CHAPTER IX

THROUGH REACTION TO UNION

Grounds for hopefulness. Compared with the actual condition of things which Lord Milner left behind him in 1905, and still more when compared with the political and economic development which could reasonably have been expected from a wise continuity of policy, the state of South Africa at the end of 1907 may well have seemed one of disastrous retrogression, and may well have given occasion to the gloomiest forebodings. Yet even at that moment the wider perspective of history not only afforded a large measure of consolation for the present, but also justified a reasonable degree of hopefulness for the future. Serious as was the loss judged only by the immediate standard of 1905, it was yet, after all, but little compared with the gain that could still be reckoned by the standard of all the past years—the standard of the years of depression which followed Majuba, the standard of those anxious months of 1899 when peace and war still hung in the balance. The British flag in the new colonies, political equality for both white races, an efficient and honest administration—the main objects for which the war was fought—these as yet remained unaffected by the reaction. It is true there was the fear that, the balance of political power once shifted, all the work achieved would gradually be undone, the standard of efficiency lowered, political equality nullified by a permanent Boer ascendancy, the British flag reduced to a meaningless symbol. Yet here again the wider perspective might suggest a doubt whether the reaction, either in England or in South Africa, could truly be regarded as the beginning of a continuous downward movement. The progress of British institutions and ideas in
South Africa, the cause of Imperial unity, had more than once in the past asserted themselves over the most violent and apparently disastrous fluctuations. In the enfranchisement of the British inhabitants of the Transvaal, in the creation of a high standard of government, they now possessed a better foundation and a greater source of strength than at any previous period. Why should they not assert themselves again? Much ground had been lost, unnecessarily and unwisely abandoned it might be. But with a good heart and good fortune, the lost ground might yet be regained, and progress be resumed once more at the point where it had been checked.

The event has justified the more hopeful view. Looking back, even though it be only over a few months, the reaction begins to assume its truer dimensions in relation to the progress achieved. Looking forward, the signs of recovery, and even of new progress, which have already shown themselves warrant a reasoned confidence in the future. However disastrous the political revolution in South Africa may have seemed at the moment, the main results of the war and of the reconstruction remained unaffected by it. The acceptance of the British flag by the stubborn burghers at Vereeniging had been the recognition of a moral as well as of a merely physical conquest. That conquest was confirmed in countless direct or subtle ways during the years that followed. The Boers became accustomed to their position within the Empire, familiar with its constitutional framework, and responsive to the attraction of its party system. The very skill with which the Boer leaders made use of British divisions both in South Africa and in England in order to strengthen their political influence in local affairs committed them all the more deeply to the acceptance of the general situation. And that acceptance became something more than mere acquiescence when their Liberal sympathizers came into office, and the once dreaded and hated Imperial factor became an active ally whose intervention helped them to triumph over their local British opponents. The motives which inspired the grant of self-government may have contained but little trace of the generous intuition and far-seeing
statesmanship sometimes claimed for the Liberal policy. It would be a mistake to minimize the risks run, or to ignore the actual unfortunate consequences of the whole policy of violent interference with the political and economic development of the new colonies. But it would be no less a mistake to leave out of account the gain involved in the speedier and fuller reconciliation of the Boers to the main conclusions of the war. That reconciliation would, no doubt, have come equally in time as the result of a more gradual progress towards complete political liberty. Still, the fact remains that it did come earlier and more spontaneously in response to the confidence shown.

Moreover, if true statesmanship and wise magnanimity played but little part in determining the grant of unfettered power to the Boers, the exercise of that power showed that in the Boer leaders the undeserved good fortune of the British Empire had found men capable of displaying those qualities in no small measure. From the first Louis Botha had accepted loyally and unreservedly the verdict of the war. Even as an irresponsible party leader he had rarely failed to draw a limit between the license which he claimed as a critic of the administration and the obligations which he considered involved in his acceptance of British sovereignty. Once in office he let the partizan sink into the background, and gave evidence of a sagacity and breadth of view which few had suspected. The Boer general, the organizer of Het Volk, had become a minister of the British Crown, conscious not only of his power, but of his responsibility. It was a recognition of that responsibility which, within a few weeks of his taking office, decided him to take part in the Imperial Conference which assembled in April, 1907. By the London populace none of the Prime Ministers present was received with such demonstrative enthusiasm as the victor of Colenso and Spion Kop, while the moderation, tact, and brevity of his public utterances won the favour even of the most critical. At the Conference itself his part was, in the main, that of a watcher and student. But his occasional interventions were to the point, and on such a subject as Imperial defence he could speak with a peculiar knowledge. From that assembly
he can hardly have failed to carry back a profound impression of the greatness of the community of free states into which he and his countrymen had entered, or to realize, from an example like that of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, how high was the position in the councils of the Empire to which men of other blood than British could hope to aspire. And if to General Botha the British Empire was a conception gradually to be realized, he had in Mr. Smuts a colleague to whom the working of British institutions was familiar from the outset. A British subject by birth, the son of a member of Parliament in a British Colony, educated at Cambridge, the ex-State Attorney and guerilla leader could not but feel at home in his new position as a British Minister. Invaluable as he was to his leader in debate, his counsel and information can have been no less valuable on all constitutional issues. In the history of South Africa during the last two years the dominant factor has been the combination between these two men: the keen-witted, resourceful, imaginative young Afrikander lawyer, and the shrewd, broad-minded Boer general. They have exercised their moderating influence over the reaction, not only in the Transvaal, but in the Orange River Colony, and even at the Cape. And it is in no small degree due to them that South Africa is settling down to a normal position in the Empire, a position less satisfactory, no doubt, in certain respects than it would have been if British policy had shown a wise consistency throughout, but infinitely more satisfactory than it well might have been if the power entrusted so recklessly had been exercised in an equally reckless and bitter spirit.

