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CHAPTER I

PERCY MOLTENO'S BOYHOOD AND FAMILY LIFE AT CLAREMONT HOUSE

(a fragment of autobiography) Percy's Own Words

I was born in Edinburgh on the 12th September, 1861, at 40 Heriot Row. My father and mother were on a visit to my father's relatives in Scotland. His great uncle, Charles Dominic Molteno, had married a Mrs. Glass, a widow with two children. They had a place called Newton in Fifeshire, near Strathmiglow and Auchtermuchty. This Mrs. Molteno was a cousin of the celebrated Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, author of *Rab and His Friends*. Letters of Mrs. Molteno will be found in his collected "Letters". Dr. John Brown saw me into the world.

(D) (TL)

(Visit)

Mrs. Molteno's brother was John Scott, first editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, who lost his life in a duel arising out of a criticism of some of Sir Walter Scott's work. Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law had fallen foul of John Scott.

(Visit)

My earliest recollections were of Claremont House, where my father and mother lived after they had returned from Scotland. Claremont House was one of the old properties, dating from the spacious days at the Cape, when the country houses were all surrounded by large grounds with charming gardens. The owners gave a warm welcome to all. Afternoon At Homes were frequent, when gatherings took place first at one house and then at another throughout the season.

I remember Lord Wolseley saying to me that he considered the Cape when he was there in 1875, one of the most delightful places in the world. He had enjoyed not only the hospitality of the old proprietors, but the splendid scenery and fine climate of a country richly endowed by nature with fruit and flowers of every kind.

The long connection of the Dutch with the East had introduced many handsome plants into the Cape peninsula. Claremont House garden was filled with many of these exotics. It was approached by a splendid avenue of oak-trees in continuation of the great avenue which led up to Stellenberg, one of Van der Stel's old residences which remains to this day a most interesting example of the Dutch colonial houses.

Sir Leicester Smythe, who when Governor at the Cape occupied Claremont House for a time, during my father's absence, told me he thought it a most beautiful place. It was certainly a delightful home for children; an old rambling house, mostly on the ground floor, surrounded after the Dutch fashion by great oak-trees, which gave shade in summer and so tempered the hot winds before they entered the house.

The view of Table Mountains from the stoep was magnificent, and the distant Hottentot's Holland Mountains could also be seen. The garden was well stocked with fruit; in fact, there was fruit all the year round and in abundance—guavas and loquets in the winter, grapes, plums, pears, peaches and other fruits in summer.

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'A large range of stables gave housing to a number of horses and ponies, which eventually filled them as we grew up.

'I was the second in age of seven brothers, and had three sisters, who were all older than the boys.

'Our first introduction to horsemanship was on a Shetland pony which all three of the elder boys rode at the same time, until each was able to manage a pony himself.

'Our education began under a Scottish dominie, the Rev. David Smith, a brother of Abercrombie Smith, who had been a Second Wrangler at Cambridge.

'The curriculum was somewhat unusual, as the main subjects on which we began were Logic, Poetry and Algebra. Eventually we all went as day-boys to the Diocesan College at Rondebosch, where there was also a strong contingent of boarders. The Rev. George Ogilvie ('Old Jogs') was our Head Master, a fine character of the old school, a graduate of Oxford, thoroughly versed in the Classics. He was well capable of maintaining discipline, and set a high standard of conduct and honour among the boys.

'During the period I spent at the school there were some able and interesting men on the classical side — the Rev. Mr. Hogarth, Edward Prince, and William Henry Parr Greswell. The curriculum included Science. Among the science masters Shelley, a charming man was succeeded by Lloyd Morgan, whose books on *Animal Intelligence* and *Monism* are well known. He eventually became Chancellor of Bristol University.

'I had an omnivorous desire for knowledge of all kinds. Classics, mathematics, physical and natural science, all interested me. I worked hard at them all, and won a large number of prizes.

'Eventually I prepared for matriculation into the University of the Cape of Good Hope, and was bracketed first in the list of successful students and won a bursary — the Porter Scholarship.

'When I was fifteen and still at College, my father (who was Prime Minister of Cape Colony at the time) proceeded to England as Plenipotentiary to confer with Lord Carnarvon.

'He had for some time trusted me with the keeping of his private cash accounts, and he decided, though I was to sit for matriculation examinations, the following year, that I should go with him and my two brothers to England. We rejoiced in the opportunity and thoroughly enjoyed the voyage. We stayed in London at first at the Albemarle Hotel in Albemarle Street. Despatches were exchanged with the Colonial Office, of which we did much of the copying.

Another important matter was the arranging of a new mail contract. The Castle Line had carried out a service roughly alternating with the then mail steamers of the Union Company, and had quickened the passage from England to the Cape, by building fast new steamers, which considerably reduced the mail contract time. My father determined to get a weekly mail service and for this purpose he was prepared to divide the service between the Castle Line and the Union Company.

(D) 1877

TL

'Sir Donald Currie (managing owner of the Castle Line) with his usual energy immediately called on my father, and put before him suggestions for a new mail service. He was reluctant about promising a weekly line of steamers; and he brought to bear many cogent arguments and figures from the ascertained performances of his own steamers. But my father was determined. He thought that rapid, speedy and frequent communications were of the utmost importance to the development of South Africa, and that this was the opportunity of securing it. So eventually a new mail contract was made, providing for weekly sailings. It also provided for increased speed, secured by special premiums, which resulted in the quickening of the passage by several days. This took place in 1875.

'Sir Donald Currie was very good to us boys. He invited us up to his Scotch home, which was then at Cluny, near Aberfeldy. There we had grouse shooting, rabbit shooting, and may rides on ponies, and thoroughly enjoyed the novelty and excitement of this new experience in such a different world from that in which we had hitherto lived.

'My father must have had considerable confidence in me; for one day he sent me with a draft for £467 to be cashed at the Bank of England, a very formidable undertaking for a boy of fifteen on his first visit to London. However, I got the aid of Ernest Martin of the Castle Company, whose acquaintance we had made. He very kindly accompanied me to the Bank, and I found my way back successfully to my great relief.'¹

The Family at Claremont House

Sir John Molteno's character, his immense energy and power of work, his great business ability, his public skill, his political capacity, consistency, fortitude and unselfish public spirit, will be described in a later chapter. Of his wife's lovable, tender and attractive personality, the grief and affliction of her husband and children, and of their friends and relations, on her untimely death are sufficient evidence.

No biography of Percy Molteno would be complete, or even intelligible, to a reader who was not introduced to his three sisters and six brothers.

The three sisters were born first. The eldest, Betty, Betty was a truly noble and unselfish woman. She believed the best of everyone. 'I found such sympathy from her,' writes her brother, Admiral Molteno, 'in matters which no one could have imagined, as from no one else. She would willingly have been a martyr in any cause where she could by suffering herself save someone else suffering.' After a course at Newnham College, Cambridge, she ran a girls' school at Port Elizabeth with great success for some years, aided by Miss Alice Greene sister of the Sir Grahame Greene who was secretary of the Admiralty before and throughout the Great War).

¹ Here alas! this fragment ends. It was dictated by Percy Molteno during his last illness in Switzerland. He did not revise it, and I have made such slight changes as he would have wished. F. W. H.

In later life she lived at Hampstead and had many English friends, including Cobden's youngest daughter, Mrs. Fisher Unwin ~~Mr. Saul Soloman's widow~~, who lived at Golder's Green, was one of her friends, and on Betty's death wrote a remarkable letter of deep sympathy to Percy Moltano

with you and the entire Moltano and Murray family circle in this supreme earthly loss of your gifted inspiring sister. . . . Only the other day she and I were looking together here at a reproduction of that delicately suggestive picture 'Sunrise', by J. Farquharson, R.A., in this year's Royal Academy. In the lone, lovely flight of the bird, its hasting wings outspread, your beloved sister at once recognized the idea of a winged soul, flying *Home* — to God.

In the course of his reply, dated 10 Palace Court, W., August 30th, 1927, Percy Moltano wrote:

She was my eldest sister, and from my earliest years I received from her the stimulation of the high and noble ideals which possessed her in such full measure; and I can never be too thankful for the ennobling influence of her fine nature all through my life.

We are so thankful that she was spared all distress and pain, and passed away in sleep, having had all her faculties in full measure right up to the last. We laid her beside her devoted friend, Alice Greene, in the Churchyard of St. Maby's, a wonderful spot.

Farquharson's pictures of nature are exquisite in their understanding and love (I know him; a delightful character), and I well understand how much the picture with the beautiful bird would appeal to my sister, whose character was so largely composed of the noble soul which was enshrined in her.

Caroline

The second daughter, Caroline, was another fine character with a fund of imaginative sympathy and affection which endeared her to the whole family and a wide circle of friends. She was very fortunate in her marriage and in the devoted love of her husband and children. She had (like several of her brothers) a wonderful memory and possessed also a descriptive power which appears in some of her letters which have been preserved. With Percy she exchanged many confidences, and it was in his house only a few weeks after his death in Switzerland that she passed away. Within the last few weeks of her life the writer of this book visited her several times. Her memory for the past was as bright and her interest in the present as vivid as ever. Her characteristics are not easily described. They developed in many ways after her happy marriage, and though she was as sensitive to wrongdoing and to the inequalities of life, she was more ready than Betty to make allowances for politicians and systems of government.

In spite of having so large a family of her own she was always ready to give a home to relations and friends. On her father's death two of her brothers, Charlie and Wallace, made their home with her, as did Barkly when he served as a midshipman in H.M.S. Raleigh, the flag-

ship at the Cape. She always took the keenest interest in politics and public affairs. Percy took a very special interest in all her children and gave them a home when in England for their education.

Maria, the youngest of the three sisters, was not so strong a personality as Betty or Caroline. She was gentle, very kind, and more light hearted. She enjoyed church work, district visiting and social duties. Her husband, Tom Anderson, was senior partner in Anderson & Muri-son, one of the principal merchant firms of general importers in Cape Town. They had two sons and one daughter. Maria died in 1902 at a comparatively early age. Maria

Charlie, the eldest son, who came next to Maria, was tall, handsome and rather unsociable. He was inclined to be quizzical, and rather fond of a rough kind of humour which sometimes caused a little discomfort, as when on a ship he insisted on introducing a friend called Mrs. Ham to another called Bacon: "Mr. Bacon, you must allow me to have the pleasure of presenting you to Mrs. Ham." Charlie

Charlie loved shooting and country life, but did not care for club life. He was educated at the Diocesan school, like his brother Percy. He was not specially good at work and did not play games. When quite young he became his father's private secretary and took over a good deal of the business after his father's retirement. After Sir John Molteno's death Charlie had to manage for some years the large sheep farms on the Karoo; but he did not neglect politics. He took a great interest in the natives and looked after their interests for many years as Member for Tembuland in the Cape House of Assembly, where he was a strong supporter and intimate friend of John X. Merriman. He married an American lady. Their two sons and three daughters are still living. In all the financial affairs of the family Percy trusted him and consulted him from first to last.

Frank, to quote a pen portrait by his brother Barkly, Frank

'was the steadiest and most conscientious member of the family. He was all virtue and had no weaknesses — a teetotaler, a non-smoker, and a hard worker. Percy told me that since they were grown up Frank had never failed to write to him every week. He qualified as a land surveyor and subsequently entered the Surveyor General's office and became assistant to the Surveyor General. He was considerate and trusted and liked by everybody.'

He married young and had two sons and two daughters. One son was drowned as a boy when fishing; the other was killed while at Oxford in a motor-bicycling accident, and Frank himself was killed in a railway accident. He and his wife and children were a devoted and a most happy family. He lived for some years at Potchestoom in the Transvaal, and did a good deal of professional work in connection with gold claims before the Boer War; but most of his life was spent near Cape Town.

James was an altogether exceptional member of the family, quite unlike the others. At school and the univer- James
sity he was not only proficient in examinations but

excelled at games and took a leading part in the social life of Trinity and in the debates of the Union, of which he became President. He had a great zest for life and most of its pleasures—cricket, hunting, tennis, swimming, racing and cards. He took immense interest in everybody and everything, making as he passed through life many friends and of course a few enemies. A love of politics and public life were in his blood, and in party strife he proved himself a valiant and at times a hot partisan. After being called to the Bar he spent his whole life in South African politics until about 1913, when he retired from the Speakership of the Federal Parliament, to which he had been appointed by Botha when the Union Government was established in 1910. He was knighted in 1910. The most famous incident in his career was his interview with Sir Alfred Milner in 1899, when Milner stated that he was bent on breaking the dominion of Afrikanerdom. In this affair Percy was, as we shall see, equally concerned, along with that brilliant Liberal journalist Henry W. Massingham, then editor of the *Daily Chronicle*. Percy (as we shall see) had complete confidence in his brother's accuracy. Most of the family were remarkable for their memories, that of James was prodigious. His book of reminiscences, entitled *The Dominion of Afrikanerdom*,² was written almost entirely without reference to printed material; and yet as far as I am aware no inaccuracies of fact were detected even by critics who hated his political opinions and disputed his conclusions.

James married Clare Holland-Pryor. They had one son, who entered the Royal Navy, and three daughters. He had an ardent love for South Africa, and like his brother Charles was a staunch disciple of John X. Merri-man, whom he describes (p. 14 of the *Dominion of Afrikanerdom*) as: 'My father's old lieutenant in politics and my life-long leader and friend. . . . The noblest public character I have known.' James became a member of the Cape Parliament in 1890 at the age of twenty-five. He died in Percy's London house in 1937.

Victor, next in age, was a complete contrast to James—very silent, modest and retiring. He wanted to go into the Army, but his father objected, and then, at Percy's suggestion, he entered Clare College, Cambridge, where he played Rugby for his College and qualified as a Doctor of Medicine. He practised the profession entirely in the vicinity of Cape Town. Victor took no interest in politics or public affairs. Shooting was his passion throughout life. He would walk with his gun all day, and even if he had only a few shots he would never give up as long as daylight lasted. Victor married Mildred Jones; they had three sons and two daughters.

Wallace, who was two years younger than Victor, was the only brother except Charlie who had no education in England. Like all the others he went to the Diocesan College in Rondebosch. On his father's death, when he

² 'Recollections Pleasant and Otherwise, by the Hon. Sir James Tennant Molteno, B.A., LL.B., K.C., late Speaker of the Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope and first Speaker of the Parliament of the Union of South Africa.' Methuen & Co., London, 1923.

(T)

was sixteen, he left school and went into his brother-in-law's firm, Anderson & Murison, at Cape Town. After three or four years in the office he felt that town business was not his line, and decided to learn farming with a Mr. Hochley, one of the best farmers in the Eastern Province. After a few years there he bought a farm near the village of Moltano, and started on his own account. He worked up several farms into good condition and sold them profitably. Eventually his eldest brother Charlie engaged him to manage their father's large properties near Beaufort West. There Wallace did so well that he bought out the other members of the family and became sole owner. His business training in Cape Town stood him in good stead and, combined with his skill and application of scientific principles to farming, gave him great success. Wallace and his younger brother Barkly corresponded every week during the whole of their lives, though as small boys they had practised pugilism constantly at one another's expense.

Wallace

Wallace married a Scottish girl named Sandeman, who proved to be a devoted co-operator in farming. Their two sons and two daughters are all living. All members of the Moltano family used Wallace's large farm and homestead as a holiday resort. The hospitality of Wallace and his wife was unbounded, and their farm was the model farm for hundreds of miles round. By irrigation and by their scientific methods of improving the pasture they quite altered the face of the dry Karoo.

Barkly, the youngest of Sir John Moltano's sons by his second wife, felt as a small boy the same love of the sea which had inspired John Jarvis (Earl of St. Vincent) to run away from home. His father and his grandfather Hercules Jarvis were themselves inspired by the same feeling, and no obstacles were thrown in his way. He joined the *Brittania* in 1885. This was the first time Percy had been brought directly in contact with his youngest brother, to whom he afterwards took the place of a father. He gave this brother a home in England whenever leave was granted. Sir Donald and Lady Currie also treated him as a son both before and after Percy's marriage to their daughter. Though Percy hated war and militarism he took the keenest interest in the welfare of the Navy; and I can well remember the pride he felt in his brother's superb bravery and skill in handling the battered *Warrior* at the Battle of Jutland.

Barkly
(D)

- Not Waspike?

Barkly was fortunate enough to serve under some of the most distinguished sailors of his day, including Admiral Sir William Kennedy, his first Captain, Admiral Sir George Callaghan, Sir Arthur Wilson, Admiral Sir Frederick Bedford, Sir George A. Curzon-Howe, Admiral Sir Martin Jerram, Sir Percy Scott, of gunnery fame, and Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, who succeeded Sir George Callaghan as Commander of the Home Fleet at the outbreak of the Great War.

During the Great War Barkly commanded seven different ships, serving as Flag-Captain to Sir William Pakenham (who afterwards commanded the Battle-Cruiser Fleet), to Sir William Grant, to Sir Martin Jerram, (who led the line of battleships in the *King George V* at Jutland) and to Sir Sidney Fremantle. Barkly com-

manded H.M.S. *Redoubtable* at the bombardment of Westende in September, 1915, and *H.M.S. Warrior* at the ~~Battle of Jutland~~, when she was sunk by German gunfire. His account of this action was afterwards printed privately in the family Chronicle. Through Barkly Percy was able to keep himself in close touch with the practical and scientific problems of naval warfare. In August, 1916, he spent several days with Barkly on board the battleship *King George V*, when she lay at Invergordon. He was then Member for Dumfries, and he made a very handsome contribution to the expenses of recreation grounds for the officers and men of the Royal Navy at Invergordon. Barkly and Percy remained in the very closest friendship until Percy's life ended in 1937. Their country homes in Surrey were not far apart. They met constantly, and Percy discussed with his brother all the public questions and especially those connected with foreign policy and armaments which were uppermost in his mind after the Great War.

Percy Alport Molteno took his first two names from his uncle Percy John Alport, of whom, in his notes on family, he wrote as follows:

My uncle, Percy John Alport, after whom I am named, married my mother's sister, Sophia Mary St. Ives Jarvis. His family came from the county of Stafford in the Hundred of Cuttlestone. They were descended from the Alports of Cannock and Bloxwick, and were landowners there before the time of Elizabeth. Originally the family came from Derbyshire, deriving its name from Alport, a village situated in lovely scenery at the opening of Lathkil Dale. Originally Alport must have been Aldport or Oldport, for as early as 1394 one Richardus Aldeport was Master of the Guild at Lichfield, near Kannock. According to a Staffordshire antiquary, Studdert Holmes, the name was Roman. In the Peak District of Staffordshire rise the Alport Heights and a great rock called Alport Stone, about nine miles south of Warksworth. Here there were lead mines, extensively worked by the Romans, and a passage-way, or port, which may well have determined the name: Alport Heights and Alport Stone will be preserved in their present state as they have become the property of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Beauty.

The coat-of-arms has descended through eleven generations, but Dr. Cecil Alport, his son, and a cousin, are the only Alports left in England, though others of the family are in New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa. I have a copy of the Shield of Arms, which is of a very early and pure type; it is completely filled with waves of water. My uncle Alport went to Beaufort West, South Africa, to join my father who was then farming at Nelspoort and had decided to open a business in Beaufort West. For this purpose the firm of P. J. Alport and Co. was established at Beaufort and remained for a long time one of the principal businesses there.

My uncle Alport brought with him to Beaufort a great interest in animals which he retained all his life. He was very fond of coursing, and kept greyhounds

and horses on a farm called Lamonfontein, near Beaufort.

He was very keen about improving stock, and introduced thorough-bred sheep to improve the yield and quality of the wool in the flocks at Beaufort. Subsequently, after retiring from active business management at Beaufort, he established (on a farm near Cape Town?) a stud of thorough-bred horses, and imported from time to time a number of very fine animals. To make them known he had to enter them for the races, but he disliked betting and gambling and would never back his own horses or any others. He also imported thorough-bred pigs and cows, and took a very keen interest in the Shows.

He was extraordinarily kind and humane, and anxious about the health and comfort of his animals. The horses he kept for his own use were generally so well fed that they got beyond themselves and caused much trouble by running away and upsetting carriages, often terrifying his wife, who was somewhat nervous.

He thought that horses ought not to go without food for so long a period as six p.m. to the following morning; so, as his coachman did not live on the place, he would himself go out to the stables and feed his horses at nine o'clock. Some of them quickly got an accurate knowledge of the time, and if their master did not appear on the very stroke of the hour they would break their halters and cause a good deal of trouble.

Uncle Alport was very kind to us boys and would constantly give us presents of animals and pets, such as rabbits and guinea-pigs.

In later years he lived at Beaufort Villa, Claremont, where he died on _____ .

Our account of the family at Claremont would be incomplete if Sir John Molteno's ~~five children by Minnie~~, his third wife, were left out. Their childhood, like Percy's was spent at Claremont, and he was on the best of terms with them. (?) X

The eldest, Minnie, called after her mother, was very fond of music. She lived at home, and after her mother's death she bought a charming cottage at Gordon's Bay, about thirty-five miles from Cape Town, where she was fond of entertaining from time to time her many friends.

Of the three boys, Edward, Clifford and Harry, Edward, always known as Ted in the family, was a godson of Sir Bartle Frere, having been born early in Sir Bartle's Governorship, before the controversy arose which drove Sir John Molteno from office. He was educated with his two brothers at Eastbourne College, of which Schreiner, a brother of W. P. Schreiner and Olive Schreiner, was headmaster. X Afterwards all three brothers went to Pembroke College, Cambridge. Edward took his M.B. at St. Bartholomew's Hospital but never practised. For two or three years he travelled in Europe and stayed some time with Count Tolstoi, whom he greatly admired. After his two younger brothers had taken their degrees at Cambridge they all went back to South Africa with their mother. Edward and Harry then purchased a farm at Elgin, about fifty miles from Cape Town. Edward displayed prodigious energy there and achieved remarkable success. He was as fond as Percy of experiments, tried different crops on the land, and

engaged in different types of farming, until he discovered that he could grow apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, plums and some other fruits to perfection on soil where previous cultivators had never grown anything successfully. He is now one of the largest, if not the largest, exporters of South African fruit to England. It has been stated that his cold store for fruit was the largest in the world at the time when it was built—about six years ago. Like Percy Edward has taken the keenest interest in everything that concerns the export of fruit to Europe and the United States, and Percy followed all Edward's farming methods and fruit-exporting projects with close attention and sympathy. Harry has entered into all his brother's schemes, and has worked with him as a partner and invaluable helper.

The second brother, Clifford, qualified as a barrister and was called to the Cape Bar, but never engaged in active practice. He also bought a farm at Elgin and has lived quietly there.

Life at Claremont House in the Years 1880-5

CONTRIBUTED BY ADMIRAL V. B. MOLTANO.

Claremont House was seven miles out of Cape Town. It was approached by two very fine oak avenues. It faced Table Mountain, three or four miles distant, of which it had a lovely view. It had spacious grounds of at least a hundred acres. There was a vineyard with splendid quality grapes, and orchards which contained quantities of all varieties of fruits—pears, apples, plums, greengages, apricots, peaches, nectarines, guavas, loquats, custard apples, bananas and dates. But the greater part of the property was covered with the natural Cape vegetation of silver trees, proteas, heaths and wild flowers which abound there.

It may be of interest to mention that we had three entirely distinct species of guavas at Claremont House, two of which I have never seen anywhere else in all my wanderings in Africa, Ceylon, China and Japan. One was a bright red fruit, the other a pale yellow with a quite soft inside, and much smaller than the common guava which has a firm-fleshed seedy interior. Also there was a roseapple, an apple-like fruit outside with one large stone; the smell of the fruit was exactly like rose-leaves. There were two tennis-courts and two very rough fields, on which we used to play cricket with the Bissets and Tredgolds, who lived near by.

Claremont House made an ideal home for a large family of boys. Some five to ten miles away, on the then quite uninhabited Cape Flats, there were numerous *vleis* (or lakes) the homes or breeding places of wild duck, and all sorts of water fowl, as well as snipe and buck (small antelopes). During the holidays there were constant shooting expeditions out on the Cape Flats, with muzzle-loaders. I cannot remember any blank days.

When you left Claremont House grounds the countryside was absolutely uninhabited with the exception of four or five small farms, for twenty to twenty-five miles out on the flats towards the Hottentot Holland Mountains. The only roads were sandy tracks. Even between

Claremont and Table Mountain at that time there were very few houses and hardly any cultivation. The inhabited parts were along the main road to Simonstown, the naval station; and out at Constantia there were a good many large wine farms.

The family formed a little colony at Claremont. The next two houses to the south belonged to the Bissets and the Alports. Aunt Betty (Mrs. Bisset, *née* Jarvis) was a younger sister of our mother. She had five sons and one daughter. My mother's elder sister, Sophia (Aunt Sophy) had married my father's business partner, Percy John Alport. They had no children, but my Uncle Alport contributed not a little to our enjoyment of country life. He was very fond of horses and sheep, imported breeding rams, kept a stud of racehorses, and was often successful on the Turf. Our grandfather, Hercules Jarvis, with an unmarried daughter and a widowed daughter, Mrs. Blenkins ('Aunt Annie') and her two sons, lived half a mile away to the south of Claremont House.

On the north side, in the very next house, lived our sister Caroline, who had married Dr. Murray, and contributed to the family circle seven boys and girls, one of whom (May Murray Parker), a great favourite with Percy and his wife, has made several contributions to this book. Beyond the Murrays lived the Andersons, the third and youngest of our sisters, Maria, having married T. J. Anderson. They had three sons and a daughter.

This completes the colony of Moltenos and their relatives in the days of Percy's boyhood and mine.

But our pleasures were not confined to Claremont. Ten miles off at Kalk Bay, then a small unspoilt seaside village on the way to Simon's Bay, my father had bought a house to provide the family with sea air and recreations. It only held about eight children at a time, and was very popular; for it provided us with fishing and bathing and long walks over the mountains, where a variety of game was to be found. One Auret, a Dutchman, ran fishing boats and one or two sailing boats on Muizenberg Vlei. He had five or six sons, who were staunch allies of the family in all boating and fishing expeditions.

My brothers and sisters all rode. My father always kept five or six riding horses at Claremont as well as two or three pairs of Cape cart-horses for transport purposes. (The Cape-cart, then a common vehicle, is now as extinct as the dodo, or the London four-wheeler.) My three elder brothers, Charlie, Percy and James, had their own riding horses; but we younger ones had to share, and on hunting expeditions the question who was to be left without a mount often caused friction and sore feelings. All over the Cape flats and the foothills of the Hottentot Holland Mountains, Cape jackals were hunted with foxhounds in the winter months, and we Molteno boys rode with the hounds.

At Claremont we kept five or six cows and a number of pigs. Besides racehorses and rams, Uncle Percy Alport imported prize pigs. These arrivals of well-bred animals excited much interest among us. The garden at Claremont was managed by a white gardener and an old

Malay called Moos, assisted by three or four Kaffir or Hottentot 'boys.' The horses were looked after by two white grooms. Partly because of the garden and livestock, partly because of my father's position as Prime Minister of Cape Colony, Claremont House, though not so fine a specimen of architecture as some of the old Dutch houses, was a good deal visited, not only by local politicians and officials but by British and foreign travellers. Occasionally a Kaffir Chief and his headmen from one of the native territories would be shown over the place dressed in skins and feathers and carrying assegais.

Percy's brother, Frank Molteno, writing a boy's letter to his cousin, James Bisset, on July 21st, 1875, tells about the good times the boys had at Kalk Bay, rowing and sailing, fishing and duck shooting. In this letter he says:

Papa is going to give me Charlie's gun. Maria, Charlie and Percy are going to be confirmed here on Saturday at Kalk Bay. Papa is going to buy us the boat in which we sailed the other day. Mr. Auret wants only £15 for it; it is thirteen feet long and four feet broad. James is in the second class at Mrs. Jones's school. Percy and Charlie are in the second class at college. Percy is third and Charlie is seventh, and I am in the fifth class.

Another glimpse of the life at Claremont is given us by Percy's younger brother, James, who lived there till 1885 when he left as Percy had done six years before for Trinity College, Cambridge, and the Inner Temple.

From my cradle until I was twenty years of age [wrote Sir James] I grew up in an atmosphere of politics. . . . My father was at the date of my birth (1865) in the zenith of his political career, and seven years after my birth became first Prime Minister under responsible government.

After an interval following the dismissal of his Cabinet by Sir Bartle Frere, he was persuaded to help the third ministry under Sir Thomas Scanlen in the years 1881-2. In July, 1882, Sir John Charles Molteno retired finally from public life and died in September, 1886. Percy, therefore, was a boy at Claremont, during his father's administration and was old enough to take an intelligent interest in the controversy with Sir Bartle Frere, which made an indelible impression on his mind, leaving him a convinced believer in Colonial self-government and a convinced opponent of Imperialism and of all attempts by the Home Government to impose its policy on South Africa. Sir James wrote:—

Our home was a little republic, my father the President, a genial, humorous but withal a stern man. . . . There were ten children, and when my father married again four more, all brought up in the home. . . . That was the family custom at the Cape in those days, and in my opinion it tended to the development of character in the children. We were not hedged round by unnecessary discipline, but put on our honour. . . . Hunting, fishing and all kinds of sport were to be had for the taking. We boys were fortunate in our school.

—the Diocesan College and Rondebosch, five miles from Cape Town, then under the mastership of Canon Ogilvie, an inspiring teacher, famed in English and Dutch homes alike throughout the length and breadth of South Africa.

My father kept open house. Politicians, civil servants, naval and military men frequented the old home amongst the oaks of Van der Stel. We youngsters had to fag and be useful, and of course we were curious, and we listened.

There was no monotony in South Africa in those days. . . . I remember Sir Henry Barclay and Sir Bartle Frere, the Governors and their staffs. I can see Mr. Froude; he was often at our house. In those days politics were on a different plane. One never heard of Boer and Briton. . . . Everybody knew everybody else. There were no races except the coloured races and tribes. . . . Then came the Gaika and Galeka wars; the Zulu war; the war with Seccoceni; the first Boer war and the Basuto war; and after that the race war [between the British and the Boers, 1899 to 1902].

My father was not reticent in the home. He discussed political problems, both South African and world wide, and welcomed our participations in the conversations. We were loyal partisans, and subconsciously absorbed his constitutional and political views. We noted with sorrow and dismay the break up of his fine constitution upon the reversal of his policy and the dismissal of his ministry by Sir Bartle Frere. At that time he sought peace and consolation at his seaside resort; and well do I remember Sir Garnet Wolseley after the disaster in Zululand, on his way to replace Lord Chelmsford, driving down to Kalk Bay in his four in hand to discuss the settlement with my prematurely aged father.

By that time Sir John Molteno's sight was failing and his son James remembered reading aloud to him under the old oaks in their garden the Nineteenth Century and Contemporary Reviews and discussing the religious, political, economic and scientific controversies in which Gladstone, Huxley, Herbert Spencer and others were taking part. His father used to be fond of telling about his early days, of the Kaffir wars and the rough and tumble of up country life.

In 1884 the Cape Town line of railway was linked up with the Port Elizabeth line at the junction of De Aar, five hundred miles in the interior.' In the middle of 1885, James and his young brother, ~~Barkly~~, a naval cadet, left the Cape for England, where Percy had been called to the Bar at the Inner Temple, and Victor, another brother, was studying medicine at St. Bartholomew's.

Table Mountain.

During his visit to South Africa in the winter of 1907-8 Percy planned with his friend Marjorie Lindley a book on The Antock Morioi of Table Mountain, for which she was to provide illustrations.

A fragment of his introduction — three or four pages — which he left makes one wish he had found time to carry out the project. He begins with a sentence from Drake who circumnavigated the Cape of Good Hope in 1580: 'This Cape is a most stately thing, and the fairest Cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth.' What Drake saw once in his little *Pelican* Percy saw many times from the decks of the great Union Castle liners. His enthusiasm for Table Mountain endured all through his life. Whenever he re-visited the Cape he climbed it. In

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1908 he wrote: 'The seaward appearance of the mass of mountain land which constitutes the Cape Peninsular can have changed but little since the time of Drake. It presented the same grand outline when I passed round it one cloudless afternoon in January.'

Table Mountain towers 3,500 feet above Cape Town. It is the highest and grandest portion of the Peninsula.

'It rises almost vertically from its base to the top of the horizontal wall from which it takes its name. On three sides it rises precipitously without any buttresses; on one side it is washed by the sea itself; on all sides it is a magnificent object as seen from below. The lights and shades are ever changing, as is the colouring. Sometimes it is shrouded in mist, but more often it is cloudless and clear in outline against the sky.'

He then set out to examine the vegetable and animal life of the Mountain and the wonderful rocks which he had so often explored:

'Portions of native forest still clothe its ravines. The monkey ropes swing from tree to tree; abundant ferns and mosses clothe the rock beneath, kept green by the water, clear as crystal, which had such a reputation for brightness and purity that a supply was regularly brought home by the Dutch fleets for the use of His Majesty the King of Denmark.

On its lower slopes the famous silver trees shine in sheets of burnished silver. So partial are they to its soil that they are rarely to be found elsewhere and never more than a few miles from its base. The sugar bush, with the special race of birds that feed on its sweet nectar, is also very abundant. Flora of unrivalled variety and beauty clothe Table Mountain from top to bottom. Through the whole cycle of the year nature has provided flowers in endless variety of form, colour and species.

Animal life is represented by several small antelopes, a troop of baboons and numerous coneys, or rock rabbits, whose nearest extant congener is said to be the rhinoceros.

Inanimate forms which simulate life are numerous. The process of denudation has carved many an outline of animals antediluvian and post-diluvian. Here a human face in broad outline against the sky; there a series of faces one above the other. The profile of the great Duke of Wellington is clearly set in the buttress edge of Table Mountain which flanks the Hout Bay Neck—it cannot be mistaken when looked at from Rondebosch on a summer evening. Heads of men or animals are visible everywhere. The lion as you would expect in Africa is particularly well represented—a good specimen may be seen in one of our illustrations.

Then, we are told, you may see troops of petrified elephants, or a crested grebe, or a great bird resting its stony frame on the mountain ridge, or curious antediluvians which 'stare at you as you disturb their secular solitude, or open rocky mouths at imaginary opponents, the stony spines still erect upon their scaly backs'. Percy's fine description reminds one of that wonderful view as the sun goes down from the rim of the Grand Cañon of Colorado. Finally he burst out into a hymn of praise; a vision of poetry:

A brilliant atmosphere round you, perched in the sky. Nothing intervenes on any side to hide the world below, or the distant sea with its islands and bays fringed with snow-white sand and breakers, or the Blue Mountains of Hottentots Holland and all the crumpled folded belt of mountain land which forms the southern and western rampart of South Africa.

It is an inspiring scene. Upon what will this great mountain gaze in years to come? It has looked on the Phœnician ships that sailed round Africa, and on the puny bushman and yellow Hottentot in mortal combat with lion and tiger; then on the tiny ships of Vasco de Gama and Drake carrying men with souls great for enterprise; now on great ocean lines silently gliding in and out of the safe harbour below.

Will it be a pillar of good hope to men struggling with evils; will it inspire them with its own fortitude, its firmness, its endurance? Great storms beat upon it, wild clouds hide it; but ever again it comes forth serene, calm, stupendous, standing boldly up to meet all the winds of heaven and the waves of the greatest ocean of the whole world, the ocean that separates the Cape of Good Hope from Cape Horn. As you see its magnificent rock walls turned to gold by the western sun, you recall Lucretius; you behold his *flammanitia mœnia mundi*—the flaming battlements of the world.

Molteno never wrote anything finer than this description of the grand mountain which cast its spell over him in the days of his boyhood at Claremont. A love of landscape, and especially of mountain scenery inspired him throughout his life, and his passion for nature in all its moods and shapes and for vegetable life in all its forms and varieties find expression here.

Our Claremont chapter may fitly conclude with a few extracts from early family letters in the 'seventies, chiefly from Claremont and Kalk Bay.

Claremont,
February 18th, 1869.

[From Caroline Molteno to Aunt Nancy (Mrs. Bingle)]

You must have enjoyed your stay at Margate. During the last holidays we too made a change to the seaside. Kalk Bay, our watering place, is very different from any English one, and one has to be prepared for a good deal of inconvenience in going there. There are at the most thirty respectable houses—many very dilapidated and the furniture still worse. The rest are all fishermen's huts. We took all the habitable rooms in the hotel which consisted of only four—one sitting room which served also as a dining room and three bedrooms upstairs. . . . Still the people tried very hard to make us comfortable and erected a tent for the children on the beach; and as we had not a single wet day during our fortnight there, they were able to make it their daily nursery. . . . While at Kalk Bay we drove down to Simons Town to see the Prince's ship, the *Galatea*, but were too late; for she was just on the point of leaving. So we had to content ourselves with sailing or rather rowing around her. The Prince and officers were all standing on deck; so we had a good view of them. The *Galatea* is a beautiful vessel and it was a splendid sight seeing her leave the bay with all her sails up. . . . Papa is thinking of getting a tutor for the boys as Charlie and Percy are getting too old for a governess.

*Claremont House,
February 21st, 1871.*

[From Maria Molteno to 'Dear Aunt Bingle']

I do not remember much of England, but recollect you and grandmamma slightly. You sent Charley the nursery rhymes which grandmamma taught me; but he has got beyond them and they suit James and Victor. I remember 'Thank you pretty cow' best of all. There are so many boys I suppose you have forgotten their names, Charley is the eldest. He is a dreadful tease, and very conceited. He is always arguing with Papa about the [Franco-Prussian] war. Charley takes the side of the French, Percy and Frank that of the Prussians. Jamesie and Victor are not very certain, but change to please the elder boys. . . . Papa's trip to the country has done him a great deal of good. He took Charley and Percy with him; they enjoyed it very much. Mr. Smith (the tutor) has given them their trip as the subject for an essay. We have been staying at Kalk Bay for five weeks; it is very pleasant there at this time.

*South Western Hotel, Southampton,
Sunday evening, March 10th, 1872.*

[From Caroline Molteno to Aunt Nancy.]

We did not leave London after all till Saturday morning. We were quite ready to go on Friday when a gentleman came to tell Papa that a discussion on the introduction of Responsible Government at the Cape was to come on that evening in the House of Lords. So Papa wrote to Lord Kimberley's secretary to ask for tickets for the House. We met Lord Kimberley and Mr. Wodehouse at the House by appointment, and they got us seats. Of course we were very much interested in the subject. Lord Granville, Lord Kimberley and another lord spoke in favour of it, and the Marquis of Salisbury and Earl Grey against it; but the result of the discussion and the sympathy of the House were evidently in favour of Responsible Government.

We have been enjoying this lovely weather driving about. The neighbourhood of Southampton is exceedingly pretty. To-morrow at two o'clock we start.³ . . . with love to Eliza and Uncle Bingle and yourself from us all and a long goodbye, Caroline Molteno.

*Claremont House,
June 19th, 1872.*

[from Betty Molteno to Aunt Nancy.]

'Papa says he is too busy to write just now so one of us must do so for him Baby was christened on Sunday. He is named Vincent Barkly. Vincent is rather a fancy name [after Earl St. Vincent] and Barkly is in honour of the Governor. . . .

After referring to a birthday ball and a dinner at Government House the letter continues:

You will see by the papers that the Responsible Government Bill passed in the Assembly by a majority of ten and in the Council by one. I think Papa is very pleased; for up till quite lately we were doubtful if would pass in the Council. . . . The Russian Prince Alexis is expected daily. When he does arrive we shall probably have another ball. Caroline and I are to go to a charade party to-morrow. Caroline is to take part in a sort of Tableau Vivant as a Spanish lady.

³ On their return journey to Cape Town.

Claremont House,
February 9th, 1873.

[From Caroline Molteno to Aunt Nancy.]

My cousin, B. Blenkins, has gone off to the Gold Fields. There is rather a stir about them just now, and they say a great many people have gone up there from the Diamond Fields. All the 86th Regiment have returned from Natal, where they found nothing to do; for the war was soon settled, fortunately. One of the officers, Major Goodenough, brought me a photograph last Saturday of Langalibalele, the old chief who gave all the trouble. He looks a most disreputable old fellow in his European clothes, but I dare say would look better in his own dress. They say he strongly objected to being photographed, and rolled on the ground, and made faces for a long time, and finally had to be taken asleep. But he is decidedly awake in the picture I have of him. I believe he will be banished for his lifetime to Robben Island.⁴

Claremont House,
April 12th, 1874.

[From Caroline Molteno to Aunt Nancy. A pathetic description of her mother's death.]

I never could have thought that anyone who was dead could look half so beautiful as she did. She is buried beside her three little boys . . . The blank is, to us, and always will be, terrible, but it is worst of all for poor Papa. The last five days he nursed Mamma night and day, and we were afraid he would break down altogether under this, but he bears up very bravely.

Shortly before her death she told one of us that 'she was quite resigned, though it was very hard to part from us'.

May 26th, 1874.

Papa has fortunately had a great deal to do lately, and as Parliament is to be opened this week he will be still more busy. After the session is over we are hoping that he may manage to go somewhere for a change. You know, Aunt Nancy, how passionately fond of Mamma he was, and there is such a terrible, terrible change here now. He made her his only intimate friend and companion, and she was everything to him. And then it has all come so suddenly that it is just like a dream, and we shall only gradually realise it all as we get more settled. She was more than a mother to us girls; she was always thinking about us and taking such an interest in everything that pleased us . . . She never would make us anxious about anything, and always looked at the bright side of things . . . I think death can never be painful to us when we think that we shall meet her again . . . Everybody, even strangers, have been so sympathetic. It seems to have been a shock to everyone. Mamma was such a general favourite. I often used to hear people speak about her and say how bright and kind and lovable she was.

⁴ I came upon an undated letter from Maria to Caroline telling how she went with Mr. John X. Merriman to see Langalibalele, the recalcitrant chief whom Bishop Colenso had championed: 'It was such an awkward visit. The three wives wore no clothes hardly. Mr. Merriman had first to go and see Langalibalele, and persuaded him to put on a blanket before I went in to see him.' For the whole story see Percy Molteno's *Life of Sir John Charles Molteno*, Vol. I, pp. 259 sqq.

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Kalk Bay,
February 6th, 1875.

[From Caroline to Aunt Nancy]

1874
The 'Celt' brought us the news of Uncle Charles Molteno's death in a letter to me from Miss Glass; coming so suddenly it must have been a great shock to you all, he appears to have had to the last so much vigour of mind and body. I have often felt very sorry that we did not go to see them when Papa did. . . . Maria and I, with the three little ones, are down here at the seaside again . . . but all the boys have now returned to College and school. Charley and Percy have both been moved up into the second class. There was a very grand break-up at the College at the end of the year. The Governor was there, with Lady and Miss Barkly, and the Bishop presented the prizes. Percy got two prizes and was very much pleased, I think; but I dare say you saw all about it in the papers.

I suppose you noticed that we have had Mr. Froude here. He was only a very few days in Cape Town, not more than three, I think, on his arrival, and only two before he left. However, we were more fortunate than most people in seeing him. He had lunch and spent an afternoon with us when he arrived, and on his return the evening before he left we met him at dinner at the Governor's, and to my surprise it was arranged that he should take me in to dinner.

June 2nd, 1875.

[From Maria Molteno to Aunt Nancy]

A fresh engagement has taken place in our family, and although I dare say you will be rather surprised when you hear of it, you will soon see that it is the best thing which could have happened, not only for Papa's own happiness but for all of ours. Papa is engaged to Minnie Blenkins. I did not think when I began my letter that before I sent it I should have such a piece of news to add to it. It has taken us all entirely by surprise. We had no idea of it until he came down from Aunt Anne yesterday and told us that he was engaged to Minnie. I am sure that she will make him a very, very good wife indeed; and it is because he loved my mother so much, and finds that he cannot go on living like this, that he is going to marry again. All his joys and pleasures that are so entirely dependent on his home life that the want was too great for him. He wishes the marriage to take place almost immediately, and after it I should not be surprised if he paid you a visit, for he needs a change very much.

Kalk Bay,
July 5th, 1875.

[From Caroline to Aunt Nancy.]

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Betty and Maria have already told you all our startling news. We are down here for a few days to get things ready for Papa, for his wedding takes place the day after to-morrow, much sooner than we expected. . . . Betty spent a week in Government House, which did her a great deal of good. Maria has also just been staying there. Lady Barkly is very kind; she has asked us all three, and any of the boys that like to come, to stay there after the wedding . . . I am writing by this mail for my trousseau, or rather part of it.⁵ Lady Barkly has been so kind about it; her dressmaker is to make my wedding dress and most of my dresses. She works beautifully.

⁵ Caroline Molteno was preparing for her marriage to Dr. Charles Murray.

Claremont,
July 8th, 1875.

[From Caroline to Aunt Nancy]

The wedding went off very well yesterday. Minnie looked very pretty indeed, and so did her bridesmaids; it was a very quiet wedding, only some relations were invited, and of course the Bishop and the clergymen who assisted him in the ceremony.

Kalk Bay,

January 12th, 1877.

[From Victor Molteno, aged 10, to Aunt Nancy]

We are staying at Kalk Bay. Papa, Charles, Percy and Frank are going down the country for about a month . . . Dr. Murray has bought two fine horses. One is a nice riding horse whose name is Orlando. Percy took a prize at college this year . . . I think it will be a very good year for grapes. We have 52 bunches on one vine.

July 19th, 1877. (?)

[From Betty Molteno to Aunt Nancy]

Charley and Percy spent a week up in the mountains near Wellington with Grandpapa (Jarvis). They enjoyed themselves exceedingly, and Charley shot two bucks, which were sent us, as well as a porcupine, which was caught while they were there. Percy is top of his class for the last six months.

Claremont House,

November 10th, 1877.

[From Frank Molteno to Aunt Nancy]

I suppose you have heard that Mr. Stanley [who found Livingstone] has arrived at Cape Town. He has about fifty of the natives of the interior with him. He has given a lecture here, which I did not go to; but some of the others went, and they said it was very interesting. Percy has given you the enclosed to give to Mr. Bingle. It is a list of the Greek and Latin books for the Matriculation Examination for 1878. He is going up for it next year.

Lower Nell's Poort,

August 27th, 1878.

[From Percy Molteno to his sister Caroline.]

I have not written to you yet, as there is so little news that would interest you. Yesterday we went shooting on top of one of the Nell's Poort mountains; it is about 7,000 feet above the level of the sea. There was a beautiful view from the top. We could see the Prince Albert mountains covered with snow . . . We are now staying with Jackson. Charlie and I were invited to a picnic at Beaufort, to be given by Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. de Villiers . . . There is a pretty fair collection of books here, and they take the *Argus* and the *Empire*, so that we have the latest news and reading to occupy our spare time.

CHAPTER III

THE JARVISES

If energy, business ability, public spirit, tenacity and sagacity, or common sense, with courage tempered by prudence, were the only characteristics that Percy Molteno and his brothers in varying measure derived from their father, they also drew a store of fine qualities from their mother, a gentle, beautiful and attractive woman, and from her father Hercules Cross Jarvis, who was long remembered as a most lovable character and one of the best citizens of the Cape.

When the Moltenos settled in Cape Town, Hercules Cross Jarvis lived in Somerset Road, at Green Point. Later on he removed to Claremont, remaining on the most affectionate terms with his grandchildren until his death in 1889. He was the son of Captain John Jarvis and his mother's maiden name was St. Ives Dunmore Pyke. It happened that, hearing of some property of the Pykes in the Court of Chancery, to which he might have a claim, old Hercules Jarvis applied in March, 1886, to Percy Molteno, who was then learning law in the Temple.

Percy kept these letters and made some notes, which show that he looked up many topographical and genealogical books about the Pykes and the Jarvises. He also later on visited Shoreham, where Captain John Jarvis was buried. Hercules Jarvis wrote:

'My dear Percy, I am going to trouble you with a little matter which I am sure you will not object to investigating for me.' In the *Sporting Times* he had seen a notice that in the Court of Chancery, among the names of parties entitled to monies lying there, were those of Jarvis, Pike and Pyke.

It may be that I am not in any way interested; but Messrs. Cox and Co. of 41, Southampton Buildings, Holborn, will furnish a 'Book' giving the Christian and surname of the parties entitled therto. Will you therefore kindly make inquiries whether I am in any way interested?

To aid Percy in his search Hercules Jarvis went on to give some of his early recollections:

For your information, as far as I can recollect, my father's name was J. J. or J. H. Jarvis. (John Jarvis — in the burial register of Shoreham.)

He was first an officer in the Essex Light Dragoons (his portrait in uniform I have as you know). Subsequently, at his death, he was Captain and Paymaster of the Montgomeryshire Militia, of which Colonel Davies was commander. The Colonel was residing, when I left England, on an estate near Welshpool. My father died and was buried at Shoreham.

After his death we removed to Welshpool. I am not aware as to where my father was born, or regarding his relations. As regards my mother, Ives Dunmore Jarvis, she was a Pike, or Pyke, of Exeter. She had a brother and two sisters.

We were four boys and two girls. [Two died young.]

The eldest, John Henry, studied at Addiscombe and went to India in the East India Company's service in the Artillery. [He was invalided and died on his way to the Cape.] My eldest sister, Sophia St. Ives Mary, married a Mr. Duis, a Dane, and Consul for Denmark residing at Hong Kong. He died there, and she here. She had two sons. When last I heard of them they were in Japan. My remaining sister, Georgiana Charlotte, died here. I left our home at Welshpool in the year 1816 under the care of Colonel Brown and was introduced to Mr. Daniel Dixon, of the firm of Hudson, Donaldson and Dixon, by the late Colonial Secretary, Mr. Henry Alexander. I subsequently became the manager of that extensive wine business for many years. I need not tell you of the several public situations I have filled here.

I was told by my mother that I was born on the 18th of June in the year 1803 or 1804 in London, and christened there (at which Church I am not aware). When I left for the Cape in 1816 Colonel Graham, of the banking firm of Marsh and Co., in London, had something to do with the arrangement, as also with my brother's outfit to India, his cadetship and subsequent promotion there.

Percy's reply is missing; but it is evident from his grandfather's next letter that he had done a good deal of research.

Claremont,
May 25th, 1886.

[Note that he is living at Claremont.]

My dear Percy,

You may have thought it negligent on my part not to reply to your kind letter of April 14th, and your interesting letter of April 28th, received by the last mail.

When I wrote on the 16th of March I had no idea of giving you the trouble you have undertaken for me. I thought that the moneys in the Court of Chancery could have been ascertained from the Book mentioned by Messrs. Cox and Co., and that by an inspection of the Will at Doctors Commons all information would have been attained.

After suggesting that it might be best to abandon the investigation, for which he will gratefully reimburse any expense, he continues:

Reverting to the unclaimed fund in the name of Pyke, paid in in 1756, you do not say the amount. The accumulated interest since that date must be very large. Emmie¹ tells me her Aunt Sophia told her that on her mother's side her parents were entitled to a legacy which was not claimed, they fearing the expense.

Since I received your letter I have been taxing my memory. At the time I was very young; my earliest recollection was the death of my father at Shoreham, and seeing the funeral going down to the church. What impressed itself strongly on my mind was the sight of his grey Arab charger following the procession. The next thing I can remember was staying with 'Uncle Fisher' (he must have been a brother-in-law of

¹ One of his daughters.

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my father) on our journey to Exeter to my mother's parents. They lived in the street leading up to the castle. I remember going with the nurse to the castle gate. I would not go in, being afraid of the sentry. We must have stayed there some time until we commenced our journey to Wales. I remember it was a long one, and all I can recollect of it is that we stayed at an isolated inn called the Hundred House. I was so very young, only 12, when I left home, that perhaps my mother never thought of confiding in me anything relating to family matters, which she may afterwards have confided to my sisters. With regard to the sum paid in 1817 (this might be 1807) in the name of Jarvis, I heard from my mother that my father had a sister living — where, or whether married or not, I do not recollect. I never heard of a brother, nor do I know of any channel from which information could be obtained except that my father was an officer in the Essex Light Dragoons and subsequently, at the time of his death, in the Montgomeryshire Militia on actual service.

To this account set down in his old age may be added Caroline Murray's recollections of her grandfather, written in 1913 and privately circulated in a Chronicle of the family. It will be noticed that in talking to his granddaughter Hercules Jarvis referred to his relative Lord St. Vincent as one who had been desirous of helping him.

The earliest link of our family with the Cape was through Grandpapa Jarvis. I asked him once what gave him the idea of coming out to the Cape at a time when so few people even knew of its existence. He replied that his father and his brother being in the Army, became acquainted with it on their way to and from India, and in that way his interest was aroused so that when a friend of their family, a Col. Brown, was ordered out to the Cape, Grandpapa's mother was persuaded to allow him to go out under his care. He was then only 14 years old. At that date, 1818, there was no regular steamer service to the Cape and they must have made the voyage of six months on a sailing ship.

Apparently Grandpapa remained at the Cape about two years. He told me that now and again he would be seized with a fit of home-sickness, when he would climb up to the top of the Lion's Rump and, gazing there over the sea, would have a good cry. Col. Brown seems to have been very good to him, and to have taken him with him wherever he went. Once when the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, was going round the coast to Algoa Bay, Col. Brown accompanied him, and Grandpapa was also invited to be one of the party. They seem to have had only a small vessel and a rather adventurous voyage, finding themselves when a fog suddenly lifted, in an unexpected place somewhere near Cape Point, but this on their return journey. At Algoa Bay there were then only 2 houses, one a farm and the other a military station. On their arrival Col. Brown lent him a gun and in an hour he came back with a buck. When embarking for their return voyage they had some experience of the dangerous seas there. He told me that, as they

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stood on the shore, he was keen to go off in the first boat, but Col. Brown made him go with him and the Governor in the lifeboat. That first boat was swamped and everyone in it drowned. He seems to have made a favourable impression on the Governor; for, at the end of the return voyage, he offered him a commission in the Army.

This was the second time that ~~he had had that opportunity; for before he left England his relative, Lord St. Vincent, had made him the same offer, but he seems to have had no desire for a soldier's life.~~

On his return to his people at the end of 2 years, he greatly appreciated the life in his home in Wales, and especially he enjoyed the hunting; but ~~when he was about 17 the spell of Africa seized him again, and this time held him fast and claimed him as one of those men with high ideals of public duty whose love for their adopted country was expressed in services, the fruits of which we now enjoy, though often all unconsciously.~~

~~At that time the leading merchants were mostly Dutch and resided in Cape Town, which was then a very different place from the present bustling, modern looking town. Its streets seemed wide and silent with no high buildings, few shops, but many fine old dignified houses with large cool halls and rooms and high stoeps where, in the evenings with the doors and windows thrown open the family received guests and drank coffee. This Grandpapa has described to me. I have been told that he was a slender, delicate looking youth, very fond of dancing. One day, when watching him at a dance some one remarked that he was going to be married. 'What,' was the reply, 'he looks more like going to be buried.'~~ All through ~~his life he was most abstemious and a very small eater.~~ Whenever he had any kind of illness his one remedy was to go to bed and starve. I remember how this used to exasperate his anxious family. He never argued about it but quietly took his course and certainly he wonderfully retained both his physical and mental powers and his keenness of interest, to the very end of his long life.

Amongst the life-long friendships ~~he early made, was that with Mr. and Mrs. de Jongh, the parents of Miss Christina and Mrs. Botha.~~ Their mother was a Vos, and her parents' home was one of those beautiful Dutch houses in the upper part of Strand Street. It occupied, with its large courtyard and slave quarters, a block reaching through to the next street behind, and Miss Christina has described to me its beautiful old Dutch and French furniture and precious Eastern carpets, now all scattered and lost in a time when their value was quite unappreciated. The splendid old house, like many others, has now been turned into ugly warehouses and shops, with scarcely a trace left of its former glory.

At 19 Grandpapa married a Miss Vos. She was ~~only 16 and was a relative of Mrs. de Jongh.~~ The business in which Grandpapa was embarked was that of a wine merchant, at that time a very profitable one, as there was a flourishing export trade. He made his home in Somerset Road at Green Point where, from his stoep, he could gaze over the sea that he loved and watch the shipping that so keenly interested him.

actually at 22 yr.
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There I picture him still with the familiar 'spy-glass' in his hand. There was very little building then in the neighbourhood and their house and the de Smidts' adjoining seemed quite isolated. It was the spot on earth that, to my child-mind, seemed most like Paradise. As I think of it now, in the light of my older experience, I know that there was ground for that feeling. The memory of that home deserves to be valued and loved by all its descendants; for when I think of the great divergences of character, age, relationship and nationality combined in it and reflect that I have not one memory connected with it of anything but kindness, sympathy and the most generous hospitality, then I realize that it was something quite unique. It is only with the memory of a child that I can recall my Grandmother who presided over this home with a quiet dignity and authority that never seemed to press or jar, yet was the source of its harmonious working. We loved to follow her about as she busied herself with her household duties. There was never bustle or disorder, but there were always faithful old servants and always a bountiful table where an unexpected guest was sure of welcome. I never remember Grandmamma speaking anything but Dutch to us, although in her children's education and environment the English language and ideas had the preponderating influence. Grandpapa joined her Church, the Dutch Reformed, and became one of its elders. It was in the Groote Kerk in Adderley Street that all their children were baptized and married. When I go now into that vast solemn building, I can still feel myself a frightened little child buried in one of the high pews and gazing across with awe at the mass of elders in black with great bibles in front of them, amongst whom sat our kind Grandpapa. But it was the huge pulpit supported by carved lions with its overpowering canopy that struck real terror when the thunders of the preacher echoed from beneath it.

When I can first remember the house at Somerset Road Aunt Sophy had already left it; for she was married at barely 17 to Uncle Alport, and lived for some years in a cottage in the neighbourhood. Aunt Annie, too, had been married at 17, to Major Blenkins, a widower whose eldest daughter was just about her own age. Soon after their marriage they left for India, where they spent the short but very happy two years of their married life.

Elizabeth Maria Jarvis, Percy's mother, was the second daughter of Hercules Cross Jarvis. She was almost twenty years younger than her husband, and died ~~twenty-five~~ years before her father, who lived until 1889. She was attractive, amiable, unselfish, devoted to her husband and children as they to her. Percy only remembered her as one whom he lost when a small schoolboy; but he was much attached to the Jarvis family, and his interest in his Jarvis ancestors was as strong as in the Moltenos. Moreover his curiosity was stimulated by the difficulty of tracing their connection with one of his heroes, Earl St. Vincent, the great naval commander and reformer of Napoleonic times. Before his death, when he was collecting material for a family history, he dictated a series of notes about his grandfather Hercules and the Jarvis family. The letters we have quoted from Hercules

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Cross Jarvis, and the investigation which Percy made at his request while he was reading in Chambers in the Temple, had set his mind working on the subject; and he followed up these researches soon after his marriage; for there is among his papers a manuscript note dated August 11th, 1890, to the following effect:

Went over to Shoreham to-day. At New Shoreham churchyard saw tombstone of John Jarvis. It is an upright stone facing the West entrance of the Church. The inscription also faces the West entrance. The stone looks aged, and parts of the inscription are illegible. So far as I could read it, it runs: 'Sacred to the memory of Lieut. John Jarvis, Paymaster of the Royal Montgomeryshire Militia. . . . Died 10th (?) June, 1808, forty-seven years of age.'

He appends a tree showing that this Lieutenant John Jarvis married Miss Dunmore Pike, that one of their children was Hercules Cross Jarvis, born 1803 or 1804, who went to the Cape, married, and died in 1889; and that one of his daughters, Elizabeth Maria, married John Charles Moltano.

Lieutenant John Jarvis was therefore Percy Moltano's great-grandfather. Percy took the trouble to look up at the Public Record Office the muster rolls and paylists of various regiments showing his military career.

Thirty-seven years later Percy Moltano, when driving in his car to Glenlyon, the family home in Scotland, turned aside from Coventry to visit Lichfield and Eccles Hall in Staffordshire, where the ancient home of the Jarvis (or Jervis) family is situated, and where, in Eccleshall Castle, the Bishops of Lichfield resided until recently. Part of his note on this occasion is worth recording:

Among the monuments in Lichfield Cathedral I noticed one to a Mr. Jarvis who had lived in the Close. At Eccleshall we visited the Parish Church, a very fine one. On looking over the lists in the Roll of Honour, the first name I saw under the letter 'J' was that of John Jervis. We lunched at Eccleshall, and at the Inn were given the programme of a pageant which had been held on August 3rd to 6th of this year. In the list of patrons were Lieut. Col. W. S. W. Parker-Jervis, D.S.O. and Mrs. Parker-Jervis. One episode of the Pageant represented Eccleshall's celebration of the Coronation of George III. Among the arrivals at a dance patronized by the local gentry is Mrs. Jervis, mother of the boy John Jervis who was to become the famous Admiral, Earl St. Vincent. Another of the company is Lady Anson, who jokes with young Jervis about his glorious future in the Navy.

After luncheon we went on to Chatkill Hall, which is situated at some distance from Eccleshall. The house has been modernized and is now let. It was the home of the Jervis family from the time of Edward III onwards, and descended to the present owner, Miss Jervis, now Mrs. Gooch. The modern reconstruction has left little of interest in the House, which had a fine walled garden with an early English gateway in brick. The place commands fine views of the country all round, which is purely agricultural.

This visit to Chatkill Hall incited Percy to further researches, and eventually he made a rough draft of twenty-three pages on the life and ancestry of his grandfather, Hercules Cross Jarvis, in which he embodied the letters already quoted as well as some further information.

