This article was downloaded by: [University of Birmingham]
On: 08 January 2015, At: 11:35
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number:
1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street,
London W1T 3JH, UK

Scottish Geographical Magazine

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsgj19>

Basutoland and the Basutos

Sir Godfrey Lagden K.C.M.G. ^a

^a Commissioner for Native Affairs in the Transvaal, late Resident Commissioner, Basutoland

Published online: 27 Feb 2008.

To cite this article: Sir Godfrey Lagden K.C.M.G. (1901) Basutoland and the Basutos, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 17:7, 347-362, DOI: [10.1080/00369220108733265](https://doi.org/10.1080/00369220108733265)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00369220108733265>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access

and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

of any accident, or of the detention of the *Discovery*. It is also very desirable that there should be sufficient funds for a third year. But the first of these objects is essential. There must be a tender to the *Discovery*—a second ship. The required funds must be raised. The feeling that this is necessary is becoming strong among those of our Fellows who have a sense of responsibility. I have just received a letter from a Fellow of this Society, who writes as follows: "On the assumption that the instructions for the conduct of the National Antarctic Expedition are definitely settled to the satisfaction of our Council, I shall be glad to contribute £5000 towards the provision of a second ship, the necessary tender to the *Discovery*." Another wellwisher has promised £500. We have thus had noble examples set before us. We are all bound to use our utmost endeavours to see that those examples are followed. It is our duty to see that all due precautions are taken for the safety of the gallant men who are going upon a perilous enterprise at our behest.

BASUTOLAND AND THE BASUTOS.

By Sir GODFREY LAGDEN, K.C.M.G., Commissioner for Native Affairs in the Transvaal, late Resident Commissioner, Basutoland.

(Read at a Meeting of the Society, Edinburgh, on June 3, 1901.)

I AM very sensible of the honour of being invited to address the Royal Scottish Geographical Society at Edinburgh. The opportunity also affords me the great advantage of getting a first glimpse of your magnificent city.

I am unaware of the reason which inspired the invitation, except it be the keenness and enterprise proverbial of Scotch men and Scotch societies to gain world-wide information, and to encourage travellers in the assurance that a common interest is taken in their studies and observations.

The substance of the paper I am about to read was composed at the request of, and read before, the Royal Colonial Institute in London.

Of the many interesting native territories in South Africa, probably none have enjoyed less notoriety until the present war than Basutoland; not because it was undeserving of prominence, but that it was happy in having no recent history to make it seriously conspicuous. For this its best friends are thankful.

Its earlier history is full of thrilling incident and romance. A glance at the map shows its remarkable position, wedged in between the civilised states of South Africa—that is, between Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Transvaal, and Natal. How for those many years it managed to preserve its entity as a tribe is a matter no less of wonder than surprise—of wonder, because nearly all others similarly situated have lost their individuality—of surprise, because of its value for climatic, agricultural, and other reasons. At intervals the territory has been on the verge of incorporation with the Republics. Once indeed it

was practically absorbed by the Orange Free State, and might have so remained but for the inability of a scattered and disorganised population of Boer farmers to maintain their hold sufficiently long to claim the right or the power to govern.

It is necessary to treat briefly of its geography, well known though it be, because of the light it throws upon the history and character of its people. For Africa offers no exception to the general rules under which human races are moulded to some extent according to their environment.

Basutoland is, roughly speaking, about the size of Belgium. It is unsurveyed, the estimated area being somewhat over 10,000 square miles. Traversing almost its entire length from north-west to north-east are the Maluti mountains, sometimes described as the backbone of the Drakensberg range. These mountains attain to an elevation approximately of 12,000 feet, and extend over the greater part of the country, which may be generally described as an elevated plateau, extremely irregular, its contour being of the most broken and rugged nature. They form the watershed of certain large rivers, the Orange or Sinqu and Tugela in particular taking their rise at one spot called the "Mont aux Sources," and abruptly parting company to cleave their way in opposite directions. The locality is a veritable "parting of waters," and is a favourite resort of those travellers who are able to face the extremely rough journey necessary in reaching it. The whole area is a network of rivers, which make the matter of travelling troublesome, even dangerous, for the beds are as a rule full of smooth and slippery boulders, and in flood after heavy rains the waters are strong and treacherous. During the winter season, from May to August, the higher altitudes are generally topped with snow, which remains on the southern slopes for months together in protected places where the sun does not penetrate. Rarely a season passes without snow falling heavily on the lower plateaux in the valleys of the Orange and Caledon rivers. On various occasions a carpet of snow has covered the ground at Maseru for three days together. This is mentioned to show the duration of severe weather in the otherwise semi-tropical climate.

The climate itself may be described as almost perfect. The mean temperature averages about 60°, with average maximum of 95°, and minimum of 17°. Frost prevails throughout the winter. It is a common thing to see ponds frozen hard. With such high altitude and exhilarating air the general health conditions, to which reference will be made later on, are naturally good.