But if the main achievement of the war, the definite incorporation of the Boer Republics in the Imperial system, remained unaffected by the late reaction, the same was no less true of the work of reconstruction. The retrenchment of British officials which followed the advent of the Boers to power involved many instances of hardship to individuals.*

* In the Transvaal some retrenchment was undoubtedly warranted as the pressure of work in various departments diminished. A special commissioner, Mr. Marris, of the Indian Civil Service, had been appointed to consider the question before the grant of self-government, and in the majority of cases, though not in all, the reductions were based on his
But it did not change the essential character of the administration. However freely Botha and his colleagues had denounced the Crown Colony administration, they were wise enough to realize the value of a good instrument once it was in their hands. They had no desire to go back to the dishonesty and inefficiency of the old days, or to fill up the departments of state with the discarded hangers-on of Krugerism. Indeed, but for the determined pressure of the "back-veld" members, and for the failure of the British Government to make even the least provision for those who had served it, it is doubtful whether the changes would to any serious extent have gone beyond such reductions as were financially inevitable, and would have taken place in any case. As it was, the changes were greatest in the police and in local administration. But the admirable machinery of justice, the sound finance, the efficient railway administration, the scientific supervision of agriculture—the whole Milner system, in fact—went on substantially unchanged. After the first period of uncertainty and alarm, the Civil Service rapidly recovered the normal influence which any well organized and capable civil service exercises over its political chiefs, and gradually established with them those relations of mutual loyalty which are so marked a feature of the British system. The wise example set by the Transvaal undoubtedly exercised its influence on the Orange River Colony, and even there the changes, many of them regrettable in themselves, have not been sufficient to destroy the main features of the reconstruction.

In many respects, indeed, the work of reconstruction has only begun to bear its fruits since the change of government. It is only in the last two years that the scientific researches of the Transvaal Agricultural Department have passed the experimental stage and begun to yield practical results. These...
results in their turn would have been of comparatively little commercial value but for the linking up of veld and town by the completion of the Milner railway programme. The intense industrial and commercial depression of the last two years in South Africa has been to some extent compensated by a genuine agricultural revival, the mere beginnings of a great development to follow. The foundations of that development were laid by Milner and Jameson. But their successors have continued the work in the same spirit. And if the policy of land settlement has been discontinued by the British Government, the increasing prosperity of agriculture is gradually bringing independent British settlers on to the land, and thus helping to break down that isolation of the two white races which has underlain so much of the difficulties of the past.

Even the industrial situation has passed the worst stage of depression and shows signs of a steady recovery. The unsympathetic and at first almost hostile attitude of the new Government towards the mining industry gradually gave way to a friendlier spirit as they were brought into closer contact with the actual problems, and by degrees the confidence of the leaders of the industry and even of the investing public began to revive. The production of the gold mines has continuously increased till in 1908 it only fell short by a few pounds of £30,000,000. It is, unfortunately, true that the recovery has to a large extent been due to the general stagnation all over South Africa, to depression in the diamond industry, and to the completion of the public works and railway programme, all of which circumstances released large numbers of native labourers to take the place of the Chinese as their contracts expired. The hopes of a

* No small share of the credit for the establishment of better relations between the Transvaal Government and the mining industry, and so between the Boer and British leaders, is due to Mr. Lionel Phillips, who devoted himself with great single-mindedness to this task throughout the early period of the reaction when racial and party feeling were still at their height.