On September 17th, 1936, there appeared an obituary notice of Percy Molteno's brother, Sir James Molteno. Thereupon Colonel Swynfen Jervis, of Middle Barton, Oxfordshire, wrote to Percy Molteno:

I noticed in the obituary notice of your brother in the 'Times', the interesting fact that on your Mother's side you were descended from the Jervis family. As one of the few Jervises in the male line left, and as a member of the family who has taken a great interest in tracing all our relationship, I should be much obliged if you could tell me where the connection comes in as at present I have been unable to trace it. I can trace all the descendants of the family from John Jervis and Mary Swynfen, the grandparents of John, Earl of St. Vincent (and my four times great-grandparents), but some of the earlier collateral branches cannot be traced down to the present day.

In reply, September 30th, 1936, Percy Molteno recapitulated the details about his great-grandfather John Jarvis, (or Jervis), who was gazetted a cornet of the Essex Light Dragoons in 1795. His grandfather Hercules, he added,

always used as his seal a winged Pegasus, and had among his belongings a Coat of Arms with three martlets and the Pegasus as a Crest. His family were informed by him that he was closely related to Earl St. Vincent's family. . . . I would be very glad if you could succeed in establishing the exact relationship in the pedigrees of the Jervis family.

In his answer Colonel Swynfen Jervis, after tracing his own pedigree back to John Jervis, born in 1631, the great-grandfather of the Earl, said he was unable to find a relationship between the Jervis family of Staffordshire and Molteno's ancestors. His ancestors had always spelt their name Jervis, having come originally from the Norman Gervaise. He continued:

As regards the winged pegasus on the seal you mention, the crest granted to Earl St. Vincent on his elevation to the peerage (1797) was 'a demi pegasus issuant out of a naval crown'; but this is only admissible to the descendants of the 2nd. Viscount. The coat of arms 'Sa .a chevron erm bet three martlets or' is the old one of the Jervis family of Staffordshire, and was confirmed at the visitation of the County in 1664. This is the coat of arms borne by myself, and the crest I bear, 'a griffen's head erased etc.' was granted to my Gt. Grandfather in 1818.

The coat of arms as mentioned above is usable by any member of the family who can prove their descent from Robert Jervys b. 1520, from whose seal it was taken at the visitation in 1664 by his Gt. Gt. nephew William b. 1624.

In the last letter of this correspondence, dated October 21st, 1936, Molteno wrote:

With regard to the name having been changed from Jervis to Jarvis. I have always been informed that the name Jervis is pronounced Jarvis; and I remember reading in Tucker's Life of Earl St. Vincent that he was known to the sailors as 'Old Jarvie'. On looking at some of my papers I see that in the Muster Rolls of the Loyal Fencible Regiment of Cavalry (December, 1794 to June, 1795) John Jervis, Quartermaster, was appointed Cornet and was promoted from Cornet to Lieutenant in January, 1796. When appointed Paymaster he appears as John Jervis but signs himself J. Jarvis; so it seems clear there was some confusion in the spelling of the names.

I remember my aunt (my grandfather's daughter) telling me that a mistake had been made in his commission in spelling his name.

In case it is of interest to you I enclose an impression of the seal which he used, a demi Pegasus. I notice also that in the Coat of Arms, in addition to the three martlets, there is a Shield of Pretence, with three small objects, possibly leopards' faces; but it is difficult to make them out exactly.

Owing to my grandfather having left for South Africa so young, and in view of the great distances which then separated South Africa from England by sailing vessels, he was cut off from his relations in this country and so became less familiar with his family connections.

I see that his elder brother's name was John Henry, preserving the name of John, which appears to have been used so frequently in the various generations of the Jarvis family.

There can be little doubt that Molteno was right about the spelling and pronunciation. Jarvis is the English spelling of the French Jervis. There is an almost exact parallel to Gervaise and Jarvis in the case of Jervaux Abbey in Yorkshire, which is always called Jarvis in the locality. Moreover, in the *Dictionary of National Biography* there are two or three cross-references of Jarvis to Jervis. The evidence of the crest, and the family tradition that Earl St. Vincent exerted himself to help the two boys whom he recognized as kinsmen, make it more than probable that Percy Molteno's grandfather came from a collateral branch of the main stem of the Jervises. In the notes already referred to Molteno remarks that the Jervis or Jarvis family had produced several other members, besides Lord St. Vincent, who had distinguished themselves in the service of their country.

There was a Sir Humphrey Jarvis, who went over to Dublin, and was twice Lord Mayor. From him descended the family of Jarvis-White Jarvis, Baronets, of Bally Ellis in the county of Wexford.

There was Sir John Jervis, a second cousin of Earl St. Vincent, and a younger contemporary, who passed from Trinity College Cambridge to the Middle Temple, represented Chester in Parliament as a Liberal from 1832 to 1850, was Attorney-General under Lord John Russell in 1846, and rose to be Chief Justice of Common Pleas from 1850 to 1856, when he died, at the early age of fifty-four.

Resuming the family story Molteno wrote:

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When Captain John Jarvis died, he left his widow with a young family to be provided for. The Jarvises had never been wealthy, and Mrs. Jarvis had to seek some opening for her boys as soon as they were old enough to begin a career of their own.

In all probability through the influence of Earl St. Vincent the eldest son John was introduced to Lord Castlereagh, the famous statesman who had charge of our foreign policy at the Congress of Vienna. Castlereagh secured a cadetship for him from John Huddleston, a director of the East India Company, through whose patronage John and Henry Lawrence went out to India. The boy Jarvis was sent to the new Military Academy at Addiscombe House, where officers were trained for the Indian Army. Among the many well-known men who studied there may be mentioned Henry Lawrence, Robert Napier, Baird Smith, Arthur Cotton, and Earl Roberts.

It may also be recalled that Colonel Sandeman (whose daughter married Wallace Moltano, Percy's younger brother) was trained at Addiscombe. After passing through Addiscombe John Jarvis was appointed to the Bengal Artillery and served some time at Dum Dum, afterwards notorious for the dum-dum bullet. In 1832 he was invalided and sailed for the Cape, intending to stay where with his younger brother Hercules. But he died in August at Mauritius during the passage.

Meanwhile my grandfather Hercules Jarvis had been furnished with letters of introduction to the Colonial Secretary at the Cape. The boy was then only thirteen or fourteen years of age. Happily Lord Charles Somerset, the Governor of the Cape, took a fancy to him, and eventually he was taken into the firm of Donaldson, Dickson, and Co. They were the chief English merchants in Cape Town, their main business being the exportation of Cape wines. These wines, like the Madeira wines, came into vogue during the Napoleonic wars, because the embargo levied by Napoleon on all goods from the Continent prevented French and German wines reaching England. Hercules Jarvis was able and energetic. He soon made his mark and was invited to become a partner in the business. He devoted himself to shipping, as many ships were then consigned to the firm. At that time there was no shelter in Table Bay from the north-west gales which frequently caused terrible havoc and destruction. He told me that the first step taken, when a ship arrived consigned to the firm, was to send out an immense hawser and anchor, so that the ship might have a secure hold and be able to ride out a gale. Realizing the importance of providing shelter for the ships he became a strong advocate of a break-water, and got his daughter Elizabeth, afterwards Mrs. Bisset ('Aunt Betty') to make a sketch of the proposed break-water, showing its position and appearance. Of this sketch a copy has been preserved.

In this connection I may mention that when my father, a little later, entered business at Cape Town, he too became a shipper of wines, then the only important export of the colony, and chartered ships to England in conjunction with Donaldson, Dickson, and Co.

During my grandfather Jarvis' early days at the

Cape he was often invited to visit the large estates at Constantia, and would spend some of his Sundays there. The proprietors, mostly Dutch, lived in considerable affluence. They had plenty of slave labour to cultivate their vineyards, and they trained some of these slaves for private bands which performed in their grounds.

~~At the age of nineteen my grandfather made a voyage to England, probably on the business of the firm. On that visit he stayed with an uncle who was clergyman somewhere in the Mendips. His uncle, he told me, was very fond of coursing, and even when going to Church on Sundays would take his dogs with him. One day on their way to Church they put up a hare. The Rector said he could not possibly leave his valuable dogs, so there was no Service that day in the Church!~~

Among the principal wine merchants of Cape Town, with whom his business brought Mr. Jarvis into connection, were two brothers of the de Vos family. He fell in love with, and married, a daughter of Mr. Hendrick de Vos, whose brother had been Chief of the Burgher Senate during the first British occupation, and was presented with a piece of plate by the British Government for his friendly acts towards the British Forces. My grandfather married Miss de Vos on December 18th, 1825. She was only sixteen and he twenty-one or twenty-two at the time of their marriage. They had a number of children but only five daughters survived. Percy's Aunt Sophia, the eldest, married his father's business partner Percy John Alport, after whom he was called. The second, Elizabeth, married his father (Sir) John Charles Molteno. The third, Annie, married Major Blenkins, the fourth, also Elizabeth (Aunt Betty) married James Bisset. The fifth, Emerentia, who was always called Emmie, remained unmarried.

Miss de Vos spoke Dutch and drew her husband into the Dutch Reformed Church; but as her name, like that of de Villiers indicates, she was partly descended from the French Huguenots who made their way to the Cape to escape religious persecution between 1687 and 1689, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685.

As time went on [to resume Percy Molteno's narrative] my grandfather Hercules Jarvis, being well-established as a partner in the business, began to take an active share in the affairs of Cape Town. It was then the only town in South Africa which had a public body of any kind elected by the inhabitants. He was chosen a Commissioner of the Municipality on May 14th, 1845 and was elected Chairman on May 3rd, 1848. In this office he continued until April 7th, 1860 when he retired by his own wish from the Board. He took up all public questions with great vigour. Two of the most exciting and important in the whole history of the Municipality arose during his period of office. The first was the celebrated attempt by Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies (or rather of the War Office, which then had charge of the Colonies as well and was often called in jest 'the Office of War with the Colonies) to establish a Penal Settlement at the Cape, like that which had been established in Australia at Botany Bay.

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 The first Whitehall proposal, in May, 1841, was that the Cape should be made a convict station for ~~European soldiers condemned (chiefly in India) to long terms of imprisonment.~~ They were to serve their terms on Robyn Island, and at the expiration of their sentences they were to be liberated in Cape Town. This project provoked many remonstrances and petitions, and its dangers were so strongly represented to the home authorities by the Governor, Sir George Napier, that it was abandoned. In the following year, however, the idea of establishing a Penal settlement at the Cape was revived by a proposal that fifty convict boys should be sent there to be apprenticed, but this too had to be abandoned owing to the strength of the local opposition.

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 Finally in November, 1848 — the year of the Irish Famine — the Governor of the Cape, Sir Harry Smith, after whom Harrismith is named, announced to the Cape Legislative Council that the Secretary of State intended to make the Cape a Penal settlement; and on March 21st of the following year it was reported that ~~a ship with prisoners convicted of agrarian offences in Ireland was on its way to Cape Town.~~ Thereupon a pledge was drawn up by the Editor of the Commercial Advertiser, John Fairbairn, to the effect that all the signatories would refuse to employ in any capacity any convicts landed at the Cape, and calling on the Governor in the exercise of his discretionary powers to refuse to receive the convicts on shore when they arrived. The pledge was placed for signature in the Commercial Exchange. A boycott of all who might employ convicts was also resolved upon, and many officials resigned their offices in order to create a deadlock.

On September 20th, 1849 the *Neptune* arrived with the convicts on board. A letter signed by my grandfather, H. C. Jarvis as Chairman of the Commissioners, and Mr. Maskew, Chairman of the Ward Masters, was immediately despatched to the Governor. It stated that, the *Neptune* with her cargo of convicted felons, having arrived in Simons Bay, the Commissioners and Ward Masters of the Municipality of Cape Town once more addressed His Excellency to inform him that the people were determined that the convicts 'must not, cannot and shall not be landed or kept in any of the ports of this Colony'; and they relied upon the Governor for protection. The Governor, while regretting the tone and style of this communication, promised that the *Neptune* should remain at anchor in Simons Bay for a few weeks until the despatch which he had addressed to the Secretary of State could be answered. The moderates in Cape Town were satisfied with this concession; but a more determined section, including Mr. Jarvis, remained defiant. Other difficulties also cropped up. A Kaffir war had broken out and trouble followed between the Municipality and the Government in connection with the garrisoning of the town. The anti-convict disturbances led to a quarrel between the Police and the Commissioners.

Meanwhile a petition of remonstrance was drawn up by the Municipality and addressed to Queen Victoria protesting strongly against the introduction of persons of evil character into the Colony. It was signed by H. C. Jarvis as Chairman, and a similar

petition was addressed to both Houses of Parliament. Interest in the struggle spread from South Africa to London, and Charles Adderley, an M.P., (afterwards Lord Norton) took up the cudgels for the Colony and made known in Parliament the course that was being pursued by Earl Grey. Eventually the protest was successful. Thereupon my grandfather called a meeting of the Commissioners, which resolved to convey their thanks to Adderley, and it was decided to change the principal street of Cape Town, then known as Heerngracht, to Adderley Street. The public interest excited by the anti-convict agitation stimulated to an enormous degree the demand for popular institutions and a Parliament at the Cape.² Jarvis was by nature and conviction one of the strongest supporters of this measure and gave the movement all the assistance in his power. Before retiring from his municipal work he had the satisfaction of seeing the grant of representative institutions and the birth of the first Cape Parliament in 1854. He stood for Cape Town and was elected Member at the head of the poll. After some years of service in the House of Representatives he was elected to the Legislative Council and remained in that position until he retired from public affairs.

On the occasion of my grandfather's death in 1889, Mr. Charles Fairbridge wrote of him:

'For more than half a century he was perhaps the best known and most energetic citizen in Cape Town. A zealous supporter of municipal institutions, he was for many years in succession a most efficient Chairman of the Municipality. Mr. Jarvis was also an ardent supporter of the measures adopted to make Table Bay a safe harbour, as well as to open our mountain passes and introduce railways and tram-ways. Finally he was strenuous in the endeavours to secure Parliamentary government. He was a director of many public institutions, and a man of general and useful activity.'

Another well-known citizen of Cape Town has written to me:

'I had hoped to be able to command the time to jot down something about the life and labours of Mr. Jarvis.' With great regret he had abandoned this intention but added:

'His services to the Cape Colony for years before the grant of representative institutions were indeed great — how great only those may know who were his associates during the years of labour he devoted to the cause of the people of this land. When tyranny was still strong, and military law superseded the legal tribunals, his own life and liberty were often in great peril. Few are now alive to know this. New generations have sprung up who have other fish to fry, and care little about ancient history or how the rights they now enjoy were fought out by their predecessors.'

When the wine export trade, with which my grandfather was associated, came to grief as a result of the commercial legislation of 1860, when the duties on light Continental wines were lowered, he wrote a useful pamphlet on the subject, pointing out the injury which was unintentionally being done to South Africa by tariff changes which, in effect, were fatal for a time to the chief export of the colony. Fortunately, as I have shown in my *Life of Sir J. G. Molteno*, the develop-

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² Cf. the account of these events in Professor Eric Walker's *History of South Africa*, pp. 249 sqq.

ment and export of wool in increasing quantities were then beginning, and were of the utmost assistance in maintaining the solvency of the Colony until diamonds were discovered and then gold, to the great financial benefit of the Cape Treasury.

72 In the same year, 1860, when these business misfortunes befell him, Hercules Jarvis retired, as we have seen (on April 7th), from the Board of Commissioners.

An address was then presented him by the Board which ran as follows:

'In the opinion of this Board the retirement of the Hon. Hercules Cross Jarvis as Member thereof will be sincerely regretted by every well-wisher of this Municipality; and this Board feels called upon to place on record their due appreciation of the many eminent services by him to this City during the time of his Commissionership, extending over a period of nearly twenty years, which services, by inaugurating and maturing measures calculated to promote the public good, entitle him to the lasting gratitude of those who have reaped in gold the benefits therefrom.'

It was further agreed that the Resolution be engrossed on parchment and presented to Mr. Jarvis by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board. Mr. Jarvis' career was one instance in many of a young Englishman transferred to entirely different surroundings from those of his old home, who, at an early age and with few advantages, by innate ability, courage, and energy, rose quickly to public positions in which he enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens. It is interesting to recall that in the seventeenth century Sir Humphrey Jarvis did much the same when he went to Ireland and rose to be Lord Mayor of Dublin.

I may add that the Town Council of Cape Town recently asked my brother, Sir James Molteno, if he could provide them with a portrait of his grandfather, who was Chairman of the old Municipality from 1848

72 to 1860.

Percy Molteno's interest in the Jarvis (or Jervis) family derived another incentive from his hero-worship of Earl St. Vincent, whose life he studied with more and more delight and approbation as his brother Barkly rose in the naval service. After the Battle of Jutland and the conclusion of the Great War he would often enlarge on the character and exploits of St. Vincent; and his marked copies of the lives of St. Vincent by Brenton and Tucker convince me that he intended to write something about that great Naval Commander and reformer.

Percy's enthusiasm may be explained partly by family pride, and partly by patriotic feeling for the Navy — enhanced during the Great War by his brother's exploits. He was much impressed by St. Vincent's magnificent work as a naval reformer as well as by his sturdy Radicalism, and also by his appreciation (after Waterloo) of the need for public and private economy to repair the devastation and misery and suffering left behind by the Napoleonic Wars. He found moreover that St. Vincent's political opinions, which harmonized with his own, were

expressed with an amazing vigour and boldness, at times when it was dangerous to express Liberal opinions.

It is well-known that by reforming the dockyards, repairing ships, improving the diet of the sailors, resisting all forms of corruption and favouritism, and appointing officers by merit, Lord St. Vincent not only won the great battle with which his name is associated, but made Nelson's victories of the Nile and Trafalgar possible. He was indeed, as Nelson wrote, the Father of the Fleet.

It is not so well-known that while St. Vincent was always for efficiency and discipline during the war, he was also anxious for an honourable peace; or that after the peace he pressed for a policy of retrenchment, combined with a clear perception of social needs, very similar to that advanced by Percy Molteno and his friends after the Great War. A few extracts from letters written by Earl St. Vincent from his country place Rochetts to intimate friends will illustrate his post-war opinions:

Sept. 4th, 1815. [When the post-war slump was just beginning.] Our crops of every description have been most abundant, and are all housed except beans, which being in the sheaf for the most part, are not liable to injury. The memory of man does not recollect so prosperous and cheap a harvest! Nevertheless all the cultivators of land complain most grievously of low prices; and many are failing, for they have been living up to the full extent of their profits. Their sons and daughters are getting far above their condition, and instead of working at the churn, cheese-press, and other domestic concerns, are playing upon their *pi-a-nos*, and flaunting about in shawls, while every female in a market cart carries a parasol in a languishing form. But the country banks, which have in a great part been the cause of these events, are in a tottering state, and will not make any advances, so that the foundation of our outward and visible sign of prosperity appears to me very hollow.

Nov. 12th, 1816. We hear of nothing but the distresses of the people, who can only be essentially relieved by the reduction of taxes, and especially of the Army Ordnance expenditure to the scale on which it stood in the year 1790; and Parliament ought to be assembled immediately to carry this measure into execution; and this language ought to be expressed at every public meeting in the kingdom; for it is by this voice alone that we can be relieved from the approaching evil of military despotism.

May 15th, 1818. Mr. Delhunty is here and confirms all my statements touching Naval hospitals, and also my late apprehension that all the systems I established (and vainly hoped would endure for ever) to preserve the health of our seamen are wearing out fast; sick berths where they continue, altered for the worse, and applied in some instances to other purposes. It may not be amiss to moot this to Sir George Cockburn (for, of all the services I lay claim to, the preservation of the health of our fleets is my proudest boast) taking care to keep Delhunty's name out of sight, or the Guardship Surgeons will roast and devour him.

July 8th, 1818. Believing that you are governed by sound good principles, opposed to enormous standing armies, and that you will exert your utmost abilities

to rescue the Navy from the degraded state it is now in (merged in the Army), I am always your zealous friend.³

Dudbrook, July 17th, 1818. It is of great importance to our country that the public should be kept alive upon the subject of our monstrous Army . . . The ordnance and appurtenances for His Majesty's Fleet should be vested in the Admiralty and entirely taken away from what is termed the Ordnance Department. The futile employment yclept *Staff* should be totally done away with, and all the frippery of the Army sent to the devil.

At Rochetts, the country seat where St. Vincent spent his last years, he loved to entertain congenial friends, and was generous to the poor. Edward Pelham Brenton, a Captain in the Navy who knew him well, states in the biography that he was

'beloved and respected by all classes in his own neighbourhood and throughout the county. He knew the history of every family, particularly those who were in any pecuniary distress; and to these, if they were deserving, his purse was ever open; but he drew a strong line between industry and idleness.

He built two good cottages on his estate and let them to two poor people of good character who had brought up large families without ever applying for parochial relief. 'A brass plate on their doors stated this fact.' That some of his ideas were eccentric may be inferred from his reason for disapproving of vaccination. The smallpox, he said, was intended by nature to check a redundant population — a rather extreme example of the influence exerted at that time by Malthus. One other anecdote deserves reproduction, for it shows that from the Jarvis connection as well as from the Moltenos Percy drew inspiration for his own favourite doctrine, which he assiduously applied, of economizing time and money, though no one was more generous with both when he thought they could be usefully employed for public or private purposes:

I never knew anyone who was at once so great an economist both of money and time as Lord St. Vincent, and yet so liberal with both. It was this seasonable parsimony, which enabled him to spare so much for the good of his fellow creatures. His life was extended to a great length, and yet, according to the average mode of taking rest, he may be considered to have lived nearly twice as long as most other men of the same age. Of the time he gave to sleep I have overstated the amount when I say that he rose at four o'clock. In summer time he was very commonly on his grounds at half-past two, always before his labourers and the man who was the first to join always received half-a-crown for his industry and early rising. At five o'clock in the morning both in summer and winter the coachman was regularly despatched on horseback to Brentwood (two miles off) for the letters and newspapers . . . When he had 'made up his post', as he called it, and franked all his letters, he would ask what privilege there was remaining, in order that he might know how far he could accommodate his friends.

³ At this time St. Vincent was well over eighty.

After getting the post St. Vincent wrote his letters and read the morning and evening papers, which occupied his time till breakfast was announced at nine o'clock, when he would exclaim. 'I have got through all my work and the day is my own'. He was not pleased if his male guests delayed their appearance after six o'clock in the morning: to the ladies he was more indulgent; but he was a severe host to guests who offended against his rule of punctuality. He used to say there were very few really independent men in England, because they all wanted something or fancied they wanted something, either for themselves, or their children, or their dependents. 'Every person, sir,' said he, to Brenton, 'lives beyond his income: three servants are kept where there should be only two. If a man has but a shilling a day, he should live upon tenpence, and lay by twopence.'

His political and economic opinions were a large part of his religion, and it was probably a difference of political opinion with the neighbouring parson that prevented him from attending the Church; but he was neither an atheist nor a Roman Catholic, though he was accused of heresy for favouring the cause of emancipation, which he believed would strengthen the Empire and the Monarchy. In fine, he was a staunch and consistent Whig, firmly attached to the Lansdowne interest and a great friend of Charles James Fox.

I have no doubt that Percy's habits of early rising, and his insistence on punctuality and his zeal for public economy were fortified by his admiration for the greatest member of his mother's family.

*

The de Vos Ancestry

During the excitement over the Raid Inquiry Tom Anderson, who was very much of a Loyalist, became very hot against the Cape Dutch, and especially against Schreiner on account of his evidence at the Inquiry, and Maria, always loyal to her husband, wrote to Percy from Kalk Bay on March 29th, 1897: 'I daresay just at present you and Betty are very indignant with Thomas.'

She held that the only way to deal with an obstinate, wrong-headed old man like Kruger was for England to deal firmly with him and Dr. Leyds.

However she thought that the Dutch and English at the Cape were beginning to understand one another better:

Thomas, who was so much opposed to all the Dutch, is now anxious through me to prove he is connected with the Dutch. Did I tell you Emmie says we are not Dutch at all? One set of our ancestors came from Osnäberg in Germany and the other from the French Huguenots.

Percy who was always in search of information, about his ancestors, was much excited on hearing of the sale at Christie's at the end of January 1924 of a silver cup which had been presented by the British military authorities at the Cape in 1797 to Jacobus Johannes Vos, who was President of the Burger Raad during the British Occupation. The cup, which was described as 'elabor-

Vos
 ately ornate', was sold for £146 3s. to Solly Joel. Molteno tried hard to buy it afterwards but without success. Fortunately the Vos family shield, crest and plate, remained with the Vos family in Cape Town, who were direct descendants of the original Johan Hendrick Vos of Osnaberg, who married Christina Bouman, daughter of a Captain of the Burger Militia at the Cape. This Osnaberg Vos died in 1719 in Batavia. His son returned to the Cape and had two sons. One, Jacobus Johannes Vos, born in 1756, was the President of the Burger Senate to whom the silver cup had been presented. His elder brother, Johan Hendrick Vos (1749-1810) married Elizabeth Rousseau, a great-granddaughter of a French refugee, Pierre Rousseau, who had come with the other French Huguenots to the Cape in the middle of the eighteenth century. Elizabeth's mother, however, was a Cape Dutchwoman, Johanna Bok, and her son, Hendrick Daniel Vos, born at the Cape in 1783, married another Dutchwoman, (with Huguenot blood), Anna Jurgens, who lived until 1853. Their daughter Elizabeth Maria Vos married in 1825 Hercules Crosse Jarvis, whose daughter, Elizabeth Maria, married John Charles Molteno and was Percy's mother.

This pedigree was furnished by Graham Botha, curator of the Archives in Cape Town, who was himself descended from the Vos family. Percy's aunt, Miss Emmie Jarvis, was applied to soon after the sale of the cup, and wrote:

The President of the Burger Senate was a brother of my great-grandfather. My grandfather, Hendrick Vos, married Anna Elizabeth Jurgens. She was of Huguenot extraction, the name I believe was de la Porte, or Delporte as they write it now

In 1931, when Percy was still in pursuit of the cup, his niece, Miss Kathleen Murray, wrote to him:

Solly Joel told me in October, 1930 that he purchased the cup at Christie's and that he would send me a copy of the inscription. The cup was in its original leather case. He had intended presenting it to General Smuts if the South African Party had won the last Election.

These documents, carefully preserved by Percy Molteno for the family history which he had designed, prove that half of his mother's blood was German, French and Dutch.

Being fond of heraldry he also noted that on the shield of the Vos family there was a red fox (vos) beneath the crest, but there was no family motto.

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CHAPTER IV

SIR JOHN CHARLES MOLTENO, K. C. M. G.

PERCY worshipped his father's memory, and his filial piety found expression in the chief literary labour of his life. As a boy he had been more and more impressed by the strong, commanding personality of his father, the master of Claremont House, who rose to be the first Premier of Cape Colony in December, 1872, when Sir Henry Barkly, the Governor, asked him to form an administration. At that time Percy was only eleven years of age, but he soon acquired a keen interest for something in African politics which lasted to the end of his life. His father's zeal and public spirit descended on him in full measure, and he resolved early in life to sweep away the tissue of misrepresentation — due to ignorance or a deliberate falsification of the records which the friends of Carnarvon, Froude and Sir Bartle Frere had woven round the Molteno administration. This long and arduous task was accomplished in 1899 and early in 1900 ~~Smith Elder published in two volumes: —~~ *"The Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno, K.C.M.G., First Premier of Cape Colony, Comprising a History of Representative Institutions and Responsible Government at the Cape, and of Lord Carnarvon's Confederation Policy, and of Sir Bartle Frere's High Commissionership of South Africa.* By P. A. Molteno, M.A., L.L.M., Trinity College, Cambridge. 1900.

In this work Percy undertook not merely to describe John Charles Molteno's character, career and achievements, but to prove by chapter and verse, after a painstaking study of the official records as well as of private letters and contemporary newspapers, that his father as Prime Minister directed the policy of Cape Colony with great wisdom and success and that in his famous controversy with Sir Bartle Frere, Carnarvon's "prancing pro-consul", he was wholly in the right and Frere wholly in the wrong.

With these volumes before me I shall endeavour to give in as brief compass as possible a portrait of the statesman, and some account of his remarkable career. In so doing I feel certain that I am fulfilling his wishes as well as a biographer's duty; for it was the most important by far of all his writings. It was, as he knew, an important contribution to history, and by the correction of error he was not only establishing the truth but conveying a lesson that has borne and should still bear good fruit. Moreover this and my two succeeding chapters will serve to introduce a later South African tragedy in which Percy was to play a notable part. In addition to filial loyalty I cannot doubt that the parallel between Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Alfred Milner, and a well-justified fear that the train of disasters started by Sir Bartle Frere would end as they did, in another racial war between the English and Dutch, inspired Percy in the five years' arduous task of preparing his father's *Life*. It was significant of his motive that he insisted on publishing the book in 1900, though the war and war-feeling were at their height, and were certain to ensure an unfavourable reception from reviewers in most of the

leading newspapers, which would at any other time have welcomed it as a valuable contribution to South African history.

(D) John Charles Moltano was born on June 5th, 1814, a year before the Battle of Waterloo, and three months before Holland ceded the Cape to England. Catholic disabilities had not then been removed, and probably for that reason his father, John Moltano, who retained the religion of his Italian ancestors, had the boy's birth registered at the Bavarian Ambassador's Chapel in Warwick Street. Despite his religion and foreign origin John Moltano entered the Home Civil Service at Somerset House, and rose to be Deputy-Controller of Legacy

(D) Duties before his death at an early age in 1828. His widow, Caroline Bower, whose family, as we have seen, held various offices in the Bank of England, was a fine character and a devoted mother. Though her eldest son, John Charles, had been baptised a Catholic, she brought

NB → him up in her own Protestant faith; and he was educated in the Old Rectory at Ewell, where he was well-grounded in Latin and Arithmetic, and won several prizes. He left school young, and entered a ship-broker's office next door to that of the Castle Line, where he was brought in contact with vessels from South Africa and other countries, and acquired a passion for the sea which never left him.

(D) Inspired by love of the sea, love of freedom and love of adventure, probably also by the hope of making a fortune, the boy when only 17, in defiance of his mother's wishes — in her eyes South Africa was a barbarous country swarming with blacks — embarked for Cape Town. The voyage then took three or four months. His first job was as assistant at the Cape Public library. Then he found a place in the office of J. B. Ebdon, where he picked up a knowledge of local business; and in 1837 at twenty-three he started on his own account under the style of Moltano & Co. as a merchant shipper. Two years later he was able to buy a block of land in Roeland Street, Cape Town, where he built substantial warehouses. Unfortunately the price of wine, his chief export, began to fall in the European markets, and eventually trade became so unprofitable that he decided to close down his business and sold his warehouses to the Government. During these early years he was described as a young man of prepossessing appearance with regular features and a clear complexion, the envy of the young ladies in Cape Town. He was of slight build, a little above the medium height, and had the blue eyes which distinguish the Moltanos and other old Lombard families. There is evidence that the Moltanos were a particularly handsome family; the portraits of several of them, engraved by Bartolozzi before their migration to England, were handed down by J. C. Moltano to his children.

(D) From mercantile pursuits young Moltano turned his attention to farming. Vineyards were no longer profitable. Wine the principal export of the Cape, was failing; another must be found, and he decided to try wool. In 1840 he had made his way with some others to Beaufort West, where the Beaufort Grazing Company

was selling a large tract of land. There were then no roads into the interior, and no bridges over the rivers. 'Twenty days by ox wagon were passed on a journey which is now accomplished in as many hours by the railway subsequently authorised by Mr. Molteno's Government.'¹ With the capital saved from the wreck of his business Molteno acquired a large property in the Beaufort district. He appointed one Alexander Ross as his manager, imported Saxon merino rams to improve the native sheep (hairy animals with broad fat tails), married a wife and left with her for Beaufort in 1843. In the previous year he wrote to his mother of his disappointment that he had not been able to return home. The prospect now ~~seemed more distant than ever.~~ In this letter he added: 'Although I have not succeeded in pecuniary matters, I have gained what is of infinitely more value—sound views on religion and a firm conviction of the vain and transitory nature of the things of this life.' Before leaving for Beaufort he wrote to his mother that she was mistaken in her notions about the wilds of Africa.' At the Cape they had an excellent Library of 30,000 volumes. With his choice of a wife he had every reason to be satisfied. He had known Miss Hewitson for eight years.

'Although she never resided out of Cape Town she is perfectly happy and contented with our country life; and depend upon it, dear mother, happiness is not confined to any particular part of the world; but the Almighty has so ordered it that it is just as easily found in the wilds of Africa (as you are pleased to term this Colony) as it is in England.

The district of Beaufort West was then as wild as his mother supposed the whole Colony to be. It is well described by Percy in the *Life* of his father:

At the foot of the Nieuwfeld Mountains, indeed entangled partly among their spurs, lies Nelspoort, the farm which had been purchased by Molteno. It is situated on the Salt River, a torrent which runs for a short period during thunder showers, and loses itself in a marshy level, the Salt River Vlei, fifteen or twenty miles away. . . . The whole country is covered with low-lying scrub, comprised chiefly of Mesembryanthems and species of Compositae, which are of a uniform dull brown until the thunder shower gives its infrequent moisture, when they suddenly bloom with the most gorgeous colours, and all Nature lives again so rapidly that it would appear to be touched with a wizard's wand.

At that time the country round this family property of the Moltenos swarmed with game. There were all kinds of antelopes, from the huge eland to the small klip-springer, which frequented the rocky heights. 'To this day,' wrote Percy in 1900, 'large herds of graceful springbucks may be seen grazing on the plains, and the wild ostrich is still to be found in considerable numbers.' When J. C. Molteno settled there, the region 'harboured a greater variety and a greater number of the largest animals in the world than any other continent.' The

¹ *Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, Vol. I, p. 13.

carnivorous animals were led by the king of beasts, the lion himself. Next to him was the fierce leopard, locally called a tiger from its cunning vindictiveness and strength. Below them came smaller leopards, with wild dogs, wild cats, wolves, hyenas and jackals. When Molteno and his wife arrived, the lion was just emigrating from the district. 'It may easily be imagined,' wrote Percy, 'what formidable difficulties the presence of these wild animals presented to the stock farmer.'

The climate was healthy and invigorating. During the summer heat 'man as well as Nature rests from 11 to 4'. The air is dry and quite free from germs of decaying vegetable matter. The winter is bright and pleasant,

the nights are cold and the water takes a coating of half an inch of ice,, which is rapidly melted by the sun. When the healing properties of the warm, dry, highly ozonised air are better known, this district would seem to have advantages as the sanatorium of the world for those who suffer from lung complaints, or from nervous exhaustion brought on by excessive work in impure air. Each session of Parliament [this is to anticipate] J. C. Molteno returned with renewed energy and vigour from the bracing air [of Nelspoort] to the hot and exhausted atmosphere of the small hall which housed the Legislature in Cape Town.

Next to the solitude, and lack of society, and the depredations of wild animals, the greatest drawbacks to farming in these parts were the stupendous and destructive thunderstorms which from time to time in the hot season burst over the table lands of South Africa. A few specks of cloud suddenly appear ; they swell and extend over the sky; the sun is obscured by an inky mass of darkness; then comes a cannonade of thunder; the rain falls in torrents, lightning flashes, and at times instead of rain comes a shower of huge hailstones six inches in circumference, spreading death among game and sheep and ostriches.

No summer passes in South Africa without its quota of men killed by lightning; and at times a whole span of sixteen or eighteen oxen may be seen lying dead, the fluid having apparently passed along the chain to which the yokes were attached, so killing each couple in succession.

In this country John Charles Molteno spent the best part of twenty years. 'The area of the district in which he settled was about twice that of Ireland, with a popula-

tion of some 15,000 all told.' The farms were large ; your nearest neighbour might be five or ten miles away. Here the South African Boer could realise his ideal; 'he was lord of all he surveyed and his eyes were not offended by seeing even the blue column of his neighbour's smoke'.

Though shut off from society, there was no danger of rusting. Molteno's active, enterprising, combative nature keen intelligence and physical energy found plenty of work in warring against the wild animals whose depredations on his flocks and herds could only be arrested or prevented by unceasing watch and ward.

Within a year a terrible blow fell upon him. In 1845 his wife and her young child died. He wrote in despair to his mother. He had not lost his religion, but he had given up the hope of worldly happiness. 'The Christian's life is but a struggle, a warfare, and this is not his home.'

Though desolated he found consolation in work. He threw himself more energetically than ever into the development of his estate by constructing irrigation works, building sheepfolds, erecting dwelling houses, or the excavation of water furrows and dams. He was a very early riser and all about him had to be the same.

His servants would complain that they were being worn out by his energy. 'His was a nature which delighted in trials of strength of all kinds; he battled with Nature and grew stronger from the contest.' The force of his will power and commanding presence made him an influence among his neighbours and impressed the natives, who yielded him ready obedience. His physical courage and endurance were as remarkable as the moral courage and consistent adherence to principles which afterwards inspired his whole political life. No hardships deterred him in this period when, like so many contemporary farmers in America, he was a pioneer on the frontier of civilisation. He often rode alone to Cape Town on horseback, a distance of 360 miles.

In 1846 a Kaffir War suddenly burst out. His manager Alexander Ross, was commandeered. Molteno preferred to leave him on the farm and volunteered himself to join the Cammando of Beaufort Burghers, attracted, no doubt, by the peril and novelty of the adventure. Taking four horses and two armed retainers, he marched with the Commandant, Andreas De Toit, for four hundred miles. His fellow-burghers elected him Assistant Commandant, and on their arrival at the frontier the Commandant-General, Sir Andries Stockenstrom appointed him full Commandant. The Kaffirs who had invaded the Colony were destroying property and carrying off cattle and sheep. This, the seventh of the great Kaffir Wars, had opened with reverse to British troops, whose officers from this time onwards displayed over and over again extraordinary ignorance of Colonial warfare and lack of adaptability to colonial conditions. In his account of the seventh Kaffir War, Percy Molteno tells of surprises which should have been avoided and retreats which were unnecessary. These, as he puts it, 'were minor disasters in the series which eventually led up to that terrible mistake of Isandhlwana'. Flushed by successes over the regulars, the whole of Kaffirland had

Creck

risen against the Colony. Describing the operations in his autobiography, Stockenstrom bestowed high praise on his five Commandants—Joubert, Du Toit, Groepe, Pringle and Molteno. They stormed the Amatola fastnesses and eventually struck such terror into the great chief Krelie that he treated for peace. Molteno was deeply impressed by these experiences and by the terrible losses of life and property due to the inexperience, incompetence and mismanagement of the regular forces. After a campaign of several months he returned to Beaufort resolved to prevent, if he could, the recurrence of the treatment which he and his Cammando had received. In his son's words

he would never consent to the Colonial force being placed under the military, of whose incompetence . . . he had been an indignant witness . . . Let our readers re-peruse the above story when they read of Mr. Molteno's resistance to Sir Bartle Frere's purpose of placing the Colonial forces under military officers.²

Returning to Beaufort, he devoted himself for five years to developing the great area of land, extending over nearly a hundred thousand acres, which he had acquired. By 1851 he had got the farms into order, and had entrusted their detailed administration to competent managers. Then, retaining a general control, he established himself in the township of Beaufort West, the capital of a large district, which had for many years—since 1837—enjoyed municipal institutions. He soon became an active member of the Council; but before settling down, being now in affluent circumstances, he revisited England after an absence of nearly twenty years. Bronzed by Karoo suns and 'adorned with a powerful beard' the Lion of Beaufort, as he was soon to be called, was hardly recognisable by his mother and the friends who remembered 'the fresh-complexioned youth who had left them in 1831'. On his return to Cape Town he married Percy's mother, Elizabeth Maria Jarvis, whose father, Hercules Cross Jarvis, held political views in complete harmony with his own. They valued their English birthright to self-government, and were equally determined to establish it in their adopted country, the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. The large family of this happy second marriage started with three girls, Betty, Caroline and Maria, who were followed by seven boys, Charles, Percy, Frank, James, Victor, Wallace and Barkly. Only the first four of the children were born at Beaufort West, which, however, was constantly visited in their boyhood by the younger sons, from the family home, Claremont, on the outskirts of Cape Town

Some recollections of Beaufort West by Caroline Murray, his second daughter, may here find a place:

John Charles Molteno had entered into a business partnership with Percy John Alport, his brother-in-law, who had married Sophia Jarvis. The farms were pastoral and they frequently depastured as many as forty thousand sheep. There was very little society for the two sisters. Mrs Molteno, my mother, was almost twenty years younger than my father . . . I wonder now, as I

² See for this most illuminating narrative, *Life and Times of Sir J. C. Molteno*, Vol. I, cap. iii, pp. 26-51.

think of what it must have meant to her, with her gay sunny nature and attractive beauty, to be suddenly transported from her happy environment (at Cape Town) into the heart of the desolate, almost awesome Karoo, which in those days of long and comfortless ox or mule waggon journeys seemed like the very end of the world. No wonder that she and Aunt Sophy (Mrs. Alport) were almost overwhelmed by the terrific wilderness around them, but she had wonderful power of sunshine within her, and life with Papa could never be dull.'

Then there was always the yearly visit to Cape Town, to which the family looked forward, when John Charles Molteno left his farms and his constituency for the Parliamentary Session. He had been a member from 1854, when a representative legislative assembly was established in Cape Colony; and he was foremost in pressing for the system of responsible self-government; and when it was conferred in 1872 he became the first Prime Minister. That position was due not only to his energy and public spirit but to the fact that he always kept clear of racial jealousies, and made no distinction in business, politics, or society, between English and Dutch.

Though Percy was born at Edinburgh after the family home had been removed to the neighbourhood of Cape Town, he often visited his father's farms at Beaufort West and had experience of travelling through a still wild and primitive region. His sister Caroline's description of the journey from Beaufort West to Cape Town before the building of the railway deserves to be put on record:

Much preparation was necessary for this 12 to 14 days trek, as there was no way on the bare and lonely route of supplying anything that might be forgotten. The selection of mules or oxen and of drivers had to be most carefully considered. Provisions for the journey were all packed into a large basket with a cover, called a 'cos mantje'; for there were no hotels, and the few farms we passed were of the most primitive description. Inside the wagon was stretched a trestle of cane framework, on which mattresses were laid. On these my mother and the children slept while the men slept on the ground. When at last the eagerly looked for day of departure arrived, the long tent-wagon with its team of twelve to sixteen animals, would be standing ready in the wide straggling street in front of our house, the drivers looking proud and smart, with wild ostrich feathers stuck in their felt hats, and in their hands the long bamboo-stick whips which they could crack with a sound like the report of a pistol. My father himself saw to the packing, which had to be done with scrupulous care and economy of space. After anxious moments, when some forgotten but necessary luggage was being smuggled in, it was a relief to hear the crack of the whip and the shout to the oxen as we creaked and rumbled slowly through the little village out into the lonely veldt.

Caroline well remembered how she longed for relief from the monotony of the limitless Karoo, with its bare level plains, sparse low brush, and too plentiful stones, stretching away to mountains on the horizon which

seemed to promise something new, but which, when reached, only disclosed a higher plateau of the same featureless expanse. Such scenery could not appeal to a child who longed for trees and flowers, but it created in Caroline's mind long afterwards, 'a memory that now no other scenery can stir with quite the same emotion'.

The stages, or 'outspans', of their journey were determined by the important consideration of water. They had to take the rare chance of pools in a river bed for a wash, and often depended for drinking water on the *vaatje*, a little fat cask, which was filled whenever possible and had to last till the next water was reached. When this meant a long stage in thirsty heat the travellers were severely tried. As for food there was only room for a few necessaries. Butter and milk were then unknown luxuries in the Karoo, and the smell of black coffee — so Caroline wrote — 'still brings before me the flowered 'commetjes' handed round before the first inspan at the earliest gleam of daylight'. But despite hardships these journeys were always a joyous adventure.

I can remember lying awake sometimes at night in the wagon, listening with a creepy feeling through the immense stillness to the weird cry of the jackals, while close to us the friendly munching of our animals feeding at the 'dissel boon' to which they were tied, gave a welcome sense of familiar companionship.

Sometimes the party took the route through Bains Kloof and Wellington, sometimes through Ceres and Mitchell's Path and thence through Montague Pass, George, and Mossel Bay by sea to Cape Town. On this latter route they passed the little inn of Furney and Swain, which, after the Karoo, seemed an oasis of comfort, and the meal of bacon and eggs, for which they were famous, an unbelievable luxury. On one occasion at Mossel Bay they were hospitably entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Vincent, old friends of both Mr. and Mrs. Moltano, whose little daughter afterwards married that famous statesman John X. Merriman. At Wellington their grandfather Hercules Jarvis, who had a house there with vine-yards, used to meet them with a nephew — Bazett. His cart would join the Moltanos, and then they would all travel on together to Cape Town, and the caravan would make its way 'with as much dash as possible' up through the welcome gate to their house in Somerset Road.

It seemed to me amazing that John Charles Moltano and his wife could have accomplished this journey from Beaufort West to Cape Town and back, with all their small children, annually without mishap, for eight or nine years. Reflecting on this his daughter said, by way of explanation: 'I think that difficulties had quite an exhilarating effect upon Papa; certainly they never for a moment deterred him from pursuing any end he wished to attain.'

As a member of the Beaufort Municipal Council, Moltano had proposed that the Crown Lands in the district should be leased by public auction. The proposal was carried. It proved a great success, and thanks to his efforts the town of Beaufort acquired the great area of

common land which it now enjoys. He also turned his mercantile experience to account. In 1852 he had started a business at Beaufort, a large store, which subsequently became the firm of P. J. Alport & Co. There was no bank in the town, though it was the capital of a district twice as large as Ireland. For some time he met the difficulty by issuing his own notes, payable at Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Mossel Bay. Then he started a bank with Percy Alport his brother-in-law³ which, like the store, proved very successful, and the operations of the two extended to Victoria West and other small towns in the district.

While he was thus establishing his position and founding a fortune which made him independent for the rest of his life, his father-in-law, Hercules Cross Jarvis, and a growing number of active reforming spirits in the colony, were agitating for representative institutions. In England after the war of American Independence, Adam Smith, Bentham, and the Philosophical Radicals had prepared British statesmanship for the grant of self-government to the colonies; and their political arguments were backed by economists like Joseph Hume, who held that it was the business of colonies like Canada, South Africa and Australia, to defend themselves instead of relying on English garrisons maintained at great cost to our tax-payers. So late as 1855 Sir William Molesworth, who had made a special study of the Colonies, could state in the House of Commons that our military expenditure at the Cape alone amounted annually to between £400,000 and £500,000, without counting a series of Kaffir wars which had cost us on an average a million sterling a year.

To supplement the practical lessons he had learnt from his father, Percy read widely in the leading books on colonial policy — from Hutchinson's *History of Massachusetts* down to Merivale on Colonisation, Lewis on Dependencies, Adderley on Colonial Policy, and others after perusing these and many official documents, including the Despatches of our Colonial Secretaries, he came to the conclusion, embodied in an excellent chapter (Chapter IV) of the *Life and Times of Sir J. C. Molteno*, that British colonial policy falls into three periods or phases. In the first, which lasted down to the War of American Independence, the colonies mostly governed themselves. 'In everything except their foreign trade', wrote Adam Smith, 'the liberty of English colonists to manage their own affairs in their own way is complete.' There was no Colonial Office. In the case of war the War Office would intervene, but commercial business with the colonies was transacted by the Board of Trade. The second period of Colonial policy, wrote Percy,

opened with our fatal imposition of the Stamp Act, and led to our tampering with colonial self-government. As a consequence we lost the American colonies, almost all we then had; and we sought to hold those few that remained, and the new colonies which we subsequently acquired, by governing them from home, taking no service from them but the expense on ourselves. It was in this period that we occupied and acquired the Cape.

³ After whom Percy Alport Molteno was called.

We applied the prevailing ideas of imperialism, made ourselves responsible for the Government, and paid the cost in a series of Kaffir wars, for which, notwithstanding the sacrifice of blood and treasure, we received no gratitude. Our official methods alienated the Boer farmers, many of whom left the colony, preferring 'to abandon their property and go out into the unknown wilds (to the north) rather than remain under so uncongenial a rule'. The Cape had become an expensive luxury, and after the Reform Bill British Parliaments and British governments began to revise their opinions about these troublesome dependencies.

Thus came 'the third period of our colonial policy, in which the principle of colonial self-government recovered itself.' For this salutary change we were largely indebted to the action of Canada, Australia and South Africa in refusing to submit to any terms of citizenship inferior to those which we ourselves enjoyed at home. It is to them, backed by the rising spirit of liberal reform in England, that Great Britain owes the emancipation of her colonies and the creation of a free self-governing Empire, now rightly known as the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Until 1854 the Cape Constitution vested the power of legislation in a Governor appointed by the Crown, assisted by an Executive Council and by a Legislative Council, also appointed by the Crown. From 1841 onwards petitions were forwarded by leading inhabitants and the municipal authorities in Cape Town to successive Governors and Secretaries of State for an elective legislature and a responsible executive. At last, in 1854, an elective legislature was granted. Two seats were assigned to Beaufort, and J. C. Moltano was elected head of the poll. He represented this constituency for a quarter of a century until his resignation in 1878.⁴

After being elected member for Beaufort West Moltano still carried on his sheep-runs and was described by a well-informed writer in a Cape Town journal as at that time 'undoubtedly the largest and most successful stock-owner in the western provinces'. Fortunately for political progress at the Cape Sir George Grey, one of the finest colonial administrators of the time, with great gifts of sympathy and imagination, was transferred from New Zealand, where he had done wonders for a peaceful and just settlement with the Maoris, to be Governor of Cape Colony. From the first Moltano worked steadily and consistently with Hercules Jarvis and other reformers for the transition to complete and responsible self-government. It was a severe and strenuous struggle, but the change — which was resisted, strangely enough, by Jan Hofmeyer and John X. Merriman, then a brilliant free-lance Conservative — was made easier by the democratic statesmanship of Sir George Grey, who rapidly became a friend of Moltano and remained until his death a hero of the Moltano family.

The difficulty of combining a Representative Legislature with an unrepresentative Official Executive, is almost insuperable in a country where the people are as competent to manage their own affairs and as fond of

⁴ J. H. Hofmeyer stood against him in 1857 and was unsuccessful.

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political liberty as the English and the Dutch. Gibbon Wakefield once compared representative institutions without a responsible executive to a fire in a room where the chimney is closed. In such cases the reform party very often resorts to purely obstructionist tactics, as Parnell did at Westminster between 1880 and 1885. But Moltano threw himself into Parliamentary work as a constructive reformer, and succeeded in carrying some very useful legislation, including an important Act governing the relations between master and servant. He was also successful in amending a bad bill which would have enabled the Governor to call out at his discretion burgher forces (selected by ballot) for the defence of the Colony, or for any other purpose, including expeditions beyond the frontier. Moltano helped to amend the bill in committee, at the same time pressing for the creation of an effective police force. This principle was approved by Sir George Grey, and an act was passed for the better organization of a mounted police force, which afterwards proved of the utmost value to the Colony. Moltano also co-operated with Sir George Grey in his endeavours to extend civilization and order by peaceful means among the barbarous tribes on the frontier. Towards the end of Sir George Grey's life Percy Moltano visited the veteran administrator, and Sir George Grey told him of 'his great indebtedness to the constant and energetic support which he received in the Cape Parliament from Mr. Moltano in carrying out this policy, as well as improving communications and providing facilities for trade and commerce'. Moltano also supported Grey when he denuded the colony of British troops for India during the Mutiny. He never made any distinction between the Dutch and the English, but always kept on good terms with both, making due allowance for the difficulties of the Boers in the Transvaal during their wars with the Basutos. His criticisms explored the field of public expenditure and finance, and induced the Government in the session of 1859 to abandon their habit of introducing estimates so late in the session that the House was unable to exercise a proper control.

In 1860 began the final chapter in the movement for responsible Government. Moltano moved a resolution affirming its necessity. It received support from two official members of the Government, and an amendment that they should await the verdict of a new Parliament was only carried by two votes. Meanwhile the Government of the Orange Free State made proposals for union with Cape Colony. Sir George Grey recommended them to the home Government and laid the proposals before the Cape Parliament. But Bulwer Lytton, who was then Colonial Secretary, disapproved of the policy and recalled Grey. Before Sir George reached England, the Conservative Government was replaced by a new administration, that of Lord Palmerston, and Grey was reappointed. But difficulties having arisen in New Zealand it was soon afterwards found necessary to send him back to that Colony, and he was succeeded in 1862 at the Cape by Sir Philip Wodehouse, an autocrat who objected to responsible government as strongly as Sir George Grey favoured it.

(D) In 1861 Molteno had visited Europe, and had spent some time with his relatives in Scotland and in the circle of Dr. John Brown at Edinburgh where his son, Percy, was born. His return coincided with the arrival of Sir Philip Wodehouse and the commencement of a constitutional struggle which was to last nearly ten years. At the General Election of 1863 he was returned unopposed for Beaufort.

(D) At this time a critic and opponent in the *Cape Argus* wrote of Mr. Molteno in a Parliamentary sketch:

I select this gentleman first of the elected members because he is put forward as the leader of the Party with whom he is associated, and because it appears to be taken for granted that, if a change of Government took place, he would occupy the first place on the Treasury benches.

Some years previously the writer had described the representative for Beaufort as: 'Good-natured with everybody and everything but the Government and the Eastern Province people.' He was easily amused and took a very active share in the business of the House. His off-hand, ready-made speeches were full of practical remarks. He was a consistent denouncer of abuses, outspoken, vigilant, attentive, and by comparison with others a Parliamentary star of some magnitude. In the Parliament elected in 1863 Molteno had developed other qualities.

He is marvellously patient and painstaking. He never leaves his seat from the moment the Session opens till it closes; and he loses no opportunity in the House or in Select Committee to serve his party. He seldom speaks without saying something, or hinting something, about representative government.

As Leader of the Opposition Molteno had against him not only Sir Philip Wodehouse, the Governor, and a very efficient Colonial Secretary, Richard Southey, but also a hostile press. Nevertheless he was able to defeat official measures for making Grahamstown, a tiny little place, into a rival political capital. The year 1865 was a year of commercial disasters, bad crops, falling prices of colonial produce, and an unbalanced budget. The Government and the system of Government became more and more unpopular. At last, in 1867, Sir Philip Wodehouse proposed a new constitution, which would have abolished the existing representative institutions, substituting a small legislative chamber. Thereupon Molteno moved that the time had come to introduce responsible government. His resolution was lost, but the Government had to withdraw its proposals for altering the constitution. In the following year Parliament was dissolved, and a new Parliament was elected in 1869 in which John X. Merriam was returned for Aliwal North. The Governor's speech admitted a serious deficiency of revenue, and proposed to meet it by an income tax of threepence in the pound, a most unpopular project which led to protests from many parts of the Colony and to a demand for extensive retrenchments. Retrenchment resolutions were passed in the House, to which the Governor objected. Eventually the controversy was terminated by a sudden

prorogation which created a dangerous conflict between the Crown and the Popular Assembly. Though it was the first Session of the new Parliament, the Governor announced that he would appeal to the country to decide on what principles the Government of the Colony should be conducted.

At last the issue was joined. As Percy put it, in Chapter VIII of his book, 'the Parliament that met in 1870 marked the crisis'. But the battle was by no means over. Molteno, Solomon and Porter, the leading speakers for responsible government, started the fight in January, 1870, on the estimates, demanding that the expenditure should be placed under the control of the representatives, and they carried their demands by a large majority. Then the Governor brought forward his 'Reform' Bill, which aimed at weakening the popular character of the Legislature, and so increasing the power of the Government. Molteno denounced Government by Downing Street, asked how the Colony was to be governed when British troops were removed, and declared that 'if taxes and contributions were to be wrung from the Colony by a Government with whom the people were not in sympathy, they would not endure it and only overwhelming force could compel them'. On this his son remarks that had these warnings and wise counsels, which ultimately prevailed, been attended to and followed in the case of the Transvaal, instead of the uninformed opinions of officials imported from abroad, not conversant with the people or their character, there would not have occurred the practical illustration of Mr. Molteno's warning words, in the rising of 1881. Meanwhile, Lord Granville, Colonial Secretary in the Gladstone Ministry, wrote to Sir Philip Wodehouse that, if the Government could not command the co-operation of the Legislature, the Legislature must be enabled to ensure the co-operation of the Government—in short in Cape Colony 'Responsible Government should be established as in other colonies of equal importance'. The Government's reform bill was defeated and the session ended in further disputes between the House and the Government on taxation and finance. Molteno's health broke down under the strain of the session, and he was incapacitated for six months.

~~Happily for the Colony Sir Philip Wodehouse, the autocrat Governor, left the Cape on May 20th, 1870, and was succeeded by Sir Henry Barkly, a liberal-minded official friendly to responsible government,~~ who was ready to co-operate with the home government and the colonial legislature, for the introduction of a full system of self-government. With Lord Kimberley, who had succeeded Granville, he now began to discuss the changes that would be necessary in connection with the removal of Imperial troops and the defence of the frontiers. Kimberley was ready to allow a regiment to remain for a reasonable time, but wished it to be plainly understood that a responsible government must be responsible for the defence of the colony. This correspondence between Lord Kimberley and Sir H. Barkly is a landmark in constitutional progress; nor can it be ignored by the historian who has to assess responsibility for the

series of disasters that ensued when two Colonial Secretaries and two High Commissioners at the Cape, with a high hand revived the interference of Downing Street in South African affairs, and over-ruled the responsible Government of Cape Colony. Percy Molteno's comment may be put on record:

These despatches are of great importance, inasmuch as they settle the responsibility of the Colonial Government for the conduct of military operations in the defence of the Colony, whether inside or outside its borders. At a subsequent period Sir Bartle Frere, on his own initiative, declared the policy of allowing the colonists to defend themselves an 'insane' one, and dismissed a Colonial Ministry (that of Percy's father in 1878) because they acted on Lord Kimberley's despatch, and endeavoured to carry out their responsibilities by conducting the operations themselves and relying entirely upon colonial forces.

When the Cape Parliament met in 1871, Sir Henry Barkly opened it with a speech pointing to the desirability of establishing responsible government, and clearly stating his opinion that self-government for the Cape should precede any attempt to bring about a scheme of Federation in South Africa. Molteno thereupon moved, adopting the words of the Governor's speech,

that the time had arrived when the system of Parliamentary Government in this Colony should be carried to its legitimate consequence by rendering the Executive responsible, through the medium of its principal officers, to the Legislature.

To conciliate the eastern members an addendum was added for the appointment of a commission to consider the expediency of a Federation. In the debates which followed, the diehards—including strangely enough a Dutch element, inspired by young J. H. Hofmeyr (Onze Jan) afterwards leader of the Bond, put up a desperate fight, during which several able men insisted on the dangers of democracy. Among these John X. Merriman, who was soon to be converted to Molteno's views, insisted on the risk of corruption and the ignorance of the voters, quoting from Australian papers to illustrate the mischiefs of popular government. He was answered by Henry de Villiers; and the Colonial Secretary, Southey, a connection of the poet, was answered by Porter. The resolution was carried with enthusiasm by 32 to 25, and the Constitution Amendment Bill was introduced by Molteno on July 30th. In winding up the debate Molteno denied the existence of the antagonism alleged by one of the speakers between Afrikanders and Englishmen. The citizens of the Cape he said were no longer English, Dutch, French, or German, but colonists desirous to do their best for their common country. He lived to see a tragic growth of ill-feeling between the Dutch and the British, as a consequence of Sir Bartle Frere's policy, which ended in the first Boer War. Then after the Majuba peace antipathies died down, only to be inflamed by the Jameson Raid into the bitter feud that

culminated in the Boer War, under the auspices of Chamberlain and Milner.

Molteno's Reform Bill was carried by 34 to 27, but was rejected in the Legislative Council, and for a short time the triumph of responsible government was postponed. J. C. Molteno took advantage of the interval for a tour to Britain and Europe, partly for the benefit of his health, which had never fully recovered from his illness in the previous year. Taking with him his wife and daughters, he made quite an extensive tour on the Continent, and also visited Egypt. At Edinburgh his second son Percy was born in September, 1873. In the following April he returned home for the opening of the Cape Parliament, when his Reform Bill was at once introduced without any change of form. It passed the House by 35 to 25, and was then sent up again to the Legislative Council, where, after some delay, it was carried by 11 to 10. The Opposition Party in the Eastern provinces was conciliated by a bill to equalize representation. It was supposed that the establishment of responsible government would bring about a union with the Orange Free State, the Transvaal Republic, and Natal; but a series of unfortunate events, disappointed these expectations.

When the Responsible Government Bill was carried, and the electoral question settled, a Cape Town journalist wrote, on the day when the Members of Parliament separated to return to their homes: 'Mr. Molteno was there, as joyous and jaunty as if the weight of coming responsibilities were not on his shoulders at all.'