The land trends from the mountains towards the open river valleys in distinctly abrupt form. Viewed at a distance, the mountains appear to be dark, perpendicular barriers, more especially on the Natal side. Below these barriers the country has the appearance of a mass of cone-topped hills which seem to flatten out across picturesque valleys towards the river levels. Lying in these valleys is a wealth of agricultural land containing deposits of rich soil still full of fertility in spite of the annual demand made upon them for crops. Interspersed are patches of green pastures upon which horses and small stock principally feed, there being

insufficient grass for herds of cattle. The traveller is surprised to find that the valleys lying between the inner mountains are also opened out for agriculture, though it is marvellous to think how ploughs could ever have scaled some of the paths by which they must have gone.

Turning to the history of the country, which can only now be briefly summarised :—

The Basutos as presently known are a conglomerate of various tribes who were first smashed and then scattered by the great warrior chief Mosilikatze, who in the early part of the last century struck terror into many of the Kaffir races of South Africa. He was a man of renown, remembered in the present day as a sort of warrior god. His remarkable reign of terror is a landmark in history. Men who cling to the memory of the martial days of old quote him and his deeds of fame. His bloody track lay through Basutoland, where he received his first check, being baffled by the hardy mountaineers, who, fearing to go out into the open, rolled down stones upon his victorious armies and humoured him by sending presents of food. He is said, as he shook off the dust of the country, to have remarked to his army, "This is no place for us; we can fight men, but not monkeys who live in caves!"

It was about this time that one of the most famous of Kaffir chiefs rose to eminence, a unique eminence indeed, acquired by constructing and consolidating into one mass a desperate lot of thieves, robbers, rogues, and fugitives who spoke a babel of tongues to begin with, and ended in speaking the one common tongue of Sesuto. Thus it is that to-day the nation comprises Basuto, Bataung, Batembu, Bapushudi, Batlokoa, Bapedi, Makoakoa, Baphuti, Fingoes, and other clans. The name of that chief was Moshesh. His extraction was good; but space does not admit of genealogical trees. He was a man of commanding mind, even of genius: he was cruel, as required by the times he lived in and the mob he had to rule. When his ascendancy had been properly felt, he was able to hold his people together by firm persuasion, joined to a ruthless treatment of any who defied him. He abolished cannibalism by sending the cannibals freely presents of cattle for food, until the taste for human flesh had disappeared. His first great work was to moderate the savage tendencies and thieving propensities of his wild subjects, and then, having formed a public opinion and generated some collective ideas of future policy, he divided the country into wards, placed over them chosen men of good blood who owned loyal fealty to his chieftainship, and set himself to preserve the country he had made in order to bequeath an inheritance to his successors. They were many, for he had 130 wives. In accomplishing this he brought into play certain characteristics common to his race, such as cunning and duplicity, together with unusual ability, plausibility, and a capacity for holding happy communication with those of the white peoples who were opposed to him or whose sympathy he wished to gain.

The power of the tribe thus roughly fashioned by Moshesh was soon felt by his civilised neighbours. It became a menace to the farmers and squatters along the border; thefts and reprisals provoked open war, which extended intermittently over many years, leading alternately to partial

occupation and abandonment of Basuto territory by the Boers. In 1852 the British Government became involved, and General Sir George Cathcart with a strong force invaded Basutoland. There are many living who can recall the tragic circumstances under which a squadron of the 9th Lancers was lured to its destruction and almost annihilated by the tricky exposure on the Berea mountain of a large herd of cattle. The cattle were of course a rich prize. Under this temptation the unfortunate squadron scaled a precipitous pass, and, when well mixed up between cattle and rough ground, was cut to pieces with assegais.

Moshesh is commonly believed to have held his own well. But he cleverly affected to be beaten, and induced the troops to withdraw on receiving his promise of good behaviour and payment of a considerable cattle fine. What followed in later years has always been a matter of sore feeling amongst the Dutch Boers, they holding that they were robbed of the fruits of their victory and sacrifices by the British Government, who authorised Sir Philip Wodehouse in 1868 to recognise the independence of Moshesh and to treat his tribe as British subjects. It is not of advantage to indulge now in opinions as to the justice and utility of that step. Three years of unsettlement ensued, in which the hazards of holding a loose Protectorate over lawless and uncontrolled people were made manifest. Then in 1871 Basutoland was annexed to the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, becoming subject to the general laws of that Colony, administered by a Governor's agent and his magistrates.

Subsequently there were periods broken by trouble and unhappiness. In 1879 Moirosi, chief of the Baphuti clan, defied the Cape Government. War with him ensued, in which a majority of the people, while professing to be loyal, sympathised with the insurgents. Disaffection ripened into rebellion later on when the Cape Peace Preservation Act, providing for general disarmament, was applied to Basutoland. The prolonged war that followed in 1880-81, commonly known as the "Gun War," was disastrous in that the Colonial forces met with several reverses, and that in the end peace was made before the Basutos were brought into a state of subjection. The Basutos in their own minds have always inclined to the belief that they were successful and invincible. This presumption bred in them a certain contempt and insolence, which made future treatment of them a matter of considerable embarrassment.