† In December, 1908, over 150,000 natives, 12,000 Chinese, and 18,600 whites were at work on the Rand, as compared with 94,000 natives, 54,000 Chinese, and 17,000 whites in January, 1907.
really great expansion on the Rand and of the building up of other industries, which Milner had always before him, and which have begun to capture the imagination of the new rulers of the Transvaal, may well find themselves once again seriously checked by the difficulties of the labour question. South African statesmen may yet come to regret that they cut themselves off from an assured and abundant source of unskilled coloured labour before the conditions were sufficiently ripe for an attempt to shift the existing framework of industry to any large extent on to a white basis. When they come to be as eager to build as Milner was, they may yet wish that the useful, if unattractive, scaffolding to which he was compelled to take recourse, had not been removed so prematurely. Still, even so, progress, though possibly hampered, will nevertheless continue. Even the depression itself has not been without its good effects in compelling improved methods and a great reduction in working costs, involving not only better profits, but adding enormously to the extent of the reef worth mining and prolonging the life of the mines. The British population has stopped dribbling away from the Transvaal, and the tide already shows signs of turning.

When that tide sets back the new-comers will automatically and of right receive their share of political power. The old distinction between Boer master and British helot exists no longer. That festering sore was cut out of the body politic of South Africa by the clean surgery of war. The principle of equal rights, asserted by the Uitlanders before the war, confirmed by the Lyttelton constitution, and endorsed in principle, though not consistently applied, in the final grant of self-government, exercised its influence over the situation in the Transvaal from the very first. Due credit has been given, and deservedly given, to Botha and his colleagues for their moderation and statesmanship. But it is also essential to bear in mind that the necessity of enlisting the support of a large section of the British voters contributed in no small degree to steadying their policy both before and after the elections, and that their administrative and legislative performances might have been far less satis-
factory but for the persistent and effective criticism of an opposition weak in numbers but strong in conviction and practical experience. From the moment the Transvaal Assembly met, the Progressives showed that they had no intention of being a negligible quantity, and it was not long before Botha discovered that, on many questions at least, he could not afford to disregard their interests or their wishes. Even without any substantial addition to the British element in South Africa that element is bound to assert itself with increasing effectiveness in the future. The late reaction no more represents the normal balance of political forces or the normal tendency of political development in South Africa than in England. There is one great difference, indeed, between the two cases. The Liberals in England, like the Bourbons, seem, so far at least, to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. The Boer leaders in South Africa have learnt much and wisely forgotten more. They have accepted many of the principles against which they once contended, and in doing so have strengthened their position and prolonged their tenure of power. Yet, sooner or later—far sooner, perhaps, than any one could have thought possible even a few months ago—the men of British birth to whom those principles embody a living faith for which they have fought and striven, will share that power with them. New issues have already sprung up to obliterate the sharp edge of the racial division. As the great struggle of the past recedes into the background the intense racial cohesion of the Dutch will weaken, as surely, though not, perhaps, as rapidly as the cohesion of the British weakened after the assertion of Imperial supremacy by the surrender of Vereeniging.

Equal rights under the British flag, honest and efficient government and material progress, these were the abiding achievements of the war and of the reconstruction. Yet, in the eyes of those whose courage and whose efforts secured them, they were but the necessary groundwork for a nobler superstructure. The creation of a united South African nation, taking its place as an equal among the free nations of the Empire, that was the goal which from the outset
Chamberlain and Milner kept steadily before them. Without haste and without rest they pressed towards it, content to lay the foundations well and truly, less concerned whether the more imposing superstructure should stand to their credit or to that of their successors. When Milner left South Africa, union was unachieved, indeed, but it was already in full view. The revolution which followed no doubt affected the conditions under which union could come about. But it created no fresh impediment to union. As an ideal, union had been looked forward to by Dutch no less than by British. Fifty years before, the Free State had approached Sir George Grey with a proposal for union which the Home Government in its unwisdom rejected. Since then, it is true, the Dutch had come to dream of a union under the Republican flag and on the basis of Afrikander domination. But the conflict over the flag and over the political foundation once removed, the aspiration for union remained common to both parties. To both the war had brought a wider outlook and an intenser devotion to the land whose possession had been so stubbornly contested. Meanwhile the internal boundaries of South Africa had lost all real significance and only their practical inconvenience remained. The native rising in Natal emphasized the need for a common native policy. Customs and railway agreements, temporarily secured by Milner's personal influence, threatened to break down and end in acute political conflict and in general economic disorganization. The severity of the commercial depression itself increased the dread of so disastrous a result, and brought home to the grumbling taxpayer the extravagance of a multiplicity of governments in a single small community.