As soon as the home Government's confirmation of the Act establishing responsible Government reached him, Sir Henry Barkly, the Governor, began to consult the leading Reformers, Porter, Molteno and Solomon with a view to the formation of a Cabinet. Porter declined for reasons of health and Solomon preferred to stand aside; so Molteno was charged with the construction of the first responsible administration at the Cape. This was in conformity with general expectation, and Sir Henry Barkly himself said subsequently that Molteno had been called to office by the almost unanimous voice of the country. Of all the leading Englishmen he was the most popular with the Dutch farmers, who respected him, not only as a successful pastoralist, but also as one who kept a vigilant watch on extravagance and yet favoured a generous expenditure on railways and public works of a useful and remunerative character. When he was called to form a Government, *The Standard and Mail*, then an important newspaper, which had often criticized him, declared that there was 'very much' in the public character of our future Prime Minister which we can admire and respect:

He is steadfast in pursuit of any object he sets before him; but he does not seek to obtain it by chicanery and double-dealing. At times rash in debate . . . he is fair and manly, and has more than once upon important questions had the moral courage to retract a vote previously given, when he found that his conclusion had been based on false premises. An idea, however,

(D)
Molteno
1873
Percy
born
1861

once clearly fixed in his mind he will fight for it and repeat the attack again and again. . . . He probably thinks like Cobden that it is more important to read the newspapers of the day than all the tomes of learned law ever written.

But, added the writer, nothing passing round him in the world, least of all in South Africa, escaped his notice. Strong, sound common sense served him in the place of philosophic speculation, and he could express with force and fluency in sentences, vigorous if wanting in ornament the ideas that were in his mind.

The new Prime Minister formed a good Cabinet, which included J. Henry de Villiers, afterwards Chief Justice, as Attorney General. Charles Brownlee, who understood better than any other available administrator in the Colony the language and the customs of the natives on the eastern frontier, and Abercrombie Smith, who had opposed responsible Government on the ground that it was premature but was now ready to help in making it a success. Molteno, as Premier, took the all-important post of Finance Minister. He had carried the day, as Sir Henry de Villiers said long afterwards, not only by an indomitable energy and force of character but by infinite faith in the good sense of the people of his adopted country and in their ability to manage their own affairs. The new Government took office on December 2nd, 1872, when Percy Molteno was eleven years of
age.

CHAPTER V

THE MOLTENO MINISTRY 1872-6

PERCY MOLTENO'S boyhood was spent in the exhilarating atmosphere of a Prime Minister's home where questions of politics, business and finance were discussed with the utmost freedom. Hence his studies at school were supplemented and invigorated by a first-class education in public affairs. By the time Percy was eleven his father had fought and won the battle against autocracy and Downing Street Government. Sir Henry Barkly understood the functions of a constitutional Governor and was on the most friendly terms with his Prime Minister. Molteno at once started 'to make good his reiterated statement that the Colony was able to manage its own affairs'. In his father's life, Percy has described, in a series of well-documented chapters, what remarkable success the Molteno administration achieved before South Africa was thrown into turmoil by Carnarvon, Froude and Bartle Frere. Having formed, as we have seen, a representative Cabinet, which showed that he bore no ill-will against those who had opposed self-government, he reformed the abuses and wasteful inefficiency of the old régime and gave a practical demonstration of statesmanship by combining balanced budgets and low taxation with the development of the colony by public works, carefully planned and economically executed. In the late fifties, Sir George Grey, while he was trying to encourage the development of the Colony's material resources, had often consulted Molteno, who was then vigorously attacking the problems presented by his own district of Beaufort. From Grey's wise and liberal

conceptions Molteno had learnt much. They both understood the natives and knew that they would respond to firm, just and humane treatment; and they were both alive to the importance of maintaining good relations between British and Dutch. It is no small testimony to the public character and reputation of the new Premier that he received on December 27th, 1872, a letter from Thomas Burgers, President of the South African Republic, congratulating him on the 'auspicious assumption of office by the first responsible Cabinet of Cape Colony', and adding:

I feel assured that the change brought about in this respect by the united action of her Majesty's representatives and the representatives of the people of the Cape Colony, will tend to the good of South Africa at large as well as the Cape Colony in particular; while at the same time I am confident that it will direct the spirit of the nation in that proper channel which will ultimately lead to a closer union between the different colonies and states of South Africa.

Accept the assurance, Sir, that nothing will give me greater pleasure than to see an intimate and friendly relationship maintained between our respective Governments.

For a time all was plain sailing. A liberal, progressive, and yet economical policy was inaugurated. In all branches of government the new spirit was felt. The colony was behindhand in education. Sir George Grey had set a fine example. To encourage study among the farmers of the north he had founded the Grey College at Bloemfontein; to civilize the black races he had founded Lovedale and other educational and industrial institutions where they could learn useful arts which would raise them gradually from barbarism. Molteno had actively supported Grey; and now on taking office as Prime Minister he at once appointed a commission to consider the establishment of a University for the Cape. In the first year of his government this scheme was converted into a Bill and the Bill into an Act; and grants were also made to schools in the rural districts. In 1874 further assistance was given to colleges in various parts of the Colony, and in 1875 these colleges were admitted to the advantages conferred by the University. It was one of those cases in which the supply creates the demand. In 1874 there were only seventy candidates for the higher examinations; there were 786 in 1884 and 3,877 in 1895. Before he died Molteno had the personal gratification of seeing two of his own sons, Percy and James, take their degrees at the Cape University.

Material progress kept pace with intellectual. The Wellington railway was purchased and was extended from Wellington to Worcester, and from Port Elizabeth to Buschman's River. Competent engineers were attracted from Europe, and surveys were made for further developments of railway communications and other transport facilities. The telegraph system was extended and projects were introduced for a bridge over the Orange River and other public works. The electoral system was reformed; the police forces of the Colony were improved; native troubles on the frontier were settled;

much of the anatonism between the eastern and western provinces was composed. After ten years of stagnation and depression a great all round advance could be recorded. In one of his speeches to promote unity between East and West and co-operation between Dutch and English, Molteno urged that they should all mix together and act together as representatives of a common country. His friend Porter, in supporting the University Bill, went out of his way to praise Holland for its literature and learning. He saw no reason why both races should not cultivate the two languages that existed side by side in most parts of the Colony. Fortunately for the administration trade and revenue were expanding, and fortunately also the Premier was careful not to spend up to the hilt.

I am not one of those [he said] who think we should rush madly into every kind of expenditure without considering what we are about. That is not my character and temperament, although no one can say that I am averse to any reasonable measures for pushing on the progress of the country. . . . A cautious policy is best. I do not agree with those who cry 'Spend spend, spend, — do anything as long as you get rid of the money'. I want to see that we shall get something for our money. I do not want to see it recklessly thrown away.

Consequently the prosperity that came from the opening of the Diamond Fields and from a great rise in the price of wool between 1870 and 1873, was turned to good use. The railways and other works undertaken were constructed efficiently and economically, and so contributed to maintain the revenue. Surpluses were carefully husbanded. It was largely due, as Percy points out, to his father's able administration and prudent finance that at a time when financial disaster overtook the Australasian colonies through the over-mortgaging of their resources 'Cape credit stood in the proud position of being second only to that of England herself.' Besides the addition to new roads and railways, in the first Session of Parliament a subsidy was voted to Donald Currie's new Castle Line, which accelerated the mail service to Great Britain and promoted an expansion of overseas trade. At the end of the Session the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, reported to the Secretary of State that there had never before been such harmony between the Executive and the Legislature and that business had never been carried on so satisfactorily and expeditiously.

After the close of the Session the Prime Minister paid a visit to the Eastern Provinces and was very well received at Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, and other centres.

In replying to the toast of his health at Grahamstown he made this the keynote of his speech: 'The Ministry has sought to promote the interests of all parts of the Colony alike. I could say much with regard to the past; but let bygones be bygones; let us look at the present and act towards each other as if we were at the commencement of a new era.' An era of good feeling seemed to have been established; and Percy here puts on record some characteristics of his father which, as we shall see in the

1873

course of this biography, descended in full measure to his son:

His desire was to let the dead past bury its dead, and to start afresh with the old habits and sorrows entirely forgotten. This was a trait eminently characteristic of his frank and generous disposition, which never dwelt upon old injuries or upon a past which is dead and gone. He believed in using one's powers to the full in the present and wasting no strength on a past which could no longer be altered. He often used the old Dutch proverb, 'Gedane zaken nemen geen keer'.

At King Williamstown, Beaufort, Craddock and Queens-town the Premier recalled the time, twenty-seven years before, when he was a commandant of burghers engaged in the defence of the frontier, a time when the country was being overrun and devastated by Kaffirs.

So much for the successful establishment of colonial self-government at the Cape. Until 1874 all went well, though an important measure for reforming the electoral system was very nearly defeated by the opposition of Sprigg, Pattison and Merriman. But in 1874 Molteno lost two friends. Ill-health compelled Porter to leave the Colony for Europe, and for the same cause Sir Christoffel Brand resigned the Speakership. Molteno did not make friends easily, and the loss of these two dealt him a severe blow. Far worse, as it turned out, was the change of Government in England after the defeat of the Liberal Party at the General Elections of 1874, when Disraeli took office. It proved a disaster for South Africa; for Lord Kimberley's successor at the Colonial Office, Lord Carnarvon, started a new kind of interference in the affairs of South Africa, which not only arrested progress but embittered the relations of the two white races and led, not to the Union (which was his object) but to the disunion of South Africa. A series of native wars, with two or three disastrous defeats, and a conflict with the Boers of the Transvaal, were the direct consequences of ill-advised and ill-contrived efforts to override the Cape Ministry and to mould unwilling communities into an artificial union.

At the beginning of 1874 all looked well. The house tax had been abolished and loans for works were unnecessary, as there was a surplus of £400,000 which could be put into the construction of railways, telegraphs, roads and bridges.

Unfortunately about this time a native chief named Langalibalele, famed as a magician and witch-doctor, came to blows with the Government of Natal. The Cape Mounted Police co-operated with the Natal forces; and Langalibalele was handed over to them. He was tried and sentenced to banishment on Robben Island, in Table Bay, where recalcitrant chiefs had previously been imprisoned. This, however, required legislation, and the Molteno Government passed an Act for the purpose, against the protest of Saul Solomon, who held that the trial was irregular and that the Colony should have left the matter alone. Langalibalele, however, found another and more powerful champion in Bishop Colenso, who

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excited humanitarian sentiment in England against the Natal Government. Articles appeared in *The Times* and the *Spectator* and other newspapers condemning the colonists and demanding that Langalibalele should be set free. Molteno, foreseeing the danger of interference and the risk of a native war, wrote on December 24th, 1874, to Sir Henry Barkly, stating the facts and adding that interference by the Home Government might make it 'impossible for us to preserve peace'. The note was forwarded to Lord Carnarvon, but Theophilus Shepstone (an expert in Kaffir dialects) had already been sent with despatches to the Cape and Natal Governments, announcing that Langalibalele must be removed from Robben Island to another location in Cape Colony. This was the first of a series of decisions affecting the vital interests of the Colony, arrived at by the new Secretary of State without previously consulting the responsible Government of the Colony. The despatch stated that the Cape Act providing for the custody of Langalibalele in Robben Island would be disallowed by Her Majesty, Queen Victoria; but Carnarvon had forgotten that there was responsible government at the Cape and a Prime Minister with a mind of his own. Eventually a compromise was reached and a new Bill was introduced under which the Chief could be transferred to the mainland. In reply to Sprigg, who denounced him for giving way, Molteno said it was a case of practical common sense, and that there was no reason why they should quarrel with the British Government unnecessarily or refuse small concessions. Eventually, as Sir Henry Barkly wrote to Carnarvon, 'thanks to the firm and conciliatory attitude of Mr. Molteno and his colleagues' the Bill was carried, but not without serious difficulties and sharp criticism from the Conservative Opposition, which for the time being had taken up the cudgels against Downing Street interference.

Among Lord Carnarvon's friends was a famous man of letters, J. A. Froude, who as historian had proved himself more brilliant than accurate and was soon to display as politician a lack of discretion which only political inexperience could excuse. To him Carnarvon entrusted a mission to South Africa of a highly delicate nature. Froude paid a short visit nominally as a tourist to Cape Town in the autumn of 1874. But after his return to England he wrote (on February 9th, 1875) to the Cape Premier about the difficulties with Langalibalele and the importance of paying attention to public opinion in England on the native question. 'It is not unlikely,' he added, 'that in a few months you will see me again in Cape Town.' The Prime Minister saw that there might be trouble ahead. But the sky was still bright and the Colony flourished. A decision had just been taken to build the new Houses of Parliament in Cape Town and Sir Henry Barkly, the Governor, was invited to lay the foundation stone. The Prime Minister in his address expressed a fervent hope that the edifice would be 'a monument to the memory of buried prejudices and of all local jealousy prejudicial to the true interests of the land, and also a visible sign of our progress and social advancement'. After paying a fine compliment to the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Barkly exhorted the Legislators to

follow the example of England by combining freedom of speech with order, and to cherish their connection with a great and generous nation, which had voluntarily relinquished all idea of selfish profit from its Colonies and had been the first to accord to its Colonial subjects the amplest powers of self-government without seeking to diminish the advantages they already enjoyed as citizens of a mighty Empire. In the biography of his father Percy Moltano improves the occasion by eulogizing the Governor for what he had done.

The fatal policy of Lord Carnarvon and its disastrous results obscured and caused to be forgotten the splendid services which Sir Henry Barkly had rendered to the Cape and to the Empire in giving peace, contentment and good government to the Cape Colony.

Another achievement of the year 1875 was an important Audit Act which reformed the old system of public accounts under which it had been impossible to ascertain the exact balance or deficit as between revenue and expenditure. This was a very valuable and permanent reform.

It was objected by some of his critics, who admitted his financial skill and the success of his economic policy, that Moltano's views were too narrow and that he thought only of the special interests of Cape Colony. Were this criticism true, it might well be retorted that 'Little Englandism', or its counterpart at the Cape, is a safer, sounder and more salutary policy than the flamboyant imperialism of a Kipling, or those other forms of expansionism in South Africa, leading to costly wars and racial bitterness, which were commenced by Carnarvon and Bartle Frere and continued after an interval by Cecil Rhodes, Joseph Chamberlain and Milner. That 'the fool hath his eyes on the ends of the earth' was a favourite text of Percy Moltano when he began to think for himself. But his father, far from being a man of narrow vision who shut his eyes to the dangers that enveloped the colony, was well aware from long experience on the frontier of the dangers that had to be provided against by a humane yet firm native policy. In the biography that forms the basis of this chapter Percy Moltano shows how the Prime Minister, from his first assumption of office, foresaw that the boundaries of the colony must inevitably be extended and the wild tribes brought peaceably and gradually under civilizing influences. On the eastern borders Residents were placed with the principal native chiefs. On the north-west, between the mouth of the Orange River and the Cunene, the coastline was unoccupied, though there were two harbours, those of Angra Pequena and Walfisch Bay, which afforded a safe haven for shipping. Along the coast were islands rich in guano. Two of them which had already been christened facetiously Roast Beef Island and Plum Pudding Island, were annexed, and in 1875 Moltano induced the Cape Parliament to pass a resolution for the annexation of Walfisch Bay and the hinterland. This was negated very stupidly by Carnarvon, who wanted to convert the Griqualand West into a Crown Colony as leverage for his grand scheme of con-

federation, and imagined — so little did he know of physical geography — that Walfisch Bay would form an excellent harbour for Griqualand West. Thus the ignorance of Disraeli's Minister prevented the Cape Colony under the far-sighted leadership of Molteno from annexing a territory which Germany afterwards acquired, and so, made possible 'the subsequent German intrigues for supplanting British influence in South Africa, and very nearly led in the first days of 1896 to a European war'. German South-West Africa, as we all know, is now a troublesome mandate of the Union of South Africa. However, Cape rule was extended over Fingoland and other territories in the direction of Natal without difficulty. Instead of being dragged under our rule, the tribes themselves begged for admission as a boon, and submitted of their own free will to British protection. Had Molteno's policy been carried out by peaceable means and persuasion, there would have been, not a series of cruel wars, but a gradual civilization of barbaric tribes under the general authority of the British crown. Their position would have been like that of Basutoland; for it was not intended to incorporate them in the political community of the Cape Colony. At the same time religious denominations were establishing missions in these territories, and Dr. Stewart was preparing to start his institution on lines similar to Lovedale. The surrender of Langalibalele had broken up a dangerous movement, and all was going well with native affairs, both within and without the Colony, until Downing Street interference began and an unconstitutional governor in the person of Sir Bartle Frere succeeded Sir Henry Barkly. A comparison of his father's 'patient, careful and conciliatory methods with the dragooning of Zulus, and disarming of Fingoes, and the administration by ultimatums pursued by Sir Bartle Frere, must,' wrote Percy Molteno, 'lead all impartial men to a preference for the policy pursued by the first responsible government of the Cape.' Within the Cape Colony itself it was open to any native possessed of the requisite qualifications to obtain and exercise the franchise. Molteno's native policy, wrote Sir Henry De Villiers, the Chief Justice, to Percy in 1899 'was one of justice and firmness combined. He was opposed to any policy which would oust loyal natives from the land occupied by them and their fathers before them'.

It is one of the tragedies of South African history that all this good work and steady progress were to be arrested or frustrated by Lord Carnarvon, a well-intentioned visionary who thought to win honour and glory by welding South Africa into a great federation, a task which, in his simplicity, he thought could be achieved almost by a stroke of the pen. Before Carnarvon's advent to office in February, 1874, wrote Percy in 1899, peace had prevailed in British South Africa for a quarter of a century. His policy and the methods by which it was pursued caused the troubles of South Africa from 1875 onwards. 'All the wars since that period are directly due to the policy of federation, which owed its initiation to

¹ See *Life and Times of Sir J. C. Molteno*, Vol. I, p. 286 sqq.

him.' It is true that in 1859, under far more favourable conditions, it had been suggested by the popular Governor, Sir George Grey, when the Orange Free State had passed a resolution in favour of union with Cape Colony. At that time, curiously enough, Carnarvon was Under-Secretary of the Colonies in a Conservative Government which promptly vetoed the proposed union and federation. In 1867, however, he had adopted the policy for Canada, and helped to pass an Act which carried out the resolutions passed by the Provincial Assemblies at Quebec. The case of South Africa was quite different from that of Canada; for in 1875 the communities concerned were not seeking union. So far as it had been rescued from savagery, South Africa consisted of the self-governing Colony of the Cape, two British dependencies, Natal and Griqualand West, and two independent Dutch Republics, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. In population, wealth, civilization and extent of territory, the Cape Colony outweighed all the other states put together. Its history as a white man's settlement extended over two centuries. It had passed through all the stages of development, from a trading station, and a Crown Colony to the status of a Government with a Legislative Council and finally, in 1872, to full responsible government. It possessed most of the sea coast, and its revenues were four times those of the four other states which Carnarvon was determined to federate. Natal was under the control of imperial officials, and its handful of white colonists, who were chiefly concerned to protect themselves against the Zulu power, had been incensed and alarmed by the action of the British Government in the case of Langalibalele. Griqualand West had come into existence only in 1871 and had been annexed on account of the diamond fields. Its turbulent mining population of about 10,000 whites and 15,000 natives was governed by officials with a local council.

Of the two Republics, the Transvaal, or South African Republic, had then a population of only about 15,000 whites, consisting of Boer farmers who had emigrated to get away from British rule. Its area of 100,000 square miles was about half that of the Cape. Thomas Burgers, its President, had fairly progressive views; but the state was poor and undeveloped. The Orange Free State had become independent in 1854. It had had a hard struggle for existence, owing to the mass of barbarism on its eastern border, and its relations with the British Government had been embittered by the seizure of the diamond fields, over which it had a claim.

From the above account, condensed from Percy Moltano's biography of his father, it will be seen that Carnarvon's project of Confederation must conflict with the Moltano policy of gradual unification with Cape Colony — the original mother-colony from which the other four colonies and republics had sprung.

It was unlucky for Carnarvon that the missionaries were at loggerheads with the Dutch, and that by supporting the missionaries in the case of Langalibalele Downing Street had revived its unpopularity with the Dutch and English farmers, besides irritating the strongly pro-

British population of Natal. Lord Derby's witty description of the Colonial Office as 'the Office at War with the Colonies' was now again to become applicable to South Africa, after an interval of friendly co-operation.

Those who wish to ascertain the merits and consequences of the great dispute between the Molteno Ministry and Lord Carnarvon, who worked first through the instrumentality of J. A. Froude and afterwards of Bartle Frere, will find an exhaustive record, with ample quotations from speeches and documents, interspersed with acid comments, in the chapters (X to XXXII) which Percy Molteno devoted to the subject in the *Life* of his father. They cover nearly six hundred pages and constitute in my judgment a complete vindication of Sir J. C. Molteno's policy throughout the period and a complete refutation of the not very formidable charges and minor complaints made against him and his colleagues by Carnarvon, Froude and Bartle Frere at the time, and later by their biographers. Very noteworthy is the fact that both Froude and Bartle Frere afterwards recognized the folly of Carnarvon's policy, when experience and knowledge of its disastrous consequences were unfolded before their eyes. All this is clearly set forth and duly expounded in Percy Molteno's narrative. The pity of it is that the controversy was not one of ideals in so far as the ultimate desirability of a Confederation (or Union) of all the British and Dutch settlements in South Africa was concerned. What Molteno saw was that it could only be attained by a very gradual process, and that the attempt to enforce it by such means and instruments as Carnarvon's would fail, and destroy that growing harmony which was being achieved by Molteno's happy co-operation with Sir Henry Barkly and Lord Kimberley. On April 3rd, 1899, when the last phase of the tragedy was being hastened by Milner's acrimonious correspondence with Kruger, while the Schreiner Ministry was attempting in vain to mediate between the Colonial Office under Chamberlain and the two Boer republics, Sir Henry de Villiers wrote to Percy Molteno, describing Sir J. C. Molteno's attitude to Confederation:

Mr. Molteno was a firm believer in the future federation of all South African colonies and states under the British Crown; but he desired that it should come as a natural growth and not be forced upon the country. His determination was to make this Colony a kind of object lesson to the independent states, in order that the people of these states might see that it is possible for a country to govern itself and prosper, although not nominally independent of the British Crown; and his firm belief was that they would in course of time voluntarily ask to be admitted as members of a confederation of South African states. Unfortunately a series of blunders for which he was not responsible, and into which I do not wish to enter, prevented the realization of his hopes; and federation now seems further off than it was during the first year of the first Molteno Ministry. He held very strongly that this Colony had no right or duty to interfere in the internal affairs of the independent states, and that a Colonial Ministry had quite enough to do in administering their own internal affairs.

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Sir Henry de Villiers concluded his letter with a eulogy of his old friend's work in sweeping away abuses and reforming all departments of the Cape government. His energy and determination bore down all the opposition of the officials reared under the old system, 'and surprise was often expressed by friends and foes that a man who had been without official experience until past middle-age should have accomplished so much in so short a time'.

Sir Henry Barkly had warned Lord Kimberley and his successor Lord Carnarvon against raising the question of Confederation, or summoning a conference for the purpose; and he informed Carnarvon that his views were shared by Molteno. In the teeth of this advice from a constitutional governor on the spot who knew the ground, Carnarvon embarked upon the project and towards the end of 1874 despatched his friend, the historian J. A. Froude, on a secret mission, undertaken ostensibly as a pleasure trip. 72

Froude had fine qualities. I well remember his distinguished appearance and manner when I met him at Oxford shortly before his death. But he was not very accurate as a professional historian nor very truthful in this his first and last adventure in politics as an amateur. He travelled for sixty days through the states which Carnarvon intended to unite. He was welcomed at the Cape as a distinguished Englishman and everywhere denied that he had come out for any public or political purpose. At Bloemfontein he said: 'I am a mere private man of letters, travelling for my own amusement.' If any of his words had created the impression that his trip was official, then 'I am a most arrogant impostor'. At Port Elizabeth and at Kimberley he repeated that he was only travelling for his own instruction and amusement. Yet somehow or other it leaked out in the newspapers of Natal and the Cape that he was confidential adviser of Lord Carnarvon, a private commissioner from the Colonial Office sent out to report; and sure enough early in 1875, soon after Froude's return, Carnarvon, under Froude's inspiration and advice, without consulting either Governor Barkly or Premier Molteno, drafted a despatch desiring that a conference representing the colonies and states of South Africa should meet at some convenient place within the Cape Colony. Then to crown the folly he nominated all the members of the conference, and divided the Cape Colony for his purpose into two provinces, one to be represented by the Prime Minister and the other by Paterson, a member of the Opposition. This amazing despatch was placed before the Prime Minister by Sir Henry Barkly on May 4th, 1875. It was accompanied by a letter from Froude to Molteno explaining briefly 'as I am myself in part responsible for Lord Carnarvon's resolution, the reasons which led me to advise it'. In this Froude stated that he had offered Carnarvon his services 'to travel through the different states and to ascertain what the real obstacles to Confederation were, and by what means they could best be removed'. He would himself return to the Cape in June, and expressed a hope that the Prime Minister

would not conceal his opinion 'if you think I have interfering presumptuously in the affairs of a country of which I know so little'.

It was a specious and disingenuous letter; for it pretended that Carnarvon's real object was to extend and enlarge self-government so that 'the British Parliament could then abandon all its pretensions to interference'. The 'hope' that Moltano would not be afraid of expressing his views about so presumptuous an interference was not disappointed, and the personal flattery with which the letter was interlarded did not help. A suggestion made by Froude to Moltano in a conversation after his arrival 'that there was nothing in the way of personal honours which he might not have if he agreed to support with his influence Lord Carnarvon's policy' was a blunder of the worst kind. When Percy Moltano was at work on his father's life, Sir Henry Barkly wrote to him with reference to this 'famous letter', in which as Carnarvon's envoy Froude hinted at the personal advantages that might accrue: 'I well remember how angry Mr. Moltano was when he showed it to me, and how contemptuously he alluded to the fact that a similar missive had been addressed by the same mail to John Paterson.' The Prime Minister saw the danger of publishing the despatch, and urged the Governor to withhold it until representations had been made to Lord Carnarvon of the injury it would cause. But Carnarvon had requested the Governor to give it the fullest publicity without delay, and to send copies of it to the Presidents of the two Republics and to the Governors of Natal and Griqualand West. Thereupon the Ministry composed a minute declaring its opinion that the interests of the Cape Colony 'would not be promoted by pressing forward at the present time such a Conference as the Secretary of State proposes'. On June 9th, 1875, the despatch was laid on the table of the House with the ministerial minute attached. The Clerk of the House, Mr. Noble, read the despatch, and when the name of Froude was mentioned there was derisive laughter. Every sentence of the minute of the Cape ministers was punctuated with cheers. A resolution approving the action of the ministers was moved by Sprigg, a Conservative, who afterwards became the most obsequious of Colonial Prime Ministers, and was carried by a large majority. Even the minority did not recommend a conference, but merely proposed soapy amendments thanking Carnarvon for the interest he had taken in the Colony. The Premier spoke with the utmost moderation, and after hearing him Sprigg said that he had made a noble stand for the honour and dignity of the Colony and for its rights and liberties.

Unfortunately this was only the beginning, not the end of the trouble. Three weeks later Froude arrived. He was terribly chagrined on finding that Carnarvon's instructions to avoid delay had brought about this adverse decision of the Cape Parliament. Froude had courage, eloquence and enthusiasm. A weaker and wiser man might have thrown up the sponge; but he was encouraged by a number of journalists including a very able Dutchman, Jan Hofmeyr, who was afterwards to

play a leading part in South African politics. Instead of yielding, Froude plunged into the fray and stumped the country for confederation. In some places he took the side of the Dutch against the English, and in others he revived the controversy between East and West. He played skilfully upon the advantages that might accrue from Confederation to local communities, and contrived to set up an agitation which led, to quote Percy Molteno's words 'to a prolonged and fatal disturbance of South African society'.

Throughout this semi-official campaign Froude was, in a false position, as he indeed admitted in letters to Molteno. In one of these, for example, June 21st, 1875, he wrote: 'In the ambiguous position which I hold it would be improper for me to do anything which would have an unconstitutional semblance.'

Partly owing to this, partly to a liking for the Boer farmers with whom he stayed during his brief visits to the two republics, he quite misrepresented his chief's intentions. While declaring that Lord Carnarvon was an intimate and honoured friend, and that he knew his mind thoroughly, he asserted:

So long as the people of the free states desire to retain their freedom, the English statesman is not born who will ever ask them to surrender it, or endeavour to entice them back under the British Flag, unless they are willing to come back and consider it would be for their own benefit.

By these assertions, and by his insistence that 'Lord Carnarvon is sincere and must not be suspected of sinister designs', he won over the Dutch Press and humbugged J. H. Hofmeyr, who spoke at a Cape Town dinner in favour of the Carnarvon policy. Froude's own story, told in the admirable English of which he was a master, of the events following his arrival at Cape Town, was embodied in a report which is still worth reading. It seems amazing that the agent of an Imperialist Colonial Secretary, who afterwards annexed the Transvaal, should have played for all it was worth the nationality card, and induced the Dutch all over South Africa to believe that a self-governing South Africa, predominantly Dutch, was being planned by the British Government. He was welcomed and fêted at all the Dutch centres. As he stated in his Report:

The feelings of the people had been excited by your Lordship's speech in the House of Lords. . . . Deputations waited upon me wherever I went with words of welcome. . . . I was followed into the towns by strings of carts and carriages half a mile long. . . . I was entertained at dinners and I was compelled to speak. Everywhere I enquired the cause of so much excitement; everywhere I received the same answer, that for the first time since 1806 an English Minister had shown a disposition to do justice to the Dutch.

On finding that Molteno could not be cajoled by bribes or coerced by threats, Froude resorted to a new move; and it was arranged that meetings should be held to agitate for the summoning of a special Session of Parliament, at which it was thought the Molteno

Ministry would be defeated and a more subservient one installed in office. At Grahamstown, to please his audience, he favoured a compulsory system of native apprenticeship, and hinted at a separation of the eastern provinces of which Grahamstown was ambitious of being the capital. He predicted that 'Mr. Moltano's following (i.e. the responsible Government of Cape Colony) will find that they will be unable to thwart Lord Carnarvon's efforts to bring about a scheme of confederation in South Africa similar to that in Canada'. Froude indeed stuck at nothing. He described himself as 'the unworthy representative of Lord Carnarvon, and actually wrote to Sir Henry Barkly, the Governor, pressing him 'to use his constitutional powers and re-assemble the Cape Parliament without delay'. He stamped opposition to Carnarvon's policy as disloyal, and justified his speeches by saying 'it was only when the ministers appeared inexorable that I was constrained to ask the people if they consented to the action of their representatives'. Finally the Premier told Froude that it was useless to continue political communications, though he was ready to maintain and did maintain friendly personal relations and social intercourse. Froude and Carnarvon had grossly violated the convention that where responsible government has been established the Colonial Office, to quote Lord Blatchford, an experienced administrator, 'shall not attempt to outflank or undercut the Colonial Government by direct appeals to the people of the Colony'. At last after a rowdy meeting at Uitenhage and a controversy with Merriman,² Froude desisted from further public speaking and returned to England to write his Report and explain his conduct.

By this time (in November, 1875) opinion in the Colony began to react pretty strongly, and the Prime Minister felt that he must bring the constitutional issue before Parliament. He therefore advised the Governor to summon a special session which was accordingly called for November 10th. Meanwhile the two Boer republics had replied to Carnarvon's invitations that they could not take part in a conference for Confederation, which would involve the surrender of their independence as states, and thus Carnarvon's grand scheme was shattered at its inception,

Froude's sanguine hopes that the Moltano Ministry would have to give way were also doomed to disappointment. When the Prime Minister laid on the table of the House the ministerial minute and memorandum showing how seriously the principles of responsible government had been infringed by Carnarvon and Froude, the constitutional party put forward and carried, after a debate of eight days, by the decisive majority of 36 votes to 22 a resolution condemning an agitation, which had been fostered by the Imperial Government in opposition to the Colonial Government, as unconstitutional and calculated to make the successful working of self-government impossible. It added that the interests of the Colony 'would not be promoted by pressing forward at the present time such a Conference as the Secretary of State proposes'.

² John X. Merriman had joined the Moltano Administration.

This was the end of the Froude mission. Froude himself became aware that he had made a mistake; for he frankly admitted in his Report that 'with respect to myself an opinion began to prevail that my zeal had gone beyond my discretion'. At a meeting in Cape Town Fairbridge, one of its members and a staunch conservative, after appealing to all colonial patriots whether of English, Dutch or French blood, to stand by their constitutional rights and refuse to bow down to the dictation of Lord Carnarvon, wound up by saying:

I do not grudge John Paterson a fortune if he should make one, nor shall I envy him if they make a baronet of him, of which it is said there is a chance. But there is one on whom I think we can count to do his duty to the Colony, and that is John Charles Moltano.

The Prime Minister, who dealt severely, but not too severely, with Froude, was supported by Solomon and Sprigg as well as by the Dutch members. On three previous occasions during the Governorship of Sir Philip Wodehouse he had parried assaults on the constitutional privileges of the Cape. He had now again repelled another attempt to overthrow self-government.

It is creditable to Froude that after doing much mischief in South Africa he had learnt something; for in the final paragraph of his Report he had the courage and good sense to tell Carnarvon that 'plants of slow growth endure the longest; and the final consummation, however devoutly it be wished, can only be brought to wholesome maturity by the deliberate action of the South African communities themselves'. Four years later, in January, 1880, after the annexation of the Transvaal, Froude went even further in a lecture at Edinburgh, saying that if he were Secretary of State he would 'try a hazardous experiment. I should try what justice would do. I would give back the Transvaal to the Dutch.'

Unfortunately for South Africa and for himself Lord Carnarvon had gone too far to retreat without loss of face. He could not wait for the plant of federation to grow; for the Premier had referred to it at the Guildhall in November, 1875. 'There is every prospect', said Disraeli, 'that another federation of colonies and states which will add power to our Empire and confer immense advantages on the world in general, will be established in South Africa.' When the report of the debate in the Cape Parliament arrived in London *The Times* admitted that a mistake had been made by the Colonial Office and by Mr. Froude, and that the course taken had been unconstitutional. It was a 'flagrant error'. In the House of Lords also Lord Granville reprimanded the Colonial Secretary for a series of mistakes 'which might have been avoided' if there had been 'a little more communication with the Governor of the Colony and the local authorities'. Having gone so far, however, Carnarvon determined to go forward towards his goal, though he had to change his course. His policy had been defeated in the Cape Parliament, and his hope of ousting Moltano by an adverse vote, or by a dissolution, had been frustrated.

With regard to Froude it need here only be added that his object had been to bring pressure upon the Molteno Ministry and not to displace it. That is clear from his Despatch and also from a private correspondence with the Prime Minister in the autumn of 1876, towards the end of Molteno's visit to England, when Froude invited him to dinner. 'In spite of appearances', he wrote, 'I have never wavered in the regard which you taught me to feel for you on my first visit to the Cape.' And we shall see later, when Percy went to Cambridge, the friendly intercourse of the Moltenos with the Froudes had not been interrupted. Froude's letter of September 30th, 1876, concluded 'with a hope that you may long continue to hold the high post in Her Majesty's Service which you have hitherto filled with so much distinction'.³

This hope was not shared by Carnarvon; but he now tried another move, and announced that he would open his Conference of nominees in London, where he thought to launch his Confederation project in a more favourable atmosphere. By this time, however, he had aroused the suspicions of the Dutch at the Cape and in the two Republics. Even Bishop Colenso, the champion of the natives, was turning against him. In March, 1876, wrote the good Bishop, Carnarvon had evidently 'made up his mind to sacrifice truth and justice to political considerations'; and again: 'He seems infatuated about this Confederation scheme, which is quite premature, and will end, I strongly suspect, in a complete fiasco.'

Eventually, while refusing to attend the Conference, Molteno agreed to proceed to England to confer with the British Government on South African questions; and he left for this purpose on July 7th, 1876. On his arrival he found that Carnarvon had settled with President Brand of the Free State by a payment of £90,000 for its claims on the diamond territory, and had saddled it as a debt on the Cape Colony without consulting the Cape Ministry! Eventually Molteno agreed to accept the responsibility for the incorporation of Griqualand West with the Cape Colony, but declined to be drawn into a discussion about the annexation of the Transvaal, which Carnarvon was now planning. In London though Molteno had a number of personal interviews with Carnarvon, he steadily refused to attend the Conference of his nominees — Sir Garnet Wolseley, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, and Froude. President Brand of the Free State was also there, but only to discuss the native question. There were two other informal nominees from the Crown Colony of Natal, and Froude was designated to represent Griqualand West, though he had no authority to do so from the local community. The Transvaal Republic, now doomed, was not represented. The Conference was a mere shadow. Carnarvon opened it on August 3rd, 1876. Thereupon President Brand said he would have to withdraw at once, if there was any attempt to negotiate

³ Ten years later in his book on the West Indies Froude remarked: 'I had observed in South Africa that the confusions and perplexities diminished exactly in proportion as the Home Government ceased to interfere.'

a Confederation, by which the independence of his State might be endangered. After the passage of a few resolutions and recommendations about native questions, which were never made public, the Conference expired.

Molteno had no reason to regret his visit to London, for he was able to make preliminary arrangements for fast steam communication between England and the Cape, a subject, as Percy Molteno writes, to which he had given great attention and attached great importance. Parliament had authorized him to contract for the conveyance of mails with the two companies then serving South Africa, the Union Company and the Castle Company, dividing the service between them. By far the ablest and most enterprising of the shipowners with whom the Premier negotiated was Sir Donald Currie, who afterwards amalgamated the two lines in the famous Union Castle Line. The negotiations were prolonged and sharply contested. The companies wanted a service of forty-eight sailings in the year; but Molteno was determined to have a weekly service. 'He was ready', his son wrote, 'to pay for rapid communication, which he thought so essential to the prosperity and advancement of the Colony.' He had his way. 'It was arranged to give a large subsidy and premiums for speed above the contract maximum.' These successful negotiations brought about an intimate friendship between the Curries and the Moltenos, which — as we shall see — was to end very happily for Percy in a marriage and a business career which diverted him from Cape Town to London, and eventually made him an active politician at Westminster, while two of his brothers, Charlie and James, became prominent members of the Cape Parliament.

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CHAPTER X

SIR DONALD CURRIE AND HIS FAMILY

Currie
1825-1909
(= 84 yrs)

NEXT to the influence exerted by his father, Sir John Charles Molteno, upon Percy's character and life comes that of his father-in-law, Sir Donald Currie, one of the ablest and most successful shipping magnates of the nineteenth century. When Percy first visited Great Britain as a boy in 1876, the friendship between the Moltenos and Curries was already established, and Percy — as we shall see — visited them at the house which Sir Donald Currie had rented at Cluny. Then for the first time he met Bessie Currie, who afterwards became his wife; and as the connection thus formed gave a decisive turn to fortune's wheel, converting him from a lawyer into a business man and from a Colonial to a British career, we shall now introduce the reader to Donald Currie.

Currie's career

Percy benefitted from his father's friendship with Currie

Percy's marriage to Bessie crucial

Like Gladstone's father Donald Currie was a Scotch lad who found his way to Liverpool and made a fortune. He was born at Greenock in 1825, but in the following year his parents moved to Belfast. There the boy was educated at the Academy. The headmaster, Reuben Bryce, and his brother, James (father of the famous

Currie's life

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②

James, Viscount Bryce) who also taught in the school, ^{Early love of Boats} were both remarkable men. Donald Currie showed proficiency and won prizes, but he was best known among his schoolfellows for possessing the largest collection of toy boats in the Academy. At fourteen he returned to Greenock, and worked there in his uncle's office for four years. At eighteen he left for Liverpool, and worked his way up to a good position in the Cunard Company until in 1862 he was able to set up on his own account. He then started the Castle Line of sailing ships from Liverpool to Calcutta and attained such success that (in 1872) he was invited by merchants at the Cape and by the Molteno Government to start a line to South Africa. In the next year, 1872, he formed a company for that purpose and began to compete against the Union Line, which then held the field with a service which was not giving satisfaction. The Castle Line went ahead. In 1900, however, the two companies were amalgamated under Sir Donald Currie's direction, and named the Union Castle Mail Steamship Company. When Sir Donald died in 1909, the company's fleet consisted of 47 steamers of 295,000 gross tonnage.

Donald Currie had started like his younger contemporaries, Andrew Carnegie and James Mackay (Lord Inchcape), without capital or influence. He was a self-made man with great gifts for business. But next to his own ability, enterprise and industry he owed his fortune to John Charles Molteno who, as Prime Minister, had brought him into the South African trade by arranging a mail contract between the Castle Line and the government of the Cape.

In addition to the profits from the Castle Line Donald Currie augmented his fortune by successful investments in South Africa, including a large holding in the Bultfontein Diamond Mine which was eventually bought by Cecil Rhodes and amalgamated with de Beers. Apart from the valuable services which his Line rendered to the Cape, Donald Currie proved a good and wise friend to South Africa as a whole. Had his judicious counsels and friendly suggestions been adopted by the British Government, both the Boer Wars would almost certainly have been averted. In 1875 he mediated successfully between the British Government and the two Boer Republics, and later on he helped to settle the Diamond Fields Dispute. In that affair he inspired so much confidence that the two parties left him to define the boundary and draw up the terms of the agreement. For these services he was rewarded in 1877 with a C.M.G. and the thanks of the Orange Free State. In the same year after Shepstone's unhappy annexation of the Transvaal, when Paul Kruger and two other leading Boers came on a deputation to England to demand the restoration of the Republic, they asked Donald Currie to help them in negotiating with the British Government, as they and all the Dutch in South Africa trusted him. Currie did his best. He told the British Government that an absolute refusal of the Boer demands would lead to disorder and bloodshed. Unfortunately the deputies heard a speech in the House of Commons by Sir Michael

* Currie had relations with all 4 SA Govs.

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Other
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Investment
Currie's
political
role in
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3

(D)

Hicks-Beach which convinced them of the hopelessness of their errand. If the Government had listened to Currie's wise counsels, the Boers would probably have accepted self-government (promised them by Sir Bartle Frere) under the British flag. As it was, they remained sullen and discontented until at last they broke into open revolt and regained their independence after Majuba Hill. It is quite reasonable, therefore, to say as Mr. Clement Jones says, that 'had Currie's statesmanlike proposals for dealing with the Boers been adopted, two wars might have been avoided'. Currie in fact took most of his views on South African questions from his friend Molteno. Like him he tried to persuade the British Government to annex what afterwards became German South-West Africa, now a most-uncomfortable mandate, administered by the Union of South Africa. Percy Molteno used to recall a conversation he had with Lord Wolseley at the time of the Boer War, when Wolseley remarked: 'If they had sent out Sir Donald Currie instead of Sir Alfred Milner, we should have got all we wanted from Kruger, and we should not have had to fight.'

Currie led practically by Molteno

4

For his services in connection with the settlement of the disputes about the Diamond Fields and the Orange Free State boundary Currie received as we have said in 1877 the honour of C.M.G., and in 1884 he was made a K.C.M.G. for the assistance he had rendered in the transport of troops during the Zulu war, and especially in connection with the relief of Ekowe.

(D)

For some years Sir Donald Currie had a seat in Parliament, first as member for Perthshire from 1880 to 1885, when he was a zealous supporter of Mr. Gladstone, and afterwards as Liberal Unionist member for West Perthshire from 1886 to 1900. No doubt his objections to Home Rule dated from his boyhood in Belfast, and his sympathies with Protestant Ulster; but his personal admiration and friendship for Gladstone were unaffected.

X Esh

Currie in UK Parliament

1880-1900

(55-75 yrs old)

Close friend of Gladstone

During the later years of his life he was the recognized leader and dominating influence among the able ship-owners who formed the South African Conference. Once, during a discussion of the thorny problem of shipping rebates, the Chairman of the South African Merchants Committee characterized him as a 'great diplomatist'.

Sir Donald was an excellent employer and landlord, very popular with his captains and with the tenantry on his Scottish estates. He has been well described by Mr. Clement Jones as 'a man of shrewdness and sagacity; a man of large ideas and great energy with which to carry them out; tenacious of purpose and pious; a staunch friend and a genial companion'. Always kindly and generous in private life he was also a munificent donor to hospitals, universities and colleges in London, Edinburgh and Belfast.

Currie as Scottish laird

Character

Benefactor (a)

Percy was a him)

Sir Donald Currie was not only the most sociable of men and the best of hosts but a wonderful organizer of pleasure as well as of profit. He might have claimed to be the inventor of cruising holidays. In his book on Pioneer Shipowners Mr. Clement Jones says that if in a shipping examination paper the question set was: 'Describe briefly the origin of pleasure cruises giving names

NB

Source

10 Do - but had of it

Origin of Pleasure
Cruises

39373 Moltano 70

and dates', he would, if examiner, give full marks to the following answer: 'Passenger, Mr. Gladstone; ship, Grantully Castle; owner, Sir Donald Currie; date, 1880.'

It was I think in connection with this cruise that a wit wrote:

The seat's engaged, the cabin's booked;
We all to sea are hurried.

The common people all are cooked;
The Grand Old Man is Curried.

Currie +
Royalty

Currie had his share of harmless (and in his case amiable) vanity. Probably of all his exploits the one that gave him most gratification was a cruise to Scandinavia in the Pembroke Castle. On that occasion he entertained at Copenhagen twenty-nine royalties, and the autograph book in which his distinguished guests signed their names was a cherished possession. Mr. Gladstone was a favoured friend. His last voyage with Currie was after his resignation, on the Tantallon Castle at the opening of the Kiel Canal in June, 1895.

(D)

The friendship between Donald Currie and John Charles Moltano, springing from a bargain equally advantageous to (the interests of) the Colony and the shipping firm, was based on a wide measure of political agreement — for both were liberals of the old school — and upon a business knowledge which extended in both cases to an enterprising foresight of the future expansion of South Africa, coupled with a keen perception of the value of commerce between nations not merely as a source of profit but also of peace and goodwill. Both men were inspired by an enlarged patriotism and an enlightened imperialism which saw a splendid future for South Africa through the harmonious co-operation of British and Dutch in the development of the country's agricultural and mining resources. So the two co-operated heartily, well knowing that the progress of wealth and welfare depends largely upon the readiness of governments to facilitate the exchange of goods by the extension of transport and traffic. From these ideas of Percy his father and father-in-law Percy Moltano drew no small part of his philosophy of life.

Moltano
Currie
↓
Political
&
Business
Harmony

Currie
(D)

Percy
his father and father-in-law
Percy Moltano
drew no small
part of his philosophy
of life.

When Sir Donald Currie had made a success of his Line to South Africa he soon became known in London as a shipowner with exceptionally wide views, and as an authority on sea communications between Great Britain and Africa. He had already gained many friends in official society and in the Services, and his opinions were sought on problems not only of commerce but of national defence. In March, 1877, he was invited by the Council of the Royal United Institution to lecture on maritime warfare, and the importance of coaling stations and graving-docks in various parts of the world, in view of the geographical dispersion of our colonies and dependencies. Sir Garnet Wolseley took the chair for him, and Sir Donald Currie surveyed the whole situation, illustrating the needs of imperial defence from our naval history, with special reference to the Ashantee campaign. During that affair he had frequent communications with

Currie
&
UK
Strategic
Interests

He

see re Currie's life

↳ Clement Jones: Pioneer Shipowners

the Admiralty, and much time was lost in despatching troops from England, owing to lack of telegraphs and the irregularity of steamers employed on the Gold Coast.

After a discussion, which still merits the attention of those interested in naval warfare, Sir Garnet Wolseley in summing up complained that 'the wind has been completely taken out of my sails; for Mr. Currie in his very able lecture has referred to every one of the topics I had intended dwelling upon'. It is curious to-day to read Wolseley's observations on powerful nations under despotic rule 'which have what they call manifest destinies to carry out', and hold that 'there are certain portions of the world which ought by right to belong to them, and of which they intend sometime or other to possess themselves'. On all sides there were rumours of war, and the world's affairs seemed so unsettled that a great war might begin at any time, from which England might not be able to keep aloof. Past experience, he thought, showed that when a great despotic power thinks it has found a fitting opportunity for acquiring what it wants and believes it ought to have, it invariably avails itself of the opportunity 'quite regardless of the means to be employed'. He thought therefore that the precautionary and preparatory measures suggested by Currie were of the greatest importance. That was in 1877. Happily the great nations allowed many years to go by before the armaments race began, and for more than thirty years Great Britain and the British Empire, with the one unhappy exception of South Africa, enjoyed peace and prosperity.

It happened that a few months afterwards the Royal Colonial Institute, disappointed in arrangements it had made for a paper on South Africa, persuaded Donald Currie to fill the gap with a discourse entitled 'Thoughts upon the present and future of South Africa and Central Africa'. His reason for accepting the invitation, though he had no personal knowledge of the Dark Continent, was that he felt it very important that the attention of the public should be drawn to African problems by an enlightened discussion. Starting with the establishment of responsible government in Cape Colony under the Premiership of his friend J. C. Molteno, 'an independent advocate for its liberties', he asked those who had doubted the capacity of the Cape Colony to manage its own affairs whether they would not agree 'in this month of June, 1877, after the troubles and disputes connected with Confederation, with Diamond Fields and the Transvaal, that responsible government for the Cape had been a good thing'. Happily an honourable settlement of the Diamond Fields had been arrived at with the Orange Free State, and the question was at rest. Of Thomas Burgers, President of the Transvaal, Currie spoke with respect 'as one with whom I had the most intimate relations when he lived with me in England'. But Burgers, after his return to the Transvaal, had been less successful. Currie, however, was now hopeful that Confederation or Union might be brought about between the States and Colonies of South Africa. He said a good word for missions and missionaries, like Moffat, Livingstone and Stewart. He would encourage every effort to

Currie & Burgers
of the Transvaal

develop not only commercial enterprise but suitable education for the natives. Their policy should aim at peace and justice, and should not be impelled merely by love of gain. Currie associated Providence with progress.

The gold mine [he said] has played a remarkable part in the history of the world. It seems as if Providence employs the attraction of gold to draw men to people distant and neglected portions of the globe. Hence the prosperity of California, the advance of Australia and the probable advance of South Africa.

But he also believed that material progress required something more than Providence, namely industry and enterprise. From Molteno he had learnt that irrigation was required for the greater development of South Africa. In many parts rain ought to be collected and stored to provide against drought. Immigration was also much needed. The Cape Colony had often subsidized immigration, but many of the immigrants, instead of settling there, had made their way to the Transvaal. *Currie*
Then there was the native question. The Kaffirs were capable of improvement, and it is our duty to treat them fairly. *Black*
He paid a tribute to the enlightened policy pursued by the Cape Government towards the coloured races. *SA*

In the discussion that followed J. A. Froude, who happened to be present, was led by Currie's references to J. C. Molteno to make a personal explanation which appears as follows in the report of the proceedings:

On his (Mr. Froude's) first visit to the Cape Mr. Molteno was exceedingly kind to him — indeed, much more than kind — and afforded him every opportunity of seeing and hearing everything to be seen and heard, besides giving him the benefit of his (Mr. Molteno's) large knowledge of the Colony. *Froude*
He certainly thought he had understood Mr. Molteno. But there had been points left imperfectly explained. When he went out again to the Cape, there was a certain degree of misunderstanding which led to disagreements. When, however, Mr. Molteno was in England last year he and Mr. Molteno came to a thorough understanding that there had been mutual mistakes. . . . There he would now wish to leave the matter with the words which Mr. Molteno used in parting with him, 'All's well that ends well'. *Molteno*

Of the native races and especially of the Zulus Froude spoke wisely and generously. They must not be allowed to perish. To do their duty to them, though difficult, would be more honourable to our colonists than if they piled up great fortunes or showed more diamonds than ever grew in the garden of Aladdin. Anthony Trollope, who was about to entrust himself, as he said, to the tender mercies of Mr. Donald Currie whose ship was to carry him to Cape Town, also pleaded for the natives and dwelt on the sad fate that had befallen the aborigines of Australia and the Red Indians in North America. *Trollope*
Vintcent, a member of the Cape Legislature, speaking of Confederation and Lord Carnarvon's policy, warned them that it was a mistake to suppose that Confederation was an accomplished fact. The colonists would like to *SA*

I.R.P.
1879



deal with the question in their own way and take their own time. He did not believe that the Cape Colony would accept any Bill which was calculated to curtail any of the political privileges which it now enjoyed. Another colonist, Lamport of Natal, spoke of the lamentable affair with Langalibalele and of the failure of the British Government to maintain a sufficient force in Natal to protect them from the Zulus. In his view Confederation would amount to nothing.

Eleven years later in a paper read to the Royal Colonial Institute (with Lord Brassey in the chair) on April 10th, 1888, Sir Donald Currie referred to his previous paper of June 7th, 1877, when he had set before the Fellows of the Institute his 'thoughts upon the present and future of South Africa and Central and Eastern Africa'. On that occasion he had spoken from business knowledge and from talks in England with his friend J. C. Molteno and other visitors from South Africa.

As he put it on this occasion,

for about 16 years past I have been more or less intimately associated with the material interests and policy of that part of the world; and yet my first visit took place only a few months ago. I had no personal knowledge of South African territory when we met together 11 years ago; but on referring to your records I find it was possible for me to appreciate at that time, to some extent, the resources of the country, the characteristics of the people, and their possible future.

Currie's 1st visit
to SA only
- 1887 - affe - I
↓
Currie links
with OFS & Tr.
leader
↓
A group
tour

He left England with his daughters in the middle of October, 1887, and proceeded thence by rail to Kimberley, where they visited the diamond mines. From Kimberley they started with three travelling carriages, (16 horses and stores for Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, where, after travelling at the rate of about thirty miles a day, they were received with great kindness by his old friend, President Sir John Brand. They then drove to Pretoria, 'where we enjoyed the hospitality of His Honour President Paul Kruger and while there I visited Johannesburg, the chief town of the gold district of Witwatersrand'. From Pretoria they drove to Heidelberg and through Standerton to Coldstream, in the north of Natal.

30m a day

Early in the morning after our arrival we drove to Majuba and reached the summit. Afterwards we visited the scene at Laing's Nek, and thence made our way to Ladysmith, the northern terminus of the Natal railway system, where I disposed of the carriages and horses.

Next the party visited Durban, East London, King William's Town and Grahamstown. From Grahamstown they drove to Lovedale, where Dr. Stewart was giving instruction and practical training to the natives. After this they stayed a few days at Port Elizabeth, 'the commercial capital of the Eastern Province'. Thence they sailed to Mossel Bay, saw Knysna, with its primeval forest, and returned to Cape Town 'to partake once more of the hospitality of our friends there'.

Having thus described his travels, Sir Donald made a brief survey of South African history in order to estimate,

first, the forces which had been brought into play previous to 1877 and were still operating in the social and political relationships of the inhabitants and, secondly, in order to 'guide us to an avowal of errors in policy which have marked the past history of that part of the world'. He touched upon the significance of the visits of the Presidents of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State to London when Lord Carnarvon was Secretary, and on the miserable wars that took place between 1877 and the restoration of Transvaal independence by the Gladstone Government after Majuba in 1881. There followed a period of commercial depression and exhaustion, after years of 'disaster and calamity in our imperial history'. All this had now changed.

Just as in 1872 the Cape Colony took a start from the discovery of diamonds, so South Africa has again made a leap forward through the acknowledged possession within its boundaries of untold wealth in gold.

(1) In 1871 the value of the gold exported was only £670; in 1884 it was £69,000, in 1886, £134,000 and in 1887 the value had risen to nearly a quarter of a million sterling. In the year 1888 he thought that the gold production would reach a total value of about a million sterling.

Gold
Economic
Impact

2M?
2 We have no space here for Sir Donald Currie's acute observations on the gold mines and the diamond mines, or on the promising discoveries of coal in Natal, or on the vineyards and wine industry and the variety of grapes. In this connection he had visited with great pleasure the old town of Stellenbosch, the centre of the wine-growing district, where many of the French Huguenots had settled, bringing with them the vines of France. 'Among the farms you will find the names known in their native land — Lamotte, Rhone, Languedoc and La Rochelle.' In this remarkable survey, Sir Donald also touched upon the importance of wool production and ostrich farming, and also on the railway communications which were being extended in Cape Colony and Natal, and were causing not only rivalry between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, but also some friction with the Transvaal and the Free State, which were still suspicious of British intentions.

After his talks with President Kruger, Sir Donald Currie was able to say that in Kruger's opinion, representing many of the Boers in the Transvaal,

Delagoa Bay offers the more attractive route (to the sea) for Transvaal interests, there being a fear on the part of those who favour this route that some day or other England may seek to re-establish authority over the Transvaal, and that it is as well to have an alternative route and so be independent.

But, he added, 'the suspicion that England desires to annex the Transvaal is fast disappearing from the minds of the population'. Moreover, as he had pointed out to President Kruger, difficulties would arise if goods imported by the Delagoa route by the Dutch Company which had the concession for the Transvaal Railway were

freed from customs duties. Besides the internal political danger for the Transvaal, with its new digger population, there was a likelihood of antagonism between the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and of a rupture of commercial relations with the Cape and Natal, 'followed by political results which I am convinced would prove very detrimental to Transvaal interests'. Sir Donald Currie was hoping, however, that a tariff conference between the States and Colonies at Cape Town would solve the railway problem satisfactorily. He favoured more co-operation between the Cape and Natal. Had they been united, Germany's annexations on the south-west coast would have been averted. He had himself introduced a deputation on the subject to Lord Derby in 1884, but Lord Derby had postponed action, and Germany had annexed Damaraland. There was a similar danger in Pondoland, whose magnificent scenery, particularly at the entrance of the St. John's River, reminded him of Skye. Here again difficulties had arisen through rivalry between the Cape and Natal, which were then divided from one another by a coastline of 120 miles. He spoke also of Swaziland, which he said had a special claim upon our Government, since the Swazis had helped Lord Wolseley to defeat Secocoeni. In the native mind, he added, variations of British policy had created much doubt and misgiving, and this had extended to the capital of Lobengulo, King of the Matabeles.

Currie tried to stop Germany getting SWA in 1884

Currie pro-Swazi: (so NOT simplification only concerned whites)

UK zigzag Policy

Currie pro-Zulu

There is nothing more marked in South Africa than the belief that no dependence is to be placed upon British assurances or upon the continuity or definiteness of our imperial policy. Our treatment of the Zulus must ever remain a disgrace to our statesmanship; and the repeated efforts which I have made in concert with others for years past to secure for that brave people a fair measure of consideration have resulted only in this—starvation amongst them, civil war, and the subjection of a large part of their very best territory to foreign authority.

After speaking of imperial interests in connection with naval defence, Sir Donald Currie ended his wise and well-informed homily before the Colonial Institute on the theme that our position in South Africa depends in the main upon the friendship of its population. It is to our permanent interest, he said, to secure their goodwill and ready assistance. Their union was not a mere dream, but was nearer than people imagined; but that desirable result would only be hindered 'if we entertain the feelings and carry out the policy which has characterized our dealings in the past towards the population of South Africa'. There had been no continuity of British policy during South Africa's chequered history. 'It was with sad thoughts of what might have been accomplished by friendly and timely action on the part of the Government of this country that I looked at Majuba on my way to Natal.' He asked himself, 'Is there any hope that the inhabitants of the Republics will ever be united in cordial and hearty association with the colonists and people of this country?' His reply was in the affirmative. He was convinced

Currie's 1st base is Highlands
- which he only rented
Later bought Gouth

Glen Lyon

Currie - like SCM -
pro voluntary union of
4 SA states

that in the future—with England's protection upon the sea coast—the population of the Transvaal, the Free State, the Cape and Natal will become more and more closely attached to each other, enjoying the management of their own affairs, and forming together a prosperous and united South Africa in practical harmony with the people of the British Isles and our colonial empire.

Could he have foreseen the advent of Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Jamieson, Chamberlain and Milner, Sir Donald Currie would have been less optimistic. But, as it happened, he lived to see his own policy and that of his son-in-law applied by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to heal the wounds of South Africa. Thus Percy's ideas of the right colonial policy, instilled by his father's teaching and example, were fostered and encouraged by his wife's father, who had also played a great and useful part in the development of South Africa.

Impact on Percy

In the late summer of 1876 Percy, then in his fifteenth year, accompanied his parents to Cluny, where the Curries were entertaining a party of guests. The ship-owner must have been pleased with the boy; for he kept the letter which Percy wrote to him a few days afterwards. It was dated, Lowestoft, September 4, 1876.

Percy + SCM to Cluny in 1876

My dear Mr. Currie,

I hope you are well at Cluny; we are well here. What kind of weather have you at Cluny? Here it has rained every day since we arrived, except yesterday which was Sunday. We went to St. Margaret's Church yesterday morning, it is a very pretty Church. All the Churches are very full about here. There is a very large skating rink; it has just been opened. Frank and I have tried it, we went there on Saturday afternoon; after a great many falls we managed to get along a little; we intend going again.

Saturday morning we sculled up the Canal for a little way, but it came on to rain and we had to return. There are about sixty or seventy fishing smacks and small sailing vessels lying at anchor close in. There is a dock here but no large vessels in it; there are nothing but fishing smacks and a few small sailing vessels. There are two steam tugs which bring small vessels into the docks. Frank wishes to be remembered to you. Please remember me to the girls.

I remain,
Your affectionate Friend,
Percy Moltano.

The 'girls' referred to in Percy's letter were the three daughters of Sir Donald Currie. Bessie, the second of them, so I have been told, fell in love with him at first sight. She was then eighteen or nineteen years old and he not quite fifteen.