In 1883 the current of feeling in the Cape Colony set so strongly in favour of being rid of the turbulent Basuto incubus that measures were framed providing for its entire abandonment and for the payment of an annual sum towards the cost of administration in lieu of customs dues on goods imported, on condition that the Imperial Government would assume control. Negotiations in 1884 finally resulted in the assumption of control by Her Majesty's Government, who appointed Sir Marshal Clarke to be the first Resident Commissioner. He found the country in a state of confusion, and with a few selected officers had to build up the fabric of administration by the slowest degrees. Resulting from the "Gun War" there was a heritage of bitter cleavage between loyals and rebels; the territory was overrun by wild characters; there were a

number of brandy canteens carrying on open trade; the general condition was one of lawlessness and impatience of control. To Sir Marshal Clarke is due the credit for evolving order out of chaos and for inaugurating the system which prevails to-day. Having gone there with him in 1884 and remained for sixteen years, I am in a position to know what changes have occurred, how they were brought about, and with what results.

It may be well at this point to say a few words about the system of control.

The management and control of natives in South Africa are complex questions upon which there are wide differences of opinion, accentuated more than usual at the present moment. To treat of the subject at any time is to venture on thorny ground. It is nearly always found that those who have had wide experience are most conscious how much they have yet to learn, and recoil at the idea of formulating theories and solutions. Some of the most versatile writers, whose confidence is to be envied, see the road quite clear and make it appear easy. It is not necessary for them to have been in Africa so long as they could derive impressions from those who represented 'Savage Africa' at the Earl's Court Exhibition.

Much depends, and always will depend, upon the present circumstances and antecedents of native communities. We have seen the Basutos engaged in a series of bloody wars, emerging from them unbroken, with many influential friends and bodies of men still partial to them, and their land intact. Her late Majesty's Government perceived in these mountaineers, not only a sturdy desire for independence, but a sensible desire to conform to such rules and regulations as were necessary for their guidance and management; and, in framing the outline of a constitution, most generously accorded them a conditional measure of self-government under the tutelage of British officers.

The land system in Basutoland lent itself well to this concession. Under it the soil is held for the people on communal tenure by the paramount chief and again held in trust for him by the Government; that is to say, the paramount chief retains the power to apportion ground for tribal use; but neither he nor his retainers can alienate for any purpose, nor is title granted. Any portions required by Government missions, trading-stations, and suchlike are loaned, and if occupation for any reason ceases they revert to the trustees. Plots for trading-stations may on change of principals be transferred but not sold with buildings. Should a station be abandoned the buildings are removed. The chief assigns to the people arable land under the feudal system of rendering personal service. All grazing is communal.

There are, as we know, many politicians who condemn this system, considering it unfair to those who claim beneficial occupation, and that it places the common people too much in the chief's power, making it possible for him to coerce them against their wills into tribal fighting, rebellion, or war. It would be idle to dispute the strength of this plea. Yet it is a system, which it is wise to retain until circumstances justify the substitution of a better one. The same school of thinkers holds any system to be faulty that maintains any form of chieftainship. That

system again has its advantages as well as its drawbacks. Any sudden wrenching of the ties binding the chiefs to the people involves serious risks. The alternative, according to existing schemes, is disintegration and extended white control with all the unsuitable machinery of judicial courts, their usage and retainers.

The self-government accorded to the Basuto was never laid down in any elaborate form. A code of regulations relating to procedure in civil and criminal cases, appeals, taxes, licences, and prohibiting import or sale of arms and liquor was proclaimed as of law; the statute law of the Cape Colony was held to apply as specially required, though no ordinance passed after March 1884 was operative unless applied by specific proclamation. Tentative measures, adopted at first for guidance of the chiefs, fell into a groove, and then certain useful but unwritten rules became established by force of custom. Subject to certain reservations, the chiefs were allowed to deal with all ordinary cases between native and native. They were debarred from treating cases of homicide, or violence with intent, cases between whites and blacks, or any in which foreigners were concerned. Their national customs, when not brutal or grossly repugnant to civilised thought, were not interfered with. In the course of years, legal provision was made for the employment of native assessors to assist magistrates, for combined courts, for the extradition of criminals, for participation in customs conventions, and suchlike. These laws and regulations are printed in book form. At intervals a strong feeling was evinced to be allowed a national council. Ten years ago the desire for it appeared so marked that the High Commissioner approved proposals. Subsequently the form and constitution of a consultative council, with the scope to be assigned to it, were formulated, the design being to give the people opportunity of indicating their wishes and affording advice on matters pertaining to domestic affairs.

For reasons never clearly apparent, however, a considerable faction became later on less in favour of it, and as the policy was to abstain from bringing any pressure but rather to let the desire be entirely spontaneous, the question lapsed for the time.

To do justice to the chiefs, it must be admitted that as a body and in large measure they justified the confidence reposed in them. In their courts, though they were not always free from taint, justice was on the whole fairly administered. They acted as Government police, procuring evidence, arresting and producing criminals, collecting taxes, and generally responding to instructions for the better preservation of law and order. With the exception of certain debauched and contumacious individuals, they suffered themselves to be guided, and proved worthy, as a general rule, of the consideration accorded to them by Her Majesty's Government, capable alike of work and responsibility requiring intelligence.

