stave off wars in South Africa for some time, it is my belief that by giving the inhabitants employment in the construction of railways and other works, we shall civilize the people, and it is better to civilize them by civil means than by military operations.

Mr. Moodie referred to some one who rather condemns the policy of Great Britain as to its colonies, and holds up to our notice the Spaniards and Portuguese as being much more successful than we have been. I cannot help thinking that the Spaniards and Portuguese may have improved their vast colonies; but still when we look to the history of Pizarro, Cortes, and others, we shall generally find that their operations have rather been towards improving the people off the face of the earth than civilizing them in the fashion which Great Britain uses her best to effect. We now have in South Africa a Governor who is a man of justice, of equity, of talent, and determination, the attributes that an Englishman should possess, and that is his Excellency Sir Bartle Frere. If any man can raise the British name in that country beyond the great position which it now holds, I believe that man is Sir Bartle Frere. He is now using his best endeavours to quiet Africa, and although the commencement of such a work may be a military one, I have every belief that he will be successful. He is animated with the ideas of justice and honourable feelings towards the natives, as well as towards ourselves. With reference to the Boer inhabitants, I consider them to be an honest, good-feeling, excellent people; they are exceedingly religious, as Mr. Anthony Trollope has stated, and as has been brought before us by Mr. Froude and those who have lately visited that country. The Boer is not to say an ignorant man, but he has an entire want of knowledge of the rest of the world; he has buried himself in the wilds, and consequently does not understand our advancement in civilization. The late Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, once said that there is no reason to suppose that we are wiser than our ancestors because we are more scientific. I am not at all sure that the Boers are not as clever, in their own generation, as any of us, but they take a long time to develop their ideas and to think about things. In order to show you the total ignorance of these men, when I sent the army up into that country, the Boers came round my Officers, and said, "We know what you are going to do. We know why you are coming here; you intend to lay hold of all our handsome young men, and take them off to the Grenadier Guards, and you intend to tax us, and worry us in every kind of way, and make us pay all the expenses, not only of this annexation, but also to tax us to pay for your war with Russia, without giving us any share in the government of our country." We explained to them that what we were doing was entirely for the object of saving them from the natives. When they saw that we paid for everything in gold (for they would not touch a bank-note), and that a great deal of gold passed into their hands, their feelings were changed, and turned very much in our favour. I have every confidence that Sir Theophilus Shepstone will be

able to give matters a right direction. One of my Officers, whom I placed in command of the cavalry, received while I was down at Williamstown, letters from the Boers of the Transvaal, offering their services as cavalry, and to bring their own horses. We had also offers of service from volunteers in all directions; this is exceedingly satisfactory and encouraging. One of the great difficulties of emigration into the Transvaal is that it is very expensive to go there. It costs a great deal of money to go to Cape Town, as much again to go to Durban, and more still to go from Durban into the Transvaal. It also takes a long time. It is impossible for a man to go from England to the Transvaal under three months. As soon as he gets there, if he is steady, he will be well rewarded. When I was there, bricklayers' wages were 25s. a day and carpenters' wages 25s. a day. A sovereign was charged for shoeing a horse; in fact, all labour is rewarded in the same proportion. The greatest difficulty I had in building barracks in Pretoria was the want of labour; therefore, I think, as the field is open, all that is to be done is for the reapers to go and reap the harvest. This country is a wonderfully productive country. The great difficulty which Mr. Moodie has so prominently brought before us is that the Government has no land to sell to the emigrants who may go there. The system of the Government of the Transvaal has been that when a young boy reached the age of sixteen, he had a right to ask his Government for a grant of 6,000 acres of land. That has been one of the reasons for the quarrel with the natives, because the Government allotted this land, and thus encroached upon the native possessions. I have known instances in which 6,000 acres of fine land, which, if it had labour, could grow corn, has been sold for two bottles of whiskey. I knew of 6,000 acres close to Middelburg sold, some three or four years ago, for a few bottles of whiskey and two or three pair of stockings, and for which, since the annexation of the Transvaal by the British Government a gentleman refused £1,100. Some gentlemen are very large proprietors, one at Potchefstroom possesses no less than 800,000 acres of land, the greater portion of it being corn-bearing. He naturally wishes to get emigrants into the country, and he invites them upon the most reasonable terms. I see no reason why companies should not be successful in arranging with these large landowners to get land. As a total outsider, I would advocate that large taxation should be put upon these large landholders, and thereby oblige many of them to sell to the State and others their lands. This would give the State a means of encouraging the emigrants who came out by allowing them to obtain land at something like fair prices. I believe this alone would help forward the Transvaal to future and great prosperity. The Transvaal possesses a few diamonds, a great deal of gold, and lead in very large quantities. The lead produced, now goes entirely to the centre of Africa, in order to utilize some of those 400,000 stand of arms that have been taken there; and so great is the profit in lead mines, that a gentleman near Potchefstroom who purchased, about two years since, an estate containing this mineral for the sum of 50*l.* or 60*l.* sterling, is now realizing from this property about 2,000*l.* a year. The cobalt mine near Middelberg was purchased from one of the Dutch farmers. It was bought for about 1,000*l.*; it is now said to be paying many thousands a year. Coal is most abundant.

The native question, however, is the great difficulty of South Africa. As to sweeping the natives away by force of arms, or by the brandy bottle, I believe the thing, even if it were just or right, is impossible. The nature of the habits and customs of the people encourages an increase in the population, and as we accept the principle of putting down all fighting amongst the native tribes, so it is a natural consequence that they should increase enormously; they have broad fertile lands, with numberless herds of cattle. Thus they have plenty of food; no starvation exists under the mild and honourable laws exercised by Great Britain; we must therefore anticipate a continual increase of population, and we must therefore be prepared to meet this difficulty. Our great panacea for this is to teach them as far as possible (for they are a very lazy race), the advantages of our modern institutions, that are now cropping up all over the land. To this end we should encourage railroads through the country, from Delagoa Bay as well as from other ports. I should be only too glad to see a check placed upon the sale of arms; they look at arms in the first instance as a great prize, as a boy does a watch. It must not be

supposed that the natives cannot use firearms. To my certain knowledge many of them can shoot just as well as we can, and they only require a small amount of practice to make them good marksmen. There is nothing so dangerous as to place a firearm in the hands of a native, with their ignorance and fanaticism. It is as dangerous to place a musket in the hands of a native as it would be to put a fire-brand in the hands of a child, and leave him in his bedroom.

As to the future government of this country, it would be injudicious for me to say more than a word. As long as Great Britain has anything to do with the annexation of a country it is always guided by the most honourable principles. It has been assured to that country by Sir Theophilus Shepstone that they will have their parliamentary Government, but he has not said when. Things must develop themselves, war must cease, and other circumstances happen before such an enlightened institution can be put into their hands; and before we feel sure that they are able to use it for their own benefit, as well as for the benefit of South Africa. Everywhere it is the endeavour of Her Majesty's Government to send officers to those countries whom they can trust, and in their selection of Sir Bartle Frere, they could not possibly have made a better. In Sir Theophilus Shepstone they have one whose perfect knowledge of the country and whose judgment will bring them through the difficulties, if any one can. As to the Transvaal itself, I consider that by a judicious Government, and by the support of Great Britain, it will become in time one of the most valuable of our colonies; it has all the conditions of greatness, and owing to its climate, its natural position, and its fertility, I believe it has a future not to be exceeded by that of any one of Her Majesty's colonies.

I am sure you will all agree with me in passing a vote of thanks to Mr. Moodie for his very excellent paper.