Bessie fell in love with Percy

The friendship was renewed when Percy left the Cape for Trinity, Cambridge. By that time Sir Donald Currie had purchased a large house with an estate at Garth in Perthshire, which is described in a letter from Percy to his sister Caroline dated Garth, Perthshire, September 11th, 1881. 'As you see', he wrote, 'I am in

older than Percy

Percy renews personal contact with Currie 5 yrs later - 1881 - He was 21 & at Cambridge

Cluny
880
885

Scotland with Sir D. Currie. He has a large party always staying here. He liked the house; they were still furnishing it and had just had a small organ put in:

Garth

Percy's description

X The place is quite near Loch Tay, about 2 miles off, and near the entrance of Glen Lyon, a very pretty glen which leads into Glencoe. It is very nice staying here; we either shoot or make expeditions somewhere; from the hills up behind Garth there are splendid views of all the mountain ranges. Yesterday we drove along Loch Tay; it was a lovely day, and the water looked beautiful — we picnicked under Ben Lawers, the highest peak about here, 3,900 feet. In the evening we have full dress dinners, which pass away a great deal of time; and they are rather early people, getting to bed generally before 11 o'clock. We have the river Lyon, a feeder of the Tay, running a short distance in front of the house. We went to a pretty little English Church at Taymouth this morning, it is Lady Breadalbane's private church, built by her.

A tribute to the delights of Garth in the days of Sir Donald and Lady Currie comes from an old friend of theirs, the Rev. J. B. A. Gordon:

Currie - Description of

I often stayed with them and found them the kindest of hosts — always trying to make their guests happy. Sir Donald was a most generous friend and a most interesting companion. He had a very subtle mind, but took broad and all-round views. He was an admirable landowner and carried out many improvements on his estates. His charities were large and very often so secret that very few knew of them. He threw himself into his children's and grandchildren's interests and amusements. I remember him getting the children to follow him as he marched round the drawing room singing 'Here comes the muffin man'.

like Percy

Lady Currie had an extraordinarily cultured and artistic nature. She loved flowers and natural scenery, but, above all, her children and grandchildren. She was perhaps not particularly interested in people in general, but she was profoundly interested in her family circle and was adored by them. She was extremely attached to the form of religion in which she had been brought up, and tried to live it out in her daily life. She was the most interesting and fascinating and charming person that I have ever known — with one exception — my own Aunt who was her intimate friend from early childhood's days.

Lady Currie

This concludes for the present our account of the Curries. In a later chapter we shall describe the happy ending of Percy Moltano's friendship with one of the three girls.

CHAPTER XI

GLEN LYON AND GLEN LYON HOUSE

Some years ago when Percy Moltano invited me to travel with him by car to Glen Lyon House, his wife's Highland home, he promised (with a smile) to conduct me over a Roman camp where Pontius Pilate was born or

buried, and where the Emperor Severus, during his campaign in Caledonia, found winter quarters. He also offered to show me the oldest tree in Britain, still alive and putting forth shoots after a life of well over 2,500 years. I had seen in California a tree which was flourishing at the time of the siege of Troy; and as I have always been interested in Roman camps since my friendship at Oxford with Professor Haverfield, my curiosity was aroused.

Glen Lyon far exceeded my anticipations alike in historical interest and in the transcendent beauty of its scenery. I am indebted to the present owner of the estate, Mr. D. J. Moltano, and to his wife, for a delightful visit to their home and for much of the information which has enabled me to write this chapter introducing my readers to Glen Lyon House. Moltano's association with the house and the estate form no unimportant part of his life and activities from 1914 onwards.

D. J. Moltano's Sir Donald Currie, as we have seen, acquired Garth in 1880, and added to the large mansion where Percy Moltano visited him in the following year. Subsequently he bought the adjoining estates, higher up the Lyon valley, of Glen Lyon and Chesthill. On his death he bequeathed these three estates to his three daughters, Mrs. Mirrielees, Mrs. Moltano and Mrs. Wisely.

Had he searched all Scotland he could not have found a Glen combining so many attractions of scenery, history and romance. Its story starts with the Druids and the Roman invasion; then came Celtic Christianity; then the Highland feuds and the Jacobite risings. In later years came the depopulation of the Glen, followed by the reconstruction of its life. It is one of the longest and narrowest as well as one of the most beautiful glens in Scotland. The Lyon, abounding in salmon, flows for forty miles until it falls into the Tay. From the mountains which hedge it in the river is fed by many streams, which are often torrents that dash down through rocks forming fine cascades.

The three estates purchased by Sir Donald Currie were all in the Highland parish of Fortingall, one of the largest in Scotland, with an area of about 750 square miles. From the borders of Argyllshire it extends almost to Blair Atholl, nearly thirty-six miles, and its breadth from the valley of the Lyon to Laggan in Inverness-shire is thirty-two miles. Within it are the two longest valleys in Scotland — Rannoch and Glen Lyon — and you can count in it more high mountain peaks than in any other parish. A local writer, the Rev. W. Cowan, of the West Manse, Fortingall, tells us that the Dale of Fortingall in which Glen Lyon House lies, and through which the river Lyon runs or rushes, stretches about three and a half miles from east to west. Less than a mile from its western boundary stands Glen Lyon House, at the foot of the mountains and only about a quarter of a mile from the river. A few hundred yards below is the clachan or hamlet of Kirkton (now Fortingall) with its ancient kirk, rebuilt by Sir Donald Currie, a small but excellent hotel, and a beautiful public hall, given shortly before his death by Percy Moltano in memory of his wife.

↳ Percy's generosity

(NB) Presbyterian Church in

During the excavations in 1902 when the church was rebuilt, some fine carvings of the old Celtic church were discovered, dating from the seventh century, when a church dedicated to St. Cedd was erected on the site by St. Adamnan, the biographer of St. Columba. An ancient font which still stands by the porch, was probably used by Adamnan, a missionary monk from Iona, who died at Fortingall in 704. He was a worthy Scottish contemporary of the Venerable Bede. Eight centuries after Adamnan another learned man, the Dean of Lismore, who made an important collection of Gaelic poems, became Vicar of Fortingall. He held the Church land and lived at Tullichmhuilinn, on the site of Glen Lyon House. The Dean of Lismore died in 1551, and since the Reformation the Presbyterian Church of Fortingall has maintained the reputation of the place by such ministers as Donald Stewart, who made his mark as a Gaelic scholar.

Fortingall - History of Xth & Scotland

One of the characteristics of the Glen is that it has never had a distinctive clan,¹ and this is reflected in the gravestones of the churchyard, where the names of the Stewarts, the Campbells, the MacGregors, the Robertsons, the MacDiarmids, MacKerchars and Menzies may be deciphered. Inside the gate is the burial place of the Campbells, who are especially associated with its history since the end of the seventeenth century.

No single clan in Glen Lyon

Campbells since late 1600s.

Mrs. D. J. Molteno, who has studied the history of the house and estate which her husband inherited from his mother, has given me some notes from which, with the help of the books from the library of Glen Lyon House, I have been enabled to sketch its history.

On the estate, as we have seen, was the site of a very early Christian mission, one of the birthplaces of Scottish Christianity. Already in the fourteenth century the estate, originally called Tullichmhuilinn, formed part of the Church lands of Fortingall. In the two following centuries it was occupied by a clerical family of MacGregors, the most famous of whom was Sir James MacGregor, a Papal Knight, best known as the Dean of Lismore, who, as we have seen, wrote in Latin the *Chronicles of Fortingall* and the *Book of the Dean of Lismore*. He brought the Chronicle down to 1542, and it was continued (after his death in 1551) down to the year 1557 by the curate of Fortingall, who mentions that in 1565 the house was burnt down by James MacGestalkar. Two MacGregors were killed, and the crime was avenged in Highland fashion.

Church lost church in Reformation

In consequence of the Reformation the Church was deprived of this property, and the estate passed into the hands of the Atholl family, which retained it until the beginning of the eighteenth century. At that time the land was under wadset, or lease, by a Baron Dewar.

In books written about the Highlands no word is more freely used and abused than the word 'tradition'. Compilers of guide-books or of histories, so-called, are ready to print almost any trash as 'a local tradition.' The story that the massacre of Glencoe was planned in Glen Lyon House by Robert Campbell, who executed the foul deed,

¹ Possibly because these were Crown Lands of the Scottish Kings.

and that he marched thence with his clansmen to the neighbouring valley of Glencoe, is a pure fiction. It was invented some fifty years ago and greedily swallowed by coaching agencies and guides who, as they drove up the Glen, pointed to Glen Lyon House and sent a shudder or thrill through a coach-load of trippers, who had heard, or read in Macaulay's pages, of the ghastly deed done in Glencoe, the 'glen of weeping', 'the most dreary and melancholy of all the Scottish passes, the very Valley of the Shadow of Death'.²

Glencoe
Massacre
connection
to Glen
Lyon

How and why the massacre was planned by the two great chiefs of the House of Campbell, Argyll and Breadalbane, with their infamous accomplice, the Master of Stair, in pursuit of a Highland revenge, has been told once for all in the glowing pages of Macaulay. On February 1st, 1692, they despatched 120 soldiers of Argyll's regiment to Glencoe, under the command of Captain Robert Campbell,

commonly called in Scotland Glenlyon, from the pass in which his property lay. He had every qualification for the service on which he was employed, an unblushing forehead, a smooth lying tongue, and a heart of adamant.

He was also able to visit the little clan of MacDonalDs, whom he was to massacre, as a friend; for his niece was married to Alexander, the second son of their old chief, Mac Ian. For twelve days Campbell and his redcoats lived familiarly with the people of the Glen. The early morn of February 13th was fixed for the deed, but the evening before a suspicion got about, and only the chief and his wife and one-fourth of the men of Glencoe were murdered. The rest escaped; but many more were frozen or starved to death. The deserted hamlets were set on fire by the departing troops who carried off sheep, goats, cattle and ponies.

For months the hideous truth was concealed. The massacre was represented as a night attack on a gang of freebooters or as a punishment for an ambushade laid for the redcoats by the old robber Mac Ian. Glenlyon, we are told, did his best to assume an air of unconcern; made his appearance in a fashionable coffee-house at Edinburgh and talked about the important service he had been engaged in. But 'he was not the man that he had been before that night, the form of his countenance was changed. In all places, at all hours, whether he waked or slept, Glencoe was ever before him'. At last, in 1695, a Commission was appointed to examine into the affair and — probably to avoid his evidence — Captain Campbell was ordered to rejoin his regiment in Flanders, where other officers engaged in the massacre were already serving. Campbell died at Bruges in the following year, aged sixty-five. He had been ruined by extravagance and gambling. He was succeeded by his son, John, who gradually freed himself from the debts left by his father and recovered the Glen Lyon estate from the Duke of Atholl.

So much for the main story. It remains only to expose the fiction which associates Glen Lyon with the massacre. This has been done once and for all by the late Alexander Stewart in A Highland Parish or the History of Fortingall, published in 1928, with a preface by his son-in-law,

² Macaulay's *History*, Chapter xviii.

Source re
History of
Fortingall.

Professor W. J. Watson. In this work, a labour of love as well as of learning, the author states that he has lived in Glen Lyon for seventy-five years. From early youth he had 'listened to the traditions of the district from the mouths of old, truthful men, well versed in local history', and had learnt to distinguish between reliable transmitters of folk lore and those who were apt to exaggerate or distort. He assured his readers that there was no vestige of tradition in the Glen until thirty or forty years ago, when drivers of stage coaches spread the tale, that Captain Campbell marched from Glen Lyon House to Glencoe. Stewart had only heard the story from tourists, or recent comers to the district, in the last twenty or thirty years. As to the known facts, Captain Robert Campbell had, in 1684, sold all his lands in Glen Lyon except his wife's estate at Chesthill to the Marquis of Atholl. Atholl sold it to Crowner Menzies in 1691.

The real tradition of the Glen is that only one other member of the Glen Lyon Campbells took part with Captain Robert Campbell in this massacre, and that Captain Campbell was at that time with his regiment in Argyllshire, whence he left for Glencoe. This regiment consisted of Campbells, but not of Glen Lyon Campbells.³

At the time of the massacre only a small part of the old house of Tullichmhuilinn existed. In 1710 the Duke of Atholl exchanged Tullichmhuilinn and West Forthingall with John Campbell, in return for an estate in Lower Atholl. John Campbell was the son of the Captain Robert Campbell who carried out the massacre of Glencoe. On the death of his father at Bruges in 1696

John Campbell was in serious financial embarrassment, but he had great energy and was getting his affairs into better condition when the 1715 rising took place. John immediately threw in his lot with the old Pretender and had to go into exile. But with the aid of influential friends he was allowed to return to his home in 1720.

He then began to enlarge the farmhouse, and renamed it Glen Lyon, in memory of the time when his family had owned large portions of the Glen. Luckily for the estate his eldest son, John, was a Hanoverian, and held the rank of Captain in the Royal Army when the young Pretender, Prince Charlie, landed in 1745. The Jacobite father was too old to fight, but his youngest son, Archie Roy, aged fifteen, joined the Stewart standard with the Glen Lyon men and marched into England with the Prince. After Culloden old John Campbell and Archie went into hiding, while the eldest son, Captain John, was despatched with his regiment to hunt Jacobites and burn down their houses in Rannoch. He is said to have acted as mercifully as his duty permitted.

Captain John Campbell rose to be a Colonel and lived for some years after his father's death in Glen Lyon House. He was succeeded there by another brother, Dr. David Campbell, who had spent thirty years in Jamaica. David lived there with his mother and sisters, loved and respected by all.

³ See *A Highland Parish*, Appendix E. Nevertheless, this fictitious tradition that the massacre was planned in Glen Lyon House was firmly held and fiercely maintained by Bessie Moltano.

Campbells
of Glen
Lyon

1715

1720 Glen Lyon
farmhouse extended

1745 - Glen Lyon
men again to
the Pretender

Times were bad owing to the wars with France, and the Highland districts were miserably poor. The Campbells helped and encouraged young men to go out from the Glen into the world. The good doctor died in 1806, and the estate passed through the female line to Francis Garden Campbell of Troup. The Garden Campbells were absentee landlords and the estate was neglected.

(D) At last in 1885, the third of them sold Glen Lyon House and lands to Sir Donald Currie, who spent a great deal of money in improvements. Glen Lyon House itself was rebuilt and enlarged; but the alterations were carried out with taste, and the new mansion, one of the most attractive in the Glen, retains enough of the old to remind us of the modest farmhouse which it has replaced. The cottages in the village were in a bad state; the church was crumbling and the hotel was a poor structure. They were all entirely rebuilt by Sir Donald with the exception of the church, to which some comparatively small contributions were made by others.

In connection with the rebuilding of the church an amusing incident shows how easily an amateur antiquary may jump to hasty conclusions. Hollinshed, the old chronicler, gave currency to a legend that Pontius Pilate was born in Fortingall, his father having been one of the ambassadors whom Augustus sent to negotiate with Metellanus, King of the Caledonians. The so-called White Fort, where Metellanus is supposed to have negotiated the peace treaty with the ambassadors of Augustus, is not far from the village of Fortingall. According to another legend Pilate died in the Roman camp, which is for this purpose dated from the period of Agricola's conquest of Britain. During the excavations required by the rebuilding of the church in Kirkton, a stone was found on which were inscribed the letters P. P. Sir Donald Currie jumped to the conclusion that this must have marked the grave of Pontius Pilate, and wrote a letter to *The Times* announcing his important discovery. It is now usually held that the Roman camp dates from A.D. 209, and not from A.D. 83; but I see no reason why it should not have been established by Agricola and re-occupied by Severus in A.D. 209. In favour of Agricola we may cite Skene's opinion that the battle of Mons Grampius was fought in Perthshire, near the confluence of the rivers Isla and Tay. Near by is a great Roman camp which must have been occupied for a considerable period.

The story of Agricola's march into Scotland and of the battle of Mons Grampius is told by Tacitus, Agricola's son-in-law, and it seems just possible that the camp at Fortingall was the scene of the night attack which nearly overwhelmed one of Agricola's legions. If so we may surmise that this camp was reoccupied by Severus or one of his officers one hundred and twenty-six years later, when he marched into the Highlands and inflicted temporary chastisement on the savage tribes of Caledonia.

Molteno was not learned in the classics nor had he made any special study of Roman antiquities in Scotland. But he was not wrong in attaching importance to the camp, which lay so close to his Highland home. It is remarkable both for its size and for the raised castle or prætorium within it, which was obviously intended to

emigration

1885

Currie

buys

Glen Lyon

Hsc

Pontius

Pilate

Legend

Roman

Camp

There

cked

be a second line of defence in case the outer fringes were forced by a sudden onslaught of the enemy. The Glen Lyon camp seems to mark the furthest westward penetration of the Roman expeditions into Caledonia.

Pennant on the Roman Camp at Glen Lyon

Though Camden reproduces the famous account in Tacitus of Agricola's campaign in Caledonia he knew nothing of the Roman remains in the Highlands. So far as I am aware the first description of the Glen Lyon camp is that of Thomas Pennant, who visited Fortingall twice. During his first tour in Scotland ('a country' then 'almost as little known to its Southern brethen as Kamskatka') he wrote in his diary for July 31st, 1769:

Rode to Glen-Lion The Vale is narrow but fertile . . . On the North is a round fortress, on the top of the hill; to which in old times the natives retreated on any invasion. A little further, on a plain, is a small (?) Roman camp, called by the Highlanders Fortingal, or the Fort of the Strangers . . . It possibly might have been made during the expedition of Severus, who penetrated to the extremity of this island. It was the most northern work of the Romans of which I had any intelligence.

In August, 1772, on his second tour, Pennant again visited the camp. This time he makes some further observations:

It seems to have been the Castellum of some advanced party in the time of Antonine, or Commodus, or perhaps a temporary station in that of Severus, in whose reign the Romans abandoned these parts. A copper vessel, with a beak, handle and three feet, was found in it. I did not hear of any coins met with on the spot: but in digging the foundation of a tower near Taymouth, fourteen silver denarii were discovered; but none of a later date than Marcus Aurelius.

Pennant says that Colonel Campbell of Glen-Lion showed him at his house

a curious walking staff belonging to one of his ancestors: it was iron cased in leather, five feet long; at the top a neat pair of extended wings, like a *caduceus*; but, on being shaken, a poniard, two feet nine inches long, darted out.

It is a curiosity, but not (as some have supposed) a Roman eagle!!⁴

Pennant was much impressed by 'the wonderful yew-tree in the Church-yard of Fortingall, whose ruins measure fifty six feet in circumference', and his remarks on the wild animals, birds and trees of Glen Lyon are well worth reading. But there is one entry which I must here set down, describing his ride from Loch Tay to Glen Lyon:

The abundance of inhabitants on this side surpasses that of any place in Scotland of equal extent; for from Finlarig to the forks of the Lyon, about seventeen miles, there are not fewer than seventeen hundred and

Glen Lyon
used to have
a large po

⁴ Sir Donald Currie and his daughter firmly believed that this treasured possession *was* a Roman eagle.

eighty souls, happy under a humane Glen chieftain (Lord Breadalbane). Their habitations are prettily grouped along the sides of the hill; are small and mean, often without windows or doors; and are the only disgrace to the magnificence of the scenery.

1

Their little clachans accounted for 'a continuous tract of cultivated land, rich in corn'. Since then the population has declined. Many of the clachans have disappeared; only a few stones mark their sites; there is far less corn and fewer sheep. But on the estates left by Sir Donald Currie the people are well housed and enjoy comforts which their ancestors would have envied.

Pennant was in his day a distinguished zoologist and a first-rate observer; nor was he to be despised as an antiquary. He had read Camden's *Brittania and Bede*, and quotes both in his account of Perthshire and Dalrié, which he connects with Bede's on Dalrieti.⁵ Pennant's observations on the Roman camps at Strathern and Ardoch are still of value, and so is his treatment of the battle of Mons Grampius. Indeed one is much struck by his topographical interpretation of Tacitus' confusing story of Agricola's campaign. Pennant suggests that the night attack on the camp should be distinguished from the great battle, and that the camp was some distance away. Pennant's account of the Glenlyon camp induced the Earl of Breadalbane to send diggers to the spot; and three urns were found.

Fifty years after Pennant another topographer describes the valley of Glen Lyon and the Roman camp at some length. The valley, he wrote, afforded excellent pasturage for sheep, 'of which about 20,000 are generally fed'; the mountain-sides were well-wooded with the remains of the ancient Caledonian forest, the trees being mainly birch and native fir, with some oak, ash, beech and elm. The limestone of the Grampian range provided good building stone and quarries. To the west of Fortingall — so runs this account — were the remains of a Roman camp, surrounded by a fosse.

? correct this out

Ardoch Glen Lyon gone - 1820s

The prætorium is in good preservation: and north-west of it is a tumulus sixty feet in length, and about twenty feet wide at the base, raised over the remains of those who fell in battle. A little to the west of the General's tent [*sic*] are two obelisks, the one about six feet in height, yet standing, and the other, eight feet, long since fallen to the ground. This encampment occupies an area of nearly ninety acres.

Besides the Roman camp our topographer mentioned remains of Druidical circles near the Parish Church and elsewhere in the neighbourhood; also numerous forts of circular form, or round towers, the walls built of loose stones and of great thickness. These forts are generally referred to the time of Fingal, and are traditionally said to have been castles belonging to the heroes of that chieftain.'

Round dry stone forts (what is their name?)

The latest guide-book by the Minister of Fortingall, the Rev. W. Cowan (1937), states that the camp is oblong and surrounded by a ditch; that the prætorium

⁵ See Bede's *History Book*, I, Chapter 1. Pennant also prints an appendix by Thomas Marshall on the Roman antiquities near Perth.

⁶ See *A Highland Parish*, p. 41.

? see folio 151

2 great changes in Glen Lyon
 (1) Depopulation
 (2) Deforestation

or general's quarters can still be distinctly traced; that it embraces an area of fifty-one acres, and is 'undoubtedly Roman'. It suggests that the large burial mound on the east of the camp indicates that a sanguinary battle was fought; and refers to the disputes of various writers, some of whom think that the camp was formed by Agricola's army, A.D. 83, while others attribute it to that of the Emperor Severus who, in A.D. 209, wintered in Caledonia. Tacitus, it may be noticed, tells us that Agricola's army advanced in three separate divisions through a wilderness of forest and marshes, and that the Ninth Legion, one of the divisions, was surprised and nearly overwhelmed in a night attack on the camp. Was this the camp? Or was it one of those formed after the victory of Mons Grampius, when the Roman legions and their British allies were exploring the country? The leading archæologist of Scotland, Sir George Macdonald, said not long ago of the Roman camps in Caledonia (the Roman name for the country north of Antonine's wall): 'These are camps not of permanent occupation but of armies on campaign. They are as yet wholly unexplored.'

A third legend, which was always stoutly maintained by Sir Donald Currie and his daughter Bessie, goes back to the Hollingshead tradition that Pontius Pilate was born at Fortingall:

His father was a Roman officer who came as an ambassador from the Emperor Augustus to establish a covenant of peace — a kind of ancient League of Nations. The local tradition is that his mother was a Balquhider woman. At that time the King of Scotland, Mettelanus, lived at Fortingall, possibly in the white fort on the hill above Balnacraig. He is said to have given hospitable entertainment to the embassy and to have loaded them with gifts for the Emperor.

When Percy Moltano first took an interest in the camp he found that a burn having changed its channel, was running into the fosse and silting it up. To stop this he had it diverted.

Percy & the
Roman
Camp.

During the War he had part of the camp between the prætorium and the river ploughed up and sown with potatoes, but the crop did not meet with his expectations and I am told that this innovation was disliked by some of the local people, who have a perhaps superstitious feeling about mysterious antiquities, though they had no objection some years previously when the camp was converted into a golf course.

In the recent learned if occasionally imaginative work on *Roman Britain* by Collingwood and Myres will be found an account of Hadrian's Wall and its various vicissitudes before and after A.D. 142 when a new wall was built across the isthmus. It was wrecked about A.D. 200 when a great eruption of the northern tribes played havoc with the Roman stations and Romanized towns as far south as Chester. Then came the 'grim African Emperor,' Septimus Severus, to drive back the barbarians, and the success of his punitive expeditions is attested not only by Roman and Greek historians but

also by the fact unknown to Pennant that Roman camps are found as far north as Aberdeen. It is no wonder that Severus, who had to be carried in a litter, was worn out by this hard warfare in an inclement climate between A.D. 208 and 211 when he died at York. The authors of *Roman Britain* dwell on the importance of the Roman fortress near the junction of the Tay and the Isla; but they suggest that Agricola's army must have been in touch with the fleet and that the expression *praemissa classe* makes it likely that the Mons Grampius battle was fought in north-east Strathmore not very far from Forfar or Brechin. The two great Catherthun hill forts (which I visited in 1938) prove the military importance of this region in early times. The white Cathertun is a large oval fort of stones piled on a bare hill — 'a great bastion' to quote Murray's guide book 'in front of the Grampian Range, which it commands to the north and south'. But there are no vestiges of the forest referred to in the narrative of Tacitus, though the plain of Strathmore of which there is a fine view is 'studded with Roman camps'.

The Inchtuthill camp is described by Collingwood as 'the great camp of fifty acres' — no larger by the way than the Glen Lyon camp which Pennant thought 'small'. But its twenty-foot ditch, its massive ramparts, and its wooden hutments indicate the permanent winter quarters of a legion, and this is the opinion of Sir George MacDonald, the greatest living authority on Roman antiquities in Scotland.

I regret, however, to have to record that Sir George MacDonald, on grounds which I hope are inadequate, has doubts as to whether the Glen Lyon camp was really Roman. 'There are two difficulties,' he wrote in answer to my queries, 'in the way of accepting the very tempting view that the Glen Lyon camp is Roman.'

In the first place 'there is no record of any Roman object having been found in or near it.'

Secondly 'the position of the gate is quite unlike the position of the gate (or gates) in any known Roman camp or fort.'

As to the first objection we have Pennant's account and a further statement, recorded by local antiquaries, that afterwards when Lord Breadalbane set his diggers at work they found some Roman pottery. A scientific excavation is obviously needed to decide the question. Assuming that nothing more is revealed, Sir George considers that the second objection is more serious than the first. Against it, however, stands the rectangular character of the camp, and its situation, on a river and a stream, which may well explain the unusual position of the gates. It would have been natural for the Romans on one of their punitive expeditions to march up the Glen Lyon valley from their fortress on the Tay, either in the time of Agricola or in that of Severus.

As to Agricola's campaign Sir George MacDonald now inclines to believe that the site of the Grampian battle, his 'crowning mercy', was somewhere in Kincardine or South Aberdeen.⁷

Sir George MacDonald also contests the theory that

⁷ See Sir George MacDonald's Presidential Address to the Classical Association in 1932, which was republished as a pamphlet with the title 'Agricola in Britain'.

? correct

? correct throughout

(X) Most of Percy's papers lost -
where are they?

Severus wintered in Caledonia or made the winter march attributed to him by Gibbon.

Gibbon [he says] was doubtless going on what Cassius Dio says as to the Emperor having noted the difference in the length of the day in Caledonia both in summer and winter. But, if that is to be taken literally, it must mean that Severus spent a winter in the extreme north of Scotland — for it is there, according to Dio, that the observation was made.

To this I would reply, with the humility of a mere amateur, that Severus might have marched as far north as Aberdeen and then returned to winter quarters on the Tay. He might well have waited until the early spring before returning through the two great Roman walls to York.⁶

The 3 estates
after Currie's death
(1909)

After Sir Donald Currie's death the three estates of Garth, Glen Lyon and Chesthill were vested in trustees. Lady Currie stayed at Garth and exercised a certain control over the other two estates, while Mrs. Moltano began to live during part of the summer at Glen Lyon. She was much attached to the place, and Percy soon began to take a great interest in the management and improvement of the property. He was very proud of it, though he did not love it as he loved Parklands. Among the boxes in which his papers are lodged there are long files of business correspondence from which one or two samples may be taken from the year 1914. Some of them are to the solicitor for the trustees and for Lady Currie, who had to be consulted about all large capital expenditure. Some are with the tenant of Glen Lyon House Farm, while others are with local tradesmen and contractors. It turned out that the cottages which Sir Donald Currie had built, though vastly superior to the tumble-down bothies which he had found on the estate in 1885, were far from satisfactory and not always watertight. Percy's keen and observant eye saw also many additions which might be made to increase the comfort of the house and the efficiency of the farm. The following from a letter to the farmer, John Amour, dated 10 Palace Court, October 6th, 1914, will give a good idea of his capacity in the role of an improving landlord.

Currie's cottages

Percy as landlord

I am in receipt of yours of October 3rd. I note that you did not mention whether the boiler or copper as heating apparatus would be the same for either brick-built or concrete built walls. I have quite decided that it will not do to have steam for cleaning the utensils. All kinds of difficulties arise as soon as you have steam pressure and for a small quantity of milk such as we have it is really not worth while. There would need to be an ordinary copper in the meal-house and another copper in the wash house. These might be placed

⁶ An important essay by Sir George Macdonald on the campaign of Severus will be found in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (1917-18), p. 252 sqq. Pennant's mention of coins is referred to and considered on p. 263 sqq.

(?)

against the outer wall so as to use the same chimney stack. I have been looking into the estimates more closely and I have come to the following conclusion:

That it would be unnecessary to plaster the concrete as if concrete is made smooth whitewashing will do as well; so also for the plaster on the stone walls, I should not propose to do that. Nor would it be necessary to seal the meal house and the sealing might be confined to the wash house. This would to some extent lighten the cost. With regard to the material for making the dividing walls I am thinking of arranging to have the necessary machine made to make concrete blocks of the river sand in the same way as I have done at Parklands, and I will probably send up someone to show how this is done; but before I can decide upon this I want you to answer the following questions.

What is the price of cement per ton delivered?

When the work is carried out do you employ the mason or does the contractor arrange for this? Suppose these blocks have to be made, the question is who make them? It is the same question exactly as who should make the concrete supposing the walls were concrete? I should like to know more about this.

I am not quite satisfied with the plan and I think it might be improved. All this moving and shutting up of doors is very costly and might I think be avoided by altering the plan. Leaving the passage which at present exists reducing the size of the wash house and also the meal house, leaving the existing door in the old byre where it is. Also leaving the stable door as it is. This would necessitate it is true another wall and door into the wash house but would really not mean much more new wall than the present plan.

My idea is to pay Glen Lyon a visit a little later on and then fully go into it after I have all the information quite ready.

With regard to the milk records I note what you are doing and I have now obtained Barham's Dairy Account Book, which seems to give means of keeping a record for the history of all the animals. Every detailed table in the book need not necessarily be carried out, but you might give your opinion as to whether this would not be the best way of keeping a history of the herd.

With regard to the crop valuation an estimate of the cost per acre would be interesting, but I think for practical purposes it would be necessary to take the cost of harvesting for the whole crop and you might also compare this with the system followed in the South of Scotland of allowing the value of the straw to go against the cost of harvesting..

I think your suggestion to keep an account for each field and also one for sundry work is a good one. The fields are not really so very numerous and it ought to be quite feasible to do this and if accurately kept it ought to be of great value.

I note what you say about the cattle and am glad you have been able to secure some further animals by yourself buying up the Glen, and I note that you have bought to the value of £84 and will still require six more and a dozen two year old heifers and cows. Let me know when the payment for the cattle is due so that I should keep you in funds. You are of course taking care not to get more stock than you can properly feed.

With regard to the hayshed I note that the columns are to be only 14 feet. Now I noticed in Yorkshire that the haysheds were very much higher than 14 feet and I should think the columns ought to be at least 16 feet as it would get a considerably increased capacity at a very small increase of cost by raising these columns 2 to 3 feet.

The next letters show that Percy was improving the water supply of the garden and altering the steading in order to make a meal house and a place in which to wash the dairy utensils. Then at the end of October comes another letter from Palace Court which shows his up-to-dateness and close attention to details:

Dealing first with your letter of the 24th. Boilers. I have read the details of these different boilers and note that you recommend the Aquita. My objection remains to this form of boiler. If we had a large dairy it might be necessary to go to such a serious expense. I see the cost of the smallest is £14 10s. A boiler of this kind depreciates very rapidly, and in the case of Glen Lyon, where the water is quite soft, more rapidly still. It will be necessary to allow 10 per cent. depreciation, so that we would be paying the interest on £14 10s. (say at 5 per cent.) plus 10 per cent. depreciation. This is not really business.

A copper of the ordinary type can be had for a small sum, and the surrounding brickwork does not depreciate to any considerable extent. In addition, the Aquita would need anthracite or good coal to work it. The ordinary copper can burn chips or firewood of any kind.

With regard to the distributor, I see you recommend the Excelsior, and I must trust to your practical judgment that this is the best. The price seems very high, but you state there is a discount of 5 per cent. Please write to the agency of the C.G.A., of which I am a member, and ascertain from them what discount they could give if it is purchased through them.

I note you are getting further quotations for the basic slag; but you are not allowing any basic slag for the cow park. Why do you omit this?

As to the making of concrete blocks I am looking into the question of other materials for dividing up the space. So far as the walls are concerned, very little in the way of machinery would be necessary to make the blocks. The difficulty however is that they cannot well be made in winter; but I am considering the whole matter and will write you again.

With regard to the hay shed, I have been wondering whether it would not be cheaper and more in keeping with the place if it were made, not of iron, but of uprights of larch, footed in concrete, the roof timbers also of larch and the roofing material either heather or slates. Either of these would look better than the iron, and would probably be cheaper, though I cannot tell this until I find out what the price of the slates would be. If it be made entirely of larch and heather, the whole cost of carriage on material, which is so great an item, would be saved. There is plenty of larch near at hand, which could be got from the estate for all these purposes.

Percy's
remorseless
attention
to detail

D. (M)
1933

In the middle of November he wrote to the trustees about the farm shed for storing hay.

These sheds [he said] are usually made of iron reefered with corrugated iron and dimensions about 60 feet by 20 feet by 14 feet to the eaves. ~~I am very loth to see corrugated iron appearing at Glen Lyon. It is very unsightly and quite out of keeping with the character and amenity of the place.~~ I have therefore been making inquiries as to whether it would not be possible to erect a shed of other material. I find that it is quite feasible to erect a shed of these dimensions with larch uprights, larch rafters and all thatched with heather.

Perry:
Aesthetic
sense

He foresaw some difficulty in getting a man at Glen Lyon who could thatch the heather properly, but he could send one up specially from the south for the purpose. The footings of the uprights would be made in concrete. Such a building would be a valuable addition to the equipment of the farm, and would not be offensive to the eye. Would the Trustees supply the larchwood and heather free of charge in view of the fact that the value of the farm would be improved, while he paid for the concrete footings and the erection and thatching of the shed? He added:

It is always desirable I think in matters of this kind to make use of the material to be had in the locality instead of importing extraneous material at very great cost. In this connection I would be obliged if you would tell me whether there is a creoseting plant on the estate at Glen Lyon. In view of so much wood becoming available with the growth of the various forests planted by the late Sir Donald Currie, it seems a great pity that the wood should not be utilised. With a suitable creoseting plant Scotch fir can be made quite durable. Near me in Surrey there is a plant of this kind which treats Scotch fir most successfully. I have noticed at Glen Lyon a large quantity of timber of size suitable for cutting up into planks, which is now simply rotting. It could be treated in the same way as the Scotch fir in Surrey has been treated.

(creosoting)

I mention the subject of treating with creosete because, if the wood were treated with creosete, the uprights and rafters of the proposed barn would be very much more durable.

The Trustees fell in with these proposals and the correspondence then passed on to the subject of improving and repairing two or three of the cottages on the estate which were draughty and leaking. Molteno was just as much interested in the welfare of his tenants as in the comfort of his family and the efficiency of the farm. He was not a business man for nothing, and he had studied to good purpose the latest scientific developments in mechanics as well as in agriculture.

Perry's
Improvements on
the Estates

It is unnecessary to follow all the improvements which he made both at Parklands, on his Surrey farm, and in Glen Lyon, on his wife's estate, which passed after her death to their son Mr. D. J. Molteno.

Bessie inherited
Glen Lyon; her
her eldest son
- Jervis

But I must not omit the two greatest improvements of all which he made at his own expense after his wife's death — the erection of an electric plant for Glen Lyon House and the village, and the planning of the beautiful village hall, which was only completed a few weeks after his death.

I. part of chapter VI

14.R
23.3.39

91

ROUGH PROOF ONLY.
PLEASE RETURN THIS MARKED SET

CHAPTER II

THE MOLTENOS AND LOMBARDY

In the *Life* of his father, Sir John Charles Molteno, Percy Molteno wrote:

John Charles Molteno was born on 5th of June 1814, three months before the cession of the Cape of Good Hope to England, and one year before the Battle of Waterloo. . . . His father, John Molteno, was a Catholic, and the boy's birth was registered at the Bavarian Ambassador's chapel in Warwick Street.

John Molteno

There is a family tradition that the boy was called Charles after Napoleon's general Bernadotte, who afterwards, in 1818, became King of Sweden. John Molteno, Percy's grandfather, entered the Civil Service at Somerset House. He was also an attorney of the King's Bench, and had risen to be Deputy Controller of Legacy Duty when he died at an early age in 1828. It has been discovered quite recently that John Molteno's brother, named Anthony, lived in London, where he was a collector and dealer in pictures, prints and curios. A sale catalogue of 1825 has been found containing a relic of Bartolozzi which belonged to Anthony.

Anthony Molteno

In 1900 Percy Molteno had not ascertained for certain the date when his ancestors left Lombardy for England. He wrote:

3 Brothers to England

As the surname indicates, the family was originally of Italian descent, though already settled for some generations in England. ~~Three brothers had come over from Italy with their friends the Colnaghis, the founders of the well-known firm of printers and lithographers in Pall Mall.~~

Correct?

It appears that the original name of the firm was Colnaghi and Molteno. In 1938 Mr. K. R. Lee (writing from Almeley, Bodenham Road, Hereford) wrote to Admiral Molteno to ask questions about the Molteno pedigree as he was compiling 'a complete record of these early printdealers who started the fashion of print collecting which is now so universal'. He said:

George Anthony Molteno

The family originates from the Italian printdealers of that name who came over to this country in the eighteenth century with the Colnaghis, Torres and others.

I have traced one branch of the family back to George Anthony Molteno who was born in 1751 and died in October, 1816. He was a famous printdealer and lived at 20, Pall Mall.

He thinks that George Anthony was a brother of John Molteno (father of Sir John Charles Molteno) who died in 1828.

X Wrong

Admiral Molteno feels sure that they were either cousins or brothers, probably brothers. One proof is that Caroline Murray's son was called George Anthony.

Colnaghi Molteno connection

Precisely when the Colnaghi-Molteno firm of picture dealers and art collectors was started and precisely when the partnership was dissolved is not known. The Col-

Anthony married Mary Lewis ~ 1784

39373 Moltano 02

Moltano arrived in UK (D)

Speculation



naghi firm still flourishes after a long history; but the early records have apparently disappeared. It is known, however, that the original firm of Colnaghi & Moltano established themselves in A Street. Admiral Moltano tells me that further inquiries and researches led his brother to the definite conclusion that their ancestors left Milan for London sometime between 1789 and 1796 — most probably early in 1796. The burning of the Bastille and the early stages of the French Revolution excited only minor repercussions in Italy; but the invasion of Napoleon Buonaparte, his victories and his proclamations, inflamed passions and excited hopes of liberty, or plunder, among the subject populations of North Italy. Half liberator half plunderer himself, Napoleon the conqueror exacted tributes from the well-to-do without helping the poor, and the disappointed peasants rose in desperate revolt. The estates of the Lombard proprietors were seized, their castles were sacked, and the State records were brought into the market-place of Milan and burnt in 1797. Fortunately those in the Ambrosian Library were saved. This probably completed the ruin of the Moltano family, which had already declined in wealth; and it was probably either then or in the previous year that Percy Moltano's great-grandfather Anthony sought refuge in England, bringing with him John Moltano, who, in 1797, was still a boy; for he 'died in 1828 at an early age'.¹ Their connection with the Colnaghis, as well as with Bartolozzi and other Italian artists, enabled them to establish a good business in London as fine art dealers; and John Moltano, as we have seen, in spite of his disabilities as a Roman Catholic, got a footing in the Civil Service and rose rapidly to a good position at Somerset House.

Immigration & Integration

How was it that the Moltanos mixed so easily and so quickly with the English? The fact that they were connoisseurs in art would bring them into contact with cultivated society in London. But they were also handsome, attractive, tall, blue-eyed, and quite unlike the typical Italian, whose physique and appearance mark his race and distinguish it from ours. To account for this deserves a digression.

In the first century of the Christian era, as we learn from Tacitus' account of Germany, the Langobardi, or Longbeards, now Lombards, were a small but very brave tribe who found safety not by submitting to their neighbours but by arms and daring. According to their sagas they had found their way from Jutland to the west side of the lower Elbe, where the village of Bardswieck, near Luneberg, is a survival of their name and dialect. They were neighbours and kinsmen of the Angli, and spoke the same dialect as our own ancestors who conquered Northumbria and East Anglia. Another Roman historian, Velleius Paterculus, describes them as a tribe even fiercer than the German average. Had they remained at the mouth of the Elbe, they might have joined in the invasion of Britain; but their roving disposition took them southwards to what is now Bavaria, and thence in the second half of the sixth century to Italy, on whose history their

¹ See *Life and Times of Sir John Charles Moltano*, p. 6.

conquests left an indelible impression; and though their language died out, leaving comparatively few traces even on the dialects of North Italy, their permanent conquest of Lombardy has given that province a character of its own, with a stamp of independence and enterprise derived from those northern Vikings. When he has described their worship of Hertha, or Mother Earth, Hodgkin adds almost dithyrambically:

Such were the rites with which the Angli and the Langobardi of the first century after Christ, the ancestors of Bede and of Anselm, of Shakespeare and of Dante, jointly adored the Mother of Mankind.

And again in a later passage, after dwelling on the savage ferocity which marked their conquest of Lombardy where they slew or reduced to serfdom the Roman proprietors of the land: 'Yet this is the race from which, in the fullness of time, under the transmuting power of the old Italian civilisation, were to spring Anselm and Lanfranc, Hildebrand and Dante Alighieri.'

After A.D. 574 the Lombard 'Dukes', or clan chieftains, reigned each in his own district quite independently without an overlord or king. Every district had its little capital, a walled town in the centre. About A.D. 591 Lombardy became a kingdom, with Milan as its capital. The code of Lombard law, which they imposed, resembled the customary or common laws of the Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians from whom they had separated. The Longbeards 'gradually accepted the vulgar Latin language' of their subjects and slaves, as the Normans did in France, and as the Anglo-Saxons did not in England. They formed a rather small minority of the population even in their own territory of Lombardy; but they remained proprietors of the land, took the lead in trade and banking — witness Lombard Street for the scope of their activities — and the northern features and physique of this tall, strong, blue-eyed race characterized the Moltenos and other noble families of Lombardy right down to the end of the eighteenth century.

The country from which the Moltenos came is described at the beginning of Manzoni's novel, *The Betrothed*. From the roof of the cathedral at Milan, looking northward to the line of the Alps, you see the last mountain at the end of the Lecco arm of Lake Como. At that point begins a country of hills and small lakes justly celebrated for its beauty and fertility. It is called the Brianza of Bel Paese and ends in the level plain which surrounds the great city of Milan. Recounting his visit to the home of his ancestors, Percy Molteno tells us how, crossing the bridge at Lecco and proceeding along the Via Promessi Sposi, he passed the charming lakes of Anoni and Pusiano, until about nine miles from Milan he came to the small town of Molteno, situated on an isolated hill whose slopes are covered with vines and mulberry-trees. A church crowns the hilltop; the houses cluster in narrow crooked streets round the base of the hill.

Read

Molteno Village

Moltenos - History of Italy

39373 Molteno 94

(Taken from Percy's Account)

This is the spot which gave its name to the family of Molteno. It must have formed a strong position as a fortress, and though the castle has disappeared, its site is still known as the Piazza di Castello.²

In the early history of the Brianza the Moltenos played a prominent part. While holding their Molteno estate they were also leading citizens in Milan, and are mentioned in the great struggle between the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, and the cities of Lombardy. When after repelling the Emperor's assaults Milan was forced to capitulate to famine, a Molteno was among the thirty-one commissioners appointed to treat with the Emperor. They welcomed the Emperor's intervention against the feudal counts and received in return for their aid various privileges and titles. They were named Barons of the Empire, and were granted a coat of arms with the imperial eagle crowned on a field of gold which has been handed down to the family.³ According to an Italian heraldic dictionary the bearing of a black eagle on a ground of gold denotes a brave and intrepid mind accompanied by the favouring condition of a stable fortune — no false presage of the character displayed and the success achieved by John Charles Molteno in the business and politics of South Africa seven hundred years later. In the fifteenth century the history of the Republic of Milan frequently tells of Moltenos who played their part among the leaders of liberty and in the general council. At the end of the century a Molteno was in charge of the building of Milan Cathedral. In his account of the nobility of Milan Fagnani devotes three pages to the family starting with this statement: 'We gather from many ancient writings that the family of the Moltenos is sufficiently ancient and noble.'⁴

The modern province of Lombardy, covering some 8,262 square miles, lies between the Alps and the Po; on the east it is bounded by Venetia and on the west by Piedmont. The Celtic tribes who inhabited it were vanquished in 222 B.C. by the Romans who afterwards called their new province Cis-Alpine Gaul — 'Gaul on this side of the Alps' — in contrast with the province of Trans-Alpine Gaul on the other side of the Alps. It was soon so completely Romanized that Mantua gave birth to Virgil and Padua to Livy. But it is worth noting that the Romanized stock of this province was entirely different from that of Southern Italy or the intervening province of Tuscany (Etruria) whose gifted and artistic race, the Etruscans, had probably migrated from Lydia. How far the darker Roman colonists supplanted the light-haired Celts, or what proportion of the subjugated race eventually received the Roman citizenship after mingling

² See for this and the following paragraph Percy Molteno's *Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, pp. 3-6. These few pages were based upon laborious researches in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, at the British Museum and at Cambridge. He remunerated the librarian at Milan handsomely for copying extracts from some of the manuscripts relating to the Moltenos.

³ See illustration, p.

⁴ Moltenorum familiam satis vetustam et nobilem ex multis vetustis scripturis colligimus.

Molteno
Coat of
Arms

?

Source

with the conquerors, we can only surmise; but when the Roman Empire of the West crumbled before successive waves of barbarian invaders, and Italy itself was overrun first by the Ostro-Goths then by the Langobards, the populations of Northern Italy, civilized and Christianized, but enervated and enfeebled by bureaucratic rule, were easily enslaved by the fiercest of all the invaders. Eventually (as we have seen) the Lombard conquerors imbibed the language and religion of their slaves and serfs, to whom they imparted something of their own independent and enterprising spirit. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Milan and the smaller cities of the Lombard League flourished and defended themselves successfully against foreign aggressors, until the last Duke of Milan died in 1447, and Lombardy bowed in turn to the Emperor of Germany, the Kings of Spain and France, and ultimately to Austria in 1713, when the duchies of Milan and Mantua passed into the possession of the Hapsburgs. By them it was ruled from Vienna until Napoleon, after his victories in 1796, made it part first of the Cis-Alpine Republic, then of the Trans-Padane Republic, and finally of the kingdom of Italy. In 1815 after Waterloo Lombardy and Venetia were restored to Austria and were governed by the military power and civil bureaucracy of the Hapsburg monarchs till 1859, when Victor Emmanuel, with the help of Napoleon III, wrested it from the Emperor Francis Joseph and incorporated it in the new kingdom of Italy. Thanks to Prussia, Venice and Venetia were added in 1866, and practically all the lands that can truly be called Italian were for the first time in the history of Modern Europe governed by an Italian King and an Italian Parliament. It is a melancholy reflection that among the consequences of the Great War, by which Italy gained new territory at the expense of its neighbours, there has been established the despotic rule of a Fascist Duce, under whom the inhabitants of the fair province of Lombardy are more heavily oppressed by taxes, more spy-ridden, and even less free to express their grievances and discontents than they were a hundred years ago.

Percy Molteno's curiosity about his Lombard ancestors and the history of the province was quickened by his keen practical and scientific interest in irrigation. He had learnt its value in a dry country on his father's farms at Beaufort, and at Cambridge he had begun to study hydraulics. In the 'nineties he was constantly writing to his brothers about methods of collecting and conserving water on the family property, and to members of the Cape Government about the policy, initiated by his father, of employing public money on irrigation works. In the summer of 1898 he determined to see for himself the system that had enriched Lombardy. He took his bicycle, and after his return (July 29th, 1898) wrote to his brother Charlie about his 'very successful tour among the canals of the Milanese':

There can be no doubt that water has simply revolutionised the district round Milan, which would be an arid country with not enough rain except perhaps for a winter crop. The account given by Smith is very

Milan's
History
FL

Percy
Irrigation

Percy visits
Italy 1898

complete. He was a distinguished leader at Delhi in the Indian Mutiny after he had written his book. I hope you will accompany me some day to see these canals. They are most instructive. A cycle was invaluable for seeing them, as I was able to follow them throughout their length right up to their headworks on the rivers. I am more than ever convinced of the feasibility and value of canals from the Orange River.

I shall hope in time to see the canals of Egypt, of southern Spain, and eventually of India.

The book which Percy recommended to his brother, entitled *Italian Irrigation*, is a report by Captain R. Baird-Smith, F.G.S. (2nd edition, 1855), on the agricultural canals of Piedmont and Lombardy. It was undertaken for the Directors of the East India Company, which was investigating irrigation as a means of improving agriculture in India. In both Lombardy and Piedmont Baird-Smith received facilities for this able study of Italian hydraulics which Moltano read and marked diligently. In Piedmont he was assisted by recommendations from Count Cavour. After crossing the Ticino by the noble bridge at Buffalora and passing the Austrian Customs Houses (when he 'entered the magnificent plain of Lombardy') he remarks:

the Austrian Custom-House authorities were courteous and obliging; and having satisfied themselves that my books on irrigation contained no inflammable or revolutionary matter, a few minutes sufficed for the examination of my baggage.

Austrian
fears
re
Baird-Smith

A Moltano, proud of his Lombard ancestors, and especially one so proficient in hydraulics as Percy, must have read with gratification the following paragraph:

I was soon made aware of the noble scale on which the hydraulic works of Lombardy have been constructed, by seeing the Naviglio Grande, or Great Canal of the Ticino; an artificial river which, constructed early in the twelfth century, has for more than six hundred years borne onward a volume of water equal to nearly 1800 cubic feet per second. This great mass of water has been spread over the surface of the country through a thousand channels, stimulating the productiveness of the soil to such an extent as to make the country through which it passes one of the richest and most densely populated which the world has ever seen. It was impossible to look for the first time on this great work — the father, as it were, of the irrigation canals of modern Europe — without some feelings of emotion. And when the amount of social and national benefit which it has been the means of conferring, through long periods of varied fortune, is recalled to mind, one feels a willing sympathy in the pride with which it is regarded by the descendants of its original constructors.

But in the next paragraph admiration for the country fades into pity for the inhabitants in their political servitude to the Austrian ruler, Prince Carlos Schwartzberg, then Governor of Lombardy:

Along one of those fine highways by which Lombardy is distinguished, between interminable rows of most unpicturesque-looking poplar and mulberry trees, and through sheets of meadow land, covered with rich crops of grass, we approached the city of Milan. Huge carts, with their long teams of heavy horses; groups of peasants, in carriages of the most indescribable character; parties of that varied soldiery which forms the present army of occupation in Lombardy; policemen on horse and on foot, and travellers of every grade, covered the road as we came near the capital. It may have been fanciful, perhaps, but I thought I observed on every Italian face there was a cloud — a look of suffering and discontent. It is certain that nothing could have been more sombre than the aspect of Milan itself, with its half-deserted streets, its squares full of German soldiery, and occasionally bristling with cannon. It was sad to see a place, once so famous for its cheerful gaiety, thus overshadowed and depressed.

While Baird-Smith was in Lombardy the Governor, Prince Schwartzberg, was transferred to Transylvania, and soon afterwards the English visitor became 'an object of notice to that despicable spy department which his successor seemed to have stimulated into unusual activity'. His notes on the canals and irrigation work attracted 'some of those wretched employees of the police who haunt the footsteps, not only of foreign travellers but of natives also'. This was the only unpleasant incident during his stay; but it deepened his impression of the evils of a Police State. 'I brought away an intense dislike to that system of morbid government under which the fair provinces of Lombardy are now crushed almost to despair.'

None the less, Captain Smith was impressed by the productivity of the country and the strong practical sagacity, the self-taught knowledge, the perseverance and probity, and the hospitable character of the Lombard tenant-farmers with whom he was brought in contact. Out of a total area of 8,262 square miles, only 561 were reported sterile and unproductive in the whole Austrian province of Lombardy. In the provinces of Cremona and Mantua he studied the immense works of drainage by which the surplus waters of this low-lying territory were disposed of. The fertility of those districts was especially remarkable, and it is clear that the people were then economically prosperous though politically discontented.

In the last two years of Percy Molteno's life the Lombards, who had already lost all their political and most of their personal liberty under Il Duce, were plunged into deeper and deeper poverty. In July, 1937, a native of the district between Mantua and Cremona, who had emigrated to France, motored through the fertile plain in which he had been born and bred, and after his return to a land of freedom wrote an account of what he saw and heard. At Gussolo he asked: 'How are things doing in the town?' The reply came:

As they must where there is distress. The peasants tighten their belts and drink water. The labourers are out of work, because the brick works and the spinning mill are closed; the masons have no work because all building is stopped by order of the Government. The shopkeepers pay enormous taxes, yawn and curse from morn till night, go bankrupt, and close their shutters.

At Palvareto the peasants existed from hand to mouth; the spinning mill was closed; the unemployed begged by day and stole by night. At Piadena the market had shrunk to a few stalls and business was going from bad to worse. In the almost empty café, once crowded on market-day, two well-dressed Fascist secretaries were playing billiards on monthly salaries of 2,000 lire. At Pescarolo the knitting factory was closed as the Government had cut off its supply of raw materials. At Vesco vado the spinning mills, brick-works, and silk mill were shut down, and the population was starving. At Cremona there had been many arrests; all the spinning mills were closed; only a munition factory was on full time. At Casalbuttana out of eight big silk mills two only were working, and those only for four months during the year; thousands of operatives were unemployed and field labourers' wages had been reduced to five lire per day for a twelve-hour day. The labourers gazed at him in stupefaction on hearing that in France workmen were earning forty francs per day. In other villages of the countryside such as Paderno, Anniccio, and Soresina he saw famished faces such as he had never before observed in that neighbourhood. A friend told him: 'From three meals a day people have been reduced to one, and now to half a meal.' Abyssinia and Spain had absorbed the most desperate of the young men.

No wonder that the dreadful state of Lombardy in the last two or three years of his life filled Percy Molteno with a longing for the restoration of peace, good will, and prosperity in armament-ridden and war-distracted Europe. We shall see that he never abated his efforts to bring about that happy consummation.

To complete the family history of the Moltenos Percy included an account of the Bowers. Sir John Charles Molteno's mother (his own grandmother) was Caroline Bower. Her father George Bower was born in 1761 at Batley in Yorkshire, where his father had started a woollen factory.

Bower Family

On March 1st 1787, my great-grandfather George Bower [wrote Percy] was elected into the service of the Bank of England, and in the same year he married Jane, daughter of John Read, of Rotherhithe, who was Admiralty Timber Surveyor of Deptford Dockyard. George Bower's father was so pleased with his son's election to the Bank of England that he built for him a large house at Peckham Rye, then a pleasant suburb of London. In 1830 George Bower was appointed Principal of the Power of Attorney Office in the Bank of England, and held that position until his death in 1838. Two of George Bower's sons and two of his grandsons also joined the Bank. One of the sons, George Clifford Bower [a great-uncle of Percy's], became Principal of the Register Office. Altogether up to 1927 the Bower family had been associated with the Bank of England, and had had representatives in it, for a hundred and forty years, and between them had given two hundred and seventy-three years' service to the Bank. An account of the family, with a portrait of

George Bower, appeared in the December, 1927, issue of *The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street*, a monthly magazine maintained by the staff of the Bank of England, which now numbers over four thousand members.

I have met several of my Bower relatives. One of them, George W. Bower, a solicitor, founded the Delphian Coterie, a flourishing club of which I am a member, which discusses matters of public interest.

Besides their connection with the Bank of England many of the Bowers were keen volunteers. Some of those at Batley joined Lord Fitzwilliam's Yorkshire Yeomanry, and one of the Earl's sons married a Bower. A London Bower joined the Middlesex Yeomanry and took part in the Great War.

CHAPTER VI

SIR BARTLE FRERE, THE DISMISSAL OF THE MOLTENO MINISTRY, THE MISFORTUNES OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PERCY MOLTENO

1877. Fall

of JCM
as PM

UNTIL the year 1877, when Percy was approaching his sixteenth birthday, the Cape Colony had been growing in prosperity; his father was its recognized leader, the prime mover in responsible government, and the successful head of its first Administration. The death of his wife had been a sad blow, and now the black clouds which had been gathering were to break into the storm which destroyed his Administration and ruined much of his handiwork. It was the first of the two tragedies which befell Percy's beloved colony, and moulded his political opinions during the first part of his active career. Both originated in Downing Street. The first impressed his imagination, and was also the incentive that induced him to embark, twenty years later, on the important literary project, the life of Sir John Molteno, which is not only a monument to his father's memory but his own political testament.

In our last chapter Froude and Carnarvon were the villains of the piece. In this Froude's place is taken by Sir Bartle Frere. Both were subordinates; both exceeded their instructions, and both afterwards went some way to confess their own mistakes, while throwing an ample share of the blame upon the Colonial Secretary. Neither had any personal quarrel with Molteno, or harboured any ill-feeling against him; nor did he, the injured party, against them. Ardent politician though he was, strongly and vehemently as he had espoused and defended the welfare of the Colony and the principles of self-government against dictation from Downing Street, he was by nature placable. Froude and Frere were both English gentlemen, endowed with fine qualities and gifts which, misused as they were in South Africa, and perverted as they were to bad purposes, nevertheless could be forgiven and forgotten, in private life.

Lord Carnarvon

Rde / T

While the Cape Premier was still in England Carnarvon was secretly intriguing against him with Paterson, the Member for Port Elizabeth, whose constituents

wanted the Transvaal to be annexed in order to recover large sums of money which they had embarked there. Soon afterwards Sir Theophilus Shepstone left England with secret instructions to carry out this design. When what was intended became known the Transvaal Greenbacks, in which Port Elizabeth was interested, appreciated rapidly from 1s. 6d. until, on annexation becoming a fact in the following April, 1877, they rose to par. At the same time, without informing Molteno, Carnarvon was having prepared in the Colonial Office the so-called Permissive Bill for enabling a Confederation of the South African Colonies and States to be formed. He transmitted this to Sir Henry Barkly, the constitutional Governor; but he had already selected a more congenial successor in the person of Sir Bartle Frere, to whom he wrote, October 13th, 1876: "A strong hand is required," adding: "I propose to press by all means in my power my Confederation policy in South Africa."

The Disraeli Government had already been more than two years in office, and Carnarvon was in a hurry; he told Frere that he expected the work of confederating and consolidating South Africa to be effected within two years. The Permissive Bill provided that the Union should be divided into provinces with such names and boundaries as the Colonial Secretary might choose, without regard to the wishes of the people, under a Governor-General with an executive council, to be appointed or dismissed at pleasure by the Governor. In January 1877, when Carnarvon's despatch and the Permissive Bill were published at the Cape, Hercules Cross Jarvis wrote at once to *The Argus* reminding his fellow-colonists how they had defeated a previous Colonial Secretary who tried to make the Colony a penal settlement, and calling upon them to be firm in resisting the new system of Government by which Carnarvon sought to substitute tyrannical rule for responsible self-government. Carnarvon had got complete control of Natal and Griqualand West, and was about to seize the Transvaal. He hoped to win over the Orange Free State, and counted on his new Governor, an autocrat trained in India, to bully or cajole the Cape Parliament into compliance with his wishes. In the end he failed; his scheme of Federation remained a paper project; he himself had to resign office before the Disraeli Ministry expired, and his strong man was first censured and then recalled. But their joint attempt to carry out the policy of interference

~~plunged South Africa into war and bloodshed, and fatally disturbed for a time the relation between the whites and blacks, and for a longer time — the end of which we have not yet seen — the relations between the English and the Dutch.~~

So wrote Percy Molteno towards the end of the century, and such must be the verdict of the impartial historian. Such indeed, so far as concerned the Permissive Bill, was the verdict of Sir Bartle Frere, who, only four years later (in the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1831) compared his late chief to 'the impatient child who pulls up the

72

H.C. Jarvis's
objection

my Government

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39373 Moltano 101 1142w

seeds he planted yesterday to see whether or not they are growing in the right direction.'

Before leaving Cape Town and relinquishing his Governorship Sir Henry Barkly was entertained at a farewell banquet. High compliments were paid him by the Prime Minister and others in recognition of the services he had rendered as the first constitutional Governor of the Colony. He was able to tell his successor that he would find no native troubles to deal with—thanks it must be said to the wise and understanding policy which had been pursued in friendly co-operation by Barkly and his constitutional advisers.