It may be supposed that a tribe of natives in actual contact and occasional conflict with civilised states, yet still prospering, possesses characteristics of no common order. This is true. The Basuto chiefs, excepting some juniors whose attempts to be despotic and licentious are epidemic and who are always to be accounted a danger, possess

in no ordinary degree the capacity for ruling and being ruled. Though powerful in numbers (40,000 is the estimate of fighting men), brave and exceedingly mobile, they are not a warlike people—that is, their habits are quiet and their ideas peaceful. When moved by any sudden impulse and united, they can be, like all coloured races, hard of reasoning and blind to persuasion. Otherwise they are content to live quiet, industrious lives, law-abiding and happy, with their magistrates and missionaries. They are simple-minded, though shrewd; fond of humour, anxious to be instructed, to educate their children, and to take on new ideas and inventions. Desire for technical education took a practical shape a few years ago, when at my suggestion the paramount chief offered a suitable site for a national industrial school, and then proceeded to collect money to build it: subscriptions varied in amount from an ox valued at £10 to threepenny bits. The total handed in to be banked, pending developments, exceeded £3000. The majority are orators with prodigious memories for records. Their ability to argue and present a case is remarkable. Proverbs and metaphors are freely introduced. Persons charged with crimes almost invariably plead “not guilty” until the evidence against them becomes too strong, when they humorously give way, asking for punishment to be inflicted without undue delay.

In conversation their language is courteous, even to flattery, by which strangers are frequently misled, experienced magistrates having continually to harden themselves against its snares. To be a criminal is not to be barred from domestic circles or fellow society; they are tolerant of each other's faults, believing that temptation and opportunity are to be blamed rather than human weakness. It is quite possible to regard them as honest; of their truthfulness little can be said: they are excellent liars; but it is done so gracefully as to avoid causing annoyance, and lying is no crime. A successful liar is reckoned to be clever.

Of savage customs, only a few relics are now to be found. Some degrading practices for young people on entering the heathen schools are decaying and no longer obligatory. Amongst the Fingoes and allied clans now forming part of the population weird dances are still kept up. A few chiefs encourage them in the belief that they tend to preserve traditions and martial ideas and to delay the advance of the white men's civilisation. When the paramount chief was invited to arrange a big dance on the occasion of the visit of Sir Alfred Milner three years ago, he remonstrated with me as to its propriety, seeming almost ashamed to identify himself with the carnival in which his own sons were the principal actors.

Brief reference has already been made to the climate, which is not incorrectly described in guidebooks as magnificent. During the summer or rainy season the heat, never excessive, is tempered by cool air with refreshing nights and mornings. Winter is cold and bracing, spring and autumn delightful; the regularity of seasons is marked. With such pleasant climatic conditions and high altitude, some disadvantages are to be expected. They are to be found in the neurotic complaints from which people of European race frequently

suffer, making it essential if possible to go to the sea at reasonable intervals. After spells of intense dryness, it is refreshing and correcting to breathe again damp sea air and smell fresh green grass.

The natives are, generally speaking, healthy; but epidemics of smallpox, typhoid, and influenza periodically occur; they are hard to combat because of the want of sanitation, for which, with the best intentions, it is difficult to make provision where natives are concerned. Malaria is almost unknown, and pulmonary complaints are nearly always traceable to those who have adopted European clothes in exchange for the older native costumes which admitted free air and afforded little protection. Sexual diseases have obtained a firm hold: though medical officers who have rendered admirable service in their free dispensaries report improvement, the hereditary nature of those diseases renders them obstinate of eradication.

Prominent amongst the features most attractive to strangers and travellers is the natural beauty of the country. Small though it be, it is cast in a picturesque mould. The enthusiasm of visitors is justified. To those who, leaving beaten tracks and taking to the wonderful ponies, face the dark mountain barriers, the outlook at first appears most discouraging. It seems almost hopeless to break through those precipitous walls; yet mysterious ways are opened. There is always a way round, and once the heights are attained, marvellous views compensate for the nerve and energy expended. The distant sight of ponies threading their way along minute paths hovering on the brink of precipices with a sheer drop of 1000 feet is a revelation to onlookers. Rarely, however, does an accident happen, and then only when the rider takes the responsibility from his horse. Once only have I witnessed a catastrophe, when an ill-balanced load twisted and disappeared with its pack animal into the abyss below. When the higher ranges of the inner mountains are reached the scenery is inexpressibly beautiful. Miles upon miles of crests, luxurious valleys opening out in all directions, rivers and streams wending their silvery way below, wild chasms, forbidding gorges—these alternate in every day's march. There are, too, some magnificent falls, especially remarkable being those called Malutsenyane, which discharge in the rainy season a gigantic volume of water. They are estimated to be 670 feet high, with a perpendicular drop apparently into the bowels of the earth. The scene below is romantic in character.