Yet the vague stirrings of discontent with the existing situation might by themselves have availed little against the deep-rooted particularism of South Africa. What was needed was some driving and inspiring force to convert aimless aspirations into definite action and empty professions into a true South African patriotism. Such a force Milner had in part supplied himself. But the stern duty of clearing the ground for union had inevitably severed him from the Dutch,
THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF SELBORNE, G.C.M.G.
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR S. AFRICA AND GOVERNOR OF THE TRANSVAAL.
MARCH 1906.
while the immense and urgent task of laying a true foundation in the new colonies necessarily excluded the devotion of time and energy to the actual work of the further stage. But Milner did not disappear from South Africa without leaving heirs to his policy, men imbued with his conceptions and inspired by his creative spirit, but freed from his burdens and his difficulties, and ready to take up the work where he had left it. Mention has been made before of Milner’s band of young Oxford men whose brains and energy played so large a part in the work of reconstruction. When the revolution came some of them stayed on in the administration, a few left South Africa, others determined to remain in the country, and as private citizens to give themselves to its service. To work for the union of South Africa was one of the most natural and obvious tasks before them. That it would have enlisted a great part of their energies in any case is probable. Their inclination was confirmed and their interest concentrated by one of those events which sometimes influence the course of history as profoundly as the decisions of statesmen or soldiers—the publication of a book. Appearing early in 1906, at the very moment when the triumph of reaction seemed most complete in England, Mr. Oliver’s “Alexander Hamilton” sounded a note of fresh inspiration and renewed courage to Englishmen who still believed in constructive statesmanship and in Imperial unity. To the young men in South Africa its account of the compacting of American union, in circumstances so similar to those around them, was no mere narrative with a moral, but a direct command.

In the course of 1906 the active campaign for South African Union may be said to have begun with private discussions got up by Mr. Curtis, whose part in the organization of municipal life in the Transvaal has been described in a previous chapter. These gradually developed into an informal committee, which comprised Mr. Duncan, the Colonial Secretary, and other members of the “Kindergarten.” A comprehensive and forcible statement of the case for union, in the main the handiwork of Mr. Curtis, was drawn up. The next step was to give authority to its


VOL. VI.
conclusions, and to secure its favourable reception. At an early stage in the work the leading men in South Africa on both sides had been drawn into consultation. In the Transvaal the effort to grapple with the question of union met with support, not only from the Progressive leaders, but also from Mr. Smuts, who throughout proved one of the keenest, as he certainly was one of the ablest and most influential workers in the cause. In Cape Colony, Dr. Jameson and Mr. F. S. Malan, editor of Ons Land, and parliamentary leader of the Bond, were equally well-disposed and anxious to further the movement. But there was no one more deeply impressed by the disadvantages and dangers of the existing disunion, or more convinced of the desirability of union, both for its own sake and in order to draw the minds of South Africans away from the narrower racial struggle to the conception of a wider national life, than Lord Selborne. Fully recognizing that union could only come as the expression of the deliberate wish of the statesmen and of the people of South Africa, Lord Selborne wisely determined to keep in the background as far as possible throughout, and to avoid everything that might look like an attempt at management or dictation. But he also realized that there was one thing which, in his position as High Commissioner, he could do more effectively than anyone else, without transgressing the limits of non-interference which he had set himself. And that was to call the attention of South Africa to the problem. With this purpose in view he was prepared to undertake the responsibility of adopting the statement prepared by Curtis's committee, and of incorporating it in a memorandum of his own. The approach of a conference to deal with the interminable squabble over railway rates gave Jameson a pretext for inviting an expression of opinion from the High Commissioner on the whole subject of the mutual relations of the British Colonies in South Africa. In July, 1907, Lord Selborne's memorandum appeared, and created a profound impression. He had secured his object and had made union a question of practical politics.

For the next twelve months, indeed, the general revolu-
tion in the several colonies threw the question into the background in the public mind. But the time was used to the full by Curtis and his allies. The original committee, now considerably expanded, devoted itself to clearing the ground by a close study of all the problems involved and by presenting the result of their researches to the public. An exhaustive account of the whole machinery of government in the various South African colonies, and of the issues involved, was brought out in successive instalments in the course of 1907–1908 under the title "The Government of South Africa." Another volume, "The Framework of Union," embodied an account of the genesis and working of various federal constitutions.* Together with the original memorandum these publications had an enormous influence, and largely determined, not merely the movement for union, but the actual provisions of the constitution subsequently drafted. At the same time a private campaign of interviews and discussions was carried on all over South Africa, and Closer Union societies were organized in all the leading centres. The men who count for political purposes in South Africa are but a handful at the best, and few of these held out long against Curtis's buoyant and infectious enthusiasm, or against the steady influence exercised by the political leaders on both sides in the Transvaal and in Cape Colony. The test of the progress made came in May, 1908, when an Inter-Colonial Conference on Customs and Railways, assembled at Pretoria, faced with the prospect of an absolute breakdown of the existing arrangements, frankly declared the problem before them insoluble without political union, and passed resolutions affirming the principle of union and pledging the governments concerned to obtain the assent of their parliaments to the appointment of delegates to a National Convention at which a constitution for a united South Africa should be drawn up.

From that moment South Africa lost all interest in every other question but union. But South Africa was by no means in the dark. The Union campaign, 1907–8. The Pretoria Conference declares for union, May, 1908.