Sir Bartle Frere too was also entertained at a great banquet on his departure from London. When Governor of Bombay he had once likened himself to Cæsar; and on this occasion he was compared by Lord Carnarvon to a Roman pro-consul leaving Rome to take possession of his province. It was, I believe, on this occasion that John Morley, then editor of the *Fortnightly*, with exquisite mockery coined the expression 'prancing pro-consuls', which stuck to Frere and was afterwards recalled when Sir Alfred Milner, after a similar banquet of Imperialists in London and a similar outburst of grandiloquent imperialism, went to South Africa on a similar mission with equally fatal results. When Governor of Bombay Bartle Frere's autocratic methods and extravagant expenditure had given much trouble to Lord (John) Lawrence, the Governor-General and his Council. He was an able but headstrong bureaucrat. A more dangerous man could hardly have been chosen by an unwise Minister to be, not only Governor of the Cape, but High Commissioner for all South Africa. What trouble was in store for Moltano may be judged by the tone of Frere's very first despatch from the Cape. In it he complained that his power was too limited under responsible government in the Cape Colony and that he would bow to constitutional usage only so long as he thought it compatible with his duty to Her Majesty's Government.

Frere disliked Responsible Gov

For a short time things went smoothly, and the new Governor reported to Carnarvon that 'nothing could exceed the courtesy and cordiality of Mr. Moltano and every other member of his Ministry' at the first meeting of the Executive Council and on 'every other occasion since my arrival'. But when it came to forcing the Permissive Bill down the throats of the Cape Ministry, Frere soon found that he had met his match and that South Africa was not India, and he had to tell Carnarvon that no one at the Cape seemed to regard Federation as a practical question. He hoped, however, the annexation of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone and the enactment of the Permissive Bill by the British Parliament would compel the Cape Parliament to pay attention to his wishes. Moltano had not been consulted about the annexation of the Transvaal and refused to have any responsibility for it; nor would he agree to its being referred to with approval in the Governor's speech at the opening of the Cape Parliament. In May the Orange Free State refused Carnarvon's invitation to join in a South African union. The annexation of the Trans-

NB Moltano's Fr annexation

Good
of

vaal turned the feeling of the Dutch in Cape Colony against Carnarvon's plans, while at the same time a growth of native troubles threatened (as Lord Blatchford wrote in the very month when Sir Bartle Frere left for the Cape)⁶ the worse cluster of native wars that we have yet had'. A prophetic utterance.

After the prorogation of Parliament in 1877 Sir Bartle Frere visited the Eastern Provinces, and while he was on the frontier there occurred an accidental collision between the Galekas and the Fingoes. Molteno had dealt successfully with three similar crises by prompt measures, and he now urged the Governor to support the Fingoes, who were loyal, with mounted police and two companies of soldiers. Sir Bartle Frere was High Commissioner in the Transkei, and therefore in the Transkei he could disregard the advice of his Ministers at the Cape. But the Cape Government was bound to defend the frontier; the Colonial troops understood frontier fighting; after an unfortunate delay Kreli and the Galekas were routed, and at the beginning of December 1877 Frere informed Carnarvon that the campaign had been completely successful thanks to the measures taken by the Colonial Government for meeting the Kreli crisis, adding :

Justice requires that I should not omit to record my sense of the degree in which the services of the forces in the field were aided and supported by the unflagging energy and quick intelligence of the Honourable Mr. Merriman, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who was charged with Mr. Molteno and his colleagues in the Ministry with the civil duties which usually devolve on a Minister for the War-Department.

These successful operations had been conducted by Commandant Griffith, and the commissariat had been so well managed by the Colonial Government that not a single man died of sickness.

Thereupon the Governor devised a plan of his own for settling the Galeka country with Germans, and for creating a frontier force on the German model. He also started a disarmament of the natives in a manner which greatly alarmed Molteno, who telegraphed to Merriman pointing out the danger 'of a too high-handed and unnecessarily harsh policy being adopted with the native population generally which we have not the power of carrying out', a policy which did not take account of 'the natural feeling of enmity existing between large masses of barbarous people'. The Cape Premier's telegrams at this crisis were written in the early hours of the morning.

It was summer, the weather being very hot, and the writer [Percy Molteno] remembers being roused before five o'clock and proceeding with his father out of doors under the great oaks of Claremont House, and there writing down the various telegrams and instructions in regard to the crisis.¹

The Governor, however, persisted. He rejected the responsible advice tendered him by Molteno and even

¹ See *The Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, Chap. xxvi.

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- of Transvaal

acted without the consent of Lord Carnarvon. To accomplish Confederation he determined to crush the Zulu power; he declared Krel's country forfeited, guaranteed its annexation to the Cape Colony and determined to rely on Imperial troops. From this time onwards the situation became more and more critical. The Governor was acting unconstitutionally by enlisting bodies of men without the consent of the Colonial Government, and at last his Cabinet decided to advise the Governor's immediate return to Cape Town in order to regularize the proceedings and to confer with his responsible Ministers. The disarmament of the natives was openly announced by Sir Bartle Frere to a deputation of the inhabitants of King Williamstown, against the advice of Merriman who was with him, and within a week the Gaikas were in rebellion. Lecky afterwards compared this action of Sir Bartle Frere with another example of the ignorance and incapacity of British administrators dealing with beliefs and types of character wholly unlike their own:

The Sepoys' objections to the use of the greased cartridges seemed to them so childish as to be incapable of any depth; yet it produced a Mutiny which for a time shook the English power in India to its very foundations.

So Sir Bartle Frere's 'strong measures' were to cost British troops and Colonial forces thousands of lives besides a terrible slaughter of natives and an addition of between four and five millions sterling to the debt of the Colony.²

When Molteno heard from Merriman of the Disarmament Proclamation the Prime Minister replied December 28th, that 'the proposition is from all points of view absolutely inadmissible'. Meanwhile the High Commissioner, on his own initiative, issued a proclamation of martial law and announced that he was asking for Imperial aid and reinforcements. Thereupon Molteno resolved to visit the frontier. On arrival at East London he was met by a telegram from Merriman: 'Here you are in the midst of drought and famine and war.' Frere resented the arrival of his constitutional adviser, and refused to take responsibility for 'the moves ordered by the Colonial Government without any concert with the military authorities'. A series of conversations and notes were exchanged between the two concerning co-operation between the Imperial troops and the Colonial forces and measures for the suppression of the rebellion. Frere regarded himself as Commander-in-Chief, and even declared that as Governor he was the only officer who could 'by simple virtue of his office command at the same time all forces of all kinds in the colony'. On this view, after consulting his Attorney-General, Molteno drew up a stiff memorandum on the powers of the Governor and his responsible Ministers, in which he said: 'Should your Excellency decline to act by and with the advice of your Ministers there is only one constitutional course open to your Excellency.'

² A recital of Sir Bartle Frere's autocratic and unconstitutional actions at this time will be found in Percy Molteno's *Life of his father*, Chap. xxvii.

Ministers, he added, did not consider it advisable that the Colonial forces should be placed under military command and control. On finding that Molteno would not give way Frere hesitated; then he suddenly decided that this was a good opportunity for getting rid of the Ministry which Carnarvon had tried but failed to dislodge. He summoned a Council on February 1st, 1878. Molteno now came to the conclusion that the difference of opinion between the Ministry and Governor was so great that he must resign. But the Governor would not hear of resignation and the dispute continued.

Finally the Governor called a Cabinet Council on February 2nd. He had ignored the advice of Ministers in a Minute and had received a Ministerial Minute in reply. He said that a dual system of Government was against common sense; but it was he who created it, and Molteno refused to acquiesce in this attempt to re-establish a dictatorship and override self-government.

The Governor then announced his willingness to accept Molteno's resignation; when told that it had been withdrawn he said he would dismiss his Ministers, but

refused to allow his Minute and their Minute in reply to be published, saying that a proper time for publication would come later. On February 6th Frere sent a formal letter to the Prime Minister stating: 'By the authority vested in me as the Governor of this Colony I remove you from your office', and instructed a magistrate 'to receive charge of your records, documents, or public property of any description appertaining to your office'.

At the same time, either in ignorance of constitutional conventions, or with a deliberate intention to disregard them, he communicated with the other Cabinet Ministers

telling them that his dismissal did not extend beyond Molteno and Merriman. The question at issue was

whether the Cape Government should submit its colonial forces to Imperial military control and direction, including supply, and whether, without the consent of the Colonial Ministry, the Colony should be made responsible for the employment of British reinforcements for

which it had not asked and for war expenditure outside its own control. Molteno understood Kaffir warfare; the Governor did not, but claimed that he had an independent power, that he was Commander by right over the Colonial forces, and could do as he liked. Molteno held that the Governor had no right to act except on the advice of his Ministers, and it was upon this contention that they were dismissed

Frere, as Gladstone put it in one of his Midlothian speeches, had not imbibed the spirit of British institutions and had chosen means for taking the government into his own hands which those conversant with free and responsible government would never have dreamt of. Frere's ultimatum to Cetewayo and his policy of disarming the natives extended the war in all directions, and the whole of native South Africa was convulsed. In Percy Molteno's words:

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The application of the same principles to Zululand led to the unjust, disastrous, and ill-fated war in that country. South Africa was deluged in blood. There followed the Battalpin war, the Griqua war, the Siku-kuni war, and finally the Boer war; while had not Sir Bartle Frere been checked by Sir Garnet Wolseley and the Imperial authorities, a Pondo war might have been added.

Series of Wars in 1878-79

Thus with appalling and amazing rapidity the tragic course of events justified Moltano. Frere called in Sprigg, who formed a puppet government, and by various arts of cajolery and pressure Moltano's majority was turned into a minority. The Prime Minister himself disdained to canvass his weak-kneed supporters. He was criticized by some of his staunch friends for not stumping the country against the Governor; but it was a time of war, and he deemed it more patriotic as well as more dignified to retire from public affairs. Frere forced the hands of the Imperial Government by declaring war on Cetewayo. When the terrible disaster of Isandhlwana (January 1879) overtook his incompetent military commanders, he was publicly censured by the Home Government — Carnarvon had already resigned — deprived of his position of High Commissioner, and eventually recalled from the Governorship of the Cape.

JCM retired

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After his return home Sir Bartle Frere showed that at the expense of South Africa he had learned the nature of his own errors and the correctness of Moltano's strategy, if not of his action as a constitutional and responsible Minister; for speaking at the Colonial Institute on February 22nd, 1881, he made this remarkable pronouncement:

I think the example of the Cape Colony has conclusively shown that the colonists are fully able, when left to themselves, unhampered by restrictions from distant commanders, to deal with any enemy which may arise in South Africa.

Nevertheless until after the publication in 1900 of Percy Moltano's biography of his father, with its exhaustive citation of letters, debates, and official documents, writers of biographies, including the Dictionary of National Biography, went on misrepresenting the issue between Frere and Moltano and presenting to English readers a complete perversion of the facts. Thanks to Percy Moltano's skilful and patient industry the printed and published evidence is overwhelming. The only mistake that I can find in Chapter xxix on 'The Dismissal' is a single sentence, p. 362: 'We have seen the last of prancing pro-consuls as Colonial Governors.'

Percy was nearly seventeen when the Moltano Ministry was dismissed. For the next two years, living with him at Claremont and studying at the Cape University he saw what was going on and became deeply imbued with the principles his father had contended for so nobly, which were now being justified month after month by unnecessary and unrighteous war.

Percy refused by JCM's Politics

Towards the end of his book (Chapter xxxi) Percy describes what happened after his father's dismissal during the brief but disastrous period of Sir Bartle Frere's

autocratic rule. The surpluses built up by Moltene during his administration—in contrast with the ever-recurring deficits of the previous decade—were dissipated; and instead of capital expenditure on railways, harbours, roads, and bridges, the debt of the Colony was increased for war purposes. Lord Blatchford, one of our ablest Colonial administrators, has contrasted the wisdom and foresight of Moltene's constitutionalism with the rash, ignorant, autocratic, and unconstitutional rule of Sir Bartle Frere and Sprigg's puppet administrations. All our troubles in South Africa, as Lord Derby said subsequently, dated from Frere's dismissal of Moltene's Ministry.

Moltene
retired from
Parliament

After representing Beaufort West for a quarter of a century Moltene retired from Parliament (at the end of 1878) to a rest which was no relief, so rapid was the succession of disasters which, under Sir Bartle Frere's auspices, overtook the Cape Colony and South Africa generally'. His warnings against the dangerous course on which Carnarvon and Frere had embarked were now amply justified. 'He saw with anguish and dismay the terrible confusion and loss of life and treasure which now took place.' His old friend and supporter, Saul Solomon, duped by Frere's professions of humanitarian regard for the natives, had deserted him at the crisis, and it was a poor compensation that afterwards, when it was too late, he acknowledged his error.

After the disaster of Isandhlwana (January 22nd, 1879) Moltene visited Natal and renewed his acquaintance with Bishop Colenso, who had fallen out with him over Langelibalele but was now strenuously opposing Frere's actions against Cetewayo and the Zulus. In the course of a letter on Frere's 'wicked policy' the Bishop wrote: 'He came up from Cape Town full of prejudices; he swallowed all the rubbish told him by worthless traders and hysterical missionaries', and reasserted for British consumption false statements about the Zulu king which Sir H. Bulwer, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, had contradicted. After forcing war on the Zulus Frere incurred the censure of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who had succeeded Carnarvon as Colonial Secretary, and being superseded by Sir Garnet Wolseley in South Africa had to return to Cape Town with restricted powers. All his schemes and projects failed.

In March, 1879, Michael Hicks-Beach, Beaconsfield's last Colonial Secretary, censured Frere for attacking Cetewayo without the Home Government's approval, and two months later deprived him of his High Commissionership and appointed Wolseley supreme military and civil authority in South Africa. Frere, however, continued his disastrous disarmament policy on the Cape frontier and in Basutoland. He even proposed an ultimatum to the Pondos, but this was vetoed by Wolseley, who saw that the disarmament policy would antagonize native sentiment throughout South Africa. Frere had tried to get the Cape Parliament to pursue the phantom scheme of Confederation, but his Premier, Sprigg, told him that there was no chance of its being adopted. Meanwhile he had selected Sir Owen Lanyon to succeed Sir T. Shepstone as Administrator of the

Transvaal. It was a bad appointment. The Boers were becoming more and more discontented. The promises made to them had been broken, and the annexation of the Transvaal had turned the Dutch in Cape Colony against the British Government and the whole policy of Confederation under the British Flag. Jan Hofmeyr, an active, able politician and a skilful organizer who loved to work underground,³ had entered the Cape Parliament. He explained how he had believed that by a generous and just policy South Africa could have been united under the British Crown. Therefore he had supported Frere against Moltano. But the Transvaal policy and the Zulu policy had shaken his faith, and now that the Transvaal had been deprived of representative institutions he changed front and announced that he would oppose instead of supporting the Confederation proposals. Confederation was already dead and Hofmeyr helped to bury the idol which he had adored. Thereupon Sir Bartle Frere, who had been permitted by the Gladstone Ministry to remain in South Africa for the sole purpose of introducing Confederation, was immediately recalled — on August 1st, 1880.

The dragooning of the Transvaal, as we have seen, had turned the Dutch of Cape Colony against British policy. The Afrikaner Bond, which was soon to become very powerful under Hofmeyr's leadership, was founded in 1880. Public opinion in Cape Colony now began to ask for Moltano's return to public life. Several constituencies invited him to stand, and in 1880 he was returned unopposed for Victoria West, which had once formed part of his old constituency of Beaufort West. After Sir Bartle Frere's departure, when Parliament met in 1881, Sprigg, having lost the support of the High Commissioner, was defeated, and Moltano was induced to serve as Colonial Secretary in the new Ministry formed by Scanlen. The situation was a miserable one. The Frere and Sprigg policy had started a new war in Basutoland, which Colenso regarded as 'a most lamentable result of Mr. Gladstone's miserable folly in keeping Sir Bartle Frere at the Cape'. A still more lamentable result was the outbreak of the Boer War. Percy Moltano wrote as follows of the situation that resulted:

The country was overwhelmed with debt. Its obligations, when Mr. Moltano was dismissed in February 1878, amounted to £7,449,000. In 1881 the Debt had risen to £16,098,000. Every penny spent during Mr. Moltano's administration (with the exception of the small war expenditure incurred before the dismissal) was represented by reproductive works. In the three short years succeeding the Debt had been more than doubled. But what a difference in the character of the expenditure! Nearly five millions had been spent on war, taxation had been enormously increased, the Customs dues had been raised to an inordinate rate, a house duty had been imposed, an excise had been put in force; but the resources of the country had not been extended. If we take the external trade of the country as an index of its resources, we find that imports and exports together amounted in 1866 to £4,530,000; in the succeeding ten years they

³ Hence his nickname 'The Mole'.

had risen (in 1876) to £9,055,000, an increase of 100 per cent. as a consequence of the state of peace and prosperity introduced and maintained under Mr. Molteno's administration.

One of Molteno's colleagues, J. X. Merriman, himself a first-class statesman and financier — who, as Prime Minister of the Cape after the ruin and desolation wrought by the second Boer War, restored the finances and prosperity of the Colony by frugal administration — wrote a letter to Percy Molteno about his father's work and character. In this he showed how in 1894 Molteno's strong personality had carried the first great measure of railway construction, in spite of local jealousies and the suspicions of the farmers, who were afraid of any expenditure which might involve taxation. Yet at the same time by careful attention to expenditure he paid off all the floating loans accumulated by his successors and defrayed 20 per cent. of the cost of his railways out of surplus revenue. He also planned schemes of irrigation which would have been carried out had he remained in office.

Merriman's Description of Jcas

① He was a type of the best kind of South African people — prudent, cautious, and with a great deal of common sense. . . . He was pre-eminently a practical man. People used sometimes in a good-humoured way to condemn what was called the 'Beaufort-Boer' finance; but it was sound finance, and he always knew how far money would go.⁴

Of how few politicians or even great statesmen or great business man can this be said! Estimates of expenditure placed before Parliaments are almost always falsified. Almost always the actual expenditure on any new project or service proves to be enormously greater than the estimates. But this rare virtue of *knowing how far money would go* was accompanied by another virtue, equally rare — *he knew how to say 'No'*. When people came to him for little local jobs, Molteno, if it was to the interest of the country, had no hesitation in refusing, and he generally refused in such a way that the applicants left him satisfied if not pleased. He was absolutely free from all suspicion or taint of favouritism and corruption. No motives of interest, or relationship, or friendship biased his decisions as a Minister. Prudence and caution were strong features of his character; he never acted until all the circumstances of the case had been weighed and balanced. But once the decision had been taken he never flinched from his purpose, whatever obstacles might be opposed. Where principle was not involved, he was ready, as Sir Henry Barkly pointed out, to yield on points of minor importance in order to smooth the way for a friendly compromise with the Governor or with Downing Street. Finally, though he could not adhere to the dogmas of any religious sect, he was a great Christian; for he could forget and forgive. He never cherished resentment for personal wrongs or even for the wrongs he felt far more, against the Colony and Colonial self-government. His personal relations with Froude, Frere, Wolseley, Bishop Colenso, Sir Gordon Sprigg, and others,

⁴ See *The Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, Chapter xxxiii.

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were unimpaired by controversy, as their own later writings and speeches attest. As for racial lines of cleavage he never distinguished between the English and the Dutch. No Colonial Minister at the Cape, Dutch or English, not even Merriman during his Premiership, has ever won, as he did, such universal respect and political support from the intelligent farmers, Dutch and English, in South Africa.

JCM Reserve

like so many of family!

His inner life was seldom betrayed even to his nearest and dearest. It was the spring of his actions and was jealously guarded. His will was strong, and his impatience of unexpected contradiction sometimes gave an impression of a violent and over-bearing temper. Of this at the time he would be quite unconscious, and frequently expressed regret when he became aware of it afterwards. Percy wrote of his father, as he might have written of himself: 'In all his deepest feelings he was reserved even to a fault', and added:

I never remember either in the case of his children, or of anyone else, his ever bringing up a past offence against them. He often dealt with faults or mistakes very severely at the time; he never recurred to them afterwards. His character never showed out more grandly than at the time of his great defeat in Parliament, which really closed his political career. He had been so conscious of the absolute right of his cause that he never had a doubt but that his friends would see it too and would rally round him when the battle came. The way in which he bore the trial was characteristic of all his political life. There was no petty personal feeling in it; his anxiety was all for the failure of a good cause, and from strong convictions of the evil consequences which must follow, and which now, by the country's own act, he was powerless to influence.

Percy won Hon

Percy Castle

Percy was living with his father at Claremont at this time, but was in Cambridge when he joined the Scanlen Ministry for a year or two as Colonial Secretary. After seeing the Ministry firmly established Molteno resigned office in the summer of 1882 and retired into private life. Many marks of Royal favour had been offered him previously, and he had declined them all. Now, however, he accepted the K.C.M.G., to the delight of many friends and admirers in the Colony. Congratulations poured in from men of all shades of opinion. Soon afterwards he paid a long visit to England and Europe, and spent many months in London, where Percy was constantly with him. In 1886 he returned to South Africa. His health, which had been seriously injured by the strain of politics and the ruin of his hopes, seemed to have improved, though from time to time fainting fits caused anxiety. Then quite suddenly, on September 1st, 1886, he died, without pain, and was taken away 'in the plenitude of his mental powers by one sharp sudden severance of the strand of life'. His death was followed by expressions of sorrow from the whole country and from all political parties. In the words of a Cape newspaper it was felt that in Sir John Charles Molteno there had passed away

JCM's final Retirement

Now JCM made KCM

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Death

→ Knight Companion

the most representative man that the country had yet produced, whose name will ever be associated with the history of the Colony, and whose public career may always serve as a model for men, possibly possessed of more superficial brilliance, but who will never outshine him in the sterling qualities of political honesty, sound judgment, and common sense.

Based on Percy's 1922 ~~the~~ pamphlet?

CHAPTER XV

CAPE FRUIT GROWING AND THE EXPORT TRADE—PERCY MOLTENO'S PIONEER WORK, AND REMINISCENCES 1891-1922

OF all countries in the world Cape Colony is perhaps the best adapted by climate, soil, and geographical position for fruit-growing. Its grapes, peaches, nectarines, plums, and pears are superb. More than a century ago its best wines were appreciated by connoisseurs in London and Amsterdam.¹ But the marvellous modern developments of peach, pear, orange and lemon orchards, as well as of fresh grapes, are the direct sequel of the export trade, chiefly to the British markets. For the initiation and scientific organization of this trade between his two native lands Percy Moltano deserves the main credit; and fortunately the story can be told in his own words on the basis of a series of articles which were written during the post-war crisis and were published in the *Cape Times* during August and September, 1922.

Here is the story as he told it, with such necessary re-arrangement and compression as are needed for the purposes of this biography. It begins with the shipment of bananas from the Canaries which, under skilful direction, proved a godsend to those islands, and afterwards to Jamaica, as well as to British consumers, besides being a new and important source of profit to the Donald Currie (Castle) Line, of which he was a director from 1890 to 1911. In August, 1898, a friend wrote to him about the progress of the Cape fruit trade. In the course of his reply Percy said:

To give an idea what may be done with fruit — we are now carrying in each of our steamers from 1,000 to 1,500 bananas from the Canaries! How much more could be done from the Cape with the whole range of temperate fruits.

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Percy's Bananas Trade

When I first took an interest in the organization of the banana transport, I found that there was no certainty about it. Small shipments of a few tons came to England, sometimes in good, often in bad condition. There was no confidence. Growers and importers suffered losses, which were small only because the shipments were small, but were disastrous in the aggregate.

I instituted scientific observations and precautions against haphazard chance. Temperatures were logged and recorded, ventilation was organized and controlled. I soon found that the banana resembles the human being

¹ Cp. the story about Sheridan.

He resigned only 2 yrs after Sir Donald Currie's death

under of Mr Michael & Mr. George

Percy's key role in export of Cape fruit.

is own as re this very

Director of the line 1890-1911

in certain vital ways. If confined in a close space at a high temperature it was suffocated and killed, it could never recover. Again, if the temperature fell rapidly and seriously, as it must do when a ship approached England from the South in winter, the banana was seized with a fatal chill, from which recovery was equally hopeless; in both cases the loss was total. There was also much to be learnt as to their treatment on shore before shipment, but security in transit by sea was the fundamental condition of success, as it is in the case of Cape fruit.

My effort soon produced remarkable results. Shipments began to arrive in better and better condition. It had involved a long course of care and observation and tabulation of facts; but it told. I well remember how, two years after I began to organize the carriage of the fruit, the leading shipper, Mr. Fyffe, of Elders & Fyffe, the great pioneers in these shipments, said to me: 'Mr. Molteno, do you know that you are ruining the costermongers of Covent Garden?' I replied: 'You don't say so. What have I to do with them?' 'Well', he said, 'they lived by buying wasty bunches of bananas and selling the occasional good fingers which remained. Now you have killed their trade; there are no wasty bunches.' My answer was: 'I am sorry for them; they must sell good red herrings. I shall go on giving the security that every bunch will be good so far as its carriage is concerned.'

In passing I may mention the sequel. Owing to this security of carriage bananas became so abundant and cheap that our costermongers came to sell sound bananas at two a penny instead of doubtful survivals of waste at a penny apiece.

The growers quickly responded to the new state of things. Before long our ships were carrying hundreds of tons of bananas instead of tens of tons, and eventually we carried thousands of tons. We no longer looked down to the bottom of our empty ships on their arrival from South Africa. For part of the voyage at any rate they were filled, and our freight list from the Canaries was a better one than from the port of Table Bay itself. Then came a special line of direct steamers to carry nothing but bananas, then another, and all in addition to the great shipment by the calling lines such as ours. Later on a line was established to bring bananas from Jamaica.

The experience gained in the banana trade, and the extraordinary results that flowed from its success, led me to turn my attention to the export of fruit from South Africa. If bananas could be shipped successfully in such quantities and at such prices as to supply the teeming millions of Europe with this cheap and wholesome fruit, what could not be done with the whole range of temperate fruits at the Cape? And if they too could be shipped successfully what would be the effect on the value of fruit land? In the Canary Islands it had risen to fabulous prices. For good irrigated banana land from £30 up to £50 per acre had been paid in rent.

Pioneer Work, with Cape Fruit

As a result of representations made to Sir Donald Currie during his visit to the Cape in 1888, the Royal

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1888 - No
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 Export
 from Cape

Mail Steamer *Grantully Castle* was fitted with a refrigerator to carry about fifty tons of fruit. She was then advertised to sail, with this space available; but only ten or fifteen tons of fruit were offered. The shipment was a total failure, shippers were discouraged, and the idea of transporting fruit from the Cape was abandoned. However, early in the year 1891, I examined at Tilbury a shipment of a thousand tons of apples which had just arrived from Tasmania. They were in excellent condition, having survived a voyage of sixty days; and it seemed to me quite reasonable to hope that even better results could be obtained after a voyage of only eighteen or twenty days from the Cape. In the same year I found that considerable quantities of small grapes were arriving in quite good condition from Portugal, while larger quantities of Almeria grapes were coming into our ports from Spain and Portugal all through the autumn. On inquiry I found out the conditions under which they were packed and carried, as well as the special keeping qualities which contributed to their successful transport.

On investigating the circumstances of the *Grantully* shipment I saw clearly that it had failed for want of the necessary knowledge as to the kind of fruit to send, the mode of packing, and the temperature to be observed on the voyage. Accurate observations and experiments had to be instituted, as in the case of the banana trade. Accordingly I undertook this, and organized a syndicate, of which Mr. J. C. Moltano is now the head, to carry out the necessary pioneer work. If the Castle Company went to the expense of fitting out ships for the trade, our action must be supplemented by those on the spot, who would arrange for shipments to fill the steamers, and would see that these shipments were made under proper conditions of selection and packing of the fruit. Our object, in fact, was to ascertain by actual experience and experiment whether the export of fruit could be made a success on a commercial scale.

I then induced the Castle Company to fit some of their mail steamers with cool chambers, and persuaded the Union Steamship Company to follow suit.

Our first shipment of fruit under the new conditions arrived by the *Drummond Castle* early in February, 1892.

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It consisted of peaches, a delicate fruit which provided a severe test. Mr. J. F. X. Merriman, himself a fruit-grower at Stellenbosch, happened to be in England at the time. I mentioned to him the arrival of the peaches and invited him to join me to see the cases opened. We went together to Messrs. Draper's of Covent Garden, who had taken up with enthusiasm the idea of providing their customers with Cape fruit during the English winter. We saw with delight case upon case opened in splendid condition. It turned out that of the whole shipment not more than 5 per cent. was damaged. The public sale of this fruit created a great sensation, as it had been thought quite impossible to carry peaches from such a distance as South Africa. Very good prices were realized at this and subsequent sales; and shipments of pears, peaches, nectarines, grapes, and apples followed. Further improvements and experience were needed, and there were setbacks; but in the next few years steady progress was

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made. With the growth of the trade it became evident that cool chambers on shore as well as on the ship were essential; but the official mind is hard to move, and a long time elapsed before this necessary provision was made by the local dock authorities.

Cape authorities on shore

The new development began to attract enterprising men, who came to see me and consult me on the prospects of fruit-growing in South Africa. Many of them have since become successful pioneers on a great scale. I well remember Messrs Dacey and Mallison, in the very early days, coming to confer with me on the subject. The well-known Cape Orchard Company was the eventual result of their activity and enterprise. At a later stage Cecil Rhodes asked me to see him to talk over the position and prospects of the export of Cape fruit. The good qualities of the Cape Haanepoot grape (recently maligned) and its probable popularity when more widely known here, figured in the discussion. As a result of our conference, Rhodes entered upon the extensive purchases, which became the well-known Rhodes Fruit Farms, in the French Hoek and Drakenstein Valleys.

1st major growers of fruit in Cape

Meanwhile in South Africa itself the whole question of the growth of fruit and its transport was studied anew, and the latter was revolutionized. Grapes and other fruits had until then been carried on the railways and elsewhere in wicker bushel baskets, containing from 40 to 50 lb. apiece. There was no packing at all, and the results at the end of the journey were usually disastrous to the appearance and condition of the fruit.

The Cape Fruit Syndicate soon demonstrated the advantages of good selection, suitable packing material, and proper casing to preserve the fruit from damage. These changes ensured the arrival of fruit in good condition, even after the longest journeys.

Home SA market for fruit grew too

The local markets at once responded to the change. They began to assume an entirely different value. Port Elizabeth and Durban by sea, Kimberley, Johannesburg, Bulawayo and Salisbury by land, became increasing consumers of the fruit of the south-western districts. The new system of packing had made all the difference. These home markets became of even greater importance than the export market itself. Thus was laid the foundation of successful fruit-growing.

Enterprise soon added new varieties of old fruits, such as peaches and pears and grapes. It also provided quite new fruits in the Japanese plums, developed by the energy of Mr. Pickstone. I well remember the astonishment of one of the best-known Cape fruit-farmers when he saw on my table in London a supply of these wonderful plums, just arrived from South Africa. On his return he immediately secured a supply of trees, and soon became one of the most successful exporters of these attractive and easily-grown fruits, so admirably fitted for carriage in good condition to Europe.

With the growing knowledge and expansion of foreign and local markets, a wonderful change came over the prospects of Western Province farmers. When I first took up the idea of this export and endeavoured to get supplies of fruit, I visited the fine old historic homesteads of

Stellenbosch, the Paarl, Drakenstein, and other places.

Vineyard
 lost by
 disease
 1890s

It was very difficult to get even ordinary fruits, such as apricots or peaches, and certainly nowhere in any quantity in one spot. Phylloxera had recently ruined the vineyards, and a remedy was yet to be found. Many fine homesteads were falling into decay, and despair was settling down on their owners. They were ready to dispose of their heavily-mortgaged properties for almost any offer in cash. A vast district, well watered and fertile, was offered to me for a comparatively small sum. It was a deplorable condition of affairs. The growth and export of fruit has revolutionized the prospects and the value of these great and now prosperous areas. Let anyone visit these farms now, with their great orchards and many activities, their expanding developments, all full of hope and promise, and compare them, as many still living can do, with their condition before the change.

I have mentioned the enormous rise in land values caused by the success of the banana trade in the Canaries. South Africa shows similar results. A well-known farm, valued at £5,000 for Divisional Council purposes, soon rose to £80,000. When I last travelled from South Africa two young men on the ship had just sold a farm for fruit, on which their joint profit was no less than £70,000. Millions sterling have been added to the value of land in the south-western districts alone at the Cape.

Should anyone wish to realize what fruit-growing has been able to accomplish, let him visit the famous Hex River Valley. He will see magnificent orchards laden with the finest fruit. I have seen pear trees of the William Bon Chrétien variety in full bearing, a sight which can rarely be equalled, and never surpassed, in any part of the world. Many well-built homesteads have sprung up, whose prosperous owners are reaping a rich harvest from the produce of tree and vine. The railway stations of the Hex River are a busy scene in the fruit season. From these stations thousands of tons of fruit are annually dispatched to destinations all over South Africa.

A visit to the beautiful valleys of French Hoek and Drakenstein, or to Ceres, the Paarl, Stellenbosch, Somerset West, Elgin, Wellington, Worcester, Robertson, and other districts all supply further proof of the rapid expansion of this valuable industry.

Among the natural advantages which ensure success for fruit-growing in South Africa, I would mention first of all the climate of the south-western districts, which is ideal for the purpose — rain in winter and spring, and fine weather when the fruit is ripening. These conditions favour a fine flavour and also the firmness of condition needed of fruit which is intended for travel.

Again, South Africa is not confined to any one fruit for export. The whole range of temperate fruits flourishes there, from pears, plums, apricots, and peaches, to grapes, figs, oranges, and lemons. Hence the market is supplied over an extended summer period, to which a winter period is added in the case of citrous fruits. For the bulk of Cape fruit there is a good local market all over South Africa; moreover, the dry summer during the

period of ripening favours the drying of fruits which cannot be marketed. These dried fruits are of splendid quality when properly prepared, and can hold their own against any competitors. I should have added that in the case of grapes South Africa is in a very strong position; for in vigour, yield, and quality the South African vine is unsurpassed.

In addition to the advantages of soil and climate, South Africa shares with Australia and New Zealand the advantage of being south of the Equator. South Africa's summer is the winter of Europe and the United States, so that the summer fruits grown in northern hemispheres do not compete with the Cape fruits that arrive in winter. Further, the Cape lies almost on the meridian of Greenwich; i.e. due south from London. It is therefore the nearest country in the southern hemisphere to England, which means that the voyage to England from the Cape is shorter than that from any other of its fruit-growing competitors in the southern hemisphere.

A nation like the American, whose ninety millions of people begin their day with fruit at breakfast, consumes enormous quantities, and when the quality and flavour of the Cape fruit become known in the United States and Canada, an unlimited demand will be set up. England, in a lesser degree than the United States, but still on a great scale, has important organizations for distributing fruit, and welcomes it from the Cape in winter. So does Paris on a small scale, and would do so much more if France would modify her exclusive customs duties. So did Germany, and will do again, we hope, when she recovers from war troubles. She proved to be a great consumer of bananas when once we had shown the way to carry them in sound condition.

One of the fundamental bases of all fruit trades is the love of fruit, particularly among the young. The robbery of apple orchards by boys is induced by an instinct and craving for certain qualities found in fruit, which are essential to the processes of growth in the young. I have always felt that a supply of fresh fruit is of great benefit to the town populations of Europe. The variety it adds to their diet, besides being pleasant and palatable, has been proved by recent investigations to be essential to their health. During the Great War the phenomena of nutrition and rationing were brought into prominence, when the ordinary variety of food was interfered with. Many evil consequences ensued; and in some extreme cases whole populations were afflicted by terrible diseases due to deficiencies in diet. Thus it has been proved that scurvy is due to deficiencies which are easily curable by the addition to a diet of orange- or lemon-juice. Beri-beri is also due to bad diet. Tuberculosis and rickets appear to be encouraged by deficiencies of the right food.

After the War the condition of some famished populations such as Vienna were terrible. I learned myself from the lips of one of the principal medical officers in charge of a Vienna hospital in 1919 of the frightful state of things prevailing there after the War. He said to me that in most cases a rapid and certain cure could be

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effected if only he could obtain an adequate supply of certain foods and particularly of cod-liver oil and fruit juices. Our town populations in Europe are becoming more and more dependent on tinned meats, tinned vegetables, and tinned milk. But the process of tinning and canning usually destroys the vital principle known as vitamins. Tinned foods, however, are quite wholesome if the deficiency can be made up by fresh vegetables and fresh fruit. The Cape fruit trade is therefore capable of supplying a fundamental need in wholesome articles of diet required by great town populations. The vital importance to the growth of the young and to maintaining the health of adults, of these accessory food factors, known as vitamins, was being investigated before the War by the Animal Nutrition Institute of Cambridge, with which Professor Nuttall was associated, and of which Professor Hopkins is now the head. A new Institute is being built, with funds contributed by the trustees of the late Sir William Dunn, so well known in the Cape fruit trade (see Article IX). Through the work of McCullom, Osborne and Mendel, America also is becoming fully alive to the dietetic value of fresh fruit. Once that is recognized, it becomes the duty of every government to ensure an abundant supply at reasonable prices all the year round. That, as I have shown, brings in South Africa and the southern hemisphere to supply Europe and North America during half the year. From the standpoint of the grower, as well as of the consumer, high prices are undesirable. A really great trade can only be built up on reasonable prices. There is always a sale for the finest fruit at prices which only the rich can afford; but a really big trade must be based on popular consumption at moderate prices which are within the means of people with small incomes.

To ensure a cheap, steady, and abundant supply of good fruit from South Africa to England there were and are two indispensable conditions. The first is regularity of communications by ships properly fitted for the purpose; the second is a good organization among fruit-growers for the purpose of shipment.

As to communications, my father, the first Prime Minister of Cape Colony, realized the vital importance to South Africa of speedy communications with Europe; but to secure a satisfactory service it had to be paid for, like any other service. Being ready to do this he was able to secure for the first time a regular weekly mail steamer between Europe and South Africa. Unfortunately after his time South African Governments have failed to understand the problem of rapid communication. Party politics also came in, to the detriment of the public interest, and the question of communications with Europe became a pawn in the game of party politics. This I can illustrate from my own experience. On the last occasion when I was associated with the negotiations for a mail contract, I received a message from Dr. Jameson to the effect that he had more influence with General Botha than anyone else, and he would use it to ensure that no vote would be passed in the Cape Parliament for a contract with the existing Union-Castle Company.

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 → a rapid
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 to Europe

Why Percy's
Negotiations
with SA Gov.
failed re
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The grounds for his message were a supposed interference by the Union-Castle Company in Namaqualand in favour of the candidature of Sir David Graaff, as opposed to the candidature of a supporter of Dr. Jameson. The interference was a myth so far as the Union-Castle Company were concerned, which had no interests in Namaqualand of any kind. But Dr. Jameson was as good as his word, and soon set on the jackals of his party to attack the Company, and the vital question of communications was thrown into the arena of this petty squabble.

I had been urging upon the Government the needs of the fruit industry. I pointed out that ships of the size and character now required would take two or three years to complete; that the then Union-Castle Company was prepared to construct a number of powerful, well-equipped mail steamers, with adequate insulated space for the carriage of fruit, which would embody the experience gained in regard to the requirements of the fruit trade. I pointed out that the requirements of this trade were growing; that it must be checked by inadequate accommodation, if the Government interposed delays. The Government allowed themselves to be made the sport of the personal questions above described. Nothing was done; the whole thing was kept in a state of the greatest uncertainty; the golden opportunity was lost; the war came. Recent mail boats have taken five or six years to complete, and their cost was trebled. Had our proposals been accepted, there would have been running, even before the war, several fine, powerful mail boats, with the necessary accommodation for fruit.

Percy feels this
adversely
affected Cape
fruit export
trade

The Government entirely ignored the interests of what they appeared to regard as the negligible and unimportant fruit industry, and deliberately sacrificed the prospects and development of that industry to other considerations. In this way they administered a severe check to the prosperity of the fruit trade. The enormous shut-outs on the South African side have prevented the Cape fruit arriving in this country in the condition in which it should arrive, and whole consignments have been condemned as rotten and useless owing to this cause, for which the Government is wholly responsible.

I have gone into this detail in the hope that fruit-growers in South Africa will realize that they should bestir themselves to take the necessary steps to prevent their own interests being sacrificed to any other interests, whatever they may be.

It should be absolutely certain that every fruit-grower who grows good fruit, and takes the trouble and goes to the expense of packing it, and sending it in good time to the cool chamber, should be able to count absolutely and without fail upon its reaching the London, Paris and New York markets in perfect condition. This can be ensured easily enough, if all the links in the chain are kept sound.

In this connection one good deed must be placed to the credit of the Government — their appointment of Mr. C. du P. Chiappini. This gentleman did yeoman service in popularizing and extending the markets for fruit and

Mr Chiappini

other Cape products. He worked hard and with great success. A time soon comes in a trade like this when organization is necessary. The individual fruit-grower cannot do for himself and by his own exertions all that is required to ensure the arrival of his fruit on the consumer's table. He must organize; and the true way to accomplish this is by co-operation with his fellow fruit-growers, just as in Denmark producers of butter, bacon, and eggs have co-operated to improve quality, increase supply, and secure better prices in home and foreign markets.

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But instead of this there has developed at the Cape and in other countries a desire for Government aid, from what is supposed to be a bottomless purse. A little thought will make it clear that a Government is not the best agent to act for a trade. A Government has many other things to do; it is organized for a different purpose; it cannot know or care so much about the interests of any given industry as the industry itself. There is the further difficulty that powerful individuals are apt to get the ear of the Government which then may act in their interests and not in the interests of the industry or the tax-payers as a whole. I would strongly urge South African fruit-growers to realize that their salvation depends on themselves and not upon Government aid.

As an example of private enterprise and co-operation take the case of packing. Early this year, when fruit from the Cape was arriving in excellent condition, I spent some time with the head of the fruit department in a great London store. He pointed proudly to his splendid display of Cape fruit and said: 'Take away the Cape fruit, and when you see how little is left you will realize what a gap is filled at this time of the year by the Cape supplies.' He had no complaint to make about the packing or any alterations to suggest. At one time cork-dust seemed indispensable, but it has been displaced by wood wool and there has been no improvement since. Indeed I think there has been some want of initiative and experimentation of late in the Cape fruit trade. Hitherto no one has tried to create ideal conditions for fruit packing. I look forward to a great success for the enterprising grower who erects a small cool chamber on his farm where grapes or other fruit could be rapidly cooled down before being packed. Then grapes would arrive in the London and New York markets, not only with the berries fresh, but with the stalks green. They would then fetch a better price. Another improvement might be made by growing early maturing varieties and late maturing varieties of various fruits in order to lengthen the season.

A very serious threat to farmers at the Cape appears in the extraordinary measures taken to give protection to infant industries in South Africa. The aim and object of every new country should be to minimize the costs of its fundamental industries, of which farming must always be the most important. No unnecessary burdens should be laid on the farmer's cost of production. But the very opposite principle seems to have been adopted. Everything the farmer requires to buy is being made artificially expensive by heavy import duties or even prohibitions, as

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The Liberal Economic Case

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recently in the case of such essentials as boots and sugar. Farmers' interests are thus being sacrificed to encourage new and often bastard industries which put money into the pockets of a few individuals at the expense of the whole community. The Cape farmer, whether he produces wool, mohair, skins, maize, fruit, or ostrich feathers can only receive the world's price for them when exported. No protective tariffs can help him; but they do raise most seriously his cost of production and impose an increasing burden which he will find it more and more difficult to bear.

Moreover South Africa like Great Britain is becoming the milch-cow of a huge bureaucracy which spends its time in devising and collecting as many taxes as possible so that it may obtain fat salaries. Our unfortunate peoples have been induced to consent to these sacrifices by the promise of benefits which are to accrue from the increasing activities of Government. But it always ends in more taxation. A strong organization of fruit-growers would be able to withstand new proposals involving fresh burdens upon them.

Another of your problems is the treatment of labour. In its native and coloured population the Cape possesses an enormous advantage over some of its competitors. South African labour is intelligent, easily handled, easily satisfied and quite abundant. Experience here and in every part of the world has demonstrated the desirability of treating labour humanely and decently in order to obtain the best results. Good cottages with adequate land for gardens and facilities for cultivation are essential if a good stamp of native labour is to be attracted. A friendly interest in their welfare and some assistance in enabling them to secure necessities at reasonable prices, and in protecting them from the evils of strong drink, have well repaid those who have already acted upon these principles.

It may be mentioned here by way of parenthesis that early in 1897 John X. Merriman, who had started fruit-growing on his beautiful farm (Schonjezig) at Stellenbosch, was not satisfied with the native labour and wanting something better wrote to Percy to consult him about the possibility of attracting Italian emigrants to the Cape. Percy replied, March 25th, 1897:

A supply of labour will undoubtedly be necessary to gather the large crops that must be expected from the new orchards. I am quite at one with you in thinking that the North of Italy offers a recruiting ground second to none in Europe for the class of labour you want, the peasantry there being one of the most industrious and tractable in the world. You refer to Sir Donald's scheme of Italian emigration. I may say that its abandonment—owing as I understand to difficulties in connection with the disposal of emigrants on arrival at the Cape—was a bitter disappointment to those in Italy to whom it had been mentioned. The supply of labour which might be made available is practically unlimited, but of course some kind of selection would be necessary to see that only suitable

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and fitting persons were sent. I will communicate with our agents in Genoa and with the Scotch pastor there.

At the same time he sent Merriman a memorandum which Percy had had prepared by the passenger department of the Castle Line. Italian emigrants were then being conveyed to the Argentine at the rate of £4 10s. per head, but so low a rate would not be possible to the Cape owing to strict regulations as to space, ventilation, etc. If they could be brought in parties of fifty they might be conveyed from Genoa to Las Palmas and thence to the Cape for £11 per head. Again, if they could be conveyed from Genoa to London via Dieppe for £3, 'the open berth rate from London to Cape Town would be eight guineas'. In April he sent Merriman further communications about Italian emigrants from the Castle Line's agents at Genoa.

Percy lived Haanepoot!

In conclusion I want to touch upon the slur that has been passed on the Cape Haanepoot grape. This grape is one of the finest in flavour which the world possesses, and it will in my opinion eventually form the basis of a gigantic trade. True, its constitution will not resist bad conditions such as recent rains, or high temperature in a confined space, so well as some inferior types of grape; but with proper handling it can be brought here with all its bloom and attractions upon it. Some failures will be avoided when packers come to know, as they should, that no fruit can be expected to carry well when rain has recently fallen upon it. There are other showy grapes, such as Gross Colmar, or Lady Down Seedling, which appeal to the eye, though their taste and flavour are poor; but a great trade cannot be built upon mere appearances. In the Haanepoot grape the Cape possesses a fruit with the qualities of taste and flavour which are essential to a great trade, and this grape should not be set aside or ostracized through faults of careless treatment on the way to Europe. I grow the Cape Haanepoot myself under glass in England; and it is preferred by all my friends to any other grape.

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In 1931 the late Mr. L. M. Dicey of Orchard, an Hon. President of the Deciduous Fruit Exchange, gave a very interesting talk on the early days of the Cape fruit industry at the Chamber of Commerce in Worcester, an important market town in a fruit and vine-growing district of Cape Colony. Mr. Dicey said he had been associated with the fruit industry for forty-one years. He came to the Cape in 1892 as one of the three directors of the Cape Orchard Company, his colleagues on the board being Mr. P. R. Malleson and Mr. F. P. T. Struben. [This seems to date the talk, as reported in a Cape newspaper (?) *The Argus*, as 1931.]

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We found on our arrival [said Mr. Dicey] that export of deciduous fruit had been in progress for two years. It had been started by Mr. Percy Molteno, a director of the Castle Line, in co-operation with his brothers, who purchased fruit on the farms, packed it, and shipped it to England. I mention this particularly

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because there is no doubt that Mr. Percy Moltano was the pioneer in the export of fruit from this country; and he should receive the credit due to his enterprise and foresight.

Mr. Dicey — who died about two years ago — went on to describe the ups and downs of his business, and of the prices they received for fruit before the Boer War in Mafeking, Durban, and London.

In London we frequently got up to 40s. a tray for peaches, and in one instance I can recall a consignment of forty to fifty boxes realizing not less than 60s. a tray. Think of getting those prices today! [Laughter.] The disorganised transport consequent upon the Boer War made both export and local trade suffer severely. But from those early days has grown an industry which is of great value to South Africa, and is likely to grow still larger. In 1923 a million packages of fruit were shipped to England.

Like Mr. Moltano Mr. Dicey looked to investigation and research as 'of vital necessity', if South Africa's fruit problems were to be solved. He welcomed the entry of Italian deciduous fruits into the British market because, as it was cheap, a wider public would acquire a taste for fruit, and that was bound to be reflected in increased consumption of South African fruit when they in their season came on to the London market. Here again Mr. Dicey's opinion 'is a confirmation and echo of Mr. Moltano's.

Mr. P. R. Malleson has been good enough to supplement Mr. Dicey's discourse in the following note:

Percy's note

In the year 1892 Mr. Moltano was first establishing cool chambers in the mail ships trading between England and South Africa, to carry fruit from South Africa to England on a commercial scale. Up to that time there were only small cool chambers installed on some of the ships to supply passengers with fresh vegetables.

Mr. Moltano was, at that time, a director of the Castle Mail Steamship Company, but Sir Donald Currie had I believe, even then, a big interest in the Union Steamship Company. At any rate the two companies both established commercial cool chambers on their ships in that year.

Mr. Moltano then found that there was no one in South Africa who understood the handling and packing of delicate fruit on commercial lines. He discussed the matter with Mr. Fred Struben, who had just returned to England after helping his brother H. W. Struben to discover gold on the Rand. Mr. Fred Struben was much struck with the idea of bringing South African fruit to England at a time when the European markets were bare. He had seen the work on which I was then engaged — which was growing grapes and peaches under glass in Gloucestershire and sending them to London under very difficult conditions of road and rail transport.

He then asked me whether I would come to Africa and help to establish this new industry. After much consultation with Mr. Percy Moltano and Mr. Fred Struben I decided to form a company which we called the Cape Orchard Company. Thereupon Mr. Dicey

and I were appointed managing directors and came at once to the Cape to set to work on this new industry.

We shipped our first apricots to England in December 1892, and continued shipping any suitable fruit which we could buy during the season 1892-3. It was Mr. Molteno's idea of putting cool chambers in the ships to bring fruit to Europe in the off season that first started what has now become a great industry.

I am afraid that I am rather repeating what I wrote in the 24,25 Bulletin of the Deciduous Fruit Exchange in June, 1935, but I feel that the fruit-growers of South Africa do not appreciate what we owe to Mr. Percy Molteno as long ago as 1892.

When the cool chambers were first put into the ships very little was known as to the temperatures at which to keep the chambers or of the method of storing. It was owing to the constant watching and experimenting made by the ships' officers and engineering staffs and by the engineering staffs on shore under the direction of Mr. Molteno that we shippers were able to despatch our fruit from South Africa with a very good chance of its arrival in England in a saleable condition. Even now we constantly hear of fruit arriving in an unsatisfactory condition. You can imagine what the difficulties were forty-five years ago when the world knew practically nothing about refrigeration.

Few people realize how Mr. Molteno, after he had retired from the directorship of shipping companies, still kept his interest in the refrigeration of fruit. It was my duty, on behalf of the pear-growers of South Africa, to study the work being done at the Cambridge Low Temperature Station in 1929, and I must confess that I was amazed at the thorough and sound research work being done there. What surprised the Cambridge authorities was that, though the whole world including America was making use of their experiments, South Africa alone took no interest in the work of the station. At that time I saw Mr. Molteno in London, who deplored the fact that no advantage had been taken of the knowledge gained at Cambridge in his own country. However, I found on my return to South Africa that we were getting some advantage from the work done at Cambridge via America, and I am glad to say this has been entirely altered here since Dr. Kadd's visit. I would like to conclude by saying that not only has Mr. Percy Molteno by his work helped individual fruit-growers, but that this important South African industry owes its very existence to his work in the early stages.

CHAPTER VII

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DAYS AT THE CAPE

THERE is not much more to tell of Percy Molteno's boyhood. In previous chapters we have described the pleasures and sports of Claremont House, the exhilarating political atmosphere of a Prime Minister's home and Percy's schooldays in the Diocesan College at Rondebosch, where he carried off so many prizes.

He followed up his successes at school in the new Cape University which his father had done much to create, and ended his course there by winning the valuable Porter Scholarship. But his father generously handed over the emoluments to the competitor next in the examination, who was not so well off and might otherwise have been unable to go to an English University.

In October, 1879, having taken his B.A. degree at the Cape University, Percy was looking forward to the career at Cambridge for which his successes at school and college had qualified him.

The year was a memorable one in British and Cape politics. In the early spring Gladstone had swept the country, and after what he and his colleagues had said during the election campaign it was assumed that Sir Bartle Frere would be recalled and independence restored to the Transvaal. Unfortunately the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, was ill-advised. He did restore the Transvaal Republic. Frere was recalled in June; but before the new High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, arrived, there was trouble with the natives on the frontier, and before the end of the year the Boers had risen in arms.

Meanwhile in May Sir John Molteno had re-entered the Cape Parliament as Member for Victoria. His wife was afraid for his health, but he thought affairs so serious that it would be wrong for him to stand aside any longer. Sir Gordon Sprigg and his Ministry were unfit to deal with the situation. 'There is great excitement about the Basuto disarmament just now,' wrote Betty Molteno towards the end of May. 'It is hoped that this Parliament will do something in their favour.' But it did not.

Percy [she went on] is to go up for his B.A. examination in October; we think he will go to England early next year. You would be pleased with him; he is such an unusually good, steady fellow, and Frank is following in his footsteps.

In the middle of June, just before Sir Bartle Frere's retirement, Maria wrote:

We have been wondering if Sir Bartle would be left here. I see that his salary is to be reduced by £2,000. I suppose that is intended as a kind of peace offering to the (Liberal) Members in the English Parliament who have petitioned for his removal.

The story may be continued in a letter from Elizabeth Molteno to her Aunt Nancy (Mrs. Bingle) who lived at Richmond in England:

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Sir JCM's Gr re Percy's Porter Scholarship - P from his father

Percy BA 1879

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Betty's View Percy as a b 1882?

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TL Claremont House, September 20th, 1880. Percy goes up for his Bachelor of Arts examination next month. He is working hard. After that is over he will have to make his plans for going to Cambridge. He wishes to spend Christmas with us. He is such a good young fellow in every way — for which I cannot be thankful enough. I shall miss him dreadfully. His influence at home and with the other boys is in every way a good one. But I want him to have a University education, and am so glad that Papa seems to have finally made up his mind that he shall.

Betty wanted
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Papa has been much better of late and is in better spirits. I think he has sent you a paper with an account of the Freres' departure. He and I called to say good-bye to them on the Monday before they left. There was a great crush but we had a few words with them. I felt very much for them. They have had to go through so much while at the Cape, and they seemed very sad at leaving. Sir Bartle is a wonderful man. He has great charm of manner and great conversational powers. His daughters inherit a considerable share of both qualities.

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TL As Percy could not enter Trinity College, Cambridge, until the October term, 1881, there was no reason why he should leave for England to prepare for the Little Go until early in the New Year. It was therefore arranged that he and his father, with his brother-in-law, Dr. Murray, should make a trip to the family properties at Beaufort West, after which his father would return home, and then Percy would start with Charlie for the Diamond Fields. This programme was carried out, and a tour to the Eastern Province was added.

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The party left for Beaufort West in October and stayed there for two or three weeks. The district was in a state of turmoil. Bartle Frere had left a legacy of frontier troubles by his plan for disarming the natives, and the Sprigg Ministry was involved in a war with the Basutos which dragged on for a long time. To deal with this they had to call out forces of burghers, and Percy found scenes which he recorded with boyish animation.

1
Vice

There is great excitement here [he wrote on November 6th from Beaufort West to his sister Caroline], about the calling-out of the volunteers and burghers. It is almost impossible to get a substitute in the volunteers. As much as £200 has been offered. The burghers were selected to-day. The first lot fell on Mr. A. Alport. Mr. Jones was also among the number selected, but he has received a substitute. On Wednesday the balloting for the remainder comes off.

Impact
Railway

A considerable effect, he went on, had been produced at Beaufort by the railway. 'Already one feels much nearer to Cape Town than before, and I think that it would not be so very unbearable to live down here for a time.' Thus far he had enjoyed his trip enormously. Charlie would tell of their proposed journey to the diamond fields.

This interesting journey with its extension to Knysna and the Eastern Province, could only be performed by rough cross-country travel in an ox-wagon, or mule-

The Ox-Wagon

cart. Even fifteen years later, after further railway development, James Bryce, accompanied by his wife, had to travel in the same way over long stretches of the celebrated tour which is described in his *Impressions of South Africa*. Till the beginning of this century ox transport was the characteristic of South African travel. The ox-wagon was the vehicle in the great trek of 1836, when thousands of Boers carried their wives and children and household goods from the Cape into the territories that were to become the Transvaal and Orange River Republics. In such wise too, as Bryce reminds us, Moffatt, Livingstone, Selous, and many other missionaries, traders, or sportsmen had carried out their African explorations. The ox-wagon as described by Bryce is a long low structure, drawn by seven or more yoke of oxen and surmounted for carrying travellers by a convex wooden frame and canvas roof:

The oxen usually accomplish about twelve miles a day, but can be made to do sixteen, or with pressure a little more. They walk very slowly, and they are allowed to rest and feed more hours than those during which they travel. The rest time is usually the forenoon until about 4 p.m., with another rest for part of the night.

These ox-wagon journeys, off the lines of railway and the few main roads, were on tracks across the veldt or prairie, from which indeed obstructing bushes had been removed; but otherwise there had been no road-making, though sometimes the edges of the steep banks, or 'dongas', were cut down to allow the wagons to descend more easily to the bottom.

Two letters from Percy to his father show those powers of close observation and mastery of detail which characterized him all through life:

Percy's Powers

Queen's Hotel, Kimberley, November 30th, 1880. We arrived here this morning in time for breakfast. We left Beaufort on Wednesday evening at six o'clock, and as we had meals we got on very slowly, taking three hours to Rhenoster Kop. There we had a nap for two hours, and then went on to Courland's Kloof, where we outspanned again. We saw nobody there as it was too early. We breakfasted at Kalk Val. The country from Courland's Kloof to Kalk Val was very green. We reached Brakfontein at about 11.30. There we paid Mr. Jackson a short visit. He had lost about 100 sheep and goats in that cold wind by which Julius lost so many. We reached Victoria the same evening by about 10.30, slept there, and started next morning after breakfast.

The veldt up to about a day or two from Victoria was very fair, but further on the drought was very bad — indeed, the bushes were perfectly black and the farmers were losing their stock. This continued nearly up to Hopetown, which we reached on Sunday afternoon at about 3.30. About three hours on the Cape Town side of Hopetown we came upon Mr. Statter and his staff on the survey of the line. We dined at Hopetown, and changing mules for horses crossed the Orange River in a pont. Hopetown lies on the bank of the river, which has very little wood on its banks.

It was running pretty full when we crossed and was 320 yards broad. Hopetown is very much like Victoria, with fewer trees. After leaving Victoria the country becomes more and more flat and soon no mountains are visible. It is strange coming upon the great river in such a dry country as that about Hopetown. Next morning we passed through some very good grass veldt, the bushes being far apart — as far nearly as Hopetown the veldt looks very similar to the Beaufort veldt; but after crossing the river the bushes, chiefly sheep bush, are very small and far apart. The farms on this side the Orange River are chiefly horse and cattle farms. We saw some very fat cattle along the way; they were chiefly of a red colour. We crossed the Modder River on Monday; it was running one or two feet deep. We called upon Messrs. Wright, Tarry and North, to whom we had letters. North has been very kind and has shown us about everywhere. We have been down the mine, which is 320 feet deep now. I shall not attempt to describe it, as we shall be back so soon after your receipt of this letter.

Another letter of December 13th from Betty to Mrs. Bingle tells of Charlie's and Percy's return from their trip to the diamond fields. They had had delightful weather going and coming and had much enjoyed their visit. Percy had intended leaving for England by the first steamer in January; but he had postponed his sailing for a month and had gone off on another expedition with a Mr. Cookson, of which we have only a brief account in the following letter to his father:

Forest Hall, January 3rd, 1881. We arrived here yesterday morning, having been two days coming from Knysna. Our oxen are very slow, and a tidal river delayed us several hours. We go on today to Groot River, where we are to stay. I have heard nothing from home yet, and therefore don't know whether Charlie is coming or not. We have had very cool weather the whole time. It has rained twice — once at George, and a little the day we left the Knysna.

It is very pretty about here; there is much more open country than forest. We have travelled the whole time near the sea. Yesterday we passed Plettenberg's Bay. I suppose Betty and Frank have started today for Hex River. The game does not seem quite so plentiful as we anticipated. Mr. Cookson and I are to be back by the 16th. We shall probably start from here tomorrow week and come round from Mossel Bay by the steamer which gets in on Sunday the 16th. This I think is the last post but one by which I can write before returning. We have seen papers up to Tuesday the 28th, and the news of the 9th being cut up was confirmed in them. Mr. Cookson, who was through the Zulu War, thinks this country very similar to Natal.