Of the rivers it may be said that they are ordinarily shallow, rapid, and clear. With the exception of the Orange or Sinqu, they are in dry weather always low. Under influence of heavy rains tearing down steep gradients they rise with extraordinary rapidity, carrying ruthlessly before them everything living or inanimate which happens to be in their course. To say that walls of water then come down, or that rivers are bank high, is no mere figure of speech. Prevailing features peculiar to Basutoland rivers are treacherous quicksands. To the ignorant traveller they can be veritable death-traps. Their existence limits movements to recognised tracks, and, of course, renders unduly circuitous the routes for wheeled transport.

The fish are disappointing. They consist of what are known as yellow and silver fish, both scaled, and barbel. They afford some sport, but are poor eating. As is commonly known to travellers, eels are not to be found in the South African rivers running from east to west, but flourish in those running the reverse way.

As regards wild game, but little now remains. Government has made an effort to preserve some eland and hartebeest still running in the vicinity of the Giant's Castle, near the steep Natal frontier. A few tigers (*Felis leopardus*) are known to live in wooded kloofs and reed-beds. Jackals and some of the smaller antelopes are found in good numbers; also partridges and mountain hares. Most delightful sport is derived from quail-shooting, which is to be had all through winter. The birds are migratory, but we never could discover whence they come or whither they go. It is comparatively easy to get twenty-five brace in an hour's shooting with pointers through Kaffir corn and mealie stubble. Amongst others who enjoyed our sport during intervals of winter operations were some officers of the Black Watch stationed as garrison of the little border Free State town of Ladybrand. It was a risky job for them riding twelve miles through country more or less occupied by the enemy.

Later on it was quite funny to see the same enthusiasts coming over to Maseru to play the royal and ancient game of golf, with a rifle in saddle-bucket on one side ready for snipers, and a set of golf clubs on the other side. Where they had looted the sticks from was a riddle.

Beyond some thick kloofs lying in folds of the mountains there are few traces of wood, and nothing worthy of the name of timber. In the higher reaches of rivers remain stretches of wide-spreading willows, with occasional wild olive-trees. The question of afforesting is engaging the attention of Government. At seats of magistrates, mission stations, and villages of some chiefs are now to be seen groves of useful trees, mostly eucalyptus and pine.

A good deal of public interest of course centres round the subject of minerals in Basutoland. Like all other unexploited areas, it is commonly supposed to be rich in precious minerals. Coal crops out in several places and is used for local consumption; but it appears to dip irregularly. There are indications of iron, copper, and tin. It has been stated that traces of gold and diamonds have been discovered. I have never discovered a location of either. Government has found it expedient to avoid active research, because of the intense national feeling against it. The Basutos believe that exploitation and discovery of precious minerals have, more than anything else, led to many of the troubles in South Africa, as well as to the political obliteration of those countries in which they were found. They know and often allude to the action of Paul Kruger, who, at one period of his life, made it a penal offence amongst his burghers to announce the existence of payable minerals in the Transvaal. Similarly it is reported of the late paramount chief Letsie that on one occasion when a man found and produced for the chief's inspection a stone believed to be of mineral value, the unfortunate creature was hurled over a precipice, in order that his secret

might perish with him. This object-lesson has to this day deterred others from searching. And so it is that both chiefs and people persistently implored Her Majesty's Government, in pathetic language, to spare their small country from prospectors, urging as their plea that they have been loyal and law-abiding, and will continue to be so. The Government has hitherto respected these prayers, and promised to take them into consideration during good behaviour. At times when a report maliciously circulated by the Boers gained ground that prospecting was to be forcibly permitted, the whole country has been convulsed with alarm amounting almost to madness. During any part of the last sixteen years it is probable that ill-advised attempts to prospect for minerals would have met with armed resistance—perhaps rebellion—so keen is the repugnance of the people to its being done. Even now a mysterious traveller prowling about in quiet places with a kodak is regarded with suspicion and ill-disguised aversion.

A paper of this sort, intended for information, would be incomplete without reference to economic subjects relating to trade, commerce, agriculture, and finance.

It will be a source of satisfaction to many present to know first that all trade is British. The traders are a superior class of men, some of the most enterprising and successful being, as usual, Scotchmen. All merchandise comes from Great Britain, including in transit a small quantity of Belgium blankets, some cheap tinkety things made in Germany, and American ploughs. The amount of dutiable goods imported each year averages about £100,000, valued at coast prices. The total imports are probably double that amount. Exports are approximately of equal value, or in good seasons more. They consist mostly of grain and wool. Basutoland is often styled the granary of South Africa. In the last good season before rinderpest and war dislocated everything, nearly 250,000 bags of grain were sent out. Under favourable circumstances this can always be repeated. The soil is fertile, the people industrious, and every householder a farmer. With a railway brought close to the border, the country could become more than ever of economic value to South Africa in the matter of food supply.

The methods of agriculture, together with too greedy a demand upon the land for continual crops, are offensive features to the scientific farmer. Yet, just as the hoe has given place to the plough, so will other improvements follow. The native can't be hurried. It may be doubted, however, whether a white population on larger holdings would produce nearly the quantity our dusky friends produce from small holdings. In the cropping seasons the country presents the appearance of one huge waving green field of wheat, millet, and mealies, leaving apparently no unemployed arable spaces.

Prominent among stock stand out the Basuto ponies, whose quality is too well known to need description. Short-legged, strong-bodied, and sure-footed, they are seldom sick or sorry, and I rejoice to say that some 15,000 at least have carried our gallant soldiers into action; and if the truth were known I dare say at critical moments many a life has been spared by their nimbleness over difficult ground.

Before rinderpest spread its ravages the land had begun to groan under the weight of vast herds of cattle. It was a nasty time when that deadly epidemic came on its terrible errand, for the superstitions of the natives were roused, and some were so unkind as to attribute the introduction of it to the Resident Commissioner, whose alleged design it was to destroy the cattle and impoverish the land. Any attempt, therefore, to enforce the stamping-out process by shooting would assuredly have resulted in war. Even the system of inoculation discovered by Dr. Koch could only be practised in the most careful way against almost a storm of savage opposition. In the end, by means of exceptional tact displayed by the magistrates, we saved over 50 per cent. of the stock belonging to such chiefs as would tolerate the experiment. At this distance of time we may regard the loss of 50 per cent. as a blessing in disguise to relieve the land of its burden.

A few words as to finance. The only direct tax is 10s. formerly, and now £1, per hut, payable by each man according to the number of his wives. In the first financial year ended 1885, the local revenue, which had perforce to be gingerly collected from those who liked to pay, was £6000. It is now £51,000. There is no public debt, and a comfortable reserve fund has been built up. Few countries are in a more happy financial condition.

I may briefly group here a few items of statistical value derived from the last year's reports. The population is about 270,000, of which 570 are Europeans. Hut tax was paid on 48,029 huts. 1,835,000 lbs. of wool and mohair were exported. There are 140 licensed traders. The number of schools is 177, of scholars 11,134. Expenditure on education, £4358. The native police is 259 strong. There is no white police force. Of 306 criminal cases, the charges were:—Theft, 103; pass laws, 99; liquor laws, 32; homicide, 2; the remainder, assorted offences. Post and telegraph systems extend through the country. Letters from England take 23 days in transit. The volume of letters, cards, papers, and parcels last year aggregated 340,000 items. Before the war good ponies were obtainable for £5. They are now up to £30. The average value of wheat to the producer is 10s. per bag of 205 lbs. The average rainfall is 35 inches.

As regards education, I can have no hesitation in expressing the conviction that it has contributed largely to the contentment, enlightenment, and prosperity of the people. Though Government exercises a watchful and controlling hand over it, particularly dealing with and encouraging technical training, the actual work is committed to and undertaken principally by various missions, whose united object is to earn and administer grants in aid. More especially have the members of the French Protestant Society—amongst whom are several Scotch men and women—lent themselves to the work of education in a wholesome way. They have been identified closely with the history and destinies of the tribe for over fifty years with credit to themselves and advantage to the country. No necessity for an expensive Education Department has yet arisen. Meanwhile the missionaries are fulfilling an important service by combining religious work with school teaching.

The indiscriminate deductions often drawn by the public from 'unfortunate mistakes of a few educated natives or Christian converts are singularly unfair; but it is quite true, as so many urge, that an educated boy does not give his attention to kettle-cooking and cattle-herding so assiduously as a raw barbarian. To give an education which is in advance of their condition is in my opinion an unfortunate mistake; for the sphere of work opened to advanced scholars is infinitely small. Nothing is more cruel than to give boys high learning and turn them adrift. They soon get discouraged and desperate. The next process is lapsing or crime—sometimes both.

The natives are practically abandoning their old religions and adopting ours. Bearing in mind that they are still in the stage of infancy, it is only remarkable that so few do err. That the influence of Christianity and education upon native character is sound, in enabling them the better to understand the meaning of honesty and to distinguish right from wrong, I profoundly believe.

In alluding to the absorbing question of liquor, I feel on common ground with many people in England and the Colonies who are rightly averse to natives getting it. By the Regulations of Basutoland, the introduction of spirituous liquor in any form is prohibited without permit, and no permit is granted to natives unless for medical quantities under medical certificate. I can hardly describe the depraved state of Basutoland when we entered it in 1884. Scarcely any villages were immune from the ravages of brandy—bad, fiery, poisonous stuff warmed up with hideous concoctions to make it tickle the throat as it was gulped down. Political work amongst the chiefs was then a risky undertaking. A magistrate on duty at a chief's village was liable to insult and violence. The people were becoming besotted. Some of the leading men, and even women, fell a prey to the poison, beggaring themselves to acquire it. In 1886 a crusade against it began. Gradually the evil was overcome, not, however, without many struggles, in one of which the present writer was near being roughly handled for spiking a barrel from which a low Boer was retailing the stuff on half-profits with the chief. The missionaries and traders lent assistance to a great effort of Government, by which combination of forces canteens were driven out headlong, leaving us to reckon with a nefarious over-border traffic which has continued to this day, though in modified degree. This traffic was carried on by low-class whites of Dutch extraction, commonly called Bijwooners, who, having no land of their own and being too lazy and indifferent to labour at respectable trades, sought to eke out existence on the profits of illicit dealing. Our efforts to gain help from the Free State Government and its landdrosts in crushing this traffic were always vain. The Free State laws were good in principle, but inoperative and imperfect. For instance, it was criminal by law to sell to a native; but since it was not punishable for a native to buy or be in possession, the canteen keeper had only to square the police to shut their eyes during the process of sale. Of evidence we produced abundance, but could never get convictions, primarily because the landdrosts were afraid of the burghers who could vote them out of office, and incidentally because the evidence of black men alone was not deemed sufficient to convict a Boer.