* The author of this was Mr. B. K. Long, a member of the Cape Assembly. The considerable expenditure involved in these publications was defrayed by the generosity of Mr. A. Bailey and other sympathizers.
means clear as to what form of union was preferable, or even convinced as yet that immediate union was desirable at all. Among the Boers in the Transvaal local protectionism was clamouring for the break up even of the existing customs union and for a return to the old policy of isolation, and there were many on the Rand who were perfectly prepared to fall in with this as long as they could get cheap freights from Delagoa Bay. Among the British element all over South Africa there was a widespread and not unnatural suspicion that the Afrikander governments at that moment in power meant to rush through union with no other motive than to buttress up their present predominance for all time. The number of delegates to the Convention allotted to the opposition in the different colonies seemed to suggest an intention of conducting affairs on strict party lines. Some understanding on the lines to be followed at the Convention, and on the political basis of the future union, was essential if the British element was to take any part in it. But except in the Transvaal, no attempt to arrive at such an understanding seems to have been made. At the beginning of September, within six weeks of the meeting of the Convention, Sir P. FitzPatrick approached General Botha and his colleagues and urged the advisability of a policy of absolute unreserve between the Transvaal delegates, and the desirability of deciding on a common policy before going to the Convention. Botha agreed, and a few days later the leaders on both sides met to discuss the situation. From the start FitzPatrick and his Progressive colleagues made it quite clear that unless the union were based on the principle of "equal rights," including the adoption of the voters' basis, they would consider it their duty to prevent it by every means in their power. Botha and Smuts had drafted a proposal on a population basis. But they realized that without the cooperation of the British delegates the Convention would inevitably end in failure. Possibly, too, the fact that the voters' basis would give the Transvaal a larger number of seats may not have been without its influence upon them. In any case they fell into line, and on that and every other important issue complete agreement was arrived at between them and their
Progressive colleagues before the Convention assembled. Meanwhile, Smuts, fully alive to the enormous advantage possessed by the man who is armed with a definite detailed plan over people whose minds have not been made up, had set to work with Duncan and two or three of the younger men to draft a constitution, largely based on the previous labours of Curtis’s committee. The result was that while every other colony sent to the Convention a certain number of individuals with general ideas on the subject of union, the Transvaal delegates went down as a solid body, not only agreed on their general policy, but with a complete South African constitution in their pockets—a constitution which, in its main features at least, they succeeded in carrying through the Convention.

The Convention met at Durban on October 12. It was a purely parliamentary convention, composed of representatives of the government and opposition in each colony. The original moving spirits of the agitation for union were not directly represented. But two of them, Mr. Duncan and the Hon. R. H. Brand, played a most important part, as advisers to the Transvaal delegation, in the actual framing of the draft constitution, while Curtis and some of the others were already busy organizing opinion all over South Africa in readiness for the result of the deliberations of the Convention. There were thirty-three members, twelve from Cape Colony, eight from the Transvaal, five each from the Orange River Colony and Natal, and three from Rhodesia. It was, however, generally understood that no immediate inclusion of any part of the Chartered Company’s territories was in contemplation. The High Commissioner was not invited to preside, as at previous Inter-Colonial Conferences. But his advice and guidance were throughout at the disposal of the Convention, and his help was freely called upon in the framing of that part of the constitution which dealt with the eventual assumption of authority by a united South Africa over the native protectorates. The other South African Governors were also freely drawn into consultation. As its president the Convention selected Sir H. de Villiers, Chief Justice of Cape Colony. As a sign of the interest
and good-will of the British Government, a cruiser squadron under Admiral Sir Percy Scott was sent out to attend the opening of the Convention. It was not the first time that its commander had hurried to Durban in view of an anticipated visit from General Botha and his colleagues. But the circumstances had changed since the days when the guns of the Terrible were hurriedly unshipped and mounted for the defence of the Berea. After a short adjournment in November the Convention reassembled in the cooler climate of Cape Town and sat till February. The proceedings throughout were kept absolutely secret and, except for a few rumours, practically nothing was known to the outside world till the publication of the complete text of the draft constitution on February 9.

To attempt to give any account of the work and achievement of the Convention would be to travel beyond the scope of the present work. It is only necessary here to dwell on a few points. The most striking and significant feature was the remarkable absence of all racial or political animosity. That men who had faced each other in the field but a few years ago, who had only just come through a series of bitter elections contested largely on racial lines, should be able to confer at all was a triumph of good sense. That within a few weeks many of them should become intimate friends, as they did, is little short of marvellous. The discussions, though keenly contested, were throughout inspired by a common desire to secure a permanent settlement. On few important points were divisions actually taken, and in most cases some workable compromise was found and unanimity reached by sheer force of argument and friendly persuasion. The other most striking feature was the way in which the Transvaal delegation dominated the Convention by its ability, its power of cooperation and the completeness of its preparations. Of individuals perhaps half-a-dozen stood out above the rest. Foremost on the British side was Jameson,