Several days before this Elizabeth had heard 'terrible reports from the Transvaal'. In a letter of December 26th, 1880, she wrote:

Today we hear that a hundred British soldiers have been killed. It will be an awful thing if the Boers really have broken out and intend to fight. Such tremendous ill-feeling would be created here too; for

1st
Boer
War
(TL)

the Dutch as a whole side strongly with the Transvaal people. We seem to have nothing but fighting and trouble.

Sir John Molteno was much distressed, and well he might be. The British troops under Colley were poor shots, and they had lost morale and discipline in the Zulu War. The Boers on the other hand were wonderful marksmen. They cut up a British column at Bronkhorst Spruit, and had blockaded the garrisons at Pretoria and other towns. Worse reverses were to come at Laings Nek and Majuba Hill (February 27th, 1881), while Lord Kimberley was negotiating on the basis of Boer autonomy under British suzerainty.

Percy sailed for England towards the end of January, 1881, where he was to spend his first few days at Richmond with his Aunt Nancy Bingle.

TL
Percy arrives
UK - Feb
1881

↳ Voyage with Aunt Nancy
CHAPTER VIII

CAMBRIDGE AND THE BAR

AFTER a few days with his aunt at Richmond in February, 1881, Percy passed on to Cambridge to look round the college and university of his choice. He felt desolate and home-sick. His devoted sisters confessed to Mrs. Bingle their fears that for some time he would be very lonely. He is rather shy and does not readily make friends, though he is a great favourite with all who know him.' But by the beginning of September Maria was reassured.

Percy - shy
+
Home-sick

I heard from Percy [she wrote from Claremont on September 5th] by the last mail. He is such a good correspondent. He seems much less home-sick than he was when he first arrived at Cambridge. Then his letters were quite sad; he did not know how he would get on for three years without seeing any of us.

After a glimpse of Cambridge Percy buried himself at Honington, a remote village in Lincolnshire, to prepare for the examinations at Trinity, which were to be held at the end of April. Here are some extracts from his letters home:

Honington, March 16th, 1881. I have not much news. I have been in to Grantham, about 5 miles off. It is an irregular town of about 17,000 inhabitants, and is celebrated as the native place of Sir Isaac Newton.

I went yesterday to see the remains of a Roman Camp near here. The earthworks are perfectly well marked — the ditch about 4 feet deep, then a wall four to five feet high, then another ditch and wall and then a centre about 100 yards square.

Percy's description is confirmed in Charles Cox's *Lincolnshire*:

On the heath above the village is a strongly entrenched ancient camp, forming an irregular square surrounded with a triple rampart; it is probably of British origin, and subsequently occupied by the Romans.

Honington, March 23rd. I am busy preparing for the entrance exam. for Trinity College which takes place

No Horse

at the end of April. I found when I arrived that I had not much time to spare, and therefore I got settled down here as soon as possible. I have a quiet time of it. I miss my horse very much, as this is nice country for riding and there are meets of the hounds frequently. The great people here keep seventeen horses; they are connected with the firm of Hornsby and Sons, which carried off (as I noticed in the paper) most of the prizes for agricultural machines at the last Cape Show.

After referring to the Norman church he passed on to politics:

The assassination of the Czar has alarmed people, and precautions are taken at the House of Commons against mines being laid.

I see by today's paper that a treaty of peace has been concluded with the Boers. Since I left things seem to have gone from bad to worse as regards the Basuto war. I should be delighted if from time to time you could give me accounts of the political situation at the Cape and the proceedings in Parliament. I suppose Sprigg will be out almost before this reaches you. I should also like to have an account of the races to hear how uncle's horses do. You need not fear that my interest in South Africa will slacken. I read the *Argus Weekly* through now. I used to think it an endless paper.

Uncle
Alphonse
Races

March 1881
Charlie must
go to Beaufort
with the help
of his family
farm

Honington, March 27th. Charlie's going to Beaufort will certainly make a difference at home. I think however, under the circumstances, it is the best thing for him to do. . . . it will be a great relief for him to feel that he is working with some definite aim and that he has a fixed occupation in which he will have a direct interest. . . . You must try and impress upon him the necessity of being warmly dressed in cold weather, or when riding in cold air. I am almost certain that the attack of rheumatism, which laid him up, was brought on partly by his going to the hunt in the early morning and not taking the least precaution against the cold. . . . On that trip to the diamond fields we had one fearfully cold night, a very high wind in our faces and no rug. . . . It will be a dull life, especially to him, as he does not care much for solid reading. We know what the society of Beaufort consists of!

TL

NVA
natural
intellectual

Charlie
gamble on
1 share &
wins

It is perhaps a doubtful gain for Charlie to have made a good thing by his Standard share; for we are told to beware of the dangerous road of Speculation. I think it is a bad principle to invest all one's small amount in such hazardous speculations. If one were very wealthy and could afford to lose it, then it would not matter. I have only £100, and I get six per cent. interest, and I think I must remain content; but still I thank you very much for making the suggestion.

Perry
pro Boer &
for Boer
war

It is a great relief that the Boer War is over. The Home Government have been very lenient, but still I think they have behaved nobly; for it is better to err on the side of leniency. I sympathise with the Boer cause, and on the whole they behaved very well during the War. May we soon have peace at the Cape too! I hope soon to see by cable that Mr. Sprigg has been turned out.

TL

Called that!

Three weeks after this Percy took his examination successfully, and was ready to enter Trinity in the October term. After this he paid visits to various friends, starting with a stay at South Leverton. Thence he wrote on May 11th to Caroline:

Percy had to pass ~~exams~~ entrance to get into Trinity College

1881 I have heard by cable, the long-expected news that Mr. Sprigg has resigned and that a New Ministry has been formed. I was much surprised to see Papa's name as Colonial Secretary. I did not think he would again take office. I suppose, however, that he has done it for a short time; and the excitement may do him good. Betty writes in her last letter that he was in very good spirits and stood the evening sittings well. I am taking immense interest in all that is going on at the Cape, and read all the Parliamentary proceedings. . . . I should have liked to have been at home for the excitement of the formation of a New Ministry. I am longing to hear full particulars of everything.

JCM ageing

This and much more to the same purpose showed how closely he was following affairs at the Cape. A few days later (May 18th) he wrote to Frank:

I should like to hear what you thought of Rhodes. I think he has been called to the Bar in England, and was studying law here a short time ago.

I have seen some rook shooting. I was invited to shoot, but I did not care about doing so until I had seen what sort of fun there was in shooting young birds that can barely fly. Well, there were six guns — three rifles and three shotguns. The rifles shot them sitting, the shotguns flying.

But not v. good at it!

I have had some tennis with the neighbours here. The lawns are much nicer than the hard gravel we have at the Cape.

He had just heard of his admission to Trinity as a result of passing his examination.

Meanwhile there had been exciting times at the Cape. At the beginning of June Elizabeth wrote:

We are very glad that Mr. Sprigg's Administration has come to an end, and that Papa has joined the New Ministry. He has looked wonderfully brighter and more like his old self since. The going into town is so much better for him than being at home so much; he led a kind of hermit's life and rarely saw anyone out of his family except now and again, when some political friend looked him up.

JCM in Retirement (1878-1881)

In the first week of September Percy was staying with Sir Donald and Lady Currie where he found a large party.

Percy stays with Curries in 1881 - a few mths after arrived in UK

Garth, Aberfeldy, September 6th [to Frank]. I went on the moors on Saturday and Monday. I got two brace of grouse and three of splendid large hares. Today I have been on the moors again and got three brace of grouse. It is very good fun and very good exercise. Garth is a very nice place. The house is splendidly furnished. To get here you go on about four and a half miles from Aberfeldy up the Tay. Loch Tay is about two miles off. The scenery is beautiful. The moors here are very good; only the birds are now wild, and you cannot use a dog much, but must walk and stalk the grouse, as they get up a long way off if they see you. The Miss Curries remain just the same. I think one of them is engaged to a gentleman in the Royal Engineers.

Percy revisits very house when he was
born 20 yrs earlier - Miss Glass
(step daughter of Charles Dominic
Molteno)

After leaving Garth he stayed the night with the Misses Glass at Newton near Perth. 'They are queer looking old ladies', he wrote, 'but very kind and clever. I saw Mr. Charles Dominic Moltano's grave there.' Thence he made his way to Edinburgh, crossing the Firth of Forth by steamboat.

All the houses in Edinburgh are very high, and built of stone. The position of the Castle on a sort of Acropolis is very fine. Some buildings in Corinthian style add to its claim to be called the modern Athens. On the whole I was very much pleased with my native town.

He left Edinburgh by night and travelled via Carlisle, Derby, Gloucester and Bristol to Stowey Manor near Bridgwater to stay with his friends the Greenwells. From there he wrote on September 27th to Frank:

They have a large old-fashioned house. This is a very pretty part of the country, about six miles from the Bristol Channel. Behind are the Quantock Hills. Coleridge lived here in Stowey, and at the same time Wordsworth lived at Allfoxden, three miles away. I went to see it yesterday; it is an extremely pretty place on the side of a hill with a view of the sea. . . . Term begins about the 11th of October. I shall have had a jolly holiday.

Unfortunately the letters in which Percy described his first impressions of Cambridge in the October term, 1881, have disappeared. All we know is that he found quarters in Jesus Lane, that he took to the river and speedily became a zealous oarsman; that he set to work, and got through his Little Go and embarked on the Mathematical Tripos, along with a brilliant young mathematician, W. F. Sheppard, who became one of his most intimate friends and gained the glorious and coveted distinction of being Senior Wrangler.

Sheppard seems to have given himself up almost entirely to mathematics. He and Percy both joined the classes of Dr. Routh, the celebrated coach. But Percy, though he worked hard at all branches of mathematics, including, as may be seen from his notes, a course on Optics and Astronomical Instruments, was neither a hermit nor a bookworm. He joined the Magpie and Stump, the College Debating Society, and took a lively interest in the debates of the Cambridge Union, where Austen Chamberlain was then leader of the Radical Party. He enjoyed rowing, and after a couple of years was promoted to the second Trinity boat.

To Frank he wrote on February 12th, 1882:

I have been rowing in our fifth boat the last three days and hope to keep my place in it. The Lent races are on March 15th, and Freshers' Eights on March 5th. They say the bumping races are very exciting. The boats start in a long line, each two lengths behind the other; and then they must bump the boat in front to get above it. Our fifth boat is what is called the sandwich boat, and has to row in both, wherefore its name.

2 am

Percy rows at Cambridge

Percy's friend at Cambridge

Percy Debater

TL

I.A.P.
31.3.39

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3018w

There are three divisions on the river. Our first boat is second in the first division; our second boat is somewhere in the first division and our third is the sandwich boat between the first and second divisions. Our fourth boat is about middle of the second division.

The first and second divisions race in May, the second and third in Lent, i.e. March. The Varsity boat is changed a good deal but still is a good boat and likely to do well.

Percy's early lesson in Racial Liberalism

A dark man, almost black, was elected Vice-President of the Union yesterday. It would rather startle some Cape people to see a nigger Vice-President of the Cambridge Union.

How strong were his sporting instincts is clear from his correspondence. In May, 1882, he was rowing in the 1st Trinity fourth boat: 'We are preparing for the May races. We now dine at 2 o'clock, and those who are boating have a second dinner at 8.15.' In those days beer and beefsteak was part of the equipment of an oarsman. Indeed, J. A. Froude once told me that in his Oxford days two or three heavy dinners of this kind were the main preparation for a boat race.

Charlie visits at Cambridge May 1882

On May 24th he wrote exultingly of the unexpected arrival of his brother Charlie, who would be just in the nick of time to see the races and enjoy the gaieties of May Week. Boating, he added, is taking up a lot of time now. 'We have breakfasts and two Halls as well, and are training very strictly.' But, alas, 'our boat is spoilt by the frequent changes'. How they fared is not recorded, but at the end of May he was jubilant about cricket:

We have just thrashed the invincible Australians by six wickets. This is the first reverse they have met with. When they were over before, Cambridge was the first to thrash them. It speaks well for our team, as Oxford were beaten badly by them.

Early in July he was back again for the Long Vacation, and wrote to Frank:

I shall have to buck into the work now for two months. Henley Royal Regatta races come on tomorrow. Trinity is trying for three events. You noticed the cricket no doubt. We beat Oxford by seven wickets. We have also beaten the strong M.C.C. club.

One of his friends at Trinity, Dr. George Bidder, wrote to me from his home, Cavendish Corner, Cambridge, on December 22nd, 1937:

Percy Moltano was a year senior to me at Cambridge. I liked him very much. We did not know each other as well as if we had been of the same year, or from the same school, or working at the same subject; but we were friends.

I asked him to parties at my home, and he became quite a friend of my mother's — she had a very fine intellect, and was one of the most whole-hearted Liberals that I have ever known. Already as an undergraduate Moltano had an open and a truly Liberal mind.

Percy a Liberal

I think I became acquainted with him first at the 'Magpie and Stump', the Trinity Debating Society.

To be a liberal at Cambridge was to be a small minority!

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When I first went there, he was one of the prominent members; and my impression is that he had his turn as President. He was a very earnest Liberal at a time when among the undergraduates Conservatives outnumbered the Liberals by about ten to one. That I remember was an estimate I made with L. J. Fisk, who afterwards became an Archdeacon.

Percy's Molteno was a serious, thoughtful man, very high principled, and always desirous of finding out what was the just view. He was very gentle and quiet, not at all a chatterer; but when a subject interested him, he would forget himself entirely in discussing it, and talked well. At the 'Magpie and Stump' according to my recollections he was not a very good speaker. There was good stuff in what he said; but his delivery, if my memory be correct, was hesitating and shy.

Character

ism

He was at that time a very handsome young man with thick black hair and black eyebrows. He was a good oar. Whether he got into our first boat I cannot remember. His great friend was W. F. Sheppard, who was Senior Wrangler in the same year that Molteno was Senior Optime — a bitter disappointment.

He and Sheppard (who died in 1935 or 1936) once came to stay with me at Cambridge when there was a big vote on in the Senate. I also used to meet him on the Liberal Council. I found him then the same nice fellow whom I had known as an undergraduate and as friendly as ever. I should say that kindness and loyalty and love of truth were his salient characteristics.

Percy

Percy's friends at Cambridge

Among Percy's friends was Reginald St. John Parry, a scholar of the college who was elected a Fellow in 1881. Parry was popular with undergraduates as tutor, Dean and Vice-Master of Trinity. Parry's memoir of John Morley's friend, Henry Jackson, is a fine tribute to one whose fame as a scholar and a Liberal went far beyond the college precincts. Long afterwards, in November, 1933, Clement Jones gave his old tutor Parry a friendly message from Molteno. 'I wish', he wrote, 'you could have seen how glad he was to get it.'

Another of Percy's friends and contemporaries was Sir William Bragg, who, like Dr. Bidder, has won the highest distinction in science. It was inevitable that Percy, having chosen the Mathematical Tripos, should find himself mainly in the society of the Baconians who have given such celebrity to the University of Cambridge. The present Master of Trinity, Sir J. J. Thompson, was Percy's academic senior by five years; for he came up in October, 1876, and was able to boast in his *Recollections and Reflections* (1936): 'I have "kept" every term since then.' The passage which follows is applicable to Percy's case:

At that time it was not possible to take the Little Go before the end of the first Term, and Greek was compulsory. . . . Besides attending lectures on Greek I also, like the great majority of those aspiring to obtain a good place in the Mathematical Tripos, 'coached' with Routh, the most famous of mathematical teachers. Routh's teaching was not in the least like what is ordinarily understood by 'coaching'. It was in reality a series of exceedingly clear and admirably arranged lectures, given to an audience larger than that attending the lectures of many of the mathematical Professors or College Lecturers.

At first Thompson was a little disappointed with Routh's lectures, but he soon began to appreciate their merits. At that time the Mathematical Tripos included almost all branches of mathematics and all had to be covered by a wrangler in the course of three years and a term. To do so in so short a time required a well-thought timetable, and that Routh provided. He took his pupils in classes, told them the best text-book on each subject and what part to read, correcting mistakes and supplying omissions. His lectures were supplemented by manuscripts which he placed in a room next to his lecture-room at Peterhouse and open to all his pupils. He gave them a weekly problem paper, which had to be answered; and on the Monday morning following 'a complete solution of the paper in Routh's handwriting was placed in the pupils' room, together with a list of the marks each pupil had obtained'.

Routh's system certainly succeeded in the object for which it was designed, that of training men to take high places in the tripos; for in the thirty-three years from 1855 to 1888 in which it was in force, he had twenty-seven Senior Wranglers, and he taught twenty-four in twenty-four consecutive years. Results like these could not have been obtained unless he had been a born teacher, as he was, and had spent, as he said, time and labour in keeping his technique up to the mark.

Routh's habits were amazingly regular. 'Every fine afternoon he started at the same time for a walk along the Trumpington Road, went the same distance out, turned and came back.' There was the same precision and regularity in his lecture courses; but 'His manners were very simple and kindly, and his pupils were all very fond of him'. Percy always spoke with affection and admiration of his old coach Routh.

At that time keen politicians like Moltano frequented the Magpie and Stump and the Union debates, where Austen Chamberlain, 'Rudy' Lehmann, Harold Cox, Boyd-Carpenter and J. L. Maxse played leading parts.

A Trinity man, two years junior to Percy, wrote for private circulation some *Reminiscences of Cambridge Life*, modestly concealing his authorship under the initials O. C.

In his first term, October, 1883, he tells us that a motion of No Confidence in Mr. Gladstone's Government was moved by Herbert Vivian, then an ardent admirer of Lord Randolph Churchill. It was opposed by an ex-President called Blane. Among other speakers he mentions J. K. Stephen, the brilliant writer of light verse, Austen Chamberlain, and Moltano. It resulted, he said, in a triumph for the Liberals — the voting being: For the Motion, 149; Against, 160. In the three following weeks the debates were on Horse Racing, Church Disestablishment, and University Representation.

In the following year, in the Easter Term, at the time of the Pendjeh dispute with Russia, the Union Society was invited by Mr. Boyd-Carpenter, son of the Bishop of Ripon, to declare, in view of the gravity of affairs in Central Asia, that 'an immediate war is more advan-

Cambridge still v. old-fashioned when Perry
there - dominated by Tories etc

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tageous to the interests of the Empire than the inevitable struggle at a future period'. O. C. to his credit spoke against the motion, quoting Sydney Smith's: 'It may come sooner or later; then for God's sake let it be later.' When the calamity of war with Russia was averted Lord Randolph Churchill, we are told, greeted the tidings as 'terrible news'. Boyd-Carpenter only carried his motion by 72 to 53; but when O. C. moved at the Magpie and Stump in the following week that the proposed war would be 'unnecessary and unjust' he met with no support. Molteno, let us hope, was absent!

At Cambridge in the early 'eighties there still lingered some fine specimens of the old Toryism which had ruled academic life before the era of reform and enlightened toleration set in.

When Molteno lodged in Jesus Lane, Jesus was governed by Dr. Corrie, an old-world bachelor, who lived into the 'nineties and was succeeded by Henry Arthur Morgan as Master in 1885. Morgan, one of the wittiest and best raconteurs in the University, used to tell how, at a College meeting to consider the statute permitting tutors to retain their Fellowship after marriage, Corrie said he much hoped that none of his Fellows would take advantage of the new statute. As at that time quite half the Fellows present were engaged, the remark was received in silence. For a long time the Master was uncertain whether he disliked Radicals or Ritualists most, but towards the end of his life he decided in favour of the Radicals. When a deputation of undergraduates asked permission to place some silver candlesticks on the altar in the College Chapel Corrie is reported to have said: 'My young friends, Sin and the Devil have put this foolish idea into your innocent young hearts.'

Cambridge
at the
time

I recall these stories of contemporary Cambridge as side-lights on a time when the University had almost, but not quite, emerged from the Dark Ages. It was a period of transition in politics, theology, manners, and customs. The arrival of Nonconformists had been followed by the arrival of women. Religious intolerance was breaking down; Darwinism, Rationalism, and the new sciences were impressing themselves rapidly on academic thought.

Thompson, the Master of Trinity, belonged in many ways to the old school. He had great ability and a caustic wit quite as effective as that of his younger contemporary Jowett, the celebrated Master of Balliol. One of the best Thompson stories is associated with Seeley, whose popular lectures on the Expansion of England Percy used to attend. Seeley had succeeded Kingsley as Professor of Modern History, much to the delight of budding Imperialists, who were conscious that Kingsley was more of a novelist than a historian, and worshipped Seeley as a great and original political thinker. At Seeley's inaugural lecture Thompson sat in the front row. As he came out, he was accosted by a young Fellow of Trinity who made sure that his enthusiasm would for once be shared by the Head of his College. 'What did you think of it, Master?' he asked. Then came the

crushing answer: 'I little thought we should live to regret poor Kingsley.'

A few extracts from Percy's correspondence with his father and his brother Frank may now be added.

1882 Dutch allowed in G
Parliament
X
JL
1st div

Trinity College, April 19th, 1882. I am glad to hear that the present Ministry [at the Cape] are safe this session, and that the state of Basutoland is much more satisfactory. I am curious to see what part Vincent and Hoffmeyr will take. I see Dutch has been allowed in Parliament.

There was a scholarship examination about this time at Trinity. Percy went in for it. 'I got nothing,' he wrote to his father; but he expected nothing; for the competition was very keen and the papers very stiff:

I hope to have a better chance next year. The May Term has begun now, our men having come up yesterday. Mr. Routh however began (coaching) last Monday, so that I have been at work a week already. . . . I have received the *Volksblad* with the article on Dutch in Parliament, which I read with interest. I see the importance of knowing Dutch, and shall commence to learn as soon as possible. I think a very good plan would be to spend one or two vacations in Holland.

Percy notes that Dutch
J
Currie B
or his father

At the beginning of May Percy went up to town to eat his three dinners at the Inner Temple for the Term; as he had arranged to read for the Bar after taking his Tripos. On May 9th he wrote to his father about this, and added:

Percy studies to

(M) I went with the Curries to an At Home at Lady Brassey's — the people who made the voyage in the *Sunbeam*. I saw Sir Charles C. Dilke, Admiral Commerell, and Dr. Siemens, the Electric man, there. The assassination of Lord F. Cavendish and Mr. Burke [in Phoenix Park] has created great consternation.

Curries act to extent as for Percy

On Monday Sir Bartle Frere called on me and enquired after you and all at home, and wished me to remember him to you. He asked me to come out to Wimbledon and see Lady Frere.

I am rowing again this Term; it agrees with me very well; it is splendid exercise.

May 14th, 1882. You must have been very much shocked to hear of the Dublin murders. As yet they seem to have no clue. Lord Frederick was at Trinity College, as was also his successor Sir George Trevelyan. It may interest you to know that the Marquis of Hartington, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre were also at Trinity, and that Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Leonard Courtney were at Cambridge. Dilke was senior Legalist in his year and Courtney second Wrangler. Trevelyan was, I think, second Classic. M. Waddington, the late French Minister, was also a Trinity man.

I read Mr. Merriman's speech on the Basutoland question, and thought it very good.

In the middle of June, 1882, Percy and Charlie dined with Sir Donald Currie and went with him to a dance given by the First Lord of the Admiralty, where they met Sir Henry Barkly and other Cape people. They

(R)

(X) Maybe Percy Dutch

Percy
loved
travel

- 1802 - Percy & Charles travel in Europe together

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then left for a short tour on the continent by Dover and Calais to Paris. Percy shared his father's love of travel and his father encouraged it as one of the best kinds of education. From Paris Percy wrote on June 20th to Sir John Moltano:

1802

TL

I am very much struck with the appearance of Paris. The wide boulevards lined with young trees must be very different now from when you were there. The houses all along seem to have been built since 1871; they are of splendid white stone, look very massive, and are evidently built so as to be secure in troublous times. Great massive doors form the entrance to the street, and behind them is a sort of close, from which the doors of the houses proper lead. The lower windows are barred with iron. The public buildings are splendid. The Place de la Concorde is very fine. The part of the Tuilleries burnt in 1871 is still in ruins. The new Hôtel de Ville is said to be the finest public building in Europe; it is certainly magnificent, but is not yet completed. We went to Versailles today and also saw St. Cloud, which must have been in ruins when you saw it. The French understand laying out gardens.

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He was much pleased with Paris as a city, 'so very clean, the streets wide, the atmosphere clear, and trees wherever there is room for them'.

From Paris they went on to Brussels. The new Palais de Justice, 'a magnificent building', was nearing completion. It was to cost two millions, and Percy wondered how so small a country could afford so large a sum. They saw Waterloo, spent a day at Antwerp, and then travelled by Louvain through very pretty country to Aix-la-Chapelle, 'an interesting old place with a Cathedral dating from Charlemagne's time'. At Cologne, their next stopping-place, the cathedral 'dwarfs everything else — its towers, 510 feet high, stand out so splendidly'. They also admired the fine iron bridge over the Rhine — 460 yards long. After Cologne came Cleves, the home, as Percy noticed, of Henry VIII's fourth wife, and a very pretty town. 'From the hill above it we got a splendid view of the distant Rhine.' Near Cleves the train was carried bodily over the river in a huge punt. 'The current was pretty strong. The Rhine there is a real river, not a tidal stream like the Thames.' Thence they passed through a barren-looking country to Utrecht, 'a regular Dutch town with canals in the streets and gabled houses'. The language was so much like Cape Dutch that the two brothers had no difficulty in making themselves understood. In Amsterdam they were much interested. He noted that 'as the water is higher than the land, all the foundations of the houses, must first be made secure by driving down piles about fifty feet deep'.

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Trinity College, July 5th, 1832. I arrived here today, having left Rotterdam on Monday evening; it was important to be here during July and August. I got a third class in the College exam. I find it is not so bad as I thought; there are only six men above me, and they are either scholars or sizars of the College.

Trinity, July 9th. How fast the time passes! Why

is drawing a distinction between
Netherlands - & Cape Dutch / Afrikaans

half the year is gone and I have hardly got accustomed to putting 1882 to my letters. At Henley our boats have been doing very badly; in fact Cambridge only won one event. It looks bad for our chance against Oxford next year. This year it was some set-off winning the sports and the cricket. As there is no rowing now, I should like some riding; but it is too expensive — about ten shillings an afternoon.

He had just heard of the bombardment of Alexandria, which caused John Bright's resignation from the Gladstone Government. Percy thought it a great pity that the bombardment had been found necessary.

We seem to be on the verge of sending an expedition to Egypt. Everything is in readiness. There are continual rumours that the passage of ships through the Suez Canal has been stopped. If so, they would have to go to India via the Cape. Already the Orient Line are sending all their steamers that way.

At this date, July 16th, he informed his father that the expense of his Continental trip had been sixteen pounds, including everything, which made it nearly a pound a day.

Trinity, July 23rd. I have been up here nearly a year now. By this time next year I hope to be at home, unless Papa comes over before then. I am pretty hard at work now; we have just begun Rigid Dynamics, the worst subject in the tripos. I am bad at doing problems, never having had any experience to speak of at the Cape.

We seem fairly in for a war in Egypt.

Trinity, August 23rd [to his father, who had just been knighted after retiring from the Cape Ministry]. I am writing to congratulate you on the receipt of the distinction of K.C.M.G., the announcement of which appeared in the papers of last Saturday. I did not see it until one of my College friends congratulated me upon it. It must be highly satisfactory to you that the British Public and Government so strongly disapprove of the policy of Sir Bartle Frere, which you have always condemned.

He had been working hard during the Long Vacation with his coach, Routh. He got up about seven; went to Chapel twice a week at seven-thirty; breakfasted at eight; worked from nine till one or two o'clock; then lunch; then read the newspapers; then played tennis till about six; then another hour's work and dinner in Hall at seven-fifteen; then work from eight or eight-thirty to ten-thirty. No one could say that Percy was a slacker. When the Long Vacation ended he went off on August 29th with a friend, Walter Syfret, to Switzerland, leaving for Harwich and Rotterdam on August 29th.

They stopped the night at Cologne and went down the Rhine by steamboat. After Bonn he noted the vine-clad hills, and the ruined castles perched high above the river, which in some cases were being obliterated by immense modern hotels. At Bingen they caught the train for Strasbourg. It was market day, and the peasants were bringing their produce of fine vegetables and fruit to market in curious narrow one-horsed wagons. Percy

Aug 1882
JCM made
KCMG

Percy used to
work hard / by
early

liked the red sandstone of the cathedral and the spiral work of the tower. There were many German soldiers about the town. At Basle the Rhine was 'splendid'. It ran so swiftly and was so clean and blue. At Lucerne they caught their first glimpse of the snow-clad Alps. Next day Percy walked up the Rigi, and had a magnificent view of all the peaks. 'They reminded me very much of the Wellington Mountains on a clear evening.' He was much interested in the St. Gothard railway. After telling how it skirted the lake by tunnels and galleries for seven miles to Fluelen he went on:

It then begins to ascend near the road all up the Pass. In order to gain height they have resorted to spiral tunnels which go in at a low level and run round like a staircase. I am told there are 33 of these before the great tunnel. When I saw the various entrances, first low and then high, I thought they were different lines, but find the above is the explanation. There are also a set of splendid viaducts all up the Pass.

They got out at Austeg to walk, and spent the night at Andermatt, whence they visited the Furka and Rhone glacier, 'a most extraordinary sight'. It was the first he had seen near, besides being one of the largest and the source of the Rhone. 'The "neck" of the Furka', he noted, 'divides the watersheds of the Rhine and the Rhone.'

From Andermatt, where they met Cromwell Varley, the engineer of the Atlantic cables, they descended through the St. Gothard tunnel and the valley of the Ticino to Locarno. As they descended the vegetation became very rich and the vine was seen on all sides. From Locarno they found their way by diligence and steamer to Lugano and Como and thence to Milan, the home of his ancestors. The city, the cathedral and the churches delighted him. After Milan they spent a night at Verona, 'a strong fortress and well garrisoned, being near the frontier', but the Roman amphitheatre was the chief attraction. At Vicenza he admired the work of Palladio, that 'great architect'.

'At Padua we arrived about dusk and remained for the night, and then came on to Venice, where we have been busily sightseeing for the last two days.'

His descriptions of the Doge's Palace and St. Mark's and the Bridge of Sighs, with its once-formidable dungeons, need not detain us. He grieved over the fine palaces on the Grand Canal, 'no longer inhabited by a powerful and wealthy nobility', which seemed to be crumbling away. Small steamboats on the Canal were cutting into the profits of the gondoliers, who had all struck the year before, but in vain, against the march of mechanical civilization.

While they were at Venice floods cut off railway communication with the mainland; so Percy and his friend took a small ship for Ancona. The sea was rough and Percy suffered severely. However, he recovered in time to admire the grand cathedral of Florence, with its rich variegated marble. He was delighted, too, with the picture galleries, the town hall, the palaces and the churches. His letters show that he already knew a good

1882 - R
Percy visits
Italy for
1st time

deal about architecture and architects. The stone of the palaces was in a 'wonderful state of preservation. In England buildings of their age would be crumbling away'. He saw the Queen of Italy at the Pitti Gallery. The King had gone to the scene of the disastrous floods. From Florence they returned by the Mont Cenis, Paris and Dieppe. The trip, he told his father, cost him altogether about £33 which 'I think you will not consider expensive'.

After landing he spent a pleasant week at Garth with Sir Donald Currie (then a Liberal) who was preparing to address his constituents. On October 11th he was back at Trinity College, well pleased with his holidays. He had intended to spend the Christmas Vacation in Holland to learn Dutch in preparation for the Cape Bar; but came to the conclusion that it was hardly worth while as the time was too short.

Percy with Currie's again
TL

TL
1882 You will be interested [he wrote to his father on December 3rd] to hear that I find your family name mentioned in a heraldic dictionary of the noble families of Italy as being an ancient and noble family of Milan. Your coat of arms contains the characteristic features of the Milanese coats of arms. I shall enquire into the matter further.

Molteno family in Italy / Coat of Arms
Currie are basic fam

At the beginning of the New Year, 1883, Percy was invited to take part in the launch of the Hawarden Castle, a fine new boat which Sir Donald Currie had built for the Castle Line at the Fairfield Yard. The christening ceremony was performed by Mrs. Gladstone in default of her husband, the Premier, who was unwell. Percy stayed at the George Hotel, Glasgow, and wrote thence to his father on January 12th:

TL

I have been here for a day or two for the launch of the Hawarden Castle. It was a very fine sight to see her slide off and tear up the anchors buried in the ground to prevent her running too far. After the launch there was a luncheon, at which I had to answer, in conjunction with Mr. Pearse, to the toast 'Prosperity to South Africa'. I did not like it, but could not well get out of it. The building yard was most interesting. There were ships in all stages. One of the Orient Line is being built there. The yards and engine houses are most extensive. They lose no time. As soon as she was launched, she was seized by two tugs and put in the dock to receive her engines; and they began working again as soon as she was in position. Mr. Herbert Gladstone came up and spoke to me after the luncheon; he said he remembered meeting you at Government House when he was at the Cape.

1883
Percy speaks in public for 1st time

Percy seems to have acquitted himself well. According to the Scotsman he pointed out as a representative of colonial interests that the development of good and speedy communications between Great Britain and her Colonies had more than a commercial value.

Percy accepted British Empire, but...

It enables those who have cast their fortunes in new lands, however distant, to realize that they are still a part of the same great Empire. Thus commerce and shipping services foster community of interest and feeling in a way far more effectual and permanent.

than the political devices which find favour with the visionaries of Imperialism.

Castle Line
 Sir Donald Currie, in an interesting speech, mentioned that since the establishment of the regular mail line between Britain and the Cape the external trade of Cape Colony had more than doubled and the colonial revenue had nearly quadrupled. In 1870 the vessels of the Castle Line ranged from 1,400 to 1,700 tons. They were now mostly over 3,000 tons, and the tonnage of the two lines — Union and Castle — which Sir Donald Currie controlled had risen since 1870 from 14,000 to 100,000 tons. The Hawarden Castle and her sister ship the Norham Castle, though smaller than some of the Atlantic liners, were over 4,000 tons and were considered very large ships at that time. In elegance and finish and completeness of fittings as a passenger ship, wrote the *Scotsman*,

the *Hawarden Castle* is probably not surpassed by any steamer yet launched on the Clyde; and she has been built so strongly and with so many ingenious contrivances against the perils of the sea, that it would be difficult even for an experienced voyager to suggest a danger against which special provision has not been made.

The principle of construction in watertight compartments, a most valuable innovation, had been adopted.

his mily
 Before returning to Cambridge Percy wrote to Frank a few words of remorse: 'I had hoped to have worked in the Vac., but as usual have done nothing.' Soon after returning to Trinity he sent his father an account of his expenditure during 1882. The total was £379, the largest item £203 being for college and cooks' bills and coaching. Private coaching with Routh cost him £37, and the expense of furnishing his rooms £36. He had not observed Mark Pattison's maxim that everyone should spend ten per cent. of his income on books. His bill for books, paper and postage only came to £6. He spent £2 on dancing and singing lessons and £8 on keeping his Terms at the Temple. The Cambridge Term ended in the middle of March. During the Easter Vacation he had a pleasant stay in Oxford and ate his three dinners at the Temple. On April 13th he wrote to his father from Trinity:

Co. Th. to keep a child at Cambridge
 Last Friday I went to the Transvaal debate. Sir Donald Currie had got me a seat in the Speaker's special gallery, which is the best place in the House. The debate had been adjourned. Mr. Chamberlain spoke for the Government. Mr. Goschen made, I think, the best speech. I had a very good view of the House and saw most of the Ministers. Mr. Gladstone was there all through the debate. He does not look his age, but might be taken for 60. From what Mr. Chamberlain said the Government do not intend interfering very actively.

TR
 On April 29th Percy mentioned Gladstone's 'very fine speech' on the Affirmation Bill, which had been introduced to remove the difficulty caused by Bradlaugh's refusal to take the oath. There was then a severe commercial depression at the Cape, and the Union Company

1883-
Severe Depression at Cape → Financial Difficulties for Sir JCM

had been forced to pass its dividend; but thanks to good rains and a rise in the price of diamonds Percy, who had arranged to spend summer at the Cape, hoped to find trade reviving. 'I am rowing as usual,' he added, 'and am now in our second boat.' After the races and a college examination at the beginning of June he started for home and remained at the Cape until towards the end of December. He had far better have stayed in England; for he lost the Long Vacation, and they had a strong headwind and rough seas on the return voyage. His digestion was upset, and he was unwell for most of the critical period between October, 1883, and June, 1884, when he sat for the Mathematical Tripos. His sisters Betty and Caroline were with him on the return voyage in the *Hawarden Castle* and they were all very much pleased with the ship. After returning to College he wrote to his father on October 17th: 'I am in the regular groove of work again; it is now less than eight months to the examination for my degree.'

(TD)
 1883 (End
 2nd W) Percy
 Family at C

Percy M- 18
 Betty & Carl
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 back to Engla
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He expressed sympathy for 'poor Cetewayo' who 'does not seem to get much sympathy here'. The chief event of the week was the arrival of Prince Albert Victor as a Trinity freshman: 'The Prince of Wales and Prince Leopold brought him up to Cambridge. I had a good view of the Prince of Wales. The young Prince dines in Hall and attends Chapel, so that we see him frequently.' On October 23rd they had a debate at the Cambridge Union on the 'caucus system', which Chamberlain had created in order to democratize the Liberal Party. It was condemned by the Cambridge undergraduates; but it was blessed by Gladstone, and when the Home Rule split came he carried the National Liberal Federation against Chamberlain and his dissentient Liberals who, however, kept their hold on Birmingham.

Trinity College, November 11th, 1883 [to his father].
 You will be interested to hear that Mr. Ruskin agrees with you about early rising. The hours he recommends are: to go to bed at 9.30 and to get up at 4.30. I am sure I cannot do with less than eight hours. I only wish I could. I find I need more sleep when I am doing headwork than in Vacations.

Percy needs
 8 Hours

Mr. Fawcett, the Postmaster General, is lecturing on political economy here. He says the Colonies should be careful how they sell their land. They should retain a certain portion of the rent for taxation purposes, and this would eventually do away with other taxation.

Was Fawcett a disciple of Henry George, or Henry George of Fawcett?

Trinity, November 25th, 1883. Dining at the Temple I met an Oxford student and he offered me a ticket for one of Mr. Ruskin's lectures, which I accepted, as it is very difficult to get them. I went over to Oxford on Wednesday for the lecture. The journey is rather tedious, being cross-country. It takes about 3½ hours. It was most interesting to see and hear Mr. Ruskin, as I have read his book (*Modern Painters*) with the greatest interest and benefit. He is 64 years old; his beard is

Percy's early 1
 2nd W (but
 a collector
 1883)

Sept

(TD)

Very aware of Ruskin & Morris

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not very grey and his hair hardly so. His eyes are set far back, and his voice is weak.

I have been watching the state of politics at the Cape. The Bond, apparently, will not have it all its own way.

Trinity, December 5th, 1883. There is a great stir here just now about the better housing of the poor in London. Their conditions always seem to me very dreadful, a great blot and disgrace to our boasted civilization. Mr. Morris, a painter and house-decorator on a very large scale, and also a poet, gave a lecture here to a crowded audience. It was called, 'Art under Plutocracy'. I will send you a copy if I can get one. He finally declared himself 'a socialist', at which there was a great uproar. He called himself a 'reconstructive socialist'. He embodied Mr. Ruskin's views to a great extent in so far as he found fault with the present state of things; but unfortunately he did not tell us his plan for reforming them.

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(Caroline
and some
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No one can complain to-day that 'reconstructive socialists' suffer from lack of Plans!

'We have had most extraordinary sunsets,' Percy went on, 'a wonderful glow after the sun disappears. It is said to be due to the fine pumice stone shot into the air by the Java eruption.'

'We have had most extraordinary sunsets,' Percy went on, 'a wonderful glow after the sun disappears. It is said to be due to the fine pumice stone shot into the air by the Java eruption.'

The term ended on December 19th, 1883, and Percy spent the three weeks' vacation in London with his sisters, Betty and Caroline. Before leaving College he wrote to his father:

TL

Percy's
early
Racial
Liberalism

A war between China and Tonquin seems imminent. The more one looks into the relations of the European nations to those in the East, the more one finds the Might versus Right system prevailing. In Egypt they seem to have made a very great mess of the Sudan affair, and the question seems to perplex the Government here a good deal. Whatever is done, the natives are sure to get the worst of it — either being impressed to fight, or else forced to pay for our costly armaments.

From Eastbourne, January 9th, 1884, he wrote:

I have not recovered from the effects of the last voyage, when my digestion got out of order; so I am trying the effect of sea breezes and plenty of fresh air. Eastbourne is between Hastings and Brighton and has lately become a favourite place. There is no shipping, as the water is very shallow; and one does not see any ships close in, as there are sunken rocks some miles off which the ships avoid by keeping outside them. The Downs are very near behind the town and very good for walking or riding. To the west the coast is chiefly cliffs, of between four and 500 feet high. Beachy Head is about two miles to the west; it is 575 feet high. You remember the light, I have no doubt. I have had one or two rides and have enjoyed them very much. Yesterday I rode over to Pevensey to see the ruins of the castle, which date back to the Roman occupation.

Most of the land belongs to the Duke of Devonshire, and it is a splendid thing for him that Eastbourne has become so popular. He does not sell his land but lets it on long building leases. This has a very bad effect on the houses, which are built to be as flimsy and yet

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Came was
long before

as showy as possible. All the wood is unseasoned, and the bricks shockingly bad. Such houses very soon cost no end in repairs, which the landlord always takes care to stipulate must be done at the tenants' expense. This the tenant is ready to undertake, seeing that the house is *new*. The Duke is very liberal. He has spent, they say, hundreds of thousands on improvements, sea walls, drainage, parades, etc. He has connections living here. One has started as a tea merchant. The Duke is a very able man; he was Senior Wrangler at Cambridge and is now our Chancellor. It is not often a hereditary nobleman takes such a place, though we have another instance in Lord Raleigh, also at Cambridge, who is distinguished in science. The Duke's son, the Marquis of Hartington, is also, of course, an able man.

Raleigh

The peaceful state of Europe has at last allowed statesmen and the public to look the grave question of the Housing of the Poor in the face. I don't know whether you have noticed any account of the state of things in the recent papers. The horrid hovels are found to be a very paying investment for speculators.

Percy's interest in Social U

In addition to these varied interests, which show how rapidly Percy's mind had been developing a practical and intelligent interest in social welfare, he was watching very closely the Cape elections. His father had retired, and Percy was sorry that his brother Charlie was not 'ready to step forward and carry on the tradition of your name in the House'. He was now (January 9th, 1884) about to return to Cambridge with 'a steady spell of work before me, as the examination comes on in June'.

Percy's illness before taking

Everyone who has tried to take a high place in an Honours examination at any University by dint of hard work will sympathize with the industrious undergraduate who comes to grief at the end, not from lack of ability or diligence, but as a result of illness. A good many potential Firsts and Wranglers have had to be content with an 'Aegrotat'. Percy had wretched luck. Before he had got over his indigestion he was struck down with a bad attack of measles, and was so far from having recovered that he had to answer the papers in a separate room, invigilated over by some courageous person who was, or deemed himself to be, immune from infection. In the circumstances it is not surprising that Percy missed being a Wrangler; that he should have been Senior Op is very much to his credit. The disappointment (which he never mentioned to me or even to his brother, Admiral Moltano, must have been the more severe since Sheppard, the friend with whom he worked, was Senior Wrangler. But he was never in the habit of crying over spilt milk; and he gained far more from the variety of his interests at the University and (what a mere coach might have regretted) a dispersion of energies in politics, travel, botany, or mechanics, than he would have done by a strict pursuit of the higher mathematics.

12 June 1884

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His wife

When his health improved other anxieties cropped up. For some time the prosperity of Sir John Moltano's affairs had been declining. Owing to the commercial depression and also to mismanagement, the Beaufort

JCM's financial difficulties

V. few JCM letters survive

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~~estates were yielding less income~~, and Sir John Molteno was finding it difficult to provide as generously as he had wished to do for the education and training of his large family. When Percy became fully alive to the situation, he wrote home and received thereupon one of the few letters of his father which have been preserved:

JCM spends
time at Kalk
Bay

Kalk Bay, November 25th, 1884.

JCM
STM
GT

My dear Percy,

By last mail I had the pleasure of receiving your letter, dated 29th ultimo. You did not in any way allude to your health, as to the state of which I cannot say all my anxiety has entirely passed away. I infer however, in the absence of your stating anything to the contrary, that it continues to improve.

I have carefully considered all you say with regard to your future plans, to which I see no reason to take any exception whatever, sure as I am that you will carefully consider and deliberate over all your plans before acting.

One thing however I may say with regard to your remarks on the score of economy, etc. While I fully appreciate all you say, and am glad to see that the necessity for economy is brought to bear upon everything you have to do, still I do not wish you to infer that I consider things have come to such a point that it is at all necessary (to use a homely phrase) 'to spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar', either in your own or Vic's case.

and
Jeffare

He was planning a visit to England with Lady Molteno and her children. As to Claremont he

thought of leaving the house unoccupied, having now a thoroughly competent and satisfactory gardener, fully equal to looking after everything and keeping things in order during my absence, our idea still being to leave the Cape about March or April. We shall remain at Kalk Bay until we leave.

just
Thjos

Charlie will no doubt have written you and attended to financial affairs. I have myself been rather poorly this last week or ten days — nothing however of much consequence . . . Wishing you a happy Christmas, and with love from us all, hoping we may have the pleasure of meeting ere many months pass,

Believe me,

Your affectionate father,

J. C. M.

PS. I have omitted to notice what you say of Mr. Fawcett's lecture, and the favourable view he took of England's prospects, in which I wish I could share. Poor man — before your letter reached me the telegram had already informed us of his sudden death — to us only another instance of how in the midst of life we are in death, and the necessity of being ready at a moment's notice.

interest X (?)

Having taken his degree at Cambridge, Percy began reading for his Law examinations and got through the first of them in December, 1885. At Christmas he was recuperating at St. Leonard's, and returned to London early in January. He took lodgings in Bernard Street, near the British Museum, after getting leave 'to read in its splendid reading room'. He missed Cambridge, but

Law
Degree

Percy
in
BM

meal

1884

was gradually getting accustomed to London, though at first he did not like it. 'I am taking a great interest', he wrote, 'in the Bechuanaland affair. It is sad to see such an unprincipled adventurer at the head of affairs at the Cape.' This was Sir Thomas Upington, who had ousted the Scanlen Ministry after the General Election and had formed another with the help of Gordon Sprigg and Jan Hofmeyr. Sir Donald Currie had left in his yacht for Egypt and the Cape, and Percy had seen nothing of him for a long time. He tried to discourage his father from coming to England until the March winds were over, but failed. Early in March Sir John and Lady Moltene with their children, had arrived, and Percy found a furnished house for them near Primrose Hill, where he joined them for a time. Sir John was subject to fits of fainting, but was reassured by the physicians whom he consulted. Percy and his father had many walks together, but after six months of work at the Law Percy felt that he needed a change. His father and stepmother went off to Wales, while he and his brother Victor took a holiday in Normandy, which they much enjoyed. From Les Andeleys on August 21st, 1885, he wrote to his sister Caroline:

We have no luggage but our knapsacks and have a very cheap return ticket from London to Havre. We have been going over some ground which you know, having just visited Rouen. The cathedral and churches pleased me very much. I was delighted with St. Ouen, with its splendid windows and glorious light, which give it a wonderfully aerial appearance. We had a most appreciative old verger who had seen York, Canterbury and Lincoln. He took us round the outside of the roof and in the triforium, so that we saw it very thoroughly. The stained glass windows in some of the smaller churches are beautiful. The town itself is interesting, with its narrow streets and timber houses. We got a splendid view of the whole as we approached it along the hills which border the banks of the Seine. Hitherto we have followed the river, and have seen a Roman amphitheatre, châteaux, pretty villages, beautiful old churches and lovely ruins of abbeys. We are at present in a delightful little town below the ancient castle of King John, built by Richard Cœur de Lion in 1190 — the Château Gaillard. It is situated just above the River Seine, the island and the old town on its banks are very picturesque. I very much wish I had a little skill with pen or pencil to take some permanent recollections of these lovely spots.

From Chartres on September 5th he wrote ecstasically: 'We are on a pilgrimage here. The cathedral is glorious, and its original old stained glass almost perfect.' They had been out in the open air all day long during their tour. Fruit, butter and cheese were plentiful 'so that we fare well and very cheaply'. His brother James was now at Trinity, and Percy had persuaded his father to make arrangements for Victor also to go to Cambridge to study medicine. Percy was delighted with Barkly's progress in the Navy, where he was sure he would never 'stagnate in idleness'. On October 24th Percy was reading in chambers with a barrister (Danckwerts), which

JCM SP only
 JCM + w
 arrive in
 1885
 JCM in -
 Fr.
 Victor &
 in France

James
 Th -
 Su
 SK
 +

Henry arrived a few weeks before father's death

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His law studies took nearly 2 years

TL

he found 'more interesting than reading Law by myself'. He changed his lodging to Kildare Terrace, Bayswater, where he shared his rooms with an old college friend. He went on working in chambers until the summer of 1886, studying both English and Dutch law, and in June, 1886, having passed his Bar examinations and become a Barrister-at-Law, he was ready to sail for the Cape and start practice at the Cape Bar, fully intending to spend the rest of his life in South Africa. Before sailing he went rather sadly to pay farewell to Cambridge, and wrote thence on the paper of the Union Society to his sister Caroline on June 9th, 1886:

x 1 yr = UK

fe glant

fairly

I am at Cambridge, bidding a long farewell to it and to friends here. I am enjoying my stay; the weather is quite perfect and everywhere is looking lovely. James and Vic are very well. I view my departure with very mixed feelings; for I feel leaving friends I have made here and being separated by an almost impassable gulf. I am afraid there will be no possibility of getting the same intellectual and cultivated society. On the other hand, hard work will make up for many things, and I shall be very glad to begin real life in the place where I am to spend it and to be among you all again. It is very difficult to realise that I am about to experience such a complete change of environment.

every holiday mid 1885

He was much disgusted with the Cape Administration. His father, before leaving, seemed much better and said he felt 'he might yet be of some service to his country'. So ends our chapter. The next will bring us to an event which altered the whole course of his life.

Henry ambivalent about leaving England & returning to Cape

Also at Cambridge

3 out of 4 senior brethren

studying in England / Cambridge (Henry had just left the latter)

Barkley in RN

X No - at Beaufort West | A.P. 2.5.30.

39373 Molteno 147

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136w

CHAPTER VIII

? chapter number

MOLTENO A PRACTISING BARRISTER

(1886-9)

Family

1886

X

SIR JOHN MOLTENO returned to the Cape in May, 1886, and Percy followed him in June to start practice at the Cape Bar. His brothers and sisters were scattered. Charlie was with his father at Claremont; Caroline was married to Dr. Murray, and Maria to Mr. Anderson. Betty had started as a schoolmistress at Port Elizabeth; James and Victor were studying at Cambridge; Wallace was learning to farm; Barkly was a midshipman in the Navy; and Frank, Percy's particular chum, was starting as a surveyor and learning Dutch. He found it rather difficult. 'Sometimes', he wrote, 'they have a good laugh at me. For instance, instead of calling someone a comforter I called her a grid-iron; the two words in Dutch sound somewhat alike.' His life as a surveyor and prospector in Namaqualand is described in a letter from Bitterfontein, May 16th, 1886, which Percy kept. It was a nice place for a camp, with a fresh water supply; but it was twenty miles from the post office, and it was difficult to get food. He had built an oven, but the bread which his 'boy' made was like lead.

JCM back to Cape shortly before his death

Percy back to Cape June 1886

? Too young; m

Frank - v. close

life aca survive

(I have this letter)

Shakespeare

We are still living [he wrote] on the flesh of the old cow they killed at Bitterfontein nine days ago. It is good exercise for one's teeth; it began to get green; so we put it in the sun to dry. Our only neighbours are the baboons in the mountains.

Occasionally farmers came to ask if they could use the Government ground for grazing after the rains. Frank had heard that there were plenty of wild ostriches not far away. 'But one is not allowed to shoot them. However, if I am tempted I may not be able to resist. They say the flesh is very good eating, and there are the feathers, too.' At the beginning of August Betty wrote home about her work at the Collegiate School, Port Elizabeth. She had gone there from Gra^{ve} Rein^{et} and was expecting her books by ox-wagon.

(TL) 1886

At the end of August Percy happened to be with his father at Claremont, when quite suddenly Sir John Molteno passed away. Percy described his father's death in a letter to Mrs. Bingle, who was living at Richmond in Surrey. It is dated:

JCM's Death

On the Western Circuit, Cape of Good Hope,
Oct. 5, 1886.

His last 3 m

I would have written before this; but I knew that Mrs. Blenkins was sending you the details of my father's death, and no doubt the others have written very fully, and therefore I will not write quite so fully as I would have done.

You heard no doubt how everyone considered my father looking so well on his return from England, and how pleased he was to be at home again. He was always fond of being out in the fresh air; and as the trees had all grown a good deal since his departure, he was taking a great interest in having them cut into shape and generally in getting the place into good

Quote this letter in full

order. This occupied the day in a way that suited him. In the evenings he had some of us always round him. He was very glad to see me when I arrived and to have me near him. He took the deepest interest in my debut at the Bar, and my success in winning my first case gave him the greatest satisfaction.

A cold had given him some trouble; but he had got over that, and we were looking forward to his still spending many happy years with us, as his trip to England seemed to have given him a complete recovery from those fainting fits. However, we did have some slight misgivings as to how he would stand our summer heat. On the morning of his death he was perfectly well, being engaged with Frank in dividing up some land in which he took a great interest. It was a sultry, oppressive day, very hot for that time of the year. He said to Mr. Jarvis, who was also with him, that he felt the heat a good deal. However, he came home and had something to drink, gave a few orders and then came in to dress for luncheon. While so doing he felt ill and asked for some soup. Lady Moltano gave him some, but he could not take it. He took a little brandy and water, and then became unconscious and remained so until he died.

It was about two o'clock when this occurred. Frank and I were in town, Betty at Port Elizabeth, Charlie at Beaufort, Maria at Caledon. I came home at five o'clock and thus heard for the first time that my father was ill. When I saw him he was lying on his side, as if he were asleep, breathing rather more heavily than in sleep. The doctors then seemed to think his case was very hopeless. His breathing became more difficult, then it became slower and ceased altogether, quite quietly, without a struggle or groan. This was about nine o'clock that same evening. When dead he looked perfectly calm, and as if he were sleeping. When laid out his features became more definite and precise, regaining that expression of power which they had lost to some extent in his declining years. Indeed he looked ten years younger again.

All who saw him then remarked with admiration upon his splendid head and forehead. He looked like the knights of old. We had telegraphed for Betty, and she arrived on the morning of the day on which he was buried, so that she saw him once more. Charlie and Maria had returned the day before.

I think this death was most merciful and best suited to his character. It was free alike from physical and mental pain. It would have been most trying to his active mind to have endured a long illness. To us it was very hard to have no last word with him. It is impossible to describe how much I feel the loss of such a father. A kinder, more loving, affectionate and considerate father never lived. His character was very noble. There was no meanness or sordidness in it. His motives and thoughts were always of the highest and best. I trust and hope we may be to some, if even small, extent worthy of him. It is a great consolation to me that I saw so much of him during the last two years, though this makes me feel his death all the more now. It has all been so sudden that it often seems like some horrid nightmare, and that I shall wake up and find him with us still. I think the last few months and

→ In England & SA (for last 3/4 mths)

him

Betty

Percy v. close to his father

Aug 1886

metz

to Henry

eyes

ye

or yet

days of his life were very happy. His mind seemed quite relieved from care. Having us all around him was a very great pleasure to him. It was very strange that the two or three days preceding his death he had spent in visiting places connected with his previous life, such as the Houses of Parliament, the house where my mother's father used to live and Kalk Bay.

As you will have seen by the papers we sent, great sorrow seems to have been felt here by the public at the news of his death.

End
Ours

I am at present on Circuit. It began on the 16th of September. I was glad to get the change of scene and air, as I was feeling rather pulled down by all that has happened. I am enjoying the travelling. There is not much work. I was crown prosecutor at one of the towns, and have defended one or two prisoners. The prospects of the Bar here are not very good; for it is much overcrowded, and business is very bad at present. I am very glad that Betty has her teaching work at Port Elizabeth to occupy her attention at this time.

Percy had di-
establishing hi
at the Bar

James and Victor will continue their studies at Cambridge.

Prince Albert, October 10th. Since writing the above I have heard from James and Barkly. I am so very glad Barkly was with you when he heard the news. James seems very much upset. His highly sensitive nature would make him feel it very much. He writes that he has returned to England. I hope he won't be by himself for the rest of the Vacation. I am leaving for Beaufort to-morrow and return to Cape Town towards the end of this month.

Must have
her brother
completed

James
Character

JCM's Estate

Sir John's affairs were in some disorder. His property, though valuable, was not easily realizable, and the income, when divided up among his large family, left little to the individual members.

Consequently he was glad to be back in the Temple, in Chambers with Dankwerts, where the experience 'would be useful, even if I were at any time to return to the Cape'.

Percy relocate
& practises
a lawyer

There are one or two letters written during his brief experience of the Cape Bar. One from Beaufort on March 23rd, 1887, tells of the fine air and lovely weather he had enjoyed at Victoria. There he met an old fellow who had known Sir John Moltano in very early days. He said

(Has spent
Cape - June
mid 1888)

he was a ruddy-cheeked young man, and he never thought he would care about politics or succeed in them. He had heard him make his maiden speech on the occasion of the Anti-Convict agitation in the market place of Beaufort, when he spoke with very considerable diffidence.

JCM? 1st pe
speech - st
his career

Percy had dined with the judge and was about to leave for Prince Albert, where 'the rest of the Bar will join us'. At that time the Cape Bar offered little business to a new arrival.

In 1888, after returning to London, he wrote to his sister Caroline: 'I could do nothing at the Cape at present. I was simply vegetating and waiting for work; and I see little prospect of a decent livelihood there for several years.'

Why Percy m
to London

L 2
C
2

Percy wants to marry Bessie Currie

39373 Moltano 150

Spring 1888
TL

Even if his profession had been lucrative, he had a good reason for returning to England. In the spring of 1888 he wrote from Claremont to Sir Donald and Lady Currie expressing his hope and wish that he might be engaged to their second daughter, Elizabeth, always known in the family as Bessie. If they consented, he did not wish the engagement to be publicly announced, but he would like with their permission to mention it to his sisters. Sir Donald replied, April 26th, 1888:

Lady Currie joins me in acknowledging the way in which you have acted, and have written, to her and to me.

It is natural that you should desire to say something to your sisters. At the same time anything they might allow to escape them would perhaps lead to unnecessary talk. You are free to speak to them if this is provided against, as it is only for their own special information that you mean, I suppose, to say anything. And this I take it will be to the effect that you told me your wishes and have also communicated them to Lady Currie; that nothing is definitely settled; that you intend to come to England to see what your course should be, and to tell us both definitely what you would like to have arranged or settled. This gives you both time to test your ideas and feelings. It will only be then, and not before, that any of us can be in the position to say matters are settled with any definite object and purpose.

You know what I mean, and I count on your common-sense. It is not to be known or dreamt of in the Colony what your wishes or hopes are until you reach England, and time has been given to settle on all sides what is to be done.

For my own part and for Lady Currie I desire to express the satisfaction we have that you are acting with such prudence and good feeling, and wishing you may be able to visit this country and in good health,

I remain,

Yours very truly,
Donald Currie.

Lady Currie added a charming note, fully endorsing her husband's letter and adding:

You may feel quite happy I think about it all, and you will know when you come that I have been trying to assist in Bessie's wishes, and I am sure all will be well. The time seems long, but in the midst of constant excitement here Bessie is quite cheerful, and we are looking forward to your coming as soon as you can.

Under the circumstances it is no marvel that soon after this exchange of letters Percy left rather hastily for England. On the voyage he found time to write to his grandfather Hercules Cross Jarvis, who replied in a fine clear hand which I have often had occasion to wish Percy could have imitated:

Claremont,
July 31, 1888.

It was very considerate and kind of you to think of me and to give an account of your voyage so far as you have proceeded . . . I must give you some little account of proceedings here since you left. The De

finally myself

you advised Tom or Bessie

to London there as 1888

2 yrs at 1888 to

official part of

red back

reason

Lady Currie at Cape Bar
He wanted to marry Bessie Currie

Sir Donald response (NOT saying No)

Lady Currie + ve

Beers disaster ¹ you would have seen in the papers. Very sad. A Commission has gone up to investigate. Of the Zulu War you will learn more in England than we know here, as very little leaks out.

The Railway Bill is not yet through . . . Hofmeyr has broken with Sprigg. There are now three distinct parties in the field — the Opposition, the Bond and the Ministry's. It is thought that the Ministry will succumb, and that Hofmeyr will take the reins of government. The Bond Party are already canvassing the country. There will be exciting times after the dissolution. You should be here to participate.

It is uncertain who will replace poor Sir John Brand. Several names have been mentioned but all fight shy. I should not be at all surprised if the Free State and the Transvaal were to amalgamate. You know that Kruger had already tried it on. There have been disturbances in Bechuanaland, and Shippat has gone up to investigate, and Mr. Newton has gone up to replace Shippat. The Transvaal have a hand in this.

