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THE
BRITISH SETTLEMENT OF
NATAL



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BRITISH SETTLEMENT OF
NATAL

A Study in Imperial Migration

BY

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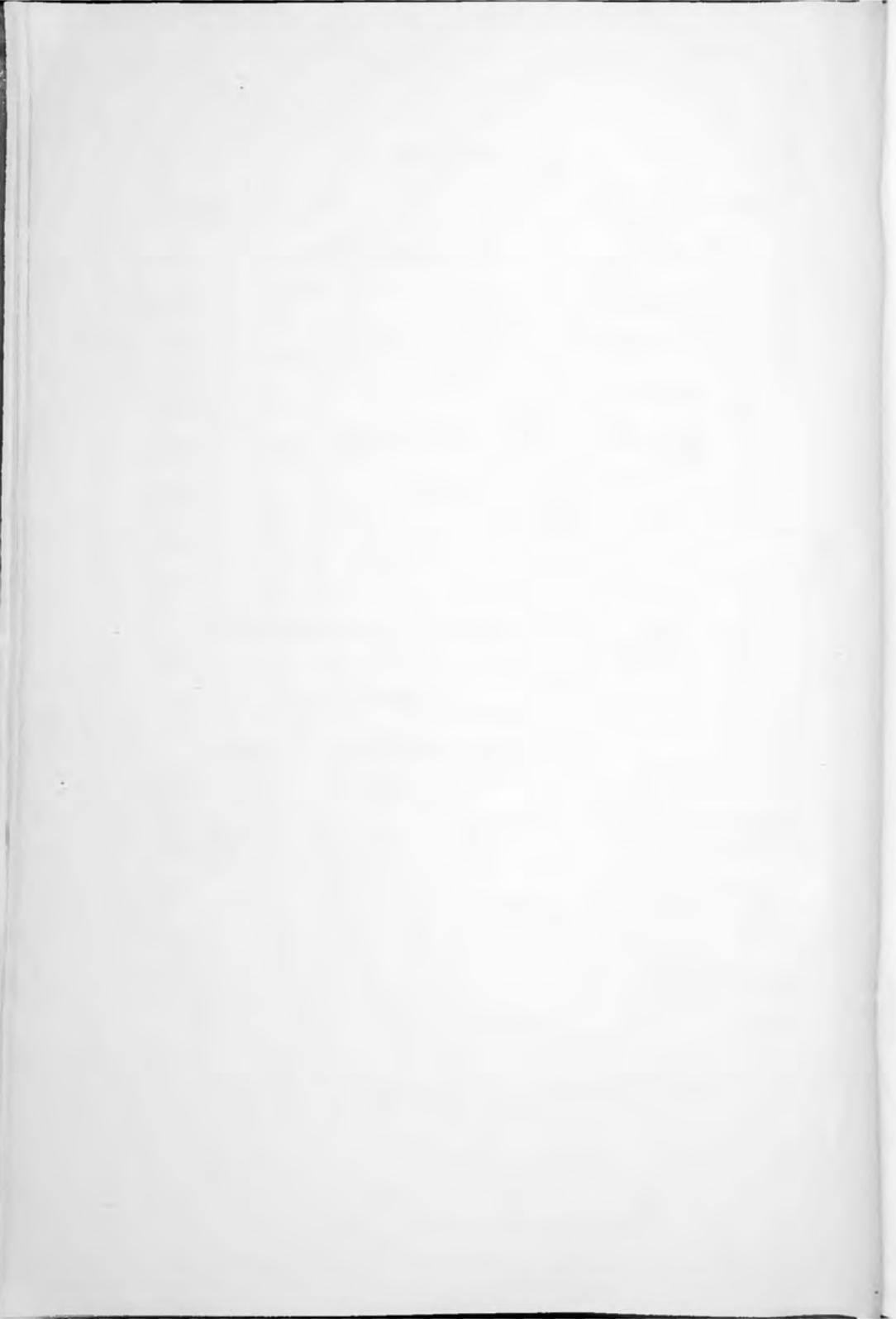
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CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	page vii
I Natal before the Coming of the Voortrekkers	1
II The Republic of Natal	22
III The Establishment of British Authority, 1845-9	66
IV The Emigration Companies	94
V Emigration to Natal from the Industrial Towns	121
VI The Rural Counties of England	149
VII Scotland and Emigration to Natal	178
VIII Arrival in Natal	194
IX Economic Development of the Coastlands by the Settlers	224
X British Farmers and the Grass Veld of Natal	249
XI Political Activities of the Settlers and the Development of Constitutional Government	284
XII Social and Cultural Aspects	312
<i>Bibliographical Note</i>	339
<i>Index</i>	343
<i>Map of Natal</i>	at end



PREFACE

A century ago, repeal of the corn laws and the full impact of a revolution in transport diverted the economic policy of Britain away from a course which, with few significant changes, it had followed for centuries into new channels, unfamiliar to all and highly distressing to many. One consequence of the immediate crisis thus provoked was large-scale emigration to the colonies and America. The outward flow of saddened, sometimes desperate, Britishers continued until, with an unexpectedly sharp turn of fortune's wheel, the dark clouds of depression were lifted. Despite the menace of foreign importation, British agriculture recovered and could even be said to have entered a golden age. Railway construction, halted by the George Hudson scandal, was resumed. The mercantile marine survived the removal of the acts of navigation and went from strength to strength with the evolution of the iron ship. The cholera receded. The fabric of old Britain was found to be by no means in the state of decay that the pundits had imagined.

This study was undertaken in a period, the circumstances of which presented many aspects of striking resemblance. Its resources and its powers of endurance strained by two world wars, Britain faced, it seemed, a stern struggle for survival as a great and a prosperous power. When investigation into the circumstances of the emigration of 1849 took the present writer to the United Kingdom for the bleak winter of 1946-7, a second great outward movement from the British Isles was on the point of inception. Again whole families were emigrating, many to Natal, and there is to-day no sign of slackening of the tide. The hopes of these emigrants are centred on the great dominions beyond the seas. The old Britain of established security and commercial prosperity, the land of plenty, seemed to have sunk beyond the horizon of history.

Though the repetitions of history are no doubt misleading, the British people may take some courage from the experience

PREFACE

of the emigrants of a century ago. The good things of the past, with even better promises for the future, may return as unexpectedly as they did in the 'fifties of the nineteenth century. Tides of new life may sweep over the old country, bringing renewed confidence and a new vision, such as was brought to Victorian England by the aftermath of the great 1851 Exhibition.

With the passage of time and the ravages of totalitarian war, it was feared that, unless undertaken without delay, investigation into the circumstances of the 1849-51 emigration to Natal might fail to produce the information that was required. Much is already beyond reach. Since the emigration was in the main the enterprise of modest and humble folk, though of people of taste and intelligence, the works of reference are silent, and traces of what had happened to individual settlers were fast receding into the distance.

These men were at the same time adventurous pioneers and home-builders. They belonged to the age of the Californian gold discoveries. Many of them had traversed strange parts of the world, and had already won and lost fortunes in territories oversea. The story of the settlers reaches out into distant countries. The old colonial homes that remain, with their decayed stoeps and fanlights over yellow-wood doors, represent in some cases the final stage in life's journey. But, with all the characteristic dislike of commonplace routine, the spirit of the pioneer was tempered by much devotion to things of the home, to the Bible and to prayer, sometimes to class and even to canons of Victorian respectability.

This book has been written to commemorate a centenary: but also in the hope that it may reveal to young Natal not only the debt owed to the first home-builders, but the strength to be drawn from the past. It has been published with some generous assistance from the Natal Provincial Administration.