* See vol. ii., pp. 282, 302. A strong detachment from the ships was on this occasion sent up to Johannesburg and Pretoria, where it was received with immense enthusiasm, and helped to remind the people of the Transvaal of the vital interest of South Africa in British sea power.
tactful and conciliatory, yet always intervening with decisive effect at the critical moment. With him stood Farrar and FitzPatrick, the former keen, persistent and businesslike, the latter large-hearted and sympathetic, but unshakable on the one vital issue of equal rights. Among the Boers Botha and Smuts naturally played the leading part, Smuts in virtue of his industry and unrivalled knowledge of detail, Botha by his shrewd good sense and remarkable personal influence over the delegates. But no single figure at the Convention was so impressive as that of ex-President Steyn, half-blind and half-paralysed by the privations and exposure of the war, but bringing to the work of union and reconciliation that same intense moral exaltation which for so long sustained the stubborn struggle for republican independence.

Between Boers and British two main questions were at issue: equal rights and the position of the Dutch language. By concentrating all their determination on the former the British, loyally supported by Botha and Smuts, secured a striking victory. The draft constitution embodies not only a division of seats in proportion to the adult male white population,* and automatic redistribution every five years, but emphasizes the principle of equal rights still further by the adoption throughout all elections of the method of proportional representation.† That method had been vainly urged by Milner four years earlier; it remained for his young men to convert South African statesmen to its merits. In return the British agreed to the absolute official equality of the English and Dutch languages, a concession to Boer sentiment the practical results of which will depend entirely upon the spirit in which it is made use of.

No such reciprocal concession was possible on the question of the place of the native in the constitution. For Cape Colony it was impossible to go back on the grant of the franchise to the qualified native. The representatives of the other colonies could make no concession, however slight, to the principle of a coloured franchise. The only thing was to

* With a margin of fifteen per cent. either way. The actual delimitation is to be made by a judicial commission.
† I.e., the Hare system of the single transferable vote.
leave the franchise unchanged in each province till, at some future time, a united South Africa should have fully studied the question from a national, and not a provincial point of view, and should have arrived at a common native policy.

The ground thus cleared, the next problem was the nature of the constitutional framework to be built upon it. What were to be the boundaries between the powers of the new central authority and those of its constituent states? Was Australia, with its loose federation, or Canada, with its strictly defined provincial powers and strong national executive, to supply the model? Here, again, the dominant factor was the power of an idea, one of the many fruitful ideas thrown out by Milner in private conversation to take strong root in the imagination of South Africans. Everyone had always spoken of federation as the goal. "But why stop at federation," Milner had asked, "why saddle a country with barely a million white people and no natural divisions with the complicated machinery of a federal constitution? Why not simply unify South Africa as New Zealand or the United Kingdom was unified?" From the first the little inner circle of workers for union aimed at unification. In the Transvaal they had, before the end of 1907, secured the unqualified support of Botha and Smuts as well as the approval of the Progressive leaders. The one idea in Smuts's mind throughout was to secure a constitution as near as possible to that of the United Kingdom. But when the Convention met, the advocates of unification still had a hard battle to fight. Natal was solidly opposed. The Orange River Colony remained doubtful. Cape Colony was divided. In the end by sheer argument and determination unification carried the day. In the draft constitution all powers are vested in the Government of South Africa. The existing colonies are retained only as provinces, exercising such functions of local government as the central government may assign to them. The constitution is thus not only effectively centralized, but, like that of the United Kingdom, absolutely flexible. Except for certain specific clauses such as those dealing with the native franchise or the dual language, for the alteration of which a two-thirds majority of both Houses
sitting together is required, all other features of the constitution may be repealed or altered at the unfettered discretion of the South African Parliament.

The first House of Assembly is to consist of 121 members, namely 51 from Cape Colony, 36 from the Transvaal, and 17 each from Natal and the Orange River Colony, henceforward, at Dr. Jameson's suggestion, to be called the Orange Free State Province. These numbers may be increased, as the result of the growth of population, to 150. After that the total number of seats will remain fixed, but the seats allotted to each province will be determined by its proportion of adult male whites. The proposal for the constitution of the Upper House or Senate is novel and interesting. The two Houses of each constituent colony, in the first instance, and afterwards the members of the Provincial Council and the members of the Assembly for the province, sitting together, are by proportional representation to elect eight senators. Another eight are to be nominated by the Government of the day, four of them by reason of their special knowledge of native affairs. The senators are to be appointed for ten years and vacancies are to be filled by the Provincial Councils. Parliament may, however, at the end of the first ten years decide on a new method of constituting the Upper House. Provision is made for a joint sitting of both Houses in case of the rejection of a Bill by the Senate at two sessions, or in the same session in the case of a money Bill. The Provincial Councils are to be chosen by the same constituencies and on the same system as the Assembly. Their limited executive functions are to be carried on by an Executive Committee of from three to five members, elected from the members by proportional representation, together with the Administrator appointed by the central Government. The titles "Administrator" and "Executive Committee," and the peculiar composition of the latter, clearly indicate both the modest scope of the provincial powers, and the desire to exclude the local administration from the field of active party politics. A schedule attached to the Constitution provides