Nothing encouraging in either Diamond or Gold shares. The market is stagnant. The Gett (?) is smashed up, and the shareholders will lose every penny they invested. There has been great roguery committed. The Directors have made themselves liable for £8,000. The Syndicate should be compelled to regorge, as not a speck of gold can be found on the property. Dr. Murray says he will lose £600. Mr. Anderson will also be a large loser. You know Aunts Annie, Emmie, Betty and Willie were shareholders. I fear other companies will fare the same way before long.

? dis | Emily lost a lot of money / how about the find

On his arrival Percy was only allowed a week with his fiancée in London, and had to remain there 'hard at work' until the dog days, when he was 'very glad' to get away to Garth. Thence he wrote in high spirits to Caroline Murray:

Garth, Aberfeldy,
Perthshire,
August 19th, 1888.

I arrived here last Wednesday and could not have had a more perfect day. It set off the lovely scenery to full advantage. Everything looked glorious, all the fresher for the plentiful rain of the preceding weeks. We are now engaged to each other; but it is all done quite quietly. Neither Sir D. nor Lady Currie care about any fuss in such matters. So the fact will be allowed to find its way about. We are very happy, and everything here is in harmony with our feelings.

Aug 1888 - Percy & Currie engaged

'Everything' included beautiful surroundings, pleasant society, a nice family party, and plenty of riding, driving, and shooting; to which Percy added: 'As my mind has now been made up on several matters there is nothing in the way of business to trouble me.'

Life at Garth by now not yet a

He was still at Garth on September 22nd. In reply to Caroline's forebodings of a long and perhaps permanent separation from the Cape he wrote:

I am very sorry to be cut off from the Cape, and especially without having said good-bye. But I shall not lose my interest in things there, and if I can succeed here I may eventually be able to be of more-service to

Percy's feelings re removal Cape

¹ A terrible fire which is described on a later page.

→ which he was - (pol' & econ)

Bessie did
NOT object
to moving
to De lape

it. Do not think that Bessie is unwilling to go to the Cape. She has left that decision entirely in my hands and is quite ready to go anywhere with me. Indeed she expected to go there before I came here. But what she would not like, or consent to, would have been my returning to the Cape without her.

He must have had some important talks with Sir Donald Currie about his prospects, for he went on:

Percy's
self-assessment
of his
character

I see a future before me which I can enter upon with great pleasure if only my health will be suited by it. For that conditions are now much more favourable than they have been for a long time past, and I think that if I am to do any hard work this climate will suit me much better than the Cape. I am glad to say I feel plenty of elasticity as to accommodating myself to new circumstances, and also to a considerable extent the power of not troubling about a thing when I once come to a decision on it. I have had a very pleasant time here, and am very well. This holiday will give me a good start for work in London, which I begin early in October.

The happy pair had been driving about in splendid weather. At Garth, he wrote, 'there is a very delightful old garden, full of old-fashioned flowers. The drawing-room is a beautiful double room, very large, with splendid views from all the windows.' Lady Currie had discovered that his birthday was on the 12th and had provided a birthday cake for the occasion.

As we have seen, Percy's hurried departure from the Cape had prevented him from saying good-bye to members of the Cape Bar. One of the most distinguished, W. P. Schreiner, brother of Olive Schreiner, whom an unkind fortune was to make Prime Minister on the eve of the Boer War, wrote him from Cape Town on October 30th, 1888, a letter of interest not only in itself but as showing what one of the ablest lawyers at the Cape thought of his young friend:

Your brother duly delivered your kind letter of leavetaking to me, and I must write at once to thank you for remembering me among your many friends here. Allow me to add mine to the numerous congratulations which you have already received upon your engagement. Let me know in time the auspicious day of your marriage, and I will see that the jovial spirits of the Bar do not fail to drink to our sage one over the water.

I am sincerely sorry that you have left us; my feeling I know is selfish, for I quite think that the opportunity embraced by you is a splendid one. But from a Colonial point of view I cannot but regret your departure, which I am convinced will be practically for life. For I am assured that you will with the opening now before you have that chance which is all that is needed to bring you well up in practice wherever you are. We can ill afford to lose good men; but I quite sympathise with your natural feeling that the delay was grievous to be borne before you found your powers fully employed in the rather restricted field here. It is I believe quite superfluous to express a wish for your success—provided only health and strength continue, and of

colly - (Boer War aftermath)
mically (key role in facilitating export of Cape fruit)

both you have no lack. I have never had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Danckwerts, whose name is however familiar to me as 'one of Templeton's boys', and whose success in the profession in London would in any case have been marked with satisfaction by Cape men.

At that time gambling in gold shares had taken possession of the people in Cape Town, and several members of the Bar had migrated to Pretoria. After mentioning these Schreiner went on:

Here in our quiet corner of the Continent the throes of electioneering are convulsing the land; but it is not always clear what lesson the candidates intend to teach us from the hoped for place in Parliament. Some talk goes round of what is called a 'country party'. Apparently a determination not to support a tax on diamonds is a shibboleth with this distinguished association of various elements. Nous verrons; but I rather fancy that none but the present Government will to all intents and purposes rule the roost for some time to come. In my view, Innes, if he would, could do much to effect the ejection, which seems to be so much desired, of the present occupants of the Treasury benches. But he is a sturdy stickler for his platform of principles, and certain alliances would be out of the question. The Roman Father has been making running in Oudtshoorn: but probably you are better advised of all things political from other sources. Some day, when I chance on a good thing in gold stocks and sell at the right time (si coelum attingam) I shall be able to afford a trip to England; and I hope you will remember old times well enough to allow me to call on you, even if you are then on the Woolsack.

A few months later, having established himself in the Temple, at 2 King's Bench Walk, Percy wrote to Mr. Justice Smith of the Cape Bench to convey 'my deep sense of your uniform courtesy and consideration to me, as to all the members of the Bar who practise before you'. He had looked forward, he added, to a career at the Cape, having continuously from earliest youth taken the keenest interest in the Colony and its politics. 'But circumstances have ordered otherwise.' Nevertheless its welfare would always be in his mind; 'and it is one of my dearest hopes to be of some service to it, if it be at any time possible for me'. This hope was to be amply fulfilled.

To his sister Caroline on December 20th, 1888, he wrote that he had taken lodgings not much more than a mile away from Hyde Park Place, Sir Donald Currie's London house, and added, rather superfluously: 'I see a good deal of them now.' On the London Stock Exchange there had been 'a mad rush for gold shares, and they are all up to immense prices'. Frank had formed a syndicate and Percy wanted to know how he was getting on. 'I heard rumours of a 20 oz reef. I hope your Black Reefs will turn out as you expect.' His brother James had been in for his law final and was longing to get back to the Cape.

From his boyhood Percy had been very fond of plants and flowers; and all his life whether walking in the valleys or climbing the hills and mountains he was on

Percy's London (close to The G)

James - Dec qualified a

Percy's love of Botany

the look out for rarities. He was in fact a botanizer, scientific and observant. One of his friends with equal enthusiasm was Mrs. Lindley. They had made many botanical excursions together, and he wrote to her on April 27th, 1889:

Peray's
View of
English
seaside

I was very glad to hear from you once more by your letter dated from Simon's Town and to learn that you were quite well again. Your description of the walks you were taking over the mountains made me long to be back again and have a tramp on familiar ground and see some real blue sea and sparkling water. I have just been at the sea side—but such a poor apology for a sea; no blue about it—a pale green muddy sea with no waves to speak of and no fine rocks with snow white surf as at Kalk Bay. However I was very glad to get a few days there after smoky London; the air was clear and bracing especially on the Downs over which I had some splendid gallops. The primroses are in full bloom just now, and the Downs were dotted with pale blue dog violets, while the railway cuttings and waysides were decked with gorse nearing perfection—splendid masses of golden colour which rejoiced my heart with their warmth. The gorse reminded me much of that aspalathus or crusocephalus which we found on Kalk Bay mountain. It belongs to the same genus I think, the popilionaceal—the leaves are very similar, being almost spines and very prickly, differing from the aspalathus, which was filiform but not prickly.

Q

Peray's
Barkly start
being close
to me again
12 April
1889

I was happy in having my sister and my youngest brother with me. The latter has just returned from a long cruise on the South East coast of America, and is delighted to be ashore and see some familiar faces once more. I hope to get him appointed to the Cape station at the end of the summer here.

!

I am glad you received the pamphlet on the orchids safely. I have not seen Mr. Bohn's book but have written to Wallace to get a copy for me from the Philosophical Society to which I still belong.

I have been very glad to hear of the good luck of many Cape people in the recent gold gamble; but few characters can withstand the deteriorating effect of such easily and suddenly acquired wealth, and I fear it will change still more the once Arcadian character of Cape Society, and not for the better.

Fate of
Claremont
House

It is sad that such great changes are impending at Claremont. I shall be very sorry when the dear old place passes out of our hands, as I fear it must very soon. I hope however that even then you will be able to remain there until you think of leaving the Cape.

odgings
writer

I am afraid you are not likely to see us out there before you leave. We are to be married next August or September; but I fear we cannot pay the Cape a visit yet. The Curries are all at Biarritz for a few weeks. I could not get away for so long. We will settle down somewhere in London, and have the pleasures of house hunting before us very soon.

Engaged
for 1 1/2

I have found a most interesting place in Kew Gardens. Just now many Cape plants are flowering, and I am able to learn the names of many which I know quite well by sight but did not know the name of. There are a good many heaths. The rhododendrons are coming out and will soon look very splendid. The

1888-
Lange

Countryside

This did NOT happen until
after Frank's death in 1926

17P
3.5.30
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39373 Molteno 155

2889w

natural beauties of Kew Gardens are very great; the early spring foliage is always lovely, being of immense variety. There are also some wonderful blossoming trees whose branches are completely hidden by lovely pink blossoms.

Percy must have heard very soon after this letter was despatched that he would be called upon before his marriage to revisit the Cape. Sir Donald Currie was the principal shareholder in the Bultfontein Diamond Mine at Kimberley, which was an important competitor of De Beers. As competition depressed the price of diamonds, Cecil Rhodes, with his friend Alfred Beit of Hamburg, had been bent for some time upon creating a diamond monopoly by a great amalgamation. To accomplish their purpose it was essential to get control of the Bultfontein. De Beers therefore approached Sir Donald Currie, and by the spring of 1889 the parties having agreed to the principle of purchase, it only remained to settle the price. Sir Donald was a shrewd business man, and it is evidence of the high opinion he had formed of his future son-in-law's ability and acumen that he decided to appoint him as arbitrator for the Bultfontein and to send him out to Kimberley with the arbitrator appointed by De Beers to make the award. This meant a very handsome fee for Percy, and proved to be the profitable conclusion of his practice at the Cape and English Bars.

Currie has been
diamond held
sent out to B
TD Spring 1889
Percy to go
& finalize
negotiat.

When a big brief arrives in the chambers of a young barrister, whose professional income has not yet overtaken his expenditure, he feels a glow of satisfaction which only members of the profession can fully appreciate. This Percy must have experienced on opening a letter, which arrived in his chambers at 2 King's Bench Walk, Temple, on June 5th, 1889. It ran:—

*The Bultfontein Mining Company, Ltd.,
16 Holborn Viaduct, E.C.,
June 4, 1889.*

Dear Sir,

I beg to inform you that at a meeting of the Directors of the Bultfontein Mining Company, Ltd., held to-day, it was unanimously agreed to request you to act as Arbitrator in the matter of the arbitration between the De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd., and this company for the fixing of the amount of the annual payment which is to form the basis of the consideration to be given by the De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd., for the purchase of this company's property.

The letter was signed by the secretary of the company, W. Cecil Stronge. In reply Percy acknowledged the receipt of 'your favour' and begged the secretary 'to inform your company that I am prepared to accept the position'. The difference between an arbitration and a lawsuit was originally that an arbitrator in his award strives to effect a compromise which will leave the parties in friendly relations, whereas a judge is expected to decide strictly in accordance with the law. Percy was associated with Francis Oates, who represented De Beers, and the instructions were headed: 'Friendly Reference between De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.,

and the Bultfontein Mining Company, Ltd.' A great deal of correspondence had passed between the two companies, and the arbitrators were requested in case of difficulties 'to apply for advice and recommendations to the Right Hon. Lord Rothschild, Sir Hercules Robinson, or Mr. Leigh Hoskyns, as they may be able to arrange'. It was settled at the end of June that the two arbitrators should proceed immediately to the Cape. Before starting they took evidence from expert witnesses as to the value of the Bultfontein mine.

Percy had no difficulty in persuading Sir Hercules Robinson (who wrote that 'the remuneration you specify for my services appears very liberal') to act as umpire. Just before leaving he had to correct a serious misstatement which De Beers had imported into the draft agreement, and wrote a rather stiff letter on the subject to the secretary of De Beers on July 9th, when he was on board the *Drummond Castle*.

Percy's fat brief was a pleasant windfall for a young man not overburdened with money on the eve of his marriage; it also gave him an opportunity of showing his capacity in dealing with a highly complicated question of law, valuation and business bargaining. It was fortunate for him that he knew South African conditions so well and had visited Kimberley previously. He applied himself with his usual industry to the task, which was accomplished successfully and amicably to the satisfaction of both parties.

CHAPTER IX

KIMBERLEY AND THE DIAMOND
FIELDS IN 1888

It was a characteristic of Molteno that whatever he took in hand he did thoroughly. Most men would have been content to get up just as much of fact, finance and law as the arbitration inquiry demanded; but he seized the opportunity of acquiring a complete and up-to-date knowledge of mining conditions which proved invaluable to him afterwards as a director of companies; and not content with this he extended by new observations and researches his previous knowledge and experience of South Africa. His faculty of observation was naturally strong. He was a keen, patient, scientific observer of nature, and of the mechanical methods by which man was learning to extract its riches and treasures for the enlargement of human wealth and welfare. And he was equally interested in the problems of politics, economics and finance that were awaiting solution in the Cape Colony, Natal and the two Boer Republics. His gift for mechanics had been developed by scientific training at Cambridge, nor had work at the Bar diminished his lively interest in the technical improvements and inventions that were revolutionizing mining and agriculture. During his preparations in London, as well as during his stay at Kimberley, he made careful notes and eventually embodied them in the shape of a lecture, or address, which he probably used at some private gathering. These unpolished notes, which I have corrected and compressed

Percy
ThoroughGood Powers
of Observation? correct
number

for the purpose, form the present chapter. He places himself in the position of a guide conducting a party of travellers from England to Kimberley :

After a fine weather passage of about nineteen days we arrive in Table Bay dock. Without delaying there, we take our seats at once in the train for a journey of about 650 miles. The train is very comfortable, being so arranged that you may walk from end to end and take your meals at leisure. Its speed is about 18 miles an hour, and it accomplishes the journey to Kimberley in 37 hours. Thanks to the slow rate of progress one is free from the jolting and jarring that are incidental to the high speed of express trains at home. Hence the journey is far less fatiguing than a journey of similar length in Great Britain.

Train Speed

I well remember as a boy counting skeletons in thousands of oxen, horses and mules which had perished on this very same journey, when it had to be performed by coach, or more commonly by ox-wagon, taking some thirty to forty days, i.e. about as many days as it now takes hours.

Perhaps Quite Of this journey the chief feature is a rapid ascent through splendid scenery to about 3,500 feet above sea-level, past bold and jagged mountain chains, until we reach the great plateau of the Karroo—a dry country lying on the backs of these mountain ranges.

Trip from CT to Karroo

As we rise higher and higher the appearance of the country changes. The green grass and dark bush of the coast gives way to a dry, arid, stony land, meagrely clothed with low scrub. This continues to be the general character of the country until we reach Kimberley. To the uninitiated it seems a barren and worthless region; but in fact it is splendid pasture land, supporting countless flocks of sheep celebrated for the fineness of their wool and the flavour of their mutton. Ascending yet further our train passes the great Orange River, which crosses Africa at this point, and we eventually arrive at Kimberley, which has an altitude of 4,300 feet. On the way we have occasionally had glimpses of the graceful springbok, the chief game of the country. The arid plain seems interminable until suddenly you see irregular yellow masses and white specks beneath them. Coming nearer you find that these are artificial hills of debris; the white specks are the houses of Beaconsfield and Kimberley. So at last we have reached our destination; but before I take you through the town I must tell you a little, just a very little, of the history of the country.

*

In 1867 a farmer of Hope Town in Cape Colony, when calling on a neighbour, observed that his children were playing with a remarkably brilliant pebble. The mistress of the house, when he admired the stone, made him a present of it without hesitation. Shortly afterwards a trader came to the farmer's house, and the stone was shown him as a curiosity. Believing it to be a diamond he obtained possession of it, and had it examined. It was pronounced to be a diamond, and was sold to the Governor of the Cape, Sir Philip Wodehouse, for £500, and was eventually exhibited. Diamond searching was immediately commenced in the district of Hope Town, a good name for a place where

Discovery of D

(TL)

people were hoping every moment to find fortunes. Soon afterwards a second diamond was found, and then another, but this, the third, was on the bank of the Vaal river, and attention was thus drawn to another district.

In 1868 more diamonds were found, and in March, 1869, the Star of South Africa was obtained from a native witchfinder, who had possessed it for a long time but valued it only as a powerful charm. This diamond, a magnificent brilliant of eighty-three carats, was sold for £11,000 and now belongs, I understand, to the Countess of Dudley.

As yet, however, people did not believe in the existence of diamond mines. They thought that these gems had been accidentally lost, or that ostriches had brought them from the far distant interior. This was the opinion of an expert, who was sent out at the time by an English diamond-merchant to inspect the country about Hope Town.

However, towards the close of 1869 diamonds began to be found in considerable numbers along the north bank of the Vaal river. They were obtained by sorting and washing the debris of sand and mud among the great boulders. More and more companies of diggers arrived, along with mechanics, clerks, professional men, farmers, merchants, and labourers. Everyone, in short, who did not see his way to a fortune elsewhere within the next day or two, rushed away over the burning desert.

Camps of canvas tents rose as if by magic. When a diamond was found in a new locality, the next day saw a tent there, the ground marked out, and diggers at work. Early in 1870 diamonds were discovered on the east side of the river, and in June a party of men set to work on the mission station of Pruel (?). The missionary ordered them away, but the ground turned out to be very rich and he was compelled to allow the diggers to remain.

Hitherto I have not mentioned Kimberley; but a little later in the year 1870 the children of a farmer residing near a depression called Du Toits Pan, picked several small diamonds from the plaster mud of their house. At once search was made in the place from which the mud had been taken, and diamonds were found. A rush of diggers followed, but several farmers, friends of the proprietor, were already at work, and they were refused permission to dig. However, the farmer like the missionary was compelled to come to terms, and so began what are called the 'dry diggings' as opposed to the 'river diggings'. This was the origin of Du Toits Pan, the least rich of all the great mines. Bult Fontein was then discovered, and about the same time the great De Beers. Nature was gradually disclosing her treasures, and she kept the best to the last; for it was only in June, 1871, that the first diamond was found on the spot where the mine now known as the Kimberley Mine exists. It had been examined twice previously and abandoned.

When first laid out in claims the Kimberley Mine was a gentle swell of ground above the general surface. Seven hundred claims or plots, each nine hundred square feet, were marked off and immediately taken possession of. But many of these afterwards proved to be beyond the reef of rock which contained the diamond-bearing soil, and were therefore of no value.

Even of claims within the reef many were soon found to be not worth working. Less than seven acres is the area whose yield was so amazing as to reduce the price of diamonds throughout the world to a mere fraction of their former value.¹

Twelve roadways across the mine, each fifteen feet wide, were made under a regulation which required each claim holder to reserve one-quarter of his plot for that purpose. Between these roads great trenches were opened, and the soil taken out was conveyed beyond the reef and there carefully sifted. Mounds, or tumuli, of sifted earth rivalling in size the natural elevations of the country rapidly rose round the mine, which was now changing its form to that of a crater.² These newly made hills and roads and trenches swarmed with human beings. In that narrow space I saw on my first visit to Kimberley 30,000 men, white and black, working at once. Reports of the enormous quantities of diamonds found there had attracted strangers from all parts of the civilized world; and there too were congregated blacks from every tribe in South Africa, lured by the prospect of obtaining guns and ammunition with the very high wages offered. The river diggings were almost deserted. Men who by mere chance had secured rich claims for nothing, when they were first allotted, could now readily get £1,000 for half their ground.

A great camp of canvas tents of all shapes and sizes covered the space on one side of the mine. Soon streets and squares were laid out, and iron buildings rose along them. Churches and schools, banks and newspaper offices, concert rooms and theatres, stores and shops, diamond buyers' offices, hotels, canteens, and gambling-houses, were all to be seen before the close of the year. Along the streets passed a constant stream of wagons, carts, carriages, and pedestrians.

On a smaller scale but similar in character were the camps at Du Toits Pan, Bultfontein, and De Beers. All four mines were within a circle, having a radius of rather less than two miles.

Life at the camps in those early days was full of excitement but far from pleasant. Water was scarce and bad. For a long time there was no drainage and the air was offensive. The dust storms were terrific. Violent gusts of hot air caught up the sifted ground and loose materials, whirling them about until the atmosphere was darkened. During the dust storms it was difficult to breathe. An amazing abundance of insects added to the discomfort of life, and in the summer there was an alarming amount of sickness brought on by filth, bad water, dust, and vermin. Such was the condition of the diamond fields in their early days. I cannot enter into the political history, beyond saying that the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and the British Government, were all contending for the ownership of this Eldorado. Eventually the British Government took possession and paid the Free State £90,000 for its claims to the territory, which proved a troublesome possession, as the diggers were an unruly people and

¹ One is reminded of the influx of cheap Spanish jet which ruined the Whitby jet trade after the middle of the last century. F. W. H.

² When I was at Kimberley soon after the Great War the inhabitants boasted that the mine was 'the biggest hole in the world'. F. W. H.

set the local government at defiance until a regiment of soldiers arrived and restored order.³

*

I will now try to give you some idea of the present appearance and working of the four great diamond mines — Kimberley, De Beers, Du Toits Pan, and Bultfontein. They are situated in a semi-circle, with Kimberley at one extremity and Bultfontein at the other. These two are about four miles apart.

The canvas tents have given way to substantial houses of brick and stone in many instances; but some of the old galvanized iron houses remain to remind one of the early stage in the development of Kimberley. There is now a splendid club, an excellent public library, tramways, electric lighting, and a railway station which keeps the town supplied with fruit and luxuries, and provides rapid communication with the outer world.

Each mine is a vertical crater with sharply defined vertical walls. So far as is known these craters are bottomless; i.e. they descend to an unknown depth. At first they become narrower as you descend; but eventually they seem to reach a constant diameter, or even expand a little again, as in the case of the Kimberley Mine.

When first worked, they were covered with mounds of yellow sand, in which the diamonds were found; but soon a black rock was met with which contained no diamonds, while in other parts the sand gave way to a sort of blue rock. By this time the mound had become a crater, shaped like a cup, with an area, in the case of Kimberley, of about seven acres.

When the blue rock was first met with, there was great consternation; for it was assumed to contain no diamonds, but very soon it was found to be diamondiferous.

At first the yellow sand covering the mine was removed in carts and wagons of all kinds along narrow roads left for the purpose; but as the depths increased the roads, being unsupported, began to collapse, and many fatal accidents resulted. This trouble led to the introduction of aerial wire trams. The wires were fastened below and above and upon them were run goat-skins, or wooden buckets, and eventually iron buckets.

At this time one person could not possess more than one claim (a claim being 30 feet by 30 feet), and often one claim was owned by five or six people. Consequently every working owner of a claim had his own gear, and at one time there were 1,100 of these gears at work, drawing earth up to the sides of the mine.

This state of things could not last long; for as the depth increased a claim was too small to be worked by itself; so the law was changed in 1876 to permit several claims to be amalgamated. Then a new difficulty had to be surmounted, which requires further explanation. The rock forming the outside of the cup or crater is called the reef. At first this reef is very hard; but on exposure it crumbles very rapidly. When each digger was working for himself all the rich ground was removed as quickly as possible, and no common action was taken to leave supports for the reef. After a time it began to crumble and fall upon the workers below, burying their machinery and tools. This really made

³ See the *Life of Southey*.

1876
Amalgamated
allowed by
law

all the difference between paying and not paying, between ruin and a fortune. The evil became worse and worse; thousands of tons would fall, bringing down engines and gears and overwhelming claims with vast quantities of worthless debris, all of which had to be removed before a digger could again reach the valuable ground, only to find, very likely, just as he was re-starting, his work interrupted by another reef fall. While I am telling you of this terrible danger — terrible it was and even now is — I must mention a very curious fact about it. The large amount of pyrites in the rock makes it burn on exposure to the air, when it gives off a smoke composed of noxious fumes and also causes great heat. Here was another very formidable hindrance to work. At Bultfontein and Du Toits Pan they are still struggling with this difficulty; how it was got over at De Beers' and Kimberley I will tell you presently.

These difficulties caused a more or less complete fusion of the claims into a few large companies. However, at a depth of about 300 feet in the Kimberley Mine the nature of the surrounding rock was found to be different. The mine had narrowed and a sort of throat was found of a rock that did not crumble and fall on exposure. Here I may add that originally the yellow sand found to be diamondiferous by the first diggers was sifted by the method known as 'dry sorting'. The sand was put on a table, and a small piece of wood or iron was used to spread it out. This process was very imperfect and many diamonds remained in the sand, as was afterwards proved when the water process was applied to the refuse and the unobserved diamonds were found.

Monopoly emerges

Kimberley, as I have said, was the richest of the four mines. For a time the rest were almost abandoned in its favour, but by degrees they were taken up. In 1882 Bultfontein was proclaimed a public mine; and when I saw it last year it was a huge open mine with workings at a depth of 530 feet from the surface.

I have now brought you up to date from the discovery and development of the mines to the present time, and I will proceed to describe the actual working of De Beers as I saw it. This is the most interesting for our purpose as it is the most advanced in organization and technical efficiency.

*

At De Beers the reef falls had become so bad that a new plan was devised to overcome the mischief. At some distance from the edge of the mine shafts were sunk, in some cases vertical, in others inclined; and a tunnel was run from them into the adjacent portion of the mine. The blue was extracted from below and carried out into the tunnel. When this plan was first introduced (in 1885) there was no united action, the mine being in the hands of different parties. This divided possession involved serious dangers; but finally the mine came into the hands of one great company, or rather two, as there is one for De Beers and one for Kimberley.

Deep mining starts

(TR)

In the case of De Beers at some distance from the edge an inclined shaft is run down into the mine, and the mine is divided into sections of 100 feet in depth. A series of tunnels are run in the blue ground itself and

are all connected with a main tunnel which again is connected with the main shaft. The work is carried on at different levels, being now at 500, 600, 700 and 800 feet. Supposing we want to work the blue at the 500 level we go to 600 and work upwards and gradually draw away the ground from below beginning as far from the entrance to the tunnel as possible and gradually allowing the roof to crash down with all its reef and debris. The system is so perfect that only about five per cent of the blue is lost. The mine, it must be remembered, is for practical purposes one solid mass of valuable blue, though there are embedded in it one or two foreign masses called 'floating reef'. The shaft contains a set of two huge buckets, worked by a great 80 h.p. engine, which moves up and down incessantly. Attached to the skip are two compartments, one for white persons and the other for Kaffirs.

Segregation already on the mines

Let me read you an impressionist description by a recent visitor of the work of the engine and of the descent:

We are at the top of De Beers — at present the best organized of all the mines. What a change from the early days when the ground was hauled up by a Kaffir at a windlass or a horse at a whim. Here is an engine of 1,500 Kaffir power, which has sometimes hauled out as much as 9,000 tons a day — a record unequalled anywhere else on or under the earth, as I am proudly assured by Mr. Nicholl, the underground manager, who has come here from a crack Tyneside coal-mine. Up and down, like a Jack-in-the-box, pops the great skip, dashing down 700 feet at every journey to return with six tons of 'blue', which at the top with a prodigious somersault it tips over into an attendant line of trucks. As I stand watching, there suddenly appears beside the skip a case like a very large double coffin in which are packed like figs in a box three or four damp, hot and soily figures. They emerge. It is a party of young English Peers who are visiting the diamond marvels. When my turn comes to be cofined, I have to descend alone; and a queer sensation it proves. I lean back in the slanting shaft, taking care to protrude neither hand nor foot. A caution, a signal, then gentle motion, and the brilliant sunshine fades away. Once or twice on the way down my eyes are startled by a glimpse of dim-lit chambers with darkling figures mysteriously toiling; or my ears deafened by the rattle of the ponderous skip as it plunges up and down past the slower lift at headlong speed. At length I stood 700 feet beneath the ground where the skip is loaded for the ascent. There the passages of the mine converge at a sort of oblong hell-mouth, tapering funnel-wise to discharge into the skip below. The skip's jaws are four trucks wide, four trucks going to a load. Here stand four Herculean shapes; and as the stream of the full trucks from the various tramways reaches them, each of the four seizes a truck and forces it against the lip of the hole and altogether with a shout upset the weighty convoy. Instantly they drag back the empty trucks, to be pushed away each by its own Kaffir, for refilling in the dark and sloppy labyrinths. Meanwhile a sign has throbbled to the engine room above and the skip has hardly touched bottom when it is on its upward race again with six tons on board. 'The dusky giants — strong, cheery, docile, sweltering naked or half naked at their pauseless task — the cries, the shifting flare and gloom, the whole strange scene of a struggle in the bowels of the solid earth, made for me a *tableau vivant* of Virgil's famous picture of Vulcan with his monstrous ministers singing and swinging hammers in the mountain's heart.

Wonderful description of the mine (like Geminal)

Another shaft was destroyed by the terrible fire in July 1888 (a year before P. M.'s arrival at Kimberley). It commenced in an engine shed and was due, it is thought, to the neglect of a native who had gone to sleep there leaving his light too near some timber. The flames spread with lightning rapidity through a wooden gallery to Number 1 shaft. Number 2 shaft was under repair at the time and could not be used as a means of saving life. Some of the men in the lower levels succeeded in making their escape. With remarkable pres-

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ROUGH PROOF ONLY.

39373 Molteno 163

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ence of mind they retreated before the fire, blowing up the timber work with dynamite as they went along, and finally found an outlet through some old workings. In this catastrophe twenty-two white men and three hundred and sixty blacks perished. Since then another shaft, called the Rock Shaft, has been constructed.

The 'skip', mentioned in my quotation, which is hauled up the shaft, has a capacity of four loads. The 'load' at Kimberley is a technical term meaning six cubic feet. The skip carried four loads, i.e. forty-eight cubic feet. When I was there they were hauling up as much as six hundred loads per day by means of this great engine.

(9)

How Diamond Blue
Rock
processed

Having now described the interior working of the mine I will return to the surface which is very full of interest. The skips moving up and down, as you have seen, so fast, bring a gigantic quantity of blue to the surface. No tram worked by animals, or even by locomotive, could cope with such a quantity. But a very splendid system of mechanical haulage has been devised by a friend of mine. A stationary engine works an endless wire which runs for several miles, and moves along a set of double rails two sets of trucks, one coming and the other going continuously. There are several hundreds of these trucks always moving up and down hills, turning corners and passing far out of sight. Thus, with a minimum of hand labour the vast quantity of blue brought to the surface by the skip is moved to the 'floors'. These floors are vast fields on which the blue is laid out to a depth of from nine to fifteen inches.

This blue is so hard that it needs dynamite to crush it when *in situ*. But on being exposed to the air it becomes pliable. It is spread out on the floors, turned from time to time, and watered. After three or four months of this treatment it becomes a comparatively fine, sandy gravel in appearance, but of a blue colour. It is then taken to the washing machine and there placed in a round cradle such as is used for washing coprolites. The water dissolves the blue mud; the stones are left at the bottom; and these heavier parts are passed into a receiver in which they are sifted into different sizes (all under lock and key), until eventually they are brought out and sorted, as was the yellow sand, with a little piece of wood or iron, and the diamonds are picked out by hand. The water is drained off and is used over and over again, while the liquid mud is carried by a mechanical appliance to a higher level and allowed to run away by gravity. In this way vast mounds of mud are formed which rival in height the natural hills and form a striking feature of the landscape near Kimberley.

The longer the pulverizing process goes on the better; for the washing is easier and more diamonds are found.

De Beers have vast fields — thousands of acres — spread out near the Mine, containing sufficient reserves to pay off all their liabilities; and this stock is even now being increased to allow of the blue being exposed to the air for a very long period. The blue is harrowed with large harrows and sometimes, as you see in the photograph, a large steam roller is used. De Beers' now employs about two hundred and fourteen

white men and 1,350 black in the Mine. There are also 180 whites and 1,400 blacks on the floors, making a total of about 400 white and 2,750 black employees.

The diamonds are spread with such remarkable uniformity over the blue ground that the return is practically constant, and each load of sixteen feet is looked upon as yielding so many carats. As the diamonds are small and easily secreted they are also easily stolen; and this was a serious loss to all owners. It can never be entirely got rid of, but it has now been very much reduced by what is called the compound system. Under this plan the natives are engaged for a certain period, generally two months, and are placed in an enclosure called a compound which communicates directly with the mine. They cannot leave on any pretence whatever while their term of service lasts. Everything necessary for their existence is contained in their enclosure, including dormitories, a store for provisions and clothing, and generally also a chapel, a school, a hospital, and a large bath in which the natives are very fond of bathing. A guard is placed over them as they go to and fro from the mine, and when they are working on the floors they are always under the eye of some white. At the end of their engagement the natives, before they are allowed to leave, are segregated for four days and closely watched. They have to wear leather gloves which are padlocked, to prevent them handling a diamond. Finally they are carefully searched and dismissed.

? see
 163 Compound
 System
 already exists

!

Explanation

For the last four years Kimberley has been worked underground, and now, when looking at the two mines of Kimberley and De Beers you see two vast excavations, both of about eight acres in area. The Bultfontein and Du Toits Pan mines look quite different. Both are worked on the open system, which is far cheaper where it can be used, but their yield per load is much less than that of the two great mines. The yield from Kimberley is one and a quarter carats per load, which, at 40s. per carat, is 50s. per load. The cost of working is estimated at 8s. so that there remains a profit of about 40s. per load. In the case of De Beers the profit is about 4s. less. The yield of the two other mines is only from one-third to one-quarter of a carat per load, which until last year was insufficient to make underground work profitable. On the other hand, and this is a curious fact, the price of the Du Toits Pan and Bultfontein diamond is higher than that of Kimberley and De Beers, the explanation being that the workings give a larger proportion of fine, large, white stones.

Profit !!

I now go on to give you some idea of the present yield and prices and profits of these four mines.

Number of claims registered:

Kimberley, 308; De Beers, 594; Du Toits Pan, 1,550; Bultfontein, 1,037.

Between September 1st, 1882, and December 31st, 1888, Kimberley produced 6,050,490 carats, worth £5,960,898, while the product of De Beers in the same period was 4,444,421 carats, valued at £4,385,782. Du Toits Pan produced 3,651,961 carats, worth £5,060,341, while Bultfontein yielded 3,771,981 carats of diamonds worth £3,765,074.

Scale
 12

Curve and part of a major mine

⁴ Unfortunately the photographs and lantern slides with which I illustrated the lecture have been lost.

The total production of diamonds in this region during the past eighteen years is estimated at forty million carats, which, at present prices, would be worth about eighty million pounds.

I have mentioned the danger of over-production and various difficulties in the mines themselves which tended to promote a fusion of interests. Hence was evolved a wonderful idea that of controlling the diamond output of the world by placing the whole mining industry in the hands of one large company. First a race began between the two great mines, Kimberley and De Beers, as to which should swallow the other. Eventually they joined together and formed a new company styled De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd. This company has a capital of £3,950,000, divided into £5 shares, and debentures of £2,250,000 to pay the debts of the constituent companies. Thus the two greatest diamond-owning combinations were united, but there still remained Bultfontein and Du Toits Pan. These also had been amalgamating; but during the last year they have been absorbed by De Beers, so that all these great mines are now in the hands of one company, which controls the diamond market. There are, however, in the Free State, Jagersfontein and Koffyfontein, two mines which produce a few very fine diamonds, and there are the river diggings of Barkly, formerly Periel. It is estimated however that De Beers now holds five-sixths of the whole amount produced.

You may ask what has been the effect on the price of diamonds. Has this combination, by forming a monopoly or quasi-monopoly, been able to raise it?

Yes: certainly it has. All last year (1887 or 1888? — probably 1888) the price rose steadily from about 20s. at the beginning of the year to 40s. at the present time. Thus the price has been doubled, and though the output will be very much reduced, the same amount of money will come in for the smaller output.

The world spends about four million pounds per annum on the luxury of diamonds; and of this total about £3,500,000 must come from De Beers. At the present price of £2 per carat a yield of 1,750,000 carats, after paying the cost of working expenses and debentures, will leave a net profit of about 2½ millions sterling, i.e. about 60 per cent. on a capital of four millions. The two mines of Bultfontein and Du Toits Pan will in all probability be closed to be held as a reserve; and eventually they will be worked underground when the price of diamonds admits.

Will it be possible to maintain this monopoly? There are other deposits of similar 'blue' near Kimberley, such as Otto's Koppje, the St. Augustine's Mine, and the North-Eastern Bultfontein. But nothing serious in the way of competition is to be anticipated from them; and it seems little likely that a second set of productive mines will be discovered. In any case it has taken all these years to bring the mines to their present condition; so that it would take a long time and enormous expense to bring any other mine into operation.

In the mines thus controlled by De Beers, with a reduced output, there are now about 1,500 white employees and from ten to twelve thousand blacks. The whites receive from four to eight pounds per week, and the blacks from twenty-four to twenty-eight shillings.

Prag - The L
suddenly
Monopoly

Profit
Rate under
Monopoly

Pay Ratio // W
Black (got
later)

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4:1; 8:1

Here Percy Molteno's manuscript ends rather abruptly. I have omitted some details which are of no present interest and have polished and pruned the language here and there, without of course altering the sense, in the way that he himself would have done in preparing it for publication.

and -
was

CHAPTER X
Percy & Bessie Mair
THE WEDDING
Summer 1889

(?)

Percy
&
Currie

Bessie's
character

Currie's
relat. with Percy

THERE is a family tradition that Bessie Currie fell in love with young Molteno at first sight when he visited her father and mother at Garth just before he embarked on his life at Cambridge. At any rate from that time until he returned to the Cape Percy was a frequent and favoured guest. Bessie was a spoilt child, and as she generally had her way it was improbable that either her father or her mother would object to her engagement to a young man whom they both liked. Sir Donald Currie, moreover, had discovered Percy's fine character, industry, and ability, and when he learnt of his daughter's passionate attachment and felt that her lover could be trusted, he made up his mind to provide him with a business career which would bring him back to England and keep his daughter at home. How and when Sir Donald Currie signified his assent has already been recounted; and we have also related how, when preparations were already beginning for the wedding, Percy, through the contrivance of Sir Donald Currie, was suddenly diverted to a profitable piece of work which forced him to concentrate his mind on the Bultfontein and De Beers amalgamation.

Before starting for the Cape Percy went to Garth and wrote thence to tell his sister Caroline about his coming visit to Kimberley and his approaching marriage:

Garth, Aberfeldy,
Perthshire,
June 12th, 1889.

My dear Caroline,

As you see above I am up in Scotland for a week of the Whitsuntide holidays. Sir Donald and Bessie are here. Everything is looking simply exquisite. The broom is one mass of golden colour, and all the new foliage is very lovely. Every bank is gay with wild flowers: You will have heard by last mail from Maria that I shall very probably be out to the Cape by the mail after the one which takes this letter. I am coming out on some very important business at Kimberley. I am sorry to say that most of the time while I am out at the Cape must be spent there, and I fear I shall have only a few days at Claremont. I shall have to hurry back, both on account of the business which takes me out and also to get back to be married before the summer holidays are over. However, it will be very nice to have even a short peep at you all again.

Percy's
love of
Nature

It will be a good opportunity for discussing my letter and coming to some agreement about our taking over the farms, and perhaps coming to some satisfactory arrangement about details.

I hardly expected to be back at the Cape so soon

like
a lot worse

again, but you could never tell what will happen. I shall be splendidly paid for the business on which I am coming out — which will be very useful in August.

We have been looking about for a house; but it is most difficult to find what we want — it may end in building one. This seems cheaper and more convenient than leasing one; but of course there would be some delay in getting into it.

Sir Hercules Robinson's speech has caused some excitement here. I agree with it very fully, and so do all here who know the Cape. But the S.A. Committee are very indignant; and as Chamberlain belongs to it the Government cannot offend him, so we shall lose Sir H. It will not be a loss socially, but politically it may be very unfortunate. Lord Knutsford is a very weak man and very vacillating. Lord Carnarvon has learned the lesson of non-interference by his previous experience, and now warmly applauds Sir H. Robinson, and recommends non-interference at the Cape very strongly.

So far as I know all the love letters have disappeared with one exception; and this happens to be the letter Bessie wrote to Percy on July 10th, 1889, just after he left for Kimberley. It begins:

My darling Percy,

Thanks for your letter from Dartmouth. I was pleased to get it. Robin is a good soul; he telegraphed me that you had reached Lisbon. Wasn't it kind of him? Since you left I have had four beautiful presents.

Bessie's
love for
Percy

After describing these she went on:

I felt fearfully low and lonely when you left me on Thursday night. Henrietta did her best to cheer me up. On Saturday morning I sat and read or worked in her garden. After lunch she drove me in her cart and we had a lovely drive through beautiful roads and lanes. . . . How are you getting on? How I miss you. . . . We did not go to Hatfield to see the Shah on Monday as it rained. . . . We are still undecided about the house. Papa has given up the idea of building and, now it lies between 1 Stanhope Terrace and 11 Connaught Square.

Apparently the previous occupier of the London house (which they thought of taking) was not all that could be desired; but, she says,

We would give it an air of respectability — at least I would — I am not sure about you. Now don't be angry.

Maria seems to have enjoyed her visit very much. She and Maggie both went to the top of the Eiffel Tower and say that it was not so very dreadful. So if we are in Paris any time I am going to the top. So don't dare say No; for I shall not pay any attention. You will find I shall be most rebellious when you return, and you will have some work to do to get me in a state of utter obedience, which I shall never attain. Suppose we arrange it this way: You give in in important things, and I give in in small things. I think that is a very good arrangement. Mary Kinnear told me that yesterday; so there I have settled it and you need not trouble about it.

B. Keases P

Quite
true

She had been taken in to dinner by a barrister friend of Danckwerts, with whom Percy had been in chambers. In a postscript she adds that there has been another change of mind and that Sir Donald Currie's idea of building a house for them has returned—a fortunate thing; for it ended in the building of their beautiful home at 10 Palace Court which was their London house to the end of their lives.

I heard again from Robin yesterday that you had arrived at Madeira. How I envy you. Surely the *Drummond Castle* has done very well. How did you find all your people? . . . Now don't do anything rash and be careful. Remember.

With best love and a good hug,
Your ever loving
Bess.

Bessie Currie had, as may be inferred from this letter, a strong sense of humour and a downright way of talking and writing which was apt to be misconstrued, but was not resented by intimate friends who preferred an occasional disagreeable truth to the current coin of society. Her family and friends would not deny that she had a sharp tongue and often used it. I have even heard her described as 'a tartar'; but my own experience was that if you stood up to her and returned jest for jest she was a good friend and lively companion. But she was certainly awkward in society and not an ideal wife for a politician. Indeed, after he entered Parliament, Percy usually entertained his political friends and acquaintances in the House of Commons or at the Reform Club.

Bessie Moltano had plenty of brains and inherited some of her father's business ability. Like Percy she kept very careful accounts and like him she was generous, sometimes impulsively so. A stickler for conventions she had a craze for punctuality, which a late guest was likely to regret.

In spite of the lameness resulting from an accident in childhood she was a fearless rider and delighted in the open-air life in the country. The lameness often caused her pain, and later in life she could hardly move about. It is no wonder that her temper was sometimes irritable.

Percy returned from Kimberley to Cape Town and sailed in the middle of by the *Drummond Castle*, from which he wrote to Caroline on August 23rd, 1889, posting at Madeira:

You will be glad to know that we have had a very fair passage so far (with a nice lot of people on board). . . . The usual routine of the voyage has become very monotonous to me, and I don't feel up to doing any good reading.

I did enjoy my glimpse of you all immensely, and only have to regret its extreme brevity. I have to thank you for all your kindness which made my visit an unalloyed pleasure. . . . I had a very satisfactory talk with Charlie (about the estate) and I do not think he was in any way self-feeling or selfish in his proposals. I am very glad that Minnie is to be in the arrangement for buying-in the farm. . . . Charlie will have Frank

Disposal
of
J.C.M.'s
Estate

Currie
decides to
build a
house for
them in
London

Bessie's
Character

?

and James' assistance at the sale at Nelspoort. I shall be so sorry when you and Maria leave your present places. If you had only realized all your gold shares at the good time you could have been more independent. . . . I have spoken to James and written to him again to look into Papa's papers and put them in order, and also to get as much information as possible from persons still living of the events in which he took part.

1889 - Percy's
Contemplation
The J. C. M.

I have just finished the *Life of Sir A. Strockstrom*. He mentions Papa as one of the Commandants under him. The book gives one a good idea of the immense progress which has been made in the last fifty years, and the great benefits of governing, or even mis-governing, ourselves.¹

We saw Cape Verde at noon to-day. It was pleasant seeing land again after so much sea. We expect to be at Madeira on Wednesday evening.

I wonder when I shall see the Cape again; these voyages are a great barrier.

The wedding took place at Garth on September 18th, 1889. An impressionable reporter, who travelled there from London, described Sir Donald Currie's home as 'the historic pile of Garth, beautifully situated in beautiful Perthshire.' He went on:

Wedding
TL

In this lovely autumn morning the whole countryside is astir; for has not the gallant young Molteno — bearer of a name honoured in South Africa's history — come to carry away his bride? The Laird of Garth, one of the county's popular members and South Africa's staunchest friend, the ever-busy and ever-genial Sir Donald Currie, to-day loses the last of his amiable and popular daughters from the old Hall. As his hundreds of tenants drive to-day to the spacious domain, along picturesque roads covered thick with autumn-tinted leaves, the one topic of conversation is 'the waddin'. While sorry to lose the gracious and kindly presence of the bride from the familiar scenes of her life, they have come at the hospitable invitation of the Laird to 'tak' a cup o' kindness' and throw the slipper after the happy pair. There are to be great festivities, and all are blithe and hearty on this fine September day.

Romantic
Journalist's
Description

Our journalist, a London Scot, alighting at Aberfeldy, saw flags flying in the quaint little town and was told in half-Gaelic what preparations had been made for the evening illuminations, and also for the still more important entertainment of the six hundred guests, by Ferguson and Forrester, the well-known Glasgow purveyors. Musicians were arriving, and after a brief intervention of Scotch mist the sun burst out and brightened the great display of flags that fluttered before the house.

Quite a
Presbyterian

Sir Donald belonged to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and a special licence had been obtained at the Marylebone Presbyterian Church in London. Its Minister, Dr. Donald Fraser, performed the ceremony in the drawing-room of Garth. The bride, Elizabeth Martin Currie, his second daughter, was given away by her father. Needless to say she looked charming:

Her dress was of soft, rich, ivory-coloured silk, made in the Empire style, with a very long square train, the

Dress

¹ He was evidently preparing to write the life of his father, Sir J. C. Molteno.

front of the skirt being covered with hand-embroidered lisse, draped slightly with a bow of very broad ribbon at the right side. The bodice was crossed in front, trimmed with lisse and fastened at the waist with a spray of orange blossom. The veil was of plain tulle fastened on with a diamond crescent, the gift of the bride's father. . . . There were no bridesmaids; the train was borne by the bride's little nephew, Master Donald Mirrielees, who was dressed in a Jack Tar suit of cream serge, with collar and cuffs of Cambridge blue silk, and sailor hat with blue ribbon.

At the wedding breakfast there were many representatives of both families — the bride's two sisters, Mrs Mirrielees and Mrs. Wisely, with their husbands, Percy's brother Victor Molteno, Mr. and Mrs. Blenkins, Mrs. Bingle, and many of the Curries. The health of the bride and bridegroom was proposed by Dr. Fraser, who said that both came of good stock, and being a Highlander himself he believed in extraction. The bridegroom replied that he could not make the usual plea of being unaccustomed to public speaking, but he could plead the novelty of his situation. He alluded gracefully to the honour which Sir Donald and Lady Currie had done him, and hoped that they would be able to say that instead of losing a daughter they had found a son. Then Mr. C. T. Ritchie, President of the Local Government Board, proposed the toast of Sir Donald and Lady Currie. Speaking as a member of the Government he declared that he would be perfectly satisfied if Sir Donald acted politically in accordance with the opinions of Lady Currie. He also let out as a secret that this was not only the wedding day of the daughter but the birthday of the father, to whom he wished many happy returns, and hoped that the day would be remembered long as the happiest birthday Sir Donald had ever spent. Sir Donald in reply referred to his friendship with Percy's father, the late Sir John Molteno, and to his confidence that the son would do honour to so good a name.

At half-past one the bride and bridegroom left for Killin *en route* for the Continent, where the honeymoon was to be passed. In the evening there was a magnificent display of fireworks in the grounds, including 'the falls of Niagara' — 'a roaring mighty cataract and flight of a hundred rockets', as the programme described it. A ball followed in a hall specially designed for the occasion, which had been built over the courtyard, and five hundred guests danced on until a late hour in the morning.

There was a very long list of presents, including two Zulu embroidered blankets from Dr. Stewart of Lovedale, a life of Sir Andrew Stockstrom, Dr. John Brown's *Horae Subsecivae*, and other appropriate gifts.

A tradition still lingers that the farmers and ghillies of the Glen had the finest time of their lives, which tradition may possibly be connected with the very ample supply of whisky that was made available on the occasion.

One of Molteno's nieces is responsible for this statement: 'Aunt Bessie said she cried all the way in the brougham to Killin because she could not take part in the dance or see the fireworks.' Percy, it is said, consoled her with a supply of hot-house grapes which he had provided.

already
of life

Nancy
Bingle can
for wedding

2
Silver

Currie
Bingle
18/9

Sp X

H.P.
15.5.39

ROUGH PROOF ONLY!
PLEASE RETURN THIS MARKED SET

39373 Molteno

171

3490w

CHAPTER XI

MOLTENO EMBARKS ON A BUSINESS CAREER 1889

Con
Copy

Percy joins the
Castle Co.

WHILE Percy and Bessie Molteno were still on their honeymoon Percy took the most important decision of his life. He resolved to remain in England and abandon the Bar for business. Sir Donald Currie was glad to keep his favourite daughter at home, and he had doubtless formed a high opinion of Percy's character and abilities — an opinion that was to be justified when Percy began to take an active part as Director of the Union Castle Line. On receiving his son-in-law's letter Sir Donald Currie wrote as follows:

Garth, Perthshire.

Oct. 12th, 1889.

Last post to-day took my short note to you acknowledging receipt of yours of the 9th instant.

You have done well to take time to deliberate as to your future and with Bessie's help in thinking the matter out. I have carefully considered the outs and ins, and am of opinion you are deciding wisely, provided arrangements can be made with satisfaction all round. There is a special interest for you in the business, as it is connected intimately with South Africa. To return to the Cape means going to the Transvaal, or the chances of a half and half legal and political occupation in the Colony. In neither place would Bessie care to be long; and for you I should think there is a better sphere, every way, in England.

Naturally I am glad you have of your own free will decided what is best; for it would be a serious thing for me to urge you to change your occupation. You may now depend upon my seeing how things can best be arranged. I go to London next Tuesday, partly to close the De Beers and Bultfontein arrangements, partly to prepare for your return, and the working out of plans which can have our consideration. As you say, however, it is not necessary to hurry too fast; we can do better by prudent action.

I am very glad to hear by Bessie's letters to Lady Currie and Mrs. Wisely that you are both enjoying the trip to Italy. It will be a great pleasure to us to see you back; but I do not wonder you delay returning, and I quite agree you should take as long a holiday as possible.

Percy went to
his honeymoon
He had 6
holidays on
Continent

After returning from his honeymoon Percy said good-bye to the Bar and set himself to master the highly complicated details of the shipping business which his father-in-law, Sir Donald Currie, transacted at the offices of the Union-Castle Line at 3 and 4 Fenchurch Street. He took to the new work as a duck takes to water, and soon showed himself a first rate man of business. A more congenial pursuit he could not have found. To a man of the world, interested in world politics and economics, there can be no more fascinating scene of action than the offices of a great shipping company like the Castle Line, with all its ramifications. That it was mainly concerned

Office

with South Africa, the home of his boyhood, which throughout life claimed a large share of his thoughts and affections, was a positive advantage in his eyes; and his knowledge of South African conditions soon proved of immense service to the firm. At the same time his work provided him with an additional incentive to extend an active correspondence with his family and friends in South Africa. He kept in constant touch with the agents of the Company at Cape Town, Durban, and other ports, as well as with fruit-farmers, and the mining and land-development interests in which Sir Donald Currie and the Molteno family had large investments.

After a long, arduous, and successful business life Sir Donald Currie was feeling the need for more relaxation and was happy to have found a young partner who could not only carry on the routine business but also take the initiative in expansion. Consequently Sir Donald began to spend more and more time at his home in Garth or on his yacht in the Western Isles and (during winter months) in the Mediterranean. He always had with him a very efficient secretary, and would send long and sometimes bewildering telegrams to the London office, which provided his subordinates with plenty to do.

7
Q Does Currie withdraw a little from the business? (He rec. 65)

Percy conducted most of the correspondence with his chief. Sometimes he had the courage to differ on important questions of policy, and on such occasions he found it worth while to give his reasons at full length; for Sir Donald was always ready to consider them, and as time went on often accepted Percy's suggestions, as well as his advice on investments.

In addition to the competition of other Lines—British and foreign (especially German) — in the South African trade, there was at times friction with the South African Government about the mail contract. As a specimen of the correspondence we may take an extract from one of Percy's letters dated September 4th, 1891, to Sir Donald Currie:

We have to-day received your very important letter asking us to consider carefully the question of two rates for mail and extra steamers respectively, and also the whole policy of having any agreements with the other lines.

Italy

The

He and his fellow-directors were holding a meeting on the next day, and Mr. Chapman, the Secretary, would be sent afterwards to explain their views and ascertain Sir Donald's. He had discussed the letter with Mr. Chapman.

He will give you his own views. Mine are not of much importance, being based on a too limited experience of the whole question. At the same time I put before you some of the ideas which suggest themselves to me, and you will take them for what they are worth.

He then entered into the agreements of the Mail Companies with the Clan and other Lines and the question whether the agreements should be modified. The final paragraph deals with the fruit shipments, which were Percy's most important contribution to the development

Is Percy really a Director in 1891? Sounds like it.

of South Africa and to the prosperity of the Union Castle Line:

1891
light from
start - Per
responds to
of Cape fr
exports (me
int. realiz
This story)

Enclosed please find cuttings from Cape papers in regard to fruit exports. You will perceive that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly applied to the Agents of the two Mail Companies to know what facilities there were for the shipment of fruit; also that a public meeting was held at Stellenbosch on the subject. From these it appears that interest is roused at the Cape, and anything we do now will come in at the right moment and meet with high appreciation.

At this time, with his brother Charlie and others Percy was forming a company which he called the Cape Fruit Syndicate, to carry on all kinds of fruit business, and especially to promote exports of grapes, peaches, etc., from the Cape Colony to London. He interested himself in all the details of packing and cool storage, and constantly visited Covent Garden to investigate the state of the fruit markets. Thus on February 3rd, 1892, he wrote to Messrs. Draper of Covent Garden:

Percy & Charlie
from Cape fr
Syndicate / S
in the busin
cons'gners

I am sending you for realization 14 cases of peaches ex *Drummond Castle* from the Cape of Good Hope. I wish a full report on their condition and packing and a special report on Case marked 1892 which was placed in the coldest portion of the cool chamber wrapped in a blanket, the other cases being in the vegetable chamber. Please return our case for me and send to 10 Palace Court, W. The cases have the number of peaches clearly marked on the outside, and contain from 36 to 48 according to size.

Primitive (or
steps a cold
household
fruit (T

It was by detailed experimentation at every stage from production to distribution that Percy developed and perfected in the course of a few years the great fruit trade between the Cape and England.

Three days later he wrote to his brother Charlie an enthusiastic letter about the consignment of peaches that had arrived by the *Drummond Castle*: 'They have come in simply splendid condition in appearance etc. — perfect flavour also and the packing is excellent, leaving nothing to be desired.'

He had looked after the publicity. All the principal papers had a paragraph on the day of the sale. There was a good attendance of buyers and brisk bidding. One case in the meat-room was frozen and ruined. They had also sent a case to Paris to try the market there.

In the following week 25 tons of fruit arrived by the *Hawarden Castle*. The temperature left nothing to be desired, but the condition varied with the packing which was less satisfactory. He took Merriman who was in London to the sale.

He asked his brothers to try other kinds of fruit such as melons. He now looked upon it as 'quite established' that they could bring grapes over in large quantities if rightly packed.

Apricots, peaches, nectarines, grapes, apples and pineapples [he wrote], have already arrived in excellent condition. The cool chambers of the rapid ocean steamers have rendered this possible, the transit being accomplished in from fifteen to nineteen days.

As regards packing they were experimenting in the relative advantages of cork, sawdust, and cotton-wool. On March 10th, 1892 he wrote to Charlie:

The pears were in very good condition and fetched excellent prices. I had a case and found one or two just a little gone. This would have been avoided by using the packing I had suggested, viz. paper. The competition was excellent. The melons were not in very good condition. This I attribute entirely to the packing — they should not have been in close boxes. but should have had ventilations and should have been packed in hay or dry straw or mealie leaves dried. I am surprised Wallace did not know this, as he has seen them arrive over here in that way.

He complained to Wallace at this time that the beans of which two cases had arrived were 'as old as Methuselah' and were greeted with roars of laughter in the market. 'It is useless to send such stuff. They carried well enough but are quite inedible. Young beans would have made sixpence to ninepence per lb., and in January-February they fetch as much as one and six.'

At this time (March 26th, 1892) he wrote to Charlie:

I paid a visit with Merriman to a man who is running a fruit colony in California, to which he sends out numbers of people. The colony has about 400 square miles of good land with water, and he lets them have land in such quantities as they want. For the first year he arranges to do the work on the land for them until they learn themselves. I saw specimens of the fruit produced both dried and preserved. It was certainly splendid. They send it to England first in refrigerators in the railway to New York, and then ship it across the Atlantic. They also have a large market in America itself. I think something of the same kind could be done at the Cape.

Merriman, he adds, was favourable to some such scheme. A syndicate would have to get control of a large quantity of land and then young fellows with a little money would buy it in small quantities, preferring to be under the British rather than the American flag. He hoped that the Cape Fruit Syndicate would be continued and its capital increased. He was trying to arrange for an exhibit of Cape products in the International Horticultural Exhibition at Earls Court which was to open in May.

These and many other letters show how much scientific work and enthusiasm he was putting into the movement. In the end his efforts were well rewarded though he had of course to put up with a good many disappointments. One of them was in France. 'I will endeavour', he wrote to Charlie on May 7th,

to make it possible to send some of the finest (Cape) pears, grapes, and peaches to the French markets. I have a copy of the French tariff. They evidently applied their duty on 'forced fruits' to the peaches. It is a prohibitive duty of about eightpence per pound. On pears the duty will be about three shillings per 112 pounds, and on grapes about nine shillings per 220 pounds. We shall have to have a certificate of origin from the French Consul at Cape Town.

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X
This
re

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V
he is
as
wipers

storage
L

Ted & Harry - clearly only following the steps pioneered by Percy 20 years before they start to export fruit.

39973 Moltano 175

1069

The Cape Fruit Syndicate was started with a capital of £3,000, towards which Percy and his wife were ready to provide 'at least £1,000'. He wanted Wallace to take an active part in the management and to have a 'good share in the profits'. By the next mail he sent an advance copy of a pamphlet he had written describing the results up to date of his experiments in the shipment and packing of Cape fruit, with lists of those varieties which were specially recommended for the London market. He was sending out large numbers of trees to his brothers for planting. In June he despatched copies of his fruit pamphlet to all members of the Cape Parliament, and also to the local papers. Sir Donald was investing in the Cape Fruit Syndicate, and local men were applying for shares. He was consulting experts on the trees which it would be most profitable to grow at the Cape for the London market. By this time he had come to the conclusion that potato-growing at the Cape was likely to prove less remunerative than fruit-growing. The fruit and produce brokers in Covent Garden has pointed out to him that early potatoes from the Cape would have to compete with the Canary Islands, Jersey, Malta, and Alexandria, which were all much nearer; and the freights were heavy in comparison with the prices that could be obtained.

Percy's care for Wallace - his much younger brother

Sends out trees

Percy good / at publicist 'dover'.

In the end, as it happened, several members of his family and many of his friends and acquaintances in Cape Colony did well out of both fruit and potatoes, and during the years of his directorship of the Union Castle Line Percy Moltano shipped thousands of carefully selected fruit trees and many hundreds of tons of seed potatoes to them in return for which the Company received a rich and ever-increasing harvest of fruit shipments from the Cape to London. The seed potatoes, which were provided mainly by Sir Matthew Wallace, the famous Dumfriesshire grower, were of course used to enlarge production in South Africa for the home markets.