It is fairly certain that the Kaffir races are too prolific to be killed off by brandy-poisoning as has happened to aboriginals in other parts of the world. It is quite certain that free use of brandy is degrading and degenerating. I venture to hope that the efforts of those in England and the Colonies whose aim it is to enlist the support of Government in prohibiting sale of liquor in any form to natives will be successful.

Now that the Orange Free State has been incorporated, the evils from which Basutoland has so long suffered are at least capable of remedy. Co-operation by the natives may be looked for, because the taste for drinking spirits is of too modern growth to be seriously hereditary. It has been acquired rapidly, and when opportunity ceases to exist the craving may as rapidly disappear.

Connected in some degree with the liquor traffic is the matter of border relations between black and white, which some thinkers hold are likely to be strained in future more than in the past, in view of the feeling that the new order of things in South Africa is calculated to breed Kaffir insolence.

Heretofore the most prolific source of crime and ill-feeling was theft of stock. These thefts were frequently committed by men who were in search of liquor or used that object as an excuse for stealing expeditions. There seems some irresistible force impelling natives to steal cattle. Risk of imprisonment, lashing, and fines do not greatly deter them. Men even of responsibility, with much to lose, occasionally abandon themselves to it. Wealth in cattle and sheep is to them wealth indeed. They have not yet learned to confide in savings banks, believing, like many ignorant Boers, that any concern which takes care of your money and pays you interest for the trouble *must* be shaky. As yet, something less than one thousand only out of a population of a quarter of a million have ventured to make deposits in savings banks, which are made available at every seat of magistracy. Generally speaking, border chiefs and Boer farmers endeavoured always to be on friendly relations for mutual reasons. An informal league between them helped to depreciate the influence of Government, which in some ways was distasteful to the independent ideas of both. Boers preferred to deal directly with chiefs, ignoring British rule; and chiefs liked to enjoy the freedom of crossing the frontiers without passes, in contravention of regulations. Any farmer who paid wages honestly and did not defraud the workman at the end of his term had no difficulty in getting a requisite amount of labour, and was more immune from stealing. But the men who tried to rob the Kaffir of his earnings had a very poor time afterwards. They used to come wailing to us after having failed to get redress from the chiefs, with whom they first coquetted, but received a cold shoulder from the magistrates unless they first produced the withheld wages.

Closely allied to border relations stands the matter of native police, to which, interesting though it be, want of space forbids any lengthy allusion. The police are recruited by Government from within the tribe, by selection as far as practicable from each chief's ward, by which means every village and person becomes known and traceable in the magistrate's court. The force is most economical, each recruit receiving

£2 a month and providing his own horse and food. The men are contented and happy, performing excellent service without display. It is no rare thing for a single policeman with a cane in his hand to arrest and lead a string of law-breakers quietly to the magistrate. Controlled by officers whom they respect and by whom they are known, they will be led anywhere and do anything in reason with intelligence. Their patrolage along the border during the first year of this war aggregated 100,000 miles. As a recruiting ground for permanent native forces, it may be of value. Whether the men would agree to serve beyond sea there has never been occasion yet to inquire.

So many engaging topics present themselves that my embarrassment has been to know which to pass over. Still I hope to have travelled over most of the profitable ground, and may be allowed to end this paper with some general conclusions.

It would be idle to pretend that a country built upon violence, ruled despotically by a savage chief for years, surrounded by enemies, frequently at war, and governed intermittently at the caprice of political parties, could settle into a prolonged state of peace without struggles, and expenditure of thought and energy, on the part of those responsible for its affairs.

Standing out of course pre-eminently in supreme prominence is the Colonial Office in England, which, though at times it must have been perplexed when dangers of war and threatened complications jostled each other along the road to Downing Street, still stuck gamely to the child of its creation—the only one of its genus in South Africa. The new Basutoland was a courageous experiment, requiring for success, patience, sympathy, and consistency. After a long and continuous experience in the country, helping to work out its destiny, I may be allowed to attest from knowledge how well and truly patience, sympathy, and consistency were extended to us by the Colonial Office. Many times when sections of the public were screaming for what was called “subjection of the Basutos,” those to whom we were responsible declined to be enchanted, hoping and believing there was some way of combating grave difficulties without recourse to methods of assault and battery. No doubt the risks of an expensive war were always in the balance. Yet it has always been apparent that the policy was governed by high principle and determination not to shrink from the experiment designedly undertaken.

No clearer illustration is needed of the influence over savages to be gained by firm consistency than the present war has afforded. We may lay aside any hopeful ideas that untutored nations love us in the ordinary sense. I cannot cherish the belief that any natives like to be forced to change their wild habits and customs, which are more attractive to them and offer lines of easier resistance. What we have to look for in them is respect—not the respect maintained by drumming and thrashing—but in a higher sense that which follows from fair and just treatment. Having forced them to abandon barbarism we are responsible for their guidance.

When the present war broke out, the Basutos, who were regarded

with some awe by other tribes, pledged their opinion and belief that the armies of the great Queen would soon overcome those who had recklessly declared war. It was then that they offered themselves, claiming the privilege as loyal servants to be allowed to fight alongside the Queen's soldiers. I need not say more than that all such propositions met with unqualified disapproval and refusal. It was with reluctance that we consented to mobilise forces for home defence when Maseru was threatened and demonstrations elsewhere became necessary. It is so easy to set savage forces in motion and so hard to control them afterwards. As unarmed scouts and purveyors of intelligence from all sides for which the army was so hungry they could fairly be employed and performed excellent service.

At the siege of Wepener we had 7000 Basutos almost alongside the Boers who were investing it for several days. They did want to cut in, no doubt, but remained under perfect discipline, admiring the pluck of our garrison, and cheering when our shells found a good target.

Similarly when other British garrisons were surrounded, or fighting raged along the river border, our people displayed the keenest anxiety, affording us from different points of view valuable information of the enemy's movements, which we were able to place rapidly at disposal of the commander-in-chief and generals in command of local operations. And if small bodies of our troops, or refugees, were cut off, they often plunged into the river and made for the nearest native village, where they were hospitably treated and escorted to one of our nearest magistrates.

But there came dark days when the outlook was of the gloomiest; the gloom was not confined to England. It entered deep into the souls of the natives, who feared that Dutch ascendancy was coming and that a day of reckoning would follow for their loyalty. Very sound reasons existed for those fears. No exception could be taken to them. Words were of little avail; it was a moment rather for silence and dogged confidence. If the tide had not soon turned it is doubtful what might have happened. Had fear gained the mastery and been followed by impulse, those passions might have been let loose which British officers had been set the task of curbing. Happily at Paardeberg the tide turned strongly, and with it partially vanished the odious risk of native intervention. The subject furnishes a story of great interest into which I cannot now enter. But I am glad of this public opportunity to pay a tribute to those whose united efforts and influence held effective sway at a critical time. I refer to the magistrates in Basutoland. Gentlemen of birth and education, some home born, some Colonial, they combined, as stated in my Annual Report, judicious energy with tact, and discharged a great trust with deserving and signal success.

And this leads me, without being rash enough to prophesy, to some aspects of the future, the enduring success of which depends so much upon continuity of administration.

Rapid improvements are not to be looked for; they are rather to be deprecated. Comparisons are better sought after ten years than one, and then simple movements may be traced. Though the social condition

of the Basutos, according to European ideas, leaves much to be desired, any attempt to introduce radical changes would probably defeat its object and be interpreted as a design to abolish their cherished customs and institutions, now more harmless than vicious. Lurking behind the veneer to which the wearing of smart clothes gives an appearance of civilisation there is a lingering superstition that will take generations to eradicate. The people have in fifty years emerged from savagery and are now on the threshold—not of civilisation but of enlightenment. There they had best dwell for a time.

Meanwhile, are they fulfilling any definite purposes of betterment to themselves and of benefit to the dominion? They certainly are. First, as producers of a large food supply, and secondly, as a source of personal contribution to the great labour market. The advantages are of course mutual. In published returns for the year before the war it may be seen that, out of an adult population of 50,000 men, 37,000 voluntarily went away in search of labour at mines, farms, or domestic service. The figures are almost eloquent of enterprise and industry.

The land question in Basutoland a few years ago began to assume the proportions of a problem. The soil was then nearly all taken up by permanent occupiers; the surplus population was getting squeezed out. Demand for labour offered a solution when the Transvaal goldfields were discovered and changed the order of South African life. Into the genesis of the desire by natives to work, the methods by which that desire may be stimulated, and the kindred question of the future labour supply, it is not expedient in this paper to enter. Wide issues depend upon it in which Basutoland becomes but a fragment.

In taking leave of the Basutos, let me recall what has often been said of them, viz., that they are their own worst enemies. The ungovernable ambition of wild young chiefs, together with tribal disputes and jealousies, which have so many times plunged them into disorder, may do so again; for their family animosities are keen, and the present paramount chief owes his position absolutely to the moral support of Government against the intrigues of his relations. He and his sons are inclined to forget from whom that support, and the power it conferred, were derived. Though prone to drink spirits freely if obtainable, and to make deceit a part of his daily life, he has ability to deal with work in a businesslike way, and unusual resolution in acting upon orders and advice essential to the safety and welfare of the tribe.

His eldest son and heir is of poor intellect with decidedly vicious tendencies. The history of intrigues and various crises arising from them in recent years would afford materials for an exciting story. The serious point is that repeated tumults in a protected territory cannot of course be tolerated, because of their menace to the common peace. It is from that danger they have most to fear as a cause for withdrawing the privileges His Majesty's Government has hitherto felt at liberty to extend to them.