* No province is, however, to have its original representation reduced before the expiration of at least ten years.
for the future administration of the native protectorates, if transferred to the South African Government, by the Prime Minister, assisted by a Commission of three appointed for ten years and only removable upon an address by both Houses. By this and other provisions every reasonable precaution has been taken against the danger of rash and ill-considered parliamentary interference. The same anxiety to lessen the dangerous influence of political motives in spheres where that influence can only be disadvantageous, is shown in the provisions for the creation of a permanent Public Service Commission, and of a permanent administrative board, with a minister as chairman, in control of all railways, ports, and harbours, and effectively secured by its constitution and regulations against parliamentary pressure.

One question at the last moment threatened to wreck the whole work of the Convention—the question of the capital. Cape Town could claim its unique beauty, its pleasant climate, its historic associations, its position as the gateway of South Africa. Pretoria insisted on its more central position, especially in view of the subsequent inclusion of Rhodesia. Neither side would give way. But even here a compromise was discovered. Pretoria was made the seat of Government and Cape Town the seat of the Legislature, Bloemfontein being consoled with the possession of the Court of Appeal. South Africans travel readily, and all dwellers on the high veld welcome an occasional change to sea level. But experience alone can test the feasibility of such an arrangement.

As a pure piece of constitution-making the work of the Convention is sufficiently remarkable. Only men of exceptional ability and open-mindedness could have devised and accepted a constitution so original, so flexible, and of such bold simplicity. But it is far more remarkable as an achievement of statesmanship. When the Convention met the cleavage between the two camps—but lately in arms—which divided South Africa seemed as deep as ever, the differences of view as irreconcilable. The Convention has dispelled that view. The cleavage still exists and will long exist. But the Convention has made manifest the existence of a common
patriotism, transcending all differences, whose strength few had ventured to suspect. It has shown the Boers, for the sake of that patriotism, accepting all the principles against which they had fought so long. It has shown the British, for the sake of that same patriotism, placing an absolute and unqualified trust in their old adversaries. Upon that achievement there can be no going back, even if the constitution should fail of acceptance from the South African Parliaments. But it is hard to believe in the possibility of failure, hard to believe that South Africans can turn their backs on the glorious vision of a full national life, and face once more the dreary prospect of interminable racial discord and petty colonial squabbles. There may be amendment of the constitution, though there is not likely to be great improvement. There may be delay. But there can be little doubt of the final result. Within the present year, perhaps, certainly within very few years, South Africa will see the close of the long chapter of conflict which began with the Great Trek, and enter on a new chapter of greater hope, of a brighter and more peaceful glory.

In the Union of South Africa, in the birth of a new nation among the British nations, the war and the reconstruction alike find their completion and their final justification. To the conflict of irreconcilable ambitions and incompatible principles of government war brought the only possible solution. So long as the main issues remained unsettled, bitterness, prejudice and intolerance were for ever kept alive by the inconclusive strife. With the war racial passion blazed up in an intenser flame. But the war did its work. The terms imposed at Vereeniging—terms as magnanimous as they were uncompromising—left no fuel for fresh hatred to feed upon. All that remained of bitterness lay in the memory of the past. And as the struggle receded that bitterness was softened, while other features, hardly realized at the time, began to stand out in stronger relief. After all there never was a war fought so obstinately and yet with such humanity and such essential chivalry. Neither side had cause to reproach itself or its adversaries. Both had good cause for just pride and mutual respect. The war...
silenced alike the braggarts who would march to Pretoria in a fortnight, and those who would make a breakfast of the British Army. It taught the Boers, face to face with the unshakable resolution of England, to realize the essential justice and reasonableness of her claims. It taught the British to recognize that if the Boer pretensions were inadmissible, Boerdom itself was no mere imposture, but a stubborn, abiding fact in the life of South Africa. It taught each to acknowledge the other's right in the land for whose sake both had shed their blood. South Africa could have won no peace but through the reconciling sword.

The reconciling influence of the war was made good by the work of restoration and reconstruction. The generosity, the care, and the forethought shown in the repatriation and relief of the vanquished, the justice and sympathy of the new administration, its integrity, its unwearying and successful efforts to promote the well-being of the country without regard to race or class, the freedom of British rule broadening swiftly from stage to stage—these things evoked no loud protestations of gratitude. On the surface of things, indeed, it may have seemed as if their only reward was impatient criticism and even misrepresentation. But their effect was none the less profound and none the less enduring. True reconciliation is shown not in professions of satisfaction but in conduct. Sympathy, justice, firmness alone can bring it about. Selfish complaisance, weak-kneed compromise may seem to yield an easier and more immediate result. But the reconciliation is counterfeit. It is soon tarnished, and before long nothing of it remains to conceal the ugliness of surrender.