Potatoes too

One of the friends with whom Percy corresponded most about South African fruit was John X. Merriman, a brilliant letter-writer, a sound economist, and the one South African statesman who carried on faithfully and consistently the political and financial legacy of Sir John Charles Moltano. He was at that time Treasurer in the Rhodes' Cabinet.

Percy & Merriman close friends of different ages

In the autumn of 1892 he heard to his great delight that Merriman had acquired land at Stellenbosch for fruit-growing, and wrote at once to convey his best wishes for success and the pleasure it would give him to carry out a commission for the despatch of fruit trees. On November 12th he wrote:

I have considered it desirable to go to a well-tryed and responsible man who will really give the best trees, true to name; for it is of great importance to you to have at start in your orchards the best trees as a nucleus from which you will graft and bud your stock. The trees go in the Warwick Castle which sailed to-day. Sir Donald, when I mentioned it, said we are not to charge you any freight.

Cumie's generosity (Merriman) (later)

A few days later Percy and Bessie Moltano sailed for the Cape, where they stayed for several months on a visit

Leisurely attitude to time those days - stays of se

which provided Percy with many opportunities of discussing with Merriman and his own family, as well as with the agents and customers of the Union Castle Line the development of the fruit trade as well as gold-mining and other political and economic problems.

Before sending the consignment of citrus and other fruit trees to Merriman Percy consulted the Royal Horticultural Society. Cecil Rhodes was in England at the time, and after a talk with him Percy wrote to Merriman:

Rhodes tells me that he also has got a farm, and has planted a large acreage of fruit trees; so I hope we may soon have a larger supply of fine fruit for the market here.

Merriman's

It is pleasant to record that Merriman's farm and orchards at Stellenbosch proved a success in every way. The estate became a perfect earthly Paradise. It had a superb environment and mountain scenery. When I visited Merriman there some thirty years later he and his nephew and manager, Mr. Nicholson, were able to show me fruit of all kinds—grapes, peaches, pears, oranges, lemons, etc.—planted round the house. The groves and orchards are intersected by a bright, clear, rippling stream full of trout. The veteran statesman and his nephew were producing excellent wine, and I spent a delightful day on the property, which brought to my mind the Vergilian picture of a heavenly Utopia:

Private

confident
g - a

amoena vireta

Fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.

Before leaving for South Africa (in August, 1892) Percy attended some exciting debates in the House of Commons, including the division of August 11th, after the General Election, which gave Mr. Gladstone a majority of 40 enabling him to form his fourth administration, with Lord Rosebery as his Foreign Secretary, Sir William Harcourt as Chancellor of the Exchequer and John Morley as Chief Secretary for Ireland and principal assistant in the framing of the Second Home Rule Bill.

In addition to investments in fruit Percy had become Sir Donald's chief adviser as regards mining investments both at Kimberley and in the Transvaal. He had joined the board of the Durban Roodepoort Company, and was corresponding in June, 1892, with Francis Oats of De Beers mentioned to Oats a report that

Percy
adviser
Mining
investments
Currie

was
Tho'
?)

Messrs. Wernher Beit are gradually acquiring a controlling interest in all the good Main Reef properties. . . . I saw Mr. Rhodes when he was here, but only for a few moments, and was not able to have any general conversation with him.

Another important investment in which Percy took an interest was a Real Estate Corporation at Johannesburg; and he wrote to the local director there, Gwynne Evans, as to the strengthening of the Board.

At this time Sir Donald Currie entrusted to Percy and B. F. Hawkesley, Cecil Rhodes's solicitor, a delicate negotiation with the British and German governments concerning a mining concession in South-West Africa. The property, or claim, was known as the Otavi mine.

became PM

in
real estate!

Percy dev'd diverse
business holdings

- X Cape Fruit Syndicate*
- X Castle Co.*
- X Durban Roodepoort Co*
- X Kenya (sisal?)*
- X Real Estate Corp of TB*

The German Foreign Office had announced on September 15th, 1892, that 'the ownerless region between Herero and Ovamboland had been placed under the protection of the German Empire'. The Otavi claim had been confirmed by one Dr. Goering of the German Foreign Office, but was alleged to have been repudiated by one of the Herero chiefs. The correspondence is interesting and Percy seems to have done well for his chief. He had many interviews with Hawkesley and paid several visits to the Foreign Office. Sir Clement Hill, the official with whom he talked, proved thoroughly competent and satisfactory, and the diplomatic correspondence between the British and German Foreign Offices seems to have ended amicably.

See
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[]

Before leaving for the Cape Percy took a house, Westbrook, from a friend Mrs. Moodie, and arranged with his brother Charlie for a couple of horses which his wife could ride or drive in single harness. He found on his arrival that the Cape Fruit Syndicate had done badly, owing mainly to a failure in the arrangements for refrigeration. Over a third of the capital was lost and in January, 1894, it was liquidated.

CFS a busi failure
TL

After his return from South Africa in the summer of 1893, Percy heard from his brother Charlie that he was standing for Parliament, and wrote:

1893 - Charlie stands for Cape
- 7 yrs after d of JCM

I am very pleased that you contemplate standing, and I trust you will be elected and allow nothing to interfere with your purpose of winning a seat. I cannot agree with you that a seat is not worth having at present; for I think every good man is needed to keep the country straight and free from jobbery, and to help to thwart men like Sir J. S. who, if allowed, would soon ruin it. You have everything in your favour — a good name, an independent position, a sound head and a knowledge of business. You will not be led away by the specious schemes which seem to dazzle so many men in the Parliament. I see you do not care to have any help with election expenses. So be it; but you need hardly have felt it any obligation to allow me to share such expenses.

Percy wants to help re election expenses

In the same month, November, 1893, he wrote to his younger brother James, who was also making political progress:

You are very wise not to attack the Bond, but to try to weaken Hofmeyr's power so long as he supports Sivewright. I have read Innes' speech; it is a fine straightforward one; but you are right to take other steps to secure influence, particularly among the colonial land-holders and Dutch farmers. The purity of Parliament and the proper responsibility of the Party in power must be your cry.

It should be explained that Merriman, Sauer and Innes had left the Rhodes Cabinet in consequent of what they regarded as a corrupt contract in which their colleague, Sivewright, was involved. Rhodes cancelled the contract but refused to part with Sivewright and having retained the support of Hofmeyr was able to win the General Election early in 1894. Charlie Molteno, however, won his seat. Percy advised his brothers not to join in the

Charlie elec 1894

attacks on Rhodes, though he strongly disapproved of Sivewright's conduct.

Percy writing life of JCM 1894

Percy was at this time working hard at the Life of his father at the British Museum, and on documents supplied by Sir H. Barkly. Unfortunately his brothers were unable to find the letter books which his father had left at Claremont, but Percy was indefatigable in getting all the information he could from them, and from Merriman, Sir Henry de Villiers, John Noble, and others who could supply reminiscences of Sir John Molteneo.

letter disappear

Parklands night 1894

During 1894, to judge from such correspondence as exists, Percy Molteneo was absorbed in business activities and in the improvement and enlargement of a farmhouse, beautifully situated near Gomshall in Surrey. Parklands, as it was called, remained his favourite residence to the end of his life. Mrs. Molteneo much preferred the country to the town, and the place was well suited for her and the three children, two boys and a girl.

TL

We have moved into the country [he wrote, on April 20th, 1894]. Spring is well advanced, my young trees are looking well. I am building one or two additional rooms and adding to the stable accommodation.

rs

Shipments of fruit from South Africa were expanding so much that he had constantly to point out to Cape producers and exporters imperfections and mistakes in packing and selection. 'It is useless', he wrote, 'to send anything but the very best.' He had advised packing in boxes rather than in baskets, and a comparison of results, he said, 'amply justify my forecast'. A consignment of pears which arrived in April were in first-rate condition, but 'for your future guidance', he wrote to the grower, 'I would say that they turned out rather coarse and gritty, and are not a first-class dessert pear.'

Palace Court

When, owing to want of proper refrigeration a 'down-right bad' shipment of grapes arrived, he wrote: These failures just now, when we can get good prices, with grapes in good demand, are most damaging to our business.'

The Youngest TL

(Their last child, a daughter, Margaret, was born on June 30th, 1894.)

Margaret 6 1894

In September, 1894, the enlargements at Parklands, including a library and stables, were being completed, and there was now room for visitors. From this time onwards his brothers and sisters and frequently also their children were hospitably entertained year after year, sometimes at Palace Court, sometimes at Parklands. Mrs. Molteneo delighted in riding and driving, Percy preferred walking or cycling. When the motor-car arrived he made full use of it as a convenience, and a time-saver, but 'joy-riding' was never much to his taste, he would at any time prefer a walk with his children or a friend or with a favourite dog.

Parklands a focus for the family

In December, 1894, he heard from Merriman encouraging reports of the activity of new Fruit Associations which had been meeting at Constantia, Stellenbosch, Wellington and the Paarl. More knowledge was needed for the improvement of orchards. The Cape Town Chamber of Commerce had issued, without consulting him, a reprint of his fruit pamphlet. In the main it still held good, but he would have liked to add the benefit of

Percy lack walking & cycling

the experience since gained. Much had been printed about a refrigerator. Molteno urged that it should be placed in the docks near the ships, not outside the docks. If it were outside the docks the fruit would have to be transferred in refrigerated wagons, and that would cause additional expense which exporters would have to bear. He went on:

Unquestionably, if the business is to be carried on on a large scale, the refrigerator is an absolute necessity. The sooner the fruit can be placed in a cool atmosphere, the fresher will it be on its arrival here. Eventually there will be refrigerators in each district where the fruit can be deposited as soon as it is packed. Pears are arriving here from California in excellent condition. I hope you are devoting attention to them as well as to other fruit.

As to Cape politics 'I see the Colossus of Rhodes dominates everything'. He was very glad that his brother Charlie had become a politician, and felt that his sound judgment and knowledge of the country would be useful — as indeed it proved to be — to Merriman and his Party.

Lord Rosebery, who prided himself on his Liberal Imperialism, was a friend and admirer of Cecil Rhodes, whose reputation as an Empire Builder and a successful speculator had made him a great figure in the City and in London society. When Rhodes received the honour of a Privy Councillorship in the New Year's Honours List Percy at once sent him a letter of congratulations (January 1st, 1895), on what 'seems to me a tardy acknowledgement of your great and varied services to the Empire and particularly to South Africa'. He concluded 'with very best wishes for yourself personally and for the great projects you have in hand'. Little did he imagine the disillusionment that was to follow within a year, and the crash of a reputation, which was to illustrate again the theme of Juvenal's tenth Satire and Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

In January, 1895, he was reading the life of Sir Bartle Frere, which had just been published. The author, he wrote, 'deals very superficially with the strictly Cape Colony portion'. It made Molteno more eager than ever to get on with the biography of his father and with a preliminary essay on Federation which he was planning. He had seen Noble and Theal, the historian of South Africa, and had gained some valuable information from them. He had bought the three volumes of Theal's *Genealogies of Cape Families*, and was corresponding with Silverbaum, Hercules Jarvis, and another veteran at the Cape from which he hoped to hear about his father's early business life.

In February his sister Caroline arrived, and told him that his brother James sometimes found his writing illegible! He thought James should have told him of this, and by way of reprisal asked him to write down in a legible hand all that he had collected from friends and relatives about their father's early days. He continued:

I am now going through the newspaper files from 1863 at the British Museum. What I do want is per-

Percy Turner
and Rhodes
of James
Reid in 1896

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Record book Syn a
a busy life

sonal reminiscences which will give body, life and colour to the picture, and these I think you will be able to get without unduly trenching on your time. I have started on the files of papers, and it is no joke. I can only do a certain amount, as I have the office to attend to also. I get up at 6.30 every morning and have two or three hours at the British Museum before getting to the office; so I am not idle. I am to see Sir John Ackerman shortly as to the conference of 1876. I have got very fully the history of 1863 and am now in the history of 1864.

At Parklands, his favourite house in the country, where the family lived from spring to autumn, Molteno was much troubled by the irregularity and unpunctuality of the South Eastern Railway, on whose trains from the local station, Gomshall to Cannon Street and back, he was dependent for his daily business in London. Economy of time was a cardinal point in his philosophy of life. Without it he could not possibly have got through the wonderful amount of work that he did in addition to the calls of family life and the exercise essential to health. Several times he tried to reform the habits of the South Eastern Railway. Here is one of his letters to Sir Myles Fenton, general manager of the South-Eastern Railway, dated April 22nd, 1895:

Dear Sir,
Will you allow me to call your attention to the excessive lack of punctuality in the arrival of trains to and from Gomshall station? I have been a season-ticket holder at various times within the last three or four years on your line of railway, and I find that trains are becoming less and less punctual. This morning the train supposed to leave Gomshall at 9.17, and arrive at Cannon Street at 10.29, only left Gomshall at 24 minutes past nine and arrived at Cannon Street a quarter of an hour late. The delay appeared to me to be largely due to the quantity of watercress, which was taken on at Gomshall station, causing loss of time there and again at London Bridge; but this is not the sole cause. The afternoon trains are generally from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour late in arriving; and this delay, from my observation, occurs through the stationmasters at Reigate and Dorking not dispatching the trains so soon as they might do from their respective stations.

It is a very serious inconvenience to those who are obliged to travel from Gomshall that, in addition to the already long period occupied in transit according to the time-table, there should be added these vexatious delays; and if I might be allowed so to do, I would suggest that a circular letter to the stationmasters from Redhill to Gomshall might go far to remedy the evil.

I am afraid that Sir Miles Fenton failed to reform the service; for later on Molteno had to lodge another protest. There was no lighting in the trains, and in the tunnels one of Molteno's fellow-passengers used to carry a candle with him to read by.

In the summer of 1895 Lord Rosebery's government fell rather ignominiously on the Cordite vote, and a General Election ensued which gave the Unionists a very large majority. Percy was ambitious to enter Parliament,

Percy's Work Day

His huge energy

Percy complains re Unpunctual Rail Service

came 100 yrs later!

Percy already wants to

enter British politics - 1895

But came opposed it
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and thought of standing for a seat in Scotland. On June 24th he wrote to Sir Charles Cameron:

I am desirous of finding a constituency, if possible in Scotland. My politics are not those of my father-in-law, Sir Donald Currie (who was a Liberal Unionist), but are Liberal. Hence I write to you. I note that you have been taking a very prominent part in political arrangements in Scotland in the Liberal interest.

Among qualifications he mentioned that he was born in Edinburgh and had married a Scottish wife, and was therefore 'as near a Scotsman as it is possible to be without actually being one . . . The suddenness of this crisis has somewhat hurried my plans.'

A day or two later, however, he had to telegraph to Cameron that business difficulties had arisen which made his candidature impossible, and more than ten years elapsed before a General Election took place at which he was able to contest and win a seat in Scotland.

It is not surprising that Sir Donald Currie intervened to prevent this diversion from business to politics; for Moltano's work at Fenchurch Street was becoming indispensable. Having built up the Union Castle Line by his own exertions Sir Donald had acquired the habits of a dictator and was something of a martinet. His staff liked him, but he inspired awe. When he made his three sons-in-law directors of the Union Castle Line and endowed them with handsome incomes, he naturally enough expected his word to remain law; but he soon found that Percy Moltano had no idea of being a mere figurehead, but applied himself with diligence to the work, attended the office regularly, mastered all the details and, as we have seen, took the lead in developing the carriage of fruit from the Cape to England. But this was not all. When the important question of building new ships and of deciding the size, the type and the cost, came up towards the end of 1895, Moltano got up the subject very thoroughly and having himself a gift for mechanics as well as for the economics of the problem, he was not prepared to accept Sir Donald Currie's ideas without demur or discussion. There is quite a long correspondence, but I must be content in this biography with the inclusion of one letter from Percy Moltano to Sir Donald Currie. Its date is December 6th, 1895.

My dear Sir Donald,

I have to thank you for your memorandum touching upon one or two points of mine of the 4th inst. I have been most anxious that all facts which we could send you, and all considerations which we felt here, should be before you to assist you in determining the difficult question of how to build a boat with all the accommodation the trade requires, and yet not too costly.

I am much impressed by two considerations:

1. We have hitherto had such expensive boats for our Intermediate Service that it has been necessary to command high rates of freight and of passage money to enable us to barely exist, whereas I would like to see us working as cheaply as anyone else could work; and this is our best source of strength. We have been most fortunate in not having had any serious war of rates with

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Percy wants
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Currie wants
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our very expensive boats to work. I am eager, therefore, that we should make a real new departure and get the very cheapest boat consistent with it being suited to its purposes. I would not allow any traditions or trammels of classification, or anything of a formal character, to impede us in this.

Referring once more to the 'G's' — they are doing their work well and are patronized by both passengers and cargo. I think we want a *shade more speed* but nothing more than that (I will refer to this presently). ~~Well, they cost £75,000.~~ Why should we pay for a ship giving only the same accommodation £25,000 to £30,000 more? If to have Lloyd's Classification and such like it seems to me too much to pay; if for longer life of the ship, the answer is that ships become obsolete long before the splendid material of which they are made is worn out, by reason of the advances in mechanical invention and improvement. If we can afford to pay more than £75,000 for a steamer, then let the additional money be put into a ship of *increased size* not into *more finish of a smaller steamer*.

We cannot, as you say, give any builder *carte blanche*; but if our own designers are set free say from Lloyd's requirements would not a saving — and a large one — be effected? Mr. List says yes. It is a technical point, and our technical advisers must say whether it is so or no.

As to speed we cannot well go faster than the 22½ days if we are really to *have a large steamer*, because to drive a large steamer fast means large and costly engines and large space devoted to engines, boilers and bunkers. Thus, in cargo, the larger the steamer the slower, rather than the faster, should she be. Again, we have our Mail Steamers for speed — we can beat anyone there — but our cargo steamers must be of a totally different type and *beat everyone there* not by speed but by being *immense carriers* and so being able to hold our own against everyone, for how could we fight now? Our small carriers being full at high rates; they could not be more than full at low or fighting rates, and this leads us to the second great consideration.

The trade has entirely changed, and the time has now come when you can actually get a cargo of 4,000, 5,000, 6,000 tons and even more; and here is the solution of our homeward cargo difficulty with our intermediate boats; for now, with a cargo of 5,000 tons, you can hope not only to pay your way but make a profit on your outward earnings; and seeing the large number of passengers we have to accommodate in *open berths* we have three strings to our bow for filling a large carrier, viz. —

- (a) Large amount of cargo,
- (b) Large number of passengers,
- (c) Coal to fill up if not enough cargo.

Looking to all these factors we can boldly go forward and build two *immense carriers* if we have got the money. But if we want *high speed and finish* we cannot pay for them.

Again, our *cheapest way* to meet the growing trade and our *safest way* is to make the accommodation in our weekly sailings as large as possible; and I would not fear to see a ship with cargo capacity 6,000 or 6,500 tons. For say she took 400 open berth passengers, this would require 1,200 tons space, leaving only 5,300 tons

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for cargo and coal for the round voyage. But we could only afford to have such a ship if she cost proportionately not more than a 'G', that is more because she is larger but not more for fittings, classification, etc. We see the large numbers going to the Cape — they all need food, clothes, etc. We see they have already eaten up all the wheat — our steamers are full of sugar from Mauritius! Here is a guarantee that our trade cannot seriously fall off in a short period as these people cannot rapidly return, and we see the deep level prospects are such that a large population can have the means of subsistence for many years to come. Hence I am sorry to go back to 425 feet as against 442.

It is too costly for us to have such highly finished steamers — when Mr. Pirrie looked over the *Arundel Castle* he said at once: 'This steamer must have cost £100,000'.

Though he was engaged at this time, as we have seen, in a most difficult and technical discussion with Sir Donald Currie and his fellow-directors about the type and size of the new ships which it was necessary to build for the Union Castle Line, Percy Molteno had found time to prepare an elaborate monograph on a scheme of Federation for South Africa, suggested to him, no doubt, by his study of an important chapter in his father's life following on Lord Carnarvon's abortive scheme. His plan was to introduce the subject to the public of South Africa, British and Dutch, by means of a series of anonymous articles in the *Cape Times*, whose editor was Edmund Garrett, a brilliant young journalist who had recently gone out to South Africa for his health, and was to make his mark as an ardent Imperialist and uncompromising supporter of the Rhodes-Chamberlain-Milner policy. But at this moment the Rhodes Ministry rested on Dutch Afrikaner support; for Jan Hofmeyr and the Bond were still sided with Rhodes. There was therefore no reason why Molteno should not apply to Garrett. His letter, dated December 13th, 1895, began as follows:

I am personally unknown to you as you are to myself. I am, however, to some extent acquainted with your career as a journalist; and when Mr. St. Leger informed me that he had entered into communication with you with a view to your taking up work with his journal in South Africa, I was very much pleased to know that there was a chance of your giving your valuable services to South Africa, where honest, independent journalism is much in need of adherents.

Since then I have read with pleasure your articles in the *Cape Times*. I merely mention this to you now to show you how it is that I am about to place so much confidence in a stranger to myself personally. Should you desire to know more of myself, it will be easy for you to ascertain all you may wish to know at the Cape.

He thought that Garrett's desire 'to further the true interests of South Africa' should prove a common bond between them, and enclosed a set of papers on South African Federation which he had written. He suggested that they might appear under the heading of 'The South African Federalist', signed 'Capensis', in the *Cape Times*.

Percy & Fed

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The papers in *The American Federalist*, he observed, written by Hamilton, Madison and Jay, which supplied a philosophic basis for the United States Constitution, had consisted of about 2,000 to 2,500 words apiece. He thought this the right length. He wanted to start publishing as soon as possible, and afterwards to issue the series in book form. The authorship was to be kept a secret.

But before these negotiations with Garrett had been concluded, a bombshell, in the shape of the Jameson Raid, shattered the plan and converted Garrett from a potential ally into one of the most pernicious and active enemies of the true interests, as Moltano understood them, of South Africa.

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CHAPTER XII

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RHODES AND THE RAID

FROM the time of his marriage to the end of 1895 Percy Moltano — as we have seen — had settled down to a career in which shipping business engaged most of his working hours, and family life was divided between London and Parklands, with a visit to Sir Donald and Lady Currie at Garth in August or September. It was only by extraordinary industry and economy of time that he was able to make progress with the *Life* of his father and with a subsidiary essay on South African Federation. He corresponded regularly with his relatives at the Cape and kept in touch with political and financial developments in South Africa. But neither he nor they suspected the convulsions that lay ahead. For the Jameson Raid started a new chapter in the history of South Africa and made Percy Moltano one of the most influential combatants in the great controversy between imperialism and liberalism which was to last more than ten years. To understand the sequence of events and the course of action which he was to pursue, first in preventing, then in resisting, war, and lastly in helping to find a satisfactory peace settlement, make it necessary to retrace our steps a little in a brief historical retrospect. Otherwise the Raid and its consequences and the underlying forces of the long conflict will not be intelligible to readers of this biography.

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In his *Impressions of South Africa*, written during and after his visit in 1895, James Bryce made the year 1884 a landmark; for until that year, as he observed, Great Britain and Portugal had been the only European Powers established in South Africa. Then it was that the new impulse for colonial expansion prompted Germany to acquire German Damaraland, and the Cameroons to the north-west of Cape Colony, and the Zanzibar coast in East Africa. Italy and France joined in the scramble, and Britain was roused by this competition, which Cecil Rhodes, adopting the metaphor of diamond diggers, described as 'pegging out claims for posterity'. At that time Seeley, in lectures at Cambridge which Percy attended, was teaching or preaching the doctrine of imperial expansion and popularizing what Harcourt called the 'lust for territorial aggrandisement'.

Background

Within nine years [wrote Bryce] from the assumption of the Protectorate over British Bechuanaland (which Boer action had precipitated in 1885) the whole unappropriated country up to the Zambesi came under British control.

TL

Later on treaties with Germany, Portugal, and the Congo defined spheres of influence with little or no regard to the rights of the natives. A treaty with Lobengula in 1888 was followed in 1889 by the grant of a Royal Charter to the British South Africa Company, formed by Cecil Rhodes for the purpose of conquering and exploiting the territories soon to be known as Rhodesia. In due course Lobengula and his Matabele warriors were subdued by

TL

the Chartered Company, and the Transvaal was closed in by British territory except on the Portuguese side, where it retained an outlet to Delagoa Bay. But no King Solomon's mines were found in Chartered territory. The Empire Builder himself, often referred to in Molteno's correspondence as 'the Colossus' soon found that Rhodesia was a costly conquest even for millionaires with a large following in the City; and the simple people who had invested in Chartered shares became uneasy. The London Press had told them that Rhodesia was 'fabulously rich' in precious metals and that vast stretches of land watered by 'a network of unfailing streams' would soon fatten cattle and smile with corn. But in the meantime, as more and more money was needed to bridge the gap between expenditure and revenue, Rhodes in his embarrassment began to covet the gold-mines of the Rand, to which adventurers of all nationalities had been flocking since 1885. Johannesburg was attracting far more speculative capital than Kimberley had ever done, and the gold rush was enriching the Transvaal. True, the mining industry was very profitable and lightly taxed; but Rhodes and his associates, not content with the riches they were amassing under Kruger's rule, began to harbour designs against the Boer Republic.

Cecil Rhodes' character is difficult to draw. A cosmopolitan financier, he associated the accumulation of wealth not only with power and political ambitions but also with international peace. He cultivated good relations with the Germans and the Americans as well as with the Dutch in Cape Colony. The famous Rhodes Trust, as everyone knows, was framed to bring Englishmen from the Colonies, Americans from the United States, and Germans from the Empire: of his friend the Kaiser — a friendship of which Rhodes was proud — to his beloved Oxford. W. T. Stead was one of the trustees until he broke with Rhodes over the Raid.

Lady Bryce once told me of the impressions which she and her husband formed of Rhodes. Bryce was a Fellow of Oriel, and had known him there at various times between 1873 and 1881, while Rhodes was keeping his terms intermittently and amassing a fortune at Kimberley. 'Rhodes', said Lady Bryce, 'was a mixture of good and evil.' She and her husband liked him and stayed with him in South Africa in 1895, just before the Raid. He was not in the least a miser or in the narrow sense a moneygrubber; but he over-estimated the money power, and thought that with it he could buy off anyone who crossed his path or threw obstacles in the way of his ambitious schemes. He was in a hurry; for, as he told Lady Bryce, he never went to bed with any certainty that he would be alive next morning.

In the early days of the Chartered Company, as we are told by his biographer, Mr. Basil Williams, Rhodes, when discussing his plans, used to pull out the map of South Africa and laying his hand on the whole region up to the central lakes would say: 'All this is to be painted red; that is my dream.'

This visionary Empire was to be an Anglo-Dutch Federation of States under the British Flag, but independent of England. In his eyes the British Constitution

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Rhodes
P. 186

was 'an absurd anachronism' which should be remodelled on the lines of the American Union. At first he thought he could achieve his designs with the aid of Jan Hofmeyr and money power — for he held that every man has his price.

After taking his degree at Oxford in 1881 Rhodes started politics at the Cape as a friend of the Dutch farmers, who elected him for Barkly West. To ensure publicity for his speeches he bought a share in the *Cape Argus*. He also made friends with the new Governor Sir Hercules Robinson, and with the Imperial Secretary, Captain Graham Bower, who both favoured co-operation with the Dutch and a reversal of Bartle Frere's policy.

Another of Rhodes' friends was Leander Star Jameson whom he first met in 1878 at Kimberley, where 'Dr. Jim' was practising. The doctor, a clever and agreeable talker, was to prove not only a dexterous and active politician, but an adventurer, whose rashness and impetuosity brought ruin on his patron and helped to plunge South Africa into a disastrous civil war. The design which ended in the Jameson Raid began to be formed after 1894 when Rhodes appointed Jameson Administrator for Southern Rhodesia.

As Liberals of the old school and colonial administrators of experience like Molteno's friend Sir George Grey perceived at the time, the grant of the Royal Charter to Rhodes by Lord Salisbury's government was a grave error of policy against which the history of chartered companies should have been a sufficient warning. The combination of a commercial monopoly with wide political powers and the right to maintain military police ought never to have been conceded by the British Government. Though he put two Dukes and Albert (Earl) Grey on the Board to give it an air of respectability, Rhodes was practically dictator, with Alfred Beit always at his side and Jameson a too willing instrument.

Alfred Beit, a Jew from Hamburg and the shrewdest financier of his time in South Africa, having made his fortune at Kimberley, stayed under the spell of Rhodes' enthusiasm to put his rare gifts at his command with a generosity and self-effacement rarely equalled.

So wrote Mr. Basil Williams in his *Life of Rhodes*. But it was to Jameson that Rhodes confided his schemes of aggrandisement, and Jameson abounded in ready expedients to overcome difficulties. Their ruthless treatment of the Rhodesian chiefs and natives would hardly have been possible had there been proper supervision and control of the Chartered Company by the Imperial authorities in the period between 1890 and 1893, when the unfortunate Mashonas and Matabeles were subjugated. Professor Eric Walker calls the Matabele War of 1893, which ended in Lobengula's death, 'a turning-point in the modern history of South Africa'.

It was to the interest of Sir Donald Currie and his Steamship Company to maintain cordial relations with successive South African governments, including those of the two Boer Republics. The Castle Line had agencies at the various ports of the Cape Colony and Natal. Moreover, Sir Donald had large investments in South

Rhodes' Cape
political career

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Africa, and relied upon Percy, whose knowledge of conditions in South Africa was extensive, minute, and always up to date, to keep him well advised and well informed about all that was going on there.

Percy
Rhodes

Percy and his political friends at the Cape had been from the first on good terms with Cecil Rhodes, whose dream of a united South Africa, based on friendly co-operation between British and Dutch, appealed to them all. Honest public men in Cape Colony might feel uneasily suspicious of the money power which Rhodes was using for political purposes; but so long as those political purposes agreed with their own, they were naturally inclined to wink at his machinations. For was it not their party which maintained in power the Rhodes Administration of 1890? In that Administration Rhodes had as colleagues John X. Merriman (the Treasurer General), J. W. Sauer and Rose Innes, and at the same time he enjoyed the support of Jan Hofmeyr, the astute politician who controlled the Afrikaner Bond. Unfortunately his Cabinet included James Sivewright, a Scotch contractor and an ally of Hofmeyr.

From 1890 until the end of 1895 South Africa was advancing in material progress. The gold mines of the Rand were attracting British and foreign capital, while a rapid increase of gold exports (which helped to pay for enlarged imports of machinery and manufactures) was of immense benefit to shipping. The Rhodes Ministry had the good sense to safeguard the interests of farmers and miners by a low tariff on imported manufactures. During this period, until March, 1895, Sir Henry Loch was High Commissioner and Governor of Cape Colony. He was succeeded by Sir Hercules Robinson (Lord Rosmead) who reigned for a second time from May, 1895, to April, 1897. They both maintained excellent relations with Natal, whose Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, held office from 1893 to 1901. Sir John Robinson was Premier of Natal until 1897; F. W. Reitz was President of the Orange Free State until 1895, when he was succeeded by M. T. Steyn. Old Paul Kruger (Oom Paul) had been President of the Transvaal Republic since May, 1883, when it recovered its independence.

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Sivewright
Scandal

Towards the end of 1892, when Cecil Rhodes was in England, it became known at the Cape that Sir James Sivewright had made a public contract with a friend which, if not actually corrupt, was clearly improper. Rhodes was ready to cancel the contract but not to dismiss Sivewright. Merriman, Sauer, and Rose Innes were disgusted, and eventually, in April, 1893, they resigned rather than remain in office with Sivewright. Rhodes reconstructed his Ministry, thanks to the continued support of Jan Hofmeyr and the Afrikaner Bond; Molteno's friend, W. P. Schreiner, of German origin, a leading member of the Bar, joined the Government, and so did Sir Gordon Sprigg, an opportunist who had already been twice Prime Minister and was at that time leader of the Opposition.

Percy Molteno was disturbed by this affair, which shook confidence in Rhodes' integrity. But 'the Colossus'

still stood for co-operation between English and Dutch and for the Federation which Percy greatly desired. Moreover, the business interests of the Castle Line dictated good relations with the Cape Government, and Rhodes remained friendly. As for Percy he had every reason to look at the bright side of things. South Africa was prosperous; he was making a fine income and accumulating a moderate fortune; he had mastered the shipping business and was developing his grand design of bringing Cape fruit to the London market by improved methods of packing and transport. In truth he was too busy at home and in too optimistic mood to worry about the future welfare of the Cape Colony, where Dutch and English seemed to be progressing towards unity and prosperity. He was also immersed in the *Life of his father* on which he had embarked partly from motives of filial piety and family pride, partly to prove from a complete study of the evidence with what wisdom Sir J. C. Molteno had combated the false imperialism of Carnarvon, Froude and Frere, and how disastrous had been the consequences of their overthrow of the Molteno Cabinet. It was this inquiry that led him into the subsidiary project of an essay or series of essays to show the advantages of federal government and the kind of Federation which would best suit South Africa.

Probably one reason why the Raid took him by surprise was that he knew of the close friendship between Rhodes and Hofmeyr, on which Rhodes' position as Premier depended, because through Hofmeyr Rhodes could rely on the electoral support of the Afrikaner Bond. Molteno was of course well aware of the political and social troubles at Johannesburg. In 1895, ten years after the discovery of gold on the Rand the Boers, a small pastoral nation of some 70,000 spread over an area of about 110,000 square miles — nearly double that of England and Wales — were in danger of being swamped by 100,000 foreigners from England, Europe and America, all attracted by the lure of gold. Such an influx, as a contemporary writer observed, was naturally unwelcome to the Boer farmers; indeed 'the men who were fast making of Johannesburg the greatest and richest town of South Africa were, it must be allowed, a somewhat motley crew'. Though most of the newcomers were British subjects 'those who seemed likely to gain the greatest influence were Jews'. To maintain perfect order and justice in such a community, said the writer, would have taxed the resources of a more efficient police and less corruptible officials than the old dopper President, Oom Paul, possessed; but the grievances were much exaggerated, and it was no wonder that Kruger had misgivings about the time when diggers and gamblers, with no patriotic zeal for the Republic, might get the franchise and outvote the old burghers. Accordingly, to meet the situation and safeguard the State he made fourteen years a condition of full citizenship. This the Outlanders resented, and even the Cape Dutch, who sympathized with their kinsmen in the Transvaal, thought that the President should have compromised by granting Johannesburg a municipal council and allowing it to elect some

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Members to the Volksraad. This, as we shall see, was Molteno's view. But the Boers were unwilling to make concessions; they remembered that the English, after seizing the Cape and driving them into the wilderness, had annexed their Republic. After Majuba it had been restored, but now they suspected a conspiracy again to rob them of their independence for the sake of the gold mines.¹

The cosmopolitan bosses of the mining industry — Wernher, Eckstein, Rudd, Albu, Hays-Hammond, etc. — did not take much part in the political agitation until the summer of 1895 when, at the instance of Rhodes, Jameson and Beit, they began to help the Reformers with money in the hope of reducing the taxation and lowering wages. By so doing one mining company calculated that it could increase its profits by two millions a year.

With good government [said Hays-Hammond at the outbreak of the Boer War] there should be an abundance of labour, and with an abundance of labour there will be no difficulty in cutting down wages, because it is preposterous to pay a Kaffir the present wages. He would be quite as well satisfied — in fact he would work longer — if you gave him half the amount.

Hammond's colleague Rudd, who advocated compulsion (practically slavery) for the natives, argued: 'If under the cry of civilization we in Egypt lately mowed down ten or twenty thousand dervishes with Maxim guns, surely it cannot be considered a hardship to compel the natives in South Africa to do a little honest work.'

It may be concluded that the wages question, the dynamite monopoly and the taxation of the mines (which would now be regarded as very light indeed) were the motives that induced the gold-mining magnates to favour the Jameson Raid and the Boer War, though the franchise was the ostensible grievance.

In the summer and autumn of 1895 a fictitious prosperity, fed by wild speculation on the London Stock Exchange, had dazzled South Africa and London. Rhodes was the magician. He waved a wand which converted worthless prospectuses and claims into auriferous land and wealth beyond the dreams of human avarice. Rhodesia became associated with fabulous treasure. Rhodes himself recommended friends at Oxford to buy shares in the Chartered Company 'as an investment for your grandchildren', and in September, 1895, during what the *Economist* called 'the wildest and most indiscriminate gamble that the Stock Exchange has witnessed for many a year', the £1 Chartered shares rose to £9.

Meanwhile Rhodes had been busy in British politics. So early as 1889 he had bought off Irish opposition to the Charter by subscribing £10,000 to Parnell's party fund. Again in 1894, when Lord Rosebery and the Liberal Imperialists came into office, Rhodes' influence in fashionable society spread, and these new connections afterwards helped to paralyse Liberal opposition to the Boer War.

¹ See *Peace or War in South Africa*, by A. S. M. Methuen, chapter 2.

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(or white) wages

Liberal
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Boer War

What induced Rhodes to plan the mad adventure of the Raid is still a mystery. Megalomania, egotism, overweening conceit of his own power, may explain the aberration. He had been too successful. Jameson seems to have persuaded him that the old Dopper could be caught napping, and that a revolution could be engineered which, magnified by the inspired Press in South Africa and London, would bring in British troops to restore order and force Kruger to submit. This was the plot. Rhodes's friends always stated that the English Colonial Office was apprised of the plan and that he was secretly encouraged by Imperial Officers in South Africa. It is significant that he had got the Colonial Secretary's permission to incorporate a corner of Bechuanaland in the Chartered Company's territory. Pitsani, in this 'jumping-off' ground, was made the headquarters of a body of Mounted Troopers raised by the Chartered Company under the command of English regular officers. During the autumn of 1895 the conspirators arranged for the formation and arming of a volunteer force in Johannesburg. At the proper time an alarm was to be raised and Imperial Troops were to be asked to come to the succour of the British inhabitants. Jameson went to Johannesburg and procured the famous letter, concocted some weeks before the proposed outbreak, signed by the leading Reformers, imploring him to come to the gold-reefed city to rescue its defenceless women and children. This letter, appealing to the credulity and sympathy of the British public at home, was to be dated and published when the signal was given. Unluckily for the conspirators it appeared prematurely in an English newspaper. It was made notorious by one of the worst sets of verses ever composed by a Poet Laureate.²

The Jameson
Same plan

On a given day [to quote Methuen's account] the English troops were to start from Pitsani, ride rapidly across the Transvaal, and arrive at Johannesburg at the moment when the Outlanders had risen in rebellion. A *coup d'état* would then be effected, the Boer oligarchy would be taken by surprise, and the conspiracy would meet with immediate success.

Towards the end of December all seemed to have been arranged; but the machinery broke down. The Reformers were not really prepared for a serious rising; most of them were more addicted to share-pushing, gambling and racing than to fighting. However, a manifesto of grievances was issued; a mass meeting was called on the Rand for January 6th, 1896; the signal for a rising was to be the announcement that a flotation of Chartered shares would take place on January 8th. Suddenly the Reformers lost heart; they resolved to postpone 'the flotation', and sent messengers to stop Jameson at all costs. But Jameson was not to be deterred by telegrams postponing the flotation. On December 29th with a body of over 500 mounted troopers he crossed the frontier and rode for Johannesburg, where he was to be welcomed by the Reformers. Instead he was met at Krugersdorp by a Boer commando, surrounded and defeated in a few hours. The invaders surrendered on January 2nd, 1896, after losing a few men.

JTL

² Alfred Austin's: 'Wrong? was it wrong?' etc.

Meanwhile the Reformers, horrified on hearing that Jameson insisted on coming to their rescue, had plucked up enough courage to distribute their store of arms and declare a provisional government. Happily for them and for the Raiders Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner, arrived at Pretoria just in time. Johannesburg laid down its arms, and President Kruger contented himself with arresting sixty of the Reformers and handing over Jameson and his Raiders for punishment to the Imperial authorities.

The ringleaders in Johannesburg were tried by Boer Judges and convicted of treason. Some were sentenced to death but reprieved and terms of imprisonment imposed. Altogether President Kruger acted with prudent magnanimity. He celebrated Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897 by releasing the last two of the prisoners.³ At the same time he granted a Municipal Council to Johannesburg, and repealed some obnoxious laws and regulations which had been imposed immediately after the Raid.

In the autumn of 1938 the *Sunday Times* had some correspondence about 'Songs of the Jameson Raid', and several letters came from men who were in Johannesburg at the time or had actually been with Jameson. One of them, Captain C. A. Knapp, recalled how Cecil Rhodes, when ordered home to appear before the Government Inquiry, expressed his readiness to 'face the music'. After the Raid, he added, 'Alfred Austin's "Wrong? Was it Wrong?" was recited at occasional concerts but fell somewhat flat.' Probably the most successful ditty of the period was 'Hands Off, Germany!' which Hayden Coffin introduced into the *Artist's Model*. The title was suggested by a leading article in an evening paper headed 'Hands Off!' in reference to the Kaiser's telegram of congratulations to Kruger. It is said to have been passed with difficulty by the Censor, as the Kaiser was grandson of our reigning sovereign, Queen Victoria. It began 'Let pinchbeck Cæsar strut and crow'.

On January 6th, 1896, Jameson's chief, Cecil Rhodes, resigned the Premiership of Cape Colony. Unfortunately the chief culprit never expressed in public any contrition or apology either for the deceit he had practised on his colleagues or for his criminal invasion of a neighbouring State. For the moment he had his hands full in Rhodesia. After the capture of Jameson and his men the Matabele Chiefs saw an opportunity of recovering the lands of which they had been despoiled. Another native war began, but Rhodes took the matter in hand and arranged terms of peace in June, 1896. Thereupon, encouraged by several demonstrations in his favour, he resolved to brazen it out, and sailed for London to appear before a Committee of the House of Commons which had been appointed to inquire and report on the genesis of the Raid and the administration of the Chartered Company. Though he soon won back the support of the Loyalists, as they were called, he had been forced to resign not only the Premiership (which he was never to regain) but also

³ In most cases the sentences of imprisonment were commuted for fines (which were paid by Rhodes and Beit), the prisoners promising to abstain from politics for three years.

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Rhodes
resigned

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for a time his Directorship of the Chartered Company.

In the course of Molteno's correspondence we shall see what disastrous effects the Raid and the two Reports upon it produced in England and at the Cape. It was proved that Rhodes, while Premier of Cape Colony, had made arrangements for invading the Transvaal Republic without the knowledge of his colleagues, and had acquired jumping-off ground for the purpose. The evidence of Miss Flora Shaw and others, though not conclusive, convinced most of those who followed the proceedings that the Raid was planned with the cognizance of the Colonial Office and of august members of English Society. There was a strong suspicion that B. F. Hawkesley, Rhodes's solicitor, possessed telegrams proving the complicity of the Colonial Office and threatened to use them—a suspicion strongly confirmed when Chamberlain, in the Debate on the Report, whitewashed Rhodes in the House of Commons, saying that he had done nothing inconsistent with his personal honour. Rhodes's remark on the 'unctuous rectitude' of his critics, and Jameson's assertion: 'I know if I had succeeded I should have been forgiven', may be compared with the statement attributed to George Wyndham, 'who was in all the secrets of the Rhodes group', that Chamberlain, though not involved in the Raid, was concerned in intrigues against the Transvaal Republic, 'which would obviously refer to the instructions to Robinson (the High Commissioner) to use an armed force if necessary in case of a rising in Johannesburg.⁴ In any case there was a secret which it was deemed impolitic to expose; and its concealment aggravated the suspicion and resentment not only of the Boers in the Transvaal and Orange Free State but also of their Dutch kinsmen throughout South Africa.—'Probably no event', wrote Methuen, 'has ever wrought such mischief in South Africa as the Jameson Raid.' He might have added that it poisoned our relations with foreign nations and Governments. The French Press poured insults on the British Government and even upon Queen Victoria. The Kaiser's telegram of congratulation to Kruger raised a storm in England which not only helped Chamberlain and Rhodes at the time but contributed to the fatal train of events that led through a new armaments race to the Great War.

Rhodes never recovered his position. He had betrayed the Dutch and their English Colonial friends, including the Moltenos. Henceforth Percy and his brothers Charles and James turned to Merriman and Sauer, who with Schreiner and Hofmeyr formed a strong opposition to Sprigg's ministry. Sprigg had to lean upon the money power of Rhodes, who now controlled the English Press in South Africa and was gaining more and more influence over London newspapers. He quickly emerged from his temporary retirement, and identified himself with the Loyalist or Progressive Party, which eventually captured Milner and brought about the South African War.

Meanwhile the Orange Free State under President Steyn, an admirably governed pastoral republic which had hitherto urged President Kruger to be more liberal

⁴ See the excellent *Life of Cecil Rhodes* by Mr. Basil Williams, page 283. Chapters XV and XVI on the Raid should be read.

What Rhodes had done

Can
the
land

Result - Afrikaner
nationalism
forward

Percy James
Charles Smith
p. 283

towards the Outlanders, now concluded a defensive alliance with the Transvaal. And Kruger, with the support of his burghers, began to prepare against another and more formidable invasion by importing arms and munitions on a large scale.

James Bryce, the most accomplished political investigator of our time, visited South Africa with his wife in the autumn of 1895. They travelled to all parts, including the Transvaal and Rhodesia. They conversed with men of all parties, races, and opinions. They were the guests of Cecil Rhodes. Yet they had not the faintest suspicion when they parted from him and sailed from Cape Town early in December, 1895, that a plot to invade the Transvaal would explode before they arrived in London. We can therefore easily imagine Molteno's surprise and consternation when the news of the Jameson Raid arrived in London. His sister Caroline was staying with him at Palace Court and wrote to Maria Anderson on Thursday morning, January 2nd, 1896:

There is the greatest excitement and amazement over the news from the Transvaal. I could scarcely believe it. Last night we dined at the Curries', a large party of sixteen. Sir Donald took me in, and of course the great topic of conversation was this news. It seems pretty certain that it is another deep scheme of Mr. Rhodes'. There are no cables as to opinion or feeling in the Colony.

On the following day she wrote again:

We are all in the greatest excitement and indignation over this Transvaal news. Last night we dined at the Wiseleys' — it was Mrs. Wiseley's birthday. Sir Donald again took me in to dinner, and we discussed Cape politics most of the time. When we got home at eleven o'clock, there was a telegram for Percy with the news of Jameson's defeat and surrender. The whole thing is most astounding. Someone went off at once with a cab after Sir Donald to give him the news. Dr. Murray thinks that this will mean the end of the Chartered Company, and I hope so. No one doubts that Mr. Rhodes is at the bottom of it all, and that he has over-reached himself. It is a most miserable stirring up of race feeling again. We can think of nothing else.

On January 4th Percy wrote to Garrett asking him (if he had not already started with the Federation articles) to await a further communication. 'Recent events are so startling and so serious that a total revision of the papers may be necessary; so please return them to me if you have not begun.' If however they had been begun, he asked him to make some important changes. One of these ran:

President Kruger has had to face one of the greatest difficulties which any statesman can be called upon to meet — namely the peaceful invasion of his State by foreigners who now outnumber the original population. The problem presented by this condition of affairs is so difficult that it would try the powers of the ablest statesman; and if a solution has not yet been attained, there is every reason why consideration and patience should be extended to the President's efforts to solve the difficulty.

Jameson
Raid news
reaches
Percy

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The events which had just taken place, he added, were 'most unfortunate for every interest in South Africa and would excite the utmost alarm, regret, and anxiety among all the friends of South Africa'. This ended the negotiation. Henceforth until his death Garrett worked for the Loyalists though he did not like Rhodes.

On the same day, January 4th, Percy wrote to Charlie:

What a monstrous and wicked act of Jameson and those who are behind him in having contrived it. I hope public opinion will be sound at the Cape in supporting the Transvaal. This atrocious attack on it has done, and will do, enormous injury to genuine South African interests.

Percy pro-
Transvaal
- rightly

So far, he thought, Chamberlain's action had been worthy of England, and most of the Press had supported him; but the line taken by *The Times* had been 'most reprehensible'. He had heard that they knew beforehand of the Raid.

The universal impression here is that the whole thing has been planned by certain people and that Rhodes gave his approval. . . . If you have not yet delivered the portrait to Rhodes, please keep it and destroy my letter to him. . . . This morning it looks very like war with Germany, owing to its hostile attitude, intensified by the Emperor's message to Kruger.

On January 10th he had come to the conclusion that 'a searching inquiry must be held'. Kruger had behaved 'splendidly' in handing over Jameson and his officers to the High Commissioner. Consequently things seemed to be settling down. He felt certain that the Raid had been planned and arranged weeks or months before the Johannesburg crisis was engineered.

To talk of going to help women and children as if the Boers were a bloodthirsty horde of savages is abominable cant. . . . The Chartered Company must go as a political force in South Africa. It is a great pity that the Colonies and States of South Africa are not ready to take it all over as common territory. . . . I hope you will write me fully. Sprigg will surely not succeed in holding office during the next Session!

A few days later he wrote again to Charlie expressing satisfaction that the ferment in the Transvaal was subsiding. He hoped for 'a searching inquiry which will get at the bottom of the causes of the Raid and put the penalties on the proper shoulders'. On January 24th he asked Charlie for fuller information about Cape politics. 'Hofmeyr has evidently entirely broken with Rhodes. Why does he support Sprigg?' The gold mines, he feared, would suffer severely from the upset and consequent want of labour. The high price of food in Johannesburg was also serious and not easily remedied. 'What openings are there just now for the investment of money?'

Hofmeyr broken
with Rhodes

Soon afterwards he was urging his brother to get a Resolution passed by the Cape Parliament for an inquiry into the origin of the plot:

I fear there are strong forces being used here to stifle that part of the inquiry. You know I have always held it to be a grave constitutional danger to the Cape that

Rhodes should have had the control of such a large secret fund, and that it should have been used to influence elections at Kimberley. . . . I had a long talk with Sir George Grey last evening. He has always been against the Charter as you know, and he is furious at the action of Jameson and Rhodes.

Soon afterwards he began to receive letters from his brother. Charlie wrote on January 29th:

Of course there is no doubt that the whole affair was carefully planned for many months past, and the part Rhodes and Co. have taken can easily be proved. Why, look at the fact that many truck loads of arms and ammunition were forwarded to the Johannesburg siding of the De Beer's Company, concealed under coke, and also at the fact that men were engaged here in large numbers for the Chartered Company. Thirty of the best shots in the East Yorks. were got to resign and were sent up.

Charlie, however, did not think that Rhodes would attempt to deny his complicity, but they would have to guard against the 'endeavour, which will no doubt be made, to embroil the English Government with the Transvaal'. The Charter should certainly be withdrawn, for if the Raid had succeeded the Chartered Company would have broken the peace of South Africa and 'we should almost certainly have had a general race war'. A few days later (February 3rd, 1896) James wrote a lively letter about the Raid fiasco. Only a small inner circle 'of the Reformers' in Johannesburg were in the secret. Most of the people there had been completely misled. He had seen a good many members of the Reform Committee who had been used 'as pawns on the chessboard'. It was a plot of the money-bags to capture the Transvaal.

Jameson and his band are far from heroes. The lies about the fighting are too barefaced. The Boers had no more than 180 men who fired a gun. The night before the final fight Jameson and his men had an immense carouse with champagne, whisky, etc.; and they had any amount of ammunition when they showed the white flag.

The Boer mobilization, he added, had beaten Jameson. They had come eighty miles in twenty-four hours. Jameson had marched 122 miles in three days. The conduct of the leaders at Johannesburg, meantime, was disgraceful. While Jameson was in his tight corner they were upstairs at the Goldfields office with fifty fully-armed men to protect them:

I can assure you that all right-thinking people here are horribly disgusted. I do hope Chamberlain has known nothing of this, and that Rhodes cannot show on him. The Imperial officials here are in my opinion in the thick of it. I saw Newton on Thursday, December 20th. He told me he was going off that evening hurriedly. Well, he and Goold Adams and Metcalfe travelled up that night, arriving at Vryberg on the

De Beers smuggled arms to Oly

"A general race war"
 // - Afrikaner + English

28th. They kept them waiting there two hours and Captain H. arrived by special from Cape Town. Then they all went off to Mafeking and posted to Pitsani, where they all wished Jameson 'godspeed'.

The Dutch, he said, were fearfully disgusted, but had kept their heads. Sprigg, who had succeeded Rhodes as Prime Minister of Cape Colony, had offered Merriman the Agent-Generalship, which he had declined. The affair had placed Englishmen like Charles and James in an awkward position. As Hofmeyr had cut adrift from Rhodes, it had more or less driven them into the arms of the Bond. The upshot of it all had been to unite the two Boer Republics and to embitter race feeling in the Colony. The two brothers were convinced that 'the great financial houses are at the bottom of all the mischief'.

At this stage Percy thought Chamberlain had done fairly well, but he feared danger if the Colonial Secretary began to press his views about reforms on the Transvaal Government. He had observed that all the jingo articles in the Cape Press were being telegraphed to London to mislead public feeling about opinion at the Cape, yet he hoped and thought that Chamberlain would not allow himself to be made a catspaw. 'His answer last night (March 5th) in the House, saying that he had every reason to believe in Kruger's *bona fides*, was excellent.' Percy had seen a trooper of Jameson's force who denied the story of the carouse, 'and I don't myself see how they could have carried so much liquor so far'. He had heard from friends of the Reform Committee that they had been fooled by a few schemers. The best compromise plan, he thought, would be to give the franchise to the Outlanders but to limit the number of their representatives in the Volksraad, and at the same time to restrict the new foreign electorate to Johannesburg and the suburbs.

Charles & James
occupy unconv
position of the Rhodes
& Anderson Bond

1 A.P.

6 JUN 1933

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CHAPTER XIII

AFTER THE RAID, 1896 AND 1897

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NEXT to the Jameson Raid itself, and hardly less disastrous, were first the delay of more than a year in starting the Inquiry, secondly the misconduct of the Inquiry, and thirdly Chamberlain's whitewashing of Rhodes in the debate on the Report. These things poisoned the atmosphere at Pretoria and confirmed the suspicions of the Boers, not only that Chamberlain was implicated in the Raid, but also that he intended to seize the next favourable opportunity for depriving them of their independence. 3 UK
Emm

The ablest and most devoted of Milner's friends in the London Press was E. T. Cook, the Liberal Imperialist Editor of the *Daily News*, who supported the war policy from 1898 onwards until January 10th, 1901, when the control of the paper passed into the hands of the 'Pro-Boers', as we shall see in the course of our narrative. But at the time of the Raid Sir Hercules Robinson (Lord Rosmead) was still High Commissioner, and Sir Alfred Milner had no connection with the Raid and no responsibility for the Inquiry. Consequently we find in Chapter VIII of E. T. Cook's *Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War*, an impartial and most acute criticism of Chamberlain's policy between the Raid and the Inquiry as well as of the Inquiry itself, which he dubbed 'A Committee of No Inquiry'.

Chamberlain's
Action

Up to a point, he agreed, both Kruger and Chamberlain acted sensibly and prudently after the Raid. Kruger dealt magnanimously with the captive Raiders and Reformers, while Chamberlain 'did his obvious duty' in disavowing the Raid, putting the Raiders on trial, and depriving the Chartered Company of its military powers.

But what then? Kruger should have removed the Outlanders' grievances by a prompt measure of moderate reform, while the British Government's obvious duty, to quote E. T. Cook's own words, was 'to institute at once and to press home a searching inquiry into the whole circumstances of the Raid', and meanwhile 'to go slowly' in diplomacy. 'The reasons for prompt inquiry were obvious. The Inquiry had been promised to Kruger. It was due no less to the honour of the Government itself.' Besides, as Lord Rosebery himself said on May 15th, 1896, we owed the 'promptest, most searching, and most impartial inquiry' not merely to ourselves and South Africa — 'to show that we mean to deal fairly as between neighbours and neighbours' — but also to Europe, which suspected the innocence of our intentions; for 'the Press of half Europe', he said, 'professes to believe that we, our Government, and our people, were part and parcel of the recent Raid upon the Transvaal Republic.' A month later in the House of Lords Rosebery predicted only too correctly that the investigation would be 'stale and fly-blown'.

Besides delaying the investigation, Chamberlain tried to force Kruger's hand almost immediately after the Raid, but bungled it, and had to withdraw on the advice of his High Commissioner, Lord Rosmead, who said: 'In

my opinion our best policy is to sit still.' Chamberlain's retreat took place in the House of Commons on May 8th, 1896, when he used language often quoted by Percy, which he afterwards had reason to regret:

In some quarters the idea is put forward that the Government ought to have issued an ultimatum to President Kruger, an ultimatum which would certainly have been neglected and must have led to war. Sir, I do not propose to discuss such a contingency as that. A war in South Africa would be one of the most serious wars which could possibly be waged. It would be in the nature of a civil war. It would be a long war, a bitter war, and a costly war; and it would leave behind it the embers of a strife which I believe generations would hardly be long enough to extinguish.

Chamberlain's
accurate
prediction of
Boer War
consequence
Quoted

Three years later Chamberlain was blustering and bluffing his way into that very war whose character and consequences he had so accurately predicted.

When at last in January, 1896, the Select Committee of the House of Commons met, there was only one essential matter to explore. That was (I again quote E. T. Cook) 'the complicity, or foreknowledge if any, of the Colonial Office'. In the course of the Committee's Inquiry it was learned that two Imperial officers, Sir Graham Bower at Cape Town and Sir Francis Newton, Resident Magistrate in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, were in some degree cognizant of the Plot. Did their foreknowledge extend to other and higher personages? Did Chamberlain know of the plan when he handed over the border strip, of jumping-off ground, to the Chartered Company? Dr. Rutherford Harris's evidence of what he said to Mr. Chamberlain on that occasion and also of what he said to Fairfield, a Permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office, is difficult to reconcile with Chamberlain's disclaimer, or with Flora Shaw's telegrams. Fairfield died in the autumn of 1896, but Harris said that both Beit and Rochfort Maguire were aware of what he told Fairfield. The Committee did not examine them on the subject. Again, Lord Grey had played a principal part in the negotiations between the Colonial Office and the Chartered Company. Lord Grey was not called as a witness. Worst of all, B. F. Hawkesley, Rhodes's solicitor, with whom Percy Moltano was intimate, knew all the facts; but when he began to tell of what had passed between him and the Colonial Office, a member of the Committee objected and nothing more was elicited. A complete set of the cables was in the possession of Rhodes, but those produced were incomplete. When Hawkesley was called upon to produce the missing telegrams, he declined, and the Committee did not insist on their production; nor did the Committee see the covering correspondence, though it was alleged to be highly important. One must agree with Cook that 'the Committee's failure to probe the matter to the end was a grievous blunder; it left suspicion plenty of material to feed upon, and to this day it lives and thrives'.

Labouchere and Blake were the only members of the Committee who wanted to pursue the investigation. Sir

The Report
 William Harcourt and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, to their lasting discredit, agreed with the majority, wishing perhaps to shield an old colleague or thinking that the condemnation of Mr. Rhodes in the Report, signed by Chamberlain, was sufficient. The Report, which exonerated Chamberlain, was issued on July 13th, 1897. It declared that Rhodes

deceived the High Commissioner, representing the Imperial Government, concealed his views from his colleagues in the Colonial Ministry and from the Board of the British South Africa Company, and led his subordinates to believe that his plans were approved by his superiors.

The Report also asserted that Rhodes must have been aware that any statements [in the suppressed cables] purporting to implicate the Colonial Office were unfounded, and the use made of them in support of his action in South Africa was not justified.

Percy View of Chamberlain
 This allegation was not proved, but if true why did not Chamberlain insist that the suppressed cablegrams, which Rhodes had shown him, should be shown to the Committee? Molteneo always believed that Chamberlain was implicated and that the documents possessed by Sir Graham Bower, which have not yet seen the light, will prove it.

Blackmail!
 Perhaps the most suspicious circumstance of all is that in the House of Commons debate which followed immediately on the issue of the Report, Chamberlain white-washed Rhodes. 'Nothing', he said, 'had been proved, and nothing exists, which affects Mr. Rhodes's personal character as a man of honour.' E. T. Cook's comments are sufficiently severe. He arrives at the conclusion that Chamberlain's statement 'only tended to deepen the mystery hanging over this unexplored affair'. Hawkesley was in the gallery of the House of Commons. It was said by his friends that if Chamberlain's statement had not been satisfactory to Rhodes, Rhodes had authorized Hawkesley to produce the missing telegrams.

When Kruger heard the news at Pretoria of the Report and subsequent debate, he expressed his indignation to J. B. Robinson, a friendly mine-owner:

'Do you think', he cried out, 'that we are so innocent as not to know that Mr. Rhodes held a pistol at the heads of certain men in England and said to them: "If you do not support me, I will denounce you and your complicity in the Raid"?'¹

From this necessary digression we now return to the point at which we left Percy Molteneo in our last chapter. Early in March, two months after the Raid, he

had a long talk with Mr. Bryce on South Africa, in which he is now very much interested, but of course in a hurried visit he could not get very accurate or deep impressions. He agrees that the native is not fit as a whole for the franchise, and compares the unfitness of the negro in the United States, which he discusses in one or two chapters of the later editions of his work on America. I said he went further than most Englishmen would go in admitting this.

¹ See E. T. Cook's *Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War*, third edition, 1902, Chapter VIII.