A. F. HATTERSLEY

CHAPTER I

NATAL BEFORE THE COMING OF THE VOORTREKKERS

In January 1850 James Wyld the younger, geographer to the Queen and Member of Parliament for Bodmin, applied to the Colonial Office for permission to use any original drawings in its custody of the district of Natal.¹ It was a period when British professional mapmakers, their livelihood threatened by the enterprise of the ordnance survey, were turning their attention to distant lands. The Wylde, father and son, Aaron Arrow-smith and others had already produced on a small scale beautifully engraved maps of southern Africa; but these lacked the accuracy of detail which scientific observations could provide. In the year when the ordnance survey completed measurement of the first great base on Salisbury Plain (1849), Wyld the younger decided to publish a new map of Natal, the colony which was figuring so prominently in the emigration columns of British dailies. He was informed that no topographical information was available beyond what was conveyed in the lithographed sketch which Natal's surveyor-general, William Stanger, had supplied to accompany a selection of official correspondence.² Stanger had complained of the numerous errors in all the published maps. The extent of the territory which Britain had annexed in 1843 remained for many years unknown even to the executive government at Pietermaritzburg. It was left to Stanger to discover the sources of the Buffalo and Umzimkhulu Rivers, whilst the impressive western boundary of the Drakensberg was found to consist of two mountain chains of different geological structure.

The terrace formation of Natal made its interior difficult of access prior to the construction of a railroad. The coastal belt,

¹ J. Wyld to Secretary of State, 22 Jan. 1850. C.O. 179/13 (P.R.O.).

² *Correspondence, etc., Natal, 1847-8*, xlii (980).

the Cape, and Francis George Farewell, who hailed from Devon. Both Farewell and King had served for eight years in the British Navy prior to the conclusion of the wars with Napoleon.

Whilst King went to London to lay his tracings before the Admiralty and to ask for a lieutenant's commission, Thompson and Farewell began to make arrangements for the establishment of a small station at the Bay. King received scant encouragement at London, but his partners could count on the growing interest of Cape merchants in the coastal trade. Sufficient support was secured to justify the chartering of two small ships. The company of adventurers, twenty-six in all, included men of all ages and occupations. With the *Julia*, which sailed from Table Bay in April 1824, went Henry Francis Fynn, who had made a journey to Delagoa Bay two years previously and acquired some knowledge of native life. Farewell followed six weeks later in the *Antelope*. He had informed the Cape governor, Lord Charles Somerset, of the project, and received his permission to transport the tiny community to the vicinity of the Bay. To Somerset, Farewell's scheme was merely a commercial undertaking. He was well aware that Downing Street was unlikely to sanction any extension of British sovereignty. Nevertheless the venture was the first step towards permanent white settlement in Natal.

Natal, with its equable climate and reasonable abundance of food supplies, had been continuously occupied by man at least since the pluvial age, which corresponded in southern Africa to the ice age of western Europe. Rough fist-hatchets (*coup-de-poing*) of fine quartzitic sandstone testify to the presence of man in the period represented by the so-called lower and middle Stellenbosch culture.¹

Natal's coastlands were originally inhabited, it appears, by neo-anthropic peoples engaged in hunting. Only close to the

¹ Geologically this is the period prior to the deposit of the Berea red sand. J. G. Cramb: 'The Early Stone Age in Natal' (*South African Journal of Science*, xxxii (1933), pp. 483-93).

sea and in marshy places, where animals and wild fowl naturally abound, would food supplies be sufficiently plentiful to sustain a considerable community. Traces of habitation of the rock-strewn beaches by neo-anthropie man are abundant in the kitchen middens, composed of discarded shells of mussels and limpets. Whilst stone-age flakes have been found in sand dunes north of Durban, the shell middens yield debris of a later period. It is clear that metal-using people with a considerable knowledge of pottery used Natal's beaches as harvest grounds for the shell-fish upon which, in arid seasons, they largely depended for food.¹ Coarse unglazed pottery and bone awls belonging to a period prior to the arrival of the Bantu testify to the gradual extension of human interests and activities.

These folk, commonly termed Bushmen or Strandloopers, belonged physically to a racial type characterised by small broad skulls and yellow wrinkled skins. Archaeological discoveries suggest that the precursors of the Bushmen—men of the Boskop type—were physically superior, with an enlarged skull capacity. The degeneration of the Bushmen may be attributed to long residence in a semi-arid environment.

In Natal, sustained aridity has not been present since the beginning of the Christian era. Lean periods may have caused human migration from particular areas where food supplies fell away, but the greater part of Natal has been continuously occupied by people of Bushman, and later of Bantu, stock.

Concrete evidence of Bushman habitation is scanty. Their improvised twig and grass huts have long since disappeared. Possessing no domesticated animals, except perhaps the dog, and lacking acquaintance with agriculture, they were dependent for food on the game they could kill with bow and arrow and rough stone axe, and on the roots and wild fruit of the bush.

¹ J. F. Schofield: 'Natal Coastal Pottery' (*South African Journal of Science*, xxxii (1935), pp. 508-27).

Culturally the Bushmen represent in Natal the old stone age of Europe. This period lasted into quite recent times. In South Africa, there are no traces of an intermediate copper or bronze epoch. With the advent of metal-using Bantu tribes, Natal passed directly from the age of stone to that of iron. This transition occurred shortly after the first European discovery of Natal by the Portuguese.

The word 'Bantu' or 'Abantu' is of native origin and means simply human beings. No definite physical type is connoted, for the Bantu have never formed a distinct homogeneous race. Tribes vary considerably in skin colour, build and features, though they largely share a common outlook on life and speak languages which belong to one linguistic family.¹ The cradle of the Bantu people is largely a matter of tradition. It is conjectured that fusion some 2000 years ago of African negroes with Hamitic or Semitic folk from Asia produced the Bantu in the region of the southern Sudan.

In historic times the Bantu have gradually spread southward. Asiatic admixture brought mental and physical qualities which enabled them to survive and expand at the expense of the negro race. A process of more or less continuous migration introduced new elements into Bantu stock through the incorporation of remnants of vanquished communities. Then, as Bantu tribes reached the neighbourhood of the east coast, they mixed their blood with Arab and Asiatic traders, deriving at the same time the familiar appellation 'Kaffir' (unbeliever).

The chronological limits of these movements can only be approximately indicated. Bantu tribes started drifting south from the vicinity of the Great Lakes about the dawn of the Christian era. In the uplands of central Africa they encountered and drove westward forest dwarfs and Bushmen. At this time and until approximately the year A.D. 1000, Africa south of the Zambezi remained in the sole occupation of Bushmen and

¹ Sir Harry Johnston, however, enumerated 226 Bantu dialects, some of which ought perhaps to be considered as separate languages. H. H. Johnston: *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, 1919.

Hottentots. But at some period in the later Middle Ages, Bantu tribesmen crossed into southern Rhodesia and established commercial relations with Asiatic traders at Quilimane and Sofala. Organisation of the community on the basis of agriculture and cattle-raising, with some knowledge of the working of metals, produced the political system known to European cartographers as the empire of Monomotapa.¹

During the long southward trek the tendency to cleavage found expression in the separation of various branches of the Bantu family, and the development of wide variations in speech, physical traits and social customs. Of the various sections so formed, the first to reach Natal was that of the so-called Nguni Bantu. Whilst Vasco da Gama was breasting the Agulhas' current, the earliest parties of Nguni were rounding the headwaters of the Limpopo and coming within sight of the neighbourhood of Delagoa Bay. Here they became known as Abambo, a collective name for remnants of tribes in flight before the redoubtable Amazimba. The Abambo were doubtless the natives with whom the Portuguese came into contact along the coast north and south of St Lucia Bay towards the close of the sixteenth century. Meanwhile, another branch, the Tongas, penetrated farther south into Natal (c. 1550). In the course of the sixteenth century, Abambo clans occupied the greater part of the area between Delagoa Bay and Pondoland, whilst Xosa and Tembu clans broke adrift from the main body and, moving through Natal and East Griqualand, eventually reached the neighbourhood of the Cape frontier. Not until the eighteenth century, however, did the vanguard of the Xosa irruption cross the River Kei.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a number of tribes bearing the Ama- prefix were in occupation of the territory of Natal and it is with these tribes that Farewell and Fynn found themselves in contact. The whole country south-east of the Zambezi was less densely occupied than it is to-day.

¹ It is unnecessary here to discuss the problem of the erection and use of the Zimbabwe ruins. See G. Caton-Thompson: *Zimbabwe Culture*, 1931.

In 1824 Farewell calculated that 'probably 50,000 souls... form the whole population of the large territory' ruled over by the Zulu king, Tshiaka.¹ This was largely guesswork. For the whole extent of the present Zululand a fair estimate would place the number of its Bantu inhabitants at a little short of 90,000. During the decade prior to Farewell's arrival it had been considerably enlarged through the forcible removal of defeated tribesmen to the vicinity of Tshiaka's kraals. This accession of strength had been at the expense of Natal. Prior to the year 1810, though the pastoral highlands north of the Mooi River carried no more than a sparse Bantu population, density of settlement in the coastlands and eastern midlands seems to have been as great as in the Zulu kingdom. The actual figures have been variously estimated. Theophilus Shepstone calculated that the population of Natal in the first decade of the nineteenth century was approximately one million, settled in ninety-four tribes, many of them quite small.² On the other hand, a modern authority computes the inhabitants of Natal in the year 1816 as 'about 100,000'.³

Tribal government was highly developed along patriarchal lines. All property, including the tribal territory, belonged strictly to the chief as administrator of the community, individual tribesmen being entitled to possession only so long as their occupation conformed to customary requirements. Numbers might fluctuate, since a man could sometimes transfer his allegiance to another chief.

The Bantu inhabitants of Natal were agriculturists as well as stock farmers, but horned cattle was their peculiar pride and distinctive form of wealth. Inter-tribal warfare was commonly the outcome of competition for fresh grazing land. Knowledge

¹ J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, p. 192.

² In a paper read before the Society of Arts in Natal, 22 Jan. 1875. The boundaries of the Colony of Natal included a part of the old Zulu kingdom, whereas the name 'Natal' originally designated merely the coastlands in the vicinity of the Port.

³ A. T. Bryant: *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, 1929, p. 82.

of the art of smelting iron spread gradually from tribe to tribe, but pottery, wood-carving and mat-weaving were common accomplishments. These industries were for the most part indigenous, and not the outcome of contact with European skill. Early Bantu hoes are of Egyptian pattern. Maize, millet and beans were grown by the coastal clans. In the midland regions the country was more congenial to cattle. Everywhere, except close to the mountain fastnesses where predatory Bushmen lurked, the inhabitants of Natal lived among plenty and in conditions of tolerable security.

These conditions were rudely disturbed in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Unrest originated in the region of St Lucia Bay and spread through Zululand and into Natal. A project of wide military overlordship was conceived by the fertile brain of an Umtetwa chieftain, Dingiswayo. His original name was Ngodongwana. Discovery of a plot against the life of his father, Jobe, was followed by Ngodongwana's hasty flight. Shepstone's conjecture that, during his exile, he established contact with the white man in the eastern Cape Colony, learning there the use of the horse and the value of military discipline, is based on native legend.¹ The story that he went northward to Delagoa Bay is less improbable, but the refugee could scarcely have obtained possession of a horse in a country notoriously 'fatal to horses'. It seems more likely that the animal, on which he is reported to have made his triumphant return to Zululand, was procured either from a wandering Griqua or from a survivor of the ill-fated expedition despatched by the Earl of Caledon to explore the country as far north as Mozambique.² Whilst Ngodongwana, who took the name 'Dingiswayo' (wanderer) on his reception as chief by the astonished Umtetwa, certainly organised an efficient regimental system, it is not necessary to suppose that he derived new ideas of military organisation from his experiences in exile.

¹ Bird: *op. cit.* pp. 162-3.

² For the expedition of Dr Cowan (1808), see the *Morning Chronicle* (London), 13 Sept. 1809, and 15 Jan. 1810.

For the tactics developed by Dingiswayo, and afterwards utilised by Tshaka, took the form of an encircling movement by warriors attacking in crescent formation, which was obviously an elaboration for military purposes of a familiar hunting device. The regiment was essentially the age-group of young men who had been initiated together as young boys.

Dingiswayo's ability and enterprise led to the consolidation of what afterwards emerged as the Zulu nation. The careless disunity of weak Bantu clans, incapable of combination for a common good, clashed with his instinct for orderly government. Though no military tyrant, he could not ignore the fact that the only recognised title by which a tribe held its lands was its ability to defend them against all comers. Only spear-power could guarantee the essentials of life. His conquests were intended to introduce discipline and cohesion on familiar patriarchal lines over a large area of Bantu country and did not involve arbitrary dispossession, still less extermination, of defeated clans.

His successor, Tshaka, entirely lacked his wisdom and magnanimity. Only as a commander was his reputation high. Tshaka consolidated what Dingiswayo had begun—the subjection to a common ruler of the great majority of the Bantu tribes inhabiting Zululand and coastal Natal. Before his rise to power, the Zulu (or Amazulu) had been an insignificant tribe occupying the upper reaches of the White Umvolosi. With others, they had submitted to the authority of the Umtetwas. Tshaka himself had entered the service of Dingiswayo, and proved his valour and powers of military leadership. It was natural that Dingiswayo should reward him at the first suitable opportunity. The death of Senzangakona left vacant the headship of the Zulu tribe. Tshaka was not the legitimate heir, but he was distinguished by personal qualities which marked him out for a career of distinction. He was tall, endowed with immense muscular strength and possessed of an indomitable and unscrupulous will. His towering height and relentless ferocity had gained for him the appellation of 'Great

Elephant'. No man had been of equal assistance to Dingiswayo in the consolidation of his military conquests.

The succession to Senzangakona was a step towards the greater ambition, which he had doubtless already conceived, of uniting under his own rule the Zulu and Umtetwa people. Dingiswayo's defeat and death, at the hands of Zwide, removed the principal obstacle. Only Tshaka could extricate the Umtetwas from an awkward military situation. No one dared dispute his assumption of the reins of office.

The ten years of Tshaka's reign represent a period of ruin and disaster in south-eastern Africa. The new chief entirely lacked conceptions of beneficent statesmanship. His one constructive achievement, the consolidation of the Zulu nation, rested on nothing more stable than military violence. But as an organiser of victory he was incomparable. His genius for anticipating the strategy of his opponents enabled him to overthrow Zwide, and to take the first perilous steps towards wide military dominion. His exploits soon revealed the immense superiority of the fighting machine which he and Dingiswayo had laboriously trained. At the outset, his resources were scanty and his trained force small. For the first aggressive movement to the north, Tshaka could muster no more than a few hundred warriors. But he had armed them with the short stabbing assegai, and appointed as commanders men whom he could trust. Though the regimental system was the outcome of long-established Nguni custom, Tshaka was responsible for the hardening of military discipline, the organisation of military kraals, the regular supply of beef rations to the men on campaign and the rule of celibacy for the younger warriors. His tactics in battle were based on the convergence of the two horns of the advancing crescent, the use of the enlarged ox-hide shield to ward off the enemy's spears, and the close fighting with the broad assegai. In the early campaigns, only the incurable division among the scores of tribes whose independence was threatened by the emergence of this new portent enabled the Zulu despot to accomplish, mainly by

untiring activity, military domination of the territory north of the Tugela. The fighting proved beyond doubt the superiority of the new shock tactics upon which Tshaka relied. The outcome of these victories was decisive. For, unlike Dingiswayo, Tshaka insisted on pressing home his successes with a view to guarding against wars of retaliation, and augmenting his own future resources. The conquest of Zululand involved far more than the recognition of Zulu overlordship by tribes which retained their internal cohesion as communities. Disruption, not conciliation, was Tshaka's ideal, and the Zulu nation was fashioned out of the compulsory incorporation of shattered peoples.

With an army of perhaps 50,000 warriors, Tshaka was ready, in the early summer of 1820-1, to invade Natal. One by one, the tribes which occupied the land south of the Tugela were attacked and overpowered. Whilst remnants of defeated tribes found refuge among the foot-hills of the Drakensberg, hordes of fugitives were driven headlong southward in the direction of the Cape frontier. By the close of the year 1823, Tshaka had swept the country virtually free of inhabitants as far south as the Umzimvubu. From Zululand further waves of upheaval overspread the inland plateau of South Africa, extending the area of desolation to the neighbourhood of the northern Transvaal. At the zenith of his power Tshaka, who may now be described as king of the Zulu nation, controlled the destinies of the entire population from Delagoa Bay southward to the Pondo frontier. Beyond the Berg, the work of destruction, set in motion by his impis, was actually wrought by others. It was one of his captains, the savage Moselikatze, who, in hasty flight from the wrath of the Zulu monarch, penetrated into western Transvaal, creating there still another centre of turmoil and ruin. Farther west, fugitives from Zululand set in motion the terrible Mantatis.

This widespread devastation, even if the loss of life has been exaggerated, altered the aspect of Natal. In the coastal areas, cultivation entirely ceased. Destruction of stock compelled

survivors to seek sustenance on roots and small game. Clan life with its patriarchal institutions suffered utter disruption, for chiefs had been singled out for slaughter. In isolated districts, remnants of clans might hold together and even provide a rallying point for unattached fugitives. But no single tribe remained undisturbed in possession of its original territory. In the 250 miles of fertile coastlands south of the Tongaat River (then the boundary of the Zulu kingdom) Fynn found in 1824 no single compact tribe. Only at the Bluff did he encounter a tiny community living under the authority of its chief, Umnini. Clans had been either broken up and driven south or west beyond the confines of Natal, or compelled by Tshaka to take up residence north of the Tongaat River. Neither kraals nor cattle remained. Natal in 1824 was almost completely depopulated.

Zululand, on the other hand, was now the home of a compact though heterogeneous military nation. When Fynn and Farewell took up their residence at the Bay, no enemy remained formidable enough to cause Tshaka serious anxiety. The coming of a handful of white men was unlikely to alarm him. The newcomers were bent on peaceful trading and they were easily satisfied by a paper grant to which he attached no importance. Not until 1827 did refugees from Zululand make their appearance at the Bay. By that time the majority of the original party had taken ship for the Cape.

The pioneers who remained selected sites in the vicinity of the harbour for the erection of their wattle-and-daub huts. It was the origin of modern Durban. They were joined in 1828 by King, who brought with him from St Helena the youthful Nathaniel Isaacs. The settlement grew slowly as the trade in ivory, hippopotamus tusks and skins came to be established. Some of the new arrivals were Albany settlers who had abandoned their holdings on the Cape frontier. Whilst a few were merchants, the majority were hunters and frontiersmen unlikely to be deterred by the hardships of life at the Port.

Fynn succeeded to the leadership on the successive deaths of King and Farewell. A brief wave of optimism followed news of the assassination of the Zulu despot, but his successor, Dingaan, was no less ruthless. Accepting the suzerainty of the new monarch, two of the Englishmen, John Cane and Henry Ogle, assumed the status of native chiefs, each with a considerable location of refugees. Several were slain when Dingaan made a treacherous attack on the village (1830), which was left a smoking ruin.

This set-back had no lasting consequences. The majority of the white men, reassured by friendly overtures from Dingaan, returned to the Bay in the course of the following year. When the Zulu king withdrew his people from the country south of the Tugela, Fynn and his followers began to consider themselves an independent community. In 1835 they ventured to treat with Dingaan on terms of equality. In return for a promise of pardon for those who had taken up their residence at the Port, the Englishmen consented to receive and harbour no more refugees from the Zulu country.

In numbers the infant community could muster several hundred native adherents whilst white residents numbered thirty or more. Among the newcomers were several Albany men, notably perhaps Robert Biggar, soon to be followed to Natal by his brother George and his father Alexander Biggar, the younger Mouncey, who had made the journey to the Cape in 1820 in company with Henry Ogle, James Collis and Richard King. Of the traders, Collis was the most prominent and his house on the flats was the only one which Allen Gardiner recognised as a European structure. The homes of his companions were mud huts carefully concealed in the sandy bush, giving the whole locality 'a most wild and deserted appearance'.¹ All lived from necessity much as the Bantu lived, Cane and Ogle with considerable establishments at the

¹ A. F. Gardiner: *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country in South Africa*, 1836, p. 84. Cf. S. Kay: *Travels and Researches in Caffraria*, 1833, an authority much criticised by Isaacs.

head of the Bay and in the vicinity of the Umlaas River. Here they governed their 'tribes' with the patriarchal authority of Bantu chiefs.

The authorities at the Cape had begun to take an interest in distant Port Natal. Sir Lowry Cole had been in communication with the Secretary of State on the subject of the Zulu kingdom. It was realised in London that war north of the Umzimkhulu would mean defeated tribesmen pouring over the colonial frontier. Learning that the Englishmen at the Port had assisted both Tshaka and Dingaan in their native wars, Lord Goderich instructed the Cape governor to extend control over the settlement by the despatch of an officer to exercise judicial authority. No appointment was, however, made: and when Sir Benjamin D'Urban reached Table Bay as successor to Cole (January 1834), he was presented with a petition from a numerous body of Cape merchants praying for the immediate annexation of Port Natal. A Peninsular War veteran, D'Urban grasped the fact that a small force at Natal might avert the danger of pressure on the Cape borderlands and at the same time exercise control over the sale of firearms to the Bantu by Portuguese and American traders. No detailed accounts of the territory inland and of its suitability for colonisation were available, but the petitioners referred to reports of Nathaniel Isaacs which had been transmitted to London. They could point to the notes of Dr (later Sir) Andrew Smith, military surgeon at the Cape, in confirmation of Isaacs's optimistic words.¹ The new governor considered that two companies would be required, a detachment that the Cape establishment was too weak to supply. The petitioners were informed that 'in the present state of the finances of the Cape, any additional expense for the establishment of a new settlement...could not with propriety be incurred'.

¹ J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, pp. 255-69. Dr Smith's expedition of 1832-4, in the course of which he visited Dingaan's kraal, must not be confused with his more famous journey of 1834-6.

The petition brought Natal before the notice of circles interested in the colonisation of Africa. Without official encouragement, Allen Francis Gardiner, a retired naval commander who had become interested in Christian missions, resolved to take up his residence in Zululand. Energetic, full of restless enthusiasm and generous to a fault, Gardiner was lacking in tact and in appreciation of what could be accomplished without friction. As a boy, he had written out a vocabulary of a West African language in case it might later be of service to him. He had served as a midshipman in the American war of 1812-14. Naval service or voluntary travel had brought him to the tropical forests of the Malay States, the infant convict settlement at Botany Bay and the coastal plains of Peru. He had visited Cape Town some two years before Fynn and his colleagues sailed in the *Julia* to establish the settlement at Port Natal. Now, at the age of forty, the death in England of his wife moved him to devote his remaining years to evangelical work among native peoples. In November 1834 he was again at the Cape, determined to push on overland to Natal despite the outbreak of war on the Kaffrarian frontier. At Port Natal his arrival was welcomed by men who had always looked forward to the advent of a Christian teacher. North of the Tugela, whither the intrepid missionary repaired with no more than two days' delay at the European settlement, Gardiner met with discouragement. Dingaan himself was friendly and hospitable, but his principal indunas were clearly hostile to the preaching of Christianity. Gardiner perforce returned to the Bay, where, in March, he established himself on the bush-covered ridge which he named the Berea, building a wattle-and-daub church and agreeing to serve the settlers in the capacity of preacher. His was the first Christian mission station in Natal.⁷

Gardiner's influence was exerted in the direction of establishing the small community on a basis of local responsibility and settled order. He was disappointed to find Englishmen

⁷ J. W. Marsh: *A Memoir of Allen F. Gardiner*, 1857.

living in squalid huts, in some cases with native wives, and without even the semblance of constituted authority. After a second visit to Dingaan, who was induced to make a treaty 'ceding' to Gardiner large tracts of Natal and to allow him to preach the Gospel in a selected area of Zululand, the missionary hastened to assemble the inhabitants in mass meeting on 23 June for the purpose of organising the settlement. Being assured of the goodwill of the new governor, Gardiner suggested the name 'Durban' for the township which was to be laid out on 'an eligible and commodious site'. It was enthusiastically adopted. In the future no Bantu huts were to be permitted. Each inhabitant was to erect a house of stated dimensions on his allotment of land within a period of eighteen months. Three thousand acres were set aside for the endowment of the Church of England, and a somewhat smaller allotment for a free school. A rough lay-out of the township, with provision for a public square, two market places and streets of a width of eighty feet, was adopted. To clear the bush, and generally to supervise public affairs, a Town committee was elected. It was to meet monthly and administer a Town fund. Of the original committee, however, Collis and a Pole named Berken perished within the year. Ogle accompanied Gardiner on a mission to the Cape and only Cane remained at the Port. It was impossible for the community, thus deprived of its leaders, to accomplish the clearing of the selected site. Nor were houses of the requisite design erected. Durban remained for several years a collection of mud huts, with a single stone building used as a store and the 'streets', despite their stately names,¹ mere wagon-tracks through the sandy soil.

The meeting had petitioned the British government to 'recognise the country intervening between the Umzimkhulu and Tugela rivers, which we have named "Victoria", in honour

¹ Two of the streets were named 'Adelaide Street' and 'Brunswick Terrace' respectively. For the Town meeting of 23 June 1835, see J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, pp. 307-11.

of our august Princess, as a colony of the British Empire, and to appoint a Governor and Council with power to enact such laws and regulations as may be deemed expedient by them, in concert with a body of representatives chosen by ourselves, to constitute a House of Assembly'. It was an ambitious project for a settlement of forty Englishmen. Their title to the considerable extent of territory was somewhat ambiguous. But the petitioners could claim that, since the wars of Tshaka, it had remained largely unoccupied. In July, following the meeting at Durban, Dingaan was induced by Gardiner to clarify his earlier grant of the Port and its neighbourhood by a formal gesture of acceptance of the missionary as chief of the whole country southward to the Umzimkhulu and westward as far as the Drakensberg. Gardiner thereupon left for the Cape.

His object was to interview Sir Benjamin D'Urban and win his support for the suggested annexation of Natal. Failing to discover a pass over the formidable Drakensberg, which Piet Retief was presently to cross safely at a point much farther to the north, Gardiner reached Grahamstown by way of Pondoland and Kaffraria. Here he learned that D'Urban was at Algoa Bay engrossed in frontier affairs. At the small township of Port Elizabeth, the two men discussed the fate of Natal. The Cape governor was personally in agreement with the proposal that an officer should be sent to represent British authority and enforce the treaty with Dingaan. The arrival at Algoa Bay of American missionaries bound for Natal filled him with concern regarding the future of British dominion in south-east Africa. Anxious to secure the colonial frontier by the extension of British influence in the rear of the tribes, he agreed to send friendly messages to Dingaan by the same ship that was to carry the missionaries to Natal.¹ Gardiner then hastened to England to offer to ministers the territory that Dingaan had vested in him.

¹ These men were Newton Adams, George Champion and Aldin Grout. See L. Grout: *Zululand*, 1863, and J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, pp. 198-229.

In the early 'thirties, before the appointment as permanent under-secretary of James Stephen, the Colonial Office lacked detailed information on many aspects of colonial administration. Its minutes reveal an alert interest in the concern of the humanitarian party for the improvement of the condition of aborigines and slaves; but there was little attention to purely local problems. Convinced of the inexpediency of enlarging the Crown's dominions in South Africa, its staff was nevertheless calculating on expansion of trade with tropical possessions and with India to compensate for losses across the Atlantic. It was conceivable that American enterprise along the coast south of Delagoa Bay might menace the security of the route to India. The Treaty of Ghent (1815) had certainly permitted American ships bound for the East to use British ports in African and Indian waters. Whaling vessels, much to the consternation of Cape merchants, had not been slow to avail themselves of the opportunity to call at Table Bay. Enterprising American shipmasters had endeavoured to open up trading connections with Zululand, and even, it was said, to land guns and powder on the coast north of the Bay. Admiralty investigation into the matter was reassuring. When Gardiner reached London there was no longer any anxiety as to American intentions. James Stephen, who had just been appointed to the Colonial Office, at once made it clear to Gardiner that the government would recognise no transactions into which he might enter with native tribes. Even D'Urban's supporting letter failed to convince Stephen that America contemplated economic penetration of South Africa or indeed any enterprise that might injuriously affect British interests in India.

It was less difficult to persuade the imperial authorities that some measure of control must be established over the English settlement at the Port. Ministers were aware of the existence of a well-informed public opinion in support of any measures designed to safeguard native races from European exploitation. In 1832 Lord Goderich had instructed the governor of New

South Wales to despatch James Busby as resident in New Zealand with vague magisterial authority over British subjects. Busby's mission was intended to assure the natives of independent New Zealand of the government's desire to protect them from injuries inflicted by British subjects. At Natal it was the Europeans who were in need of protection. Learning from Gardiner that, by harbouring deserters, they had given Dingaan cause for resentment, a select committee of the Commons recommended 'a vigilant superintendence over the growing settlement at Port Natal'.¹ Gardiner was accordingly sent back to the Cape with a warrant entitling him to exercise magisterial jurisdiction under a newly enacted Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act, which had extended the criminal law of the colony over all British subjects residing south of the twenty-fifth parallel of latitude.²

The new magistrate brought with him to Natal a Yorkshire clergyman, Francis Owen, deputed by the Church Missionary Society to inaugurate a mission in Dingaan's country. At Umgungundhlovu he met Dingaan, who surveyed him 'with minute attention and silent pleasure'.³ Though the Zulu monarch excused himself from personal attendance at Christian worship, he took an interest in the building of a school and sent young boys to listen to the Word of God. Whilst Owen was endeavouring to win the confidence of the Zulus, Gardiner essayed to govern the community at the Port. He was not unaware of the weakness of his position but he trusted that 'this faint shadow of British jurisdiction may possibly avert the danger and serve to restrain the introduction of more fire-arms and ammunition'. On his side was the moral influence which his personal generosity commanded. But he could not resist the opportunity to lecture the settlers on the laxity of their

¹ *Reports of the Select Committee on Aborigines, 1836-7*, vii (238) and (425).

² 6 & 7 William IV, cap. 57. G. W. Eybers: *Select Constitutional Documents illustrating S.A. History, 1795-1910* (1918), p. 146.

³ G. E. Cory (ed.): *Diary of the Rev. F. Owen, 1926*, p. 38.

moral standards. When it was known that he had advised Dingaan to prohibit trade with the Port, his authority was repudiated. In vain he revealed the terms of his commission. The obvious reply was that Natal was not a part of the British Empire but an independent settlement.

The settlers had received definite news of the progress of the Great Trek. Men like Alexander Biggar were well acquainted with the grievances of the frontier farmers and inclined to share their point of view in criticism of British rule. It is clear that, during June and July (1837), a plan was under serious consideration to unite with the farmers trekking from the Cape and set up an entirely independent state. In September a ship leaving the harbour was given clearance papers dated 'in the third month of our independence'. Dingaan was no longer benevolently disposed and trade was on the decline. The settlers looked to Biggar, rather than to Gardiner, to extricate the community from accumulating perils and discontents. During Gardiner's absence in Europe, Biggar, as elected commandant, had organised the 'Port Natal Volunteers'. In temperament and outlook he had much in common with his former fellow-colonists who were now finding their way down the steep declivities of the Drakensberg. He distrusted the 'false measures' of missionaries and the 'wavering policies' of distant colonial governments. When Piet Retief rode into Durban on 20 October, Biggar and his friends gave him the warmest of welcomes.

CHAPTER II

THE REPUBLIC OF NATAL

The penetration of inland Natal by European colonists was accomplished in the late 'thirties by way of the middle Orange and the northern passes of the Drakensberg. Whilst the first English settlers had come by sea from Algoa Bay and Cape Town, Dutch-speaking farmers from the eastern districts of the old colony avoided the coastal lands densely populated by Bantu tribesmen, and reached Natal from the north-west along a route made easy by Tshaka's devastations. For, in the face of the solid mass of native population which in the early years of the nineteenth century extended from the Pongola to the neighbourhood of the Fish River, no Trekker community precariously established westward of the mountains could have penetrated to the coastlands of the Indian Ocean. Tshaka, however, had dislodged the Bantu clans of Natal, and both the resulting void and the fertility of the soil were well known to Cape frontiersmen.

These European newcomers were the descendants of men who had early chafed under the rule of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape (1652-1795); and, whilst the settlement was still in its infancy, had begun to cross the mountains and move into the remote interior.

The Dutch East India Company was a monument of the successful enterprise of the people of the Netherlands. Under able, if economical, leadership, its station at the Cape of Good Hope, based on no extravagant schemes but merely on the necessities of trade with the East, soon developed into a colony capable of producing for export both grain and wine. In order to attain self-sufficiency and reduce expenditure on establishments, successive commanders were authorised to set free servants of the Company prepared to undertake independent farming, and even to receive from time to time parties of

emigrants from Europe. Within a decade of its foundation, the settlement comprised a farming community which exceeded one hundred souls.

With a fertile soil and healthy climate, colonists at the Cape should have thrived. Free burghers had some say in the government of the settlement, and they were soon permitted to obtain cattle by advantageous barter with the local Hottentot clans. By the time of Simon van der Stel (1679-99), promotion of agriculture had come to be an important object which the Company had in view; and this object made essential consideration for the welfare of the European colonists.

Nevertheless, from the outset, the burghers were grievously hampered by restrictions. In the grain belt of the south-west cultivators could have achieved a modicum of prosperity. But nothing could be sold except to the Company at the Company's own, unremunerative, price. Farther east the soil was too barren to admit of agriculture. Economic pressure impelled the farmer to use his land for grazing purposes and, as herds grew, to seek ever fresh grazing country. From Amsterdam the directors of the Company wrote insisting on boundaries which would keep the station compact and manageable, retain farmers on the land, and arrest nomadic tendencies. They ignored the fact that farmers had the best of reasons to resent official restraint. For the Company had done little but command and tax Cape burghers. Quick to suspect and to punish any infraction of its monopoly of the eastern trade, it had shown little concern for the prosperity of the colonists. Unable to make a living in proximity to the officially controlled market, farmers, even in the days of the van der Stels, had abandoned the settled life of the West and plunged deep into the uncivilised interior.

Roving habits thus implanted were perpetuated by the needs of cattle-rearing. East of the Breede River, twenty acres of land barely sufficed for the pasturage of a single head of cattle. Acidity of the soil, in conjunction with the prevalence of drought, made essential alternative grazing land which,

so long as land was plentiful, could be obtained for the asking through the registration of *leenings-plaatsen*.¹ Under these circumstances, the movement of expansion gathered momentum. Cattle farmers necessarily lived primitively. In the remoter districts isolation bred a distinct type, the South African *Trek-Boer*, akin to the frontiersman of North America, caring little for the amenities of civilisation and holding tenaciously to the fundamental traditions of the frontier.

It was because the new (1815) British government at the Cape challenged these sacred traditions that the *Trek-Boer* preferred to abandon the colony and venture forth into the unsettled lands across the ill-defined frontier. It was not that the appearance of the British flag in Table Bay aroused resentment. The farmers had no feelings of attachment towards the Company, whilst the determination of Sir John Cradock and others among the early governors at the Cape to hold the frontier firmly with detachments of British regulars was warmly received in the frontier areas. But, in the late 'twenties, British policy came to be influenced by the evangelicalism and humanitarian sentiment of the British middle classes. The frontier farmer attributed his security to firm insistence on colour inequality. For generations, his needs had been supplied by Malay slave and Hottentot herdsman. From the year 1770 he had come into direct contact with the advancing and vigorous Bantu. Successive governments had sought in vain a remedy for the recurrent problems of the frontier. The resistance of the tribes compelled diversion of the movement of expansion away from the coast to the less desirable territory on both sides of the Orange River. At the same time, it brought into the foreground the whole question of the civilisation of the Bantu. In the years immediately preceding the Great Trek the British authorities had begun to frame the rules, legal and economic, which must govern the relations

¹ Loan farms, i.e. large grazing estates of approximately 6000 acres held on annual lease for a small annual payment, nominally revocable but by custom virtually a lease in perpetuity.

between white and black in a community in which the state of slavery had just (1834) been terminated. The frontier Boer thus found the territorial expansion which was vital to the economic security of his children as pastoralists blocked against him by a solid mass of Bantu tribesmen at the moment when the unfamiliar doctrine of equal treatment for both races, irrespective of colour, was being pressed upon his unwilling attention from the rear.

The Great Trek¹ was, in the main, the outcome of the determination of the British authorities to enforce for all equality before the law. Lack of adequate pasture was indeed at the root of the whole problem of the eastern frontier. The most enlightened administration could not have kept farmers on land within the colony when fodder was insufficient to feed augmenting herds.² But a distinction must be made between the Trek proper, which began in the closing months of 1835, and the steady movement of dispersion which preceded and followed it. Scarcity of grazing land was doubtless responsible for the continuous drift of population outward from the settled areas of the colony. Nevertheless, what determined the character of the Trek was the pressure of new political and social doctrines upon a people who held strongly to the principle of a colour bar, and regarded ideas of philanthropy as tending towards disaster and destruction.

Trekkers were a religious-minded people, well versed in the teaching of the Old Testament, which seemed to them to uphold racial inequality and justify summary discipline for the backward and the heathen. Not only from what they read in the Bible, but also from a not unreasonable estimate of the circumstances of a colony where black so largely outnumbered white, they concluded that the prestige and authority of the

¹ For the causes of the Great Trek, see E. A. Walker; *The Great Trek*, pp. 59 sqq.; *C.H.B.E.* vol. viii, chap. xiv; A. F. Hattersley: 'The Great Trek' (*History*, xvi, pp. 59 sqq.).

² A. L. Hall: 'South African Pastures' (*Annual Proceedings of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1934).

colonist must be upheld and the black man subjected to firm restraint.

One aspect of the social revolution foreshadowed by the insistence on legal equality for black and white was the emancipation of the slaves. Actually the determination to trek had been taken by large numbers of frontier farmers before the coming into force of the Act for emancipation, and some years before owners lost the labour services of their former slaves. For apprenticeship, with legal compulsion to work for masters, was maintained until 1 December 1838. Probably liberation of nominally free coloured labourers from the restrictions of the pass laws (1828) injured the Boer, in his economic security and pride of race, more than slave emancipation; for Hottentot herdsmen were more numerous in the frontier areas than predial slaves. In any case, slaves were numerically a small body in the total mass of coloured African peoples. The economic results of emancipation have been exaggerated. Loss of property in slaves was doubtless a prominent Trekker grievance, but only because the Act of 1833 typified the subversive doctrine of racial equality and was considered to have been inspired by ill-informed fanaticism. The Bantu represented a much more formidable menace to Trekker traditions, for Bantu movements were responsible for the growing congestion in the frontier districts, whilst the tribesmen had yet to learn the habits of subordination to the European farmer. For generations, Trekkers had been accustomed to a leisurely life of isolation, with perhaps five or six acres under cultivation out of every 6000-acre farm. Until the last years of the eighteenth century there had been no serious shortage of pastoral land and little difficulty in obtaining essential labour from Hottentot serf or Malay slave. About the time of the second British occupation, changing economic conditions imperilled the very existence of the Trek-Boer. Wasteful farming on the old liberal scale was no longer possible. Then, in the 'twenties, the impact of humanitarianism upon a community which held firmly to the conception of a divinely

ordained colour bar produced that antagonism towards British authority which differentiated the Trek proper from earlier movements of dispersion.

The main exodus from the eastern portions of the Cape colony was preceded by the despatch of small parties of explorers. Pressure of Bantu resistance in the east had occasioned a northerly drift of pastoralists into lands in the vicinity of the Orange River. But in 1835, fearing conflicts with Basuto and Griqua, the British authorities resolved to close this avenue to expansion by discouraging or prohibiting the taking up of farms beyond the great river. The so-called *Commissie Treks* therefore went farther afield to the Zoutpansberg, Delagoa Bay and Natal. The largest party, under Piet Uys, found the coast route crowded with Bantu to the northward limits of the Pondo kingdom, and awkward for the ox-wagons on account of the depth of the intersecting rivers. But, beyond the Umtamvuna, Uys penetrated to well-watered grasslands which had been denuded of their native inhabitants by the ruthless warfare of Tshaka.

Uys's report of 1835 encouraged many to trek, the more readily that a further 'Kalfir' war had devastated the frontier farms. It is clear that the prospect of a wonderfully fertile country peopled only by the scattered remnants of dispossessed clans was the determining factor in directing the course of the main Trek towards the coastlands of Natal.¹

The route for all the Trekker parties lay across the Orange with its Griqua kraals, and through the grasslands of the Caledon to Thaba Nchu. Here roads diverged. With the fortunes of Hendrik Potgieter and others who pushed north across the Vaal to found the first Trekker communities in the present Orange Free State and Transvaal we are not concerned.² The

¹ The first parties to leave the Cape colony, under the leadership of Trigardt and van Rensburg, made for the Zoutpansberg and the lower reaches of the Limpopo River. See C. Fuller: *Louis Trigardt's Trek Across the Drakensberg*.

² For the northerly course of the Trek and the establishment of Trekker communities on the high veld, see *C.H.B.E.* vol. viii, chap. xiv.

difficult route to Natal lay east along the foot-hills of Basuto-land to the passes of the Drakensberg.

The leader in this hazardous adventure, for the passes were then unknown and the exploring parties had imagined that it would be necessary to circumvent the mountain barrier at its northernmost extremity in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay, was Piet Retief. During 1836, when the exodus was gathering momentum and attracting men of substance of the type of Maritz and Sarel Cilliers, Retief was occupied with the aftermath of the frontier war, in which he had fought as field commandant. He was now a man of fifty-six, sturdy of frame and with keen, piercing eyes. More friendly and tactful than Potgieter or Cilliers, Retief was the right man to quieten the jealous rivalries which had already arisen among the leaders.¹ It had been agreed that each self-governing party should make its own way across the Orange to the rendezvous at Thaba Nchu, and that the thorny question of the further progress and ultimate destination of the Trek should be left to future decision. With all their many virtues, the frontier farmers lacked mutual confidence and were tenacious to a degree of what they considered to be their rights. Close knit by ties of kinship, they were yet little accustomed to co-operation and compromise. Nearly all lacked experience of the give-and-take of political discussion.

Retief was by far the most gifted of the Trek leaders. His personal following was small, for he came of Huguenot descent and his original home lay among the wine and fruit farms of the settled West. Patient in hearing complaints and arranging compromises, he was resolute in pursuit of lines of policy which might hold together the Trekkers in some loose, but carefully defined, organisation of Church and State. Soon after his arrival at Thaba Nchu (April 1837) he organised the Volksraad, giving it legislative and judicial authority separate from the civil and military power which, subject to advice from an elected council of policy, was his as governor and commandant-general.

¹ For Retief's career, see G. S. Preller: *Piet Retief*.

The Volksraad was, nevertheless, unable to reach agreement on the major question of destination. All were prepared to disown allegiance to Great Britain. But many, among whom Hendrik Potgieter was prominent, were restless under the firm control of Retief, which foreshadowed a civil administration holding in check individual commandants. With his vision of a great inland republic of the high veld, Retief knew that an outlet to the ocean, enabling its merchants and farmers to communicate with the outside world independently of British authority, was little less than essential. Others thought more of trekking away north beyond the zone of the menacing Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act.¹ Whilst Potgieter took the northerly road, Retief had little difficulty in persuading the majority to turn their wagons in the direction of distant Port Natal. He well understood that the British government had refused more than once to annex the harbour, and he hoped to purchase 'vacant' Natal by negotiation with the Zulu king, Dingaan.

Retief's wagons skirted the Basuto uplands. Confronted with the formidable escarpment of the Drakensberg, his scouts reported that ways could be found down the mountain wall at no less than five different points. On the inland side the mountains presented no serious problems, even for wagons heavily loaded with food and household gear. But east of the main watershed, steep declivities could only be negotiated when wagons had been taken to pieces. Double spans would be required to keep them under control. Even on the relatively easy Bezuidenhout's pass, by which the majority descended into Natal, in preference to the more southerly route over Olivier's loek, long days of toil and anxiety must have been devoted to the clearing of a track. The whole journey from the grasslands of the Orange River was perforce taken at an easy pace, not so much because the way lay across wild country

¹ 6 & 7 William IV, cap. 57, making British subjects liable on their return to the colony for crimes committed anywhere south of latitude 25 degrees South.

but as a measure of precaution for the welfare of the calves and lambs accompanying the wagons.

Retief realised that it rested with him to show the way and convince his followers that the occupation of Natal could be accomplished in safety. He knew that Trekker settlement was unlikely to be resented by the handful of Englishmen at the Port, and he took confidence from the fact that the Zulu kingdom lay north of the Tugela barrier. Anxious, if possible, to reach a friendly arrangement with the Zulus, he decided to push ahead with a few followers. Descending the Berg a little to the west of the Van Reenen pass (October 1837), he rode on over the green bush-clad downs of upland Natal, avoiding the densely forested valleys and meeting with no signs of human habitation.

In the course of his journey, he would have to cross the Bushmansrand, beneath which the Trekkers were presently to establish their principal town. The site of the future city of Pietermaritzburg may have been selected by Retief himself. The same route was followed two months later by A. W. Pretorius, the Graaff Reinet farmer who was destined to succeed Retief in the leadership of the main Trek. Pretorius returned to the Cape by the coastal route in January, and his report referred to the selection of the site for the chief town at a point distant 'about one day's riding from the Port'. Already, he declared, some 400 wagons were moving down to occupy the site.¹

Under Maritz, however, the Trekkers made slow progress. Many preferred to remain on the high veld pending good news from Retief. The first wagons of the main Trek entered Natal on 14 November 1837. By this time Retief had already made contact with the Englishmen at the Port, and with Dingaan himself. He had reached the Bay on 19 October, conversed in friendly fashion with Biggar, Cane and others, and left five

¹ *Zuid Afrikaan*, 9 Feb. 1838; *Voortrekkerense*, ii, p. 156. I am indebted for this suggestion to Dr A. J. du Plessis, of the University of Stellenbosch.

days later for Dingaan's kraal at Umgungundhlovu. Here Dingaan's missionary, the Rev. Francis Owen, warned him that Dingaan had already ceded Natal to Captain Gardiner as the representative of Britain. But Retief was over-anxious to reach an amicable agreement with the Zulu king. He was content to accept Dingaan's promise that he would make a grant of land to the emigrant farmers on condition that they recovered for him cattle stolen by the overberg chief, Sikonyela. As the crafty monarch subsequently explained, he 'had not told the Dutch *what* country he should give them. He knew that they *desired* Port Natal, but he did not intend to give it them.'¹ What he actually contemplated, even at this early date, was the assassination of Retief and his comrades.

Sikonyela, Rob Roy of Basutoland, had his principal kraal in the uplands which overlook the present town of Ficksburg. To accomplish his mission, Retief was obliged to retrace his steps and reascend the Drakensberg passes. He found his followers in exuberant spirits over the prospects of settlement in what appeared to be a paradise for cattle farmers. His own wagons rested in the vicinity of the upper Tugela and Bushman Rivers. With them were Sarel Cilliers, the diarist-predikant Erasmus Smit, and Retief's daughter, who now proudly celebrated the welcome news by inscribing her father's name in green paint on a prominent rock surface. With good intelligence from the high veld, where the Matabele had recently been worsted in open fight, more of the Trekkers were now descending the passes, and, discarding precautions, were beginning, as was their wont, to disperse among the well-watered highlands which fringed the great escarpment.

Recovery of the Zulu cattle presented no difficulty. Retief was above all anxious to secure an outlet to the Indian Ocean, and to give Dingaan no excuse for evading his obligations. Dingaan, however, was disquieted by the victory of the Dutch

¹ G. E. Cory (ed.): *Diary of the Rev. F. Owen*, p. 65.

over his own kinsfolk, the Matabele. He did not underrate the significance of the horse and the firearm, and he preferred to keep Natal an untenanted wilderness. When Retief, with some sixty volunteers, among them the Englishman Thomas Halstead, rode into Dingaan's town, attended by no more than thirty Hottentot servants, they were ignoring the warnings of those who knew Dingaan best. The Zulu king had written on 2 February that 'his heart was now content because he had got his cattle again'. In reality, he was mindful of Tshaka's warning that the white man was destined to fall heir to Zulu dominion, and resolved to crush the newcomers before they could develop their full strength. At Umgungundlilovu welcoming faces masked the cruel treachery that was intended. The king, with a readiness that should have awakened suspicion, affixed his mark to a document which purported to transfer to the farmers the whole land, inclusive of Port Natal, which lay between the Tugela and the Umzimvubu.¹ On 6 February, however, as the party was making ready to depart, they were persuaded to enter the royal enclosure. Not without misgivings, they had previously deposited their guns at the entrance. Now, at the order 'Kill the wizards', the excited tribesmen fell upon their guests and dragged them to the hill of massacre (*kwa matiwane*), where one and all perished. To the missionary Owen, Dingaan excused his conduct by advancing the plea that the farmers 'were going to kill him, that they had come here and he had now learned all their plans'. Owen had no time to warn the hapless men. As Dingaan's messenger stood before the mission hut, 'nine

¹ After the battle of the Blood River, the grant was found in Retief's shooting wallet by E. F. Potgieter, a member of Pretorius's victorious commando. The volksraad attached much importance to the grant as documentary evidence of their title to Natal. When confronted by British intervention, the volksraad secretary seems to have entrusted the document or a copy to J. A. Smellekamp, of the Dutch ship, *Brazilia*. It certainly found its way to Amsterdam. Though written in English, it was evidently not the work of Owen; and its authorship remains obscure. See J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, p. 451; W. J. Leyds: *First Annexation of the Transvaal*.

or ten Zulus to each Boer were dragging their helpless unarmed victim to the fatal spot, where those eyes which awaked this morning to see the cheerful light of day for the last time are now closed in death.¹

Whilst Owen and his American colleagues were making hasty preparations to abandon Zululand, Dingaan was despatching his impis to take by surprise the scattered laagers in the west. For the Trekkers were now dispersed in small parties along the Bushman and Blaauwkrantz Rivers. Retief's own wagons lay north of the site of the present town of Estcourt. Dingaan's regiments advanced with almost incredible speed. Nearly all the Trekker laagers were attacked simultaneously, barely ten days after the massacre at Umgungundhlovu. Farmers on the Zululand side of the Bushman River perished almost to a man. The Liebenbergs and the Prinsloos in the lands bordering the Blaauwkrantz suffered terrible losses. Along the Moordspruit the Bothmas, Besters and Bothas fared little better.² Only at Doornkop far to the west did the Trekkers receive warning in time to permit of organised resistance. The first disastrous night cost the Dutch the lives of nearly 300 men, women and children. Thereafter, no considerable parties were actually overwhelmed. But, in the two months of open fighting which followed, Uys moving down from the Berg was trapped and, together with his gallant young son, Dirk, stabbed to death, whilst the Englishmen, coming with their Bantu levies to the assistance of the farmers, were crushed by weight of numbers at the crossing of the Tugela. Port Natal was now occupied by Dingaan's warriors whilst the survivors of the small community sought refuge on board the *Comet*, a small coasting brig which happened to be at anchor in the Bay. When the *Comet* sailed, with the missionaries on board, barely half a dozen Englishmen ventured to remain.

¹ *Diary*, p. 107.

² For the Weenen massacres, see Bird: *op. cit.* i, pp. 238 *sqq.* and 367 *sqq.*; and *Voortrekkerense*, i and iii.

Meanwhile, Potgieter, who had refused to serve under Maritz, returned to the high veld. It was the low-water mark of Trekker fortunes. Dingaan indeed refrained from pressing home his early advantage. His generals preferred, Zulu fashion, to return to their kraals for ritual purification, after rounding up the captured cattle. Moreover, the Tugela soon came down in flood. Nevertheless, at Italeni, where Uys had fallen, the Zulus had defeated the white man in open fight, despite his horses and guns. Among the Trekkers, the loss of so many draught oxen brought the bands together for concerted action. Individual leaders could no longer trek off as inclination might suggest, either back beyond the mountains or farther down into Natal. Messengers were therefore sent to the Cape expressing the determination not to abandon the land consecrated by the blood of dear ones and appealing for assistance. Meanwhile, C. P. Landman had been elected to succeed the dead governor. In May, the new leader ventured down to the stricken Port. The object of his mission was probably twofold. Landman and his Raad realised that the occasion was favourable, now