After the work of reconstruction came the grant of self-government, as it was always meant to come. And when it came it produced the result it was always meant to produce. That it came two or three years earlier, without an intervening period of transition, without due precautions for safeguarding Imperial and other interests affected is a relatively minor matter. No one, however profoundly impressed by some of the unfortunate consequences of the Liberal interference in South African affairs, need deny the
genuineness of the gratitude evoked in the Boers by an action with whose motives they were but little concerned, or the value of that gratitude as a contributory factor in the subsequent reconciliation. It may be equally readily admitted that the grant of self-government was a necessary condition of South African Union, and that but for the decision of the Liberal Government to take the short cut to self-government, union might well have been delayed for some years. But granting all this, there is nothing to justify the claim, so sedulously put forward, that all that is of hopeful augury in South Africa to-day is the fruit of Liberal policy in reconciling the Boers, and showing "trust in the people." Those who are loudest in making this claim, it must be remembered, are the men who applauded the surrender after Majuba as an act of magnanimous conciliation, the men who at every stage of the negotiations before the war were anxious to show their trust in Krugerism, the men who, when the weary months of guerilla warfare dragged on, clamoured for the reversal of the annexations and the recognition of republican independence as the only way to reconcile Dutch sentiment in Cape Colony. Is it possible that a judgment so consistently false in the past has in this instance proved unerring? Is it possible that the counsellors of folly have suddenly shown themselves the true sons of wisdom? Is it not more natural to assume that the springs of conciliation lie deeper, in the work of the past, and that the effect, for good or ill, of the subsequent spasmodic anticipation of a settled policy has been but incidental and transitory? Assuming that the earlier grant of self-government has, in fact, produced every good result that can reasonably be claimed for it, assuming that all these good results can fairly be credited to the conscious statesmanship of those upon whose decision they followed, yet, at the most, they are entitled to the distinction of having played a contributory, though no doubt useful, part in the work of union and reconciliation. Even among the contributory causes their action cannot claim, for a moment, to rank as equal with the work of those in South Africa, Boers and Englishmen, whose continuous efforts, day by day since the grant of self-govern-
ment, have averted the disaster that at one moment seemed so imminent, and have helped South Africa to find herself. Still less can it rank with the great primary causes, with the work of the men who have laid the foundations of the new South Africa, and laid them well and truly. It is the men who faced without flinching the stern but inevitable issue of war, the men who gave themselves, body and soul, to the building up of the new colonies, who are the true friends of South Africa, the true reconcilers. Those who shrank from the struggle, who threw doubts on its justice and obstructed its conduct, who found fault unceasingly with the labour of the builders, but had no other policy save that of tearing down the scaffolding whose orderly removal had already been decided on—they are at the best South Africa's fair-weather friends. Of the sacrifices and of the toil required they have known little; they could not otherwise have been so ready to risk all their fruits in the fashion they did. But they are now eager to claim the credit. And it is well that they should. For thus the work becomes a common political heritage.

But history must give the credit where it is due. To Chamberlain the Empire owes the decision which preserved it from dismemberment. To him again, with Milner, South Africa owes not only her membership in the Empire, but the broad lines of the settlement in which she has found her peace. To Milner South Africa owes the work of reconstruction which will enable her to take her equal place among the sister nations. That work lives because of its inherent truth and sincerity. There were mistakes in it, not a few, perhaps. But there was no make-believe. It was good work and true to the facts, and therefore it lives and bears fruit to-day. The reaction lopped off some of the branches that showed the fairest promise. But it could not uproot the mighty trunk, or destroy the life which is already sending out new branches and clothing them in fresh verdure and with the promise of abundant harvest. To Milner and to those who worked with him the disaster may well have seemed irreparable at first. But they had planted better than they knew, and their roots had struck deeper and wider than they had suspected.
Milner's work will endure, not only because it was truly done, but because it lives in the minds and hearts of South Africans, even of those who loved him least, and who in this generation can hardly be expected to recognize their debt to him. And it lives because it was not the work of a stranger but of one who was himself a true South African. Great and sympathetic natures do not need to be born in a country to become its lovers, and to be thrilled with the hopes and fears of its destiny. To Milner, indeed, during those eight years of striving, the destiny of South Africa could be all in all, just because to him it was an essential part of the wider destiny which claimed his continuous allegiance. "The true Imperialist is also the best South African." Milner's place in the history of the Empire is yet unknown. His place in South African history is assured for all time by his works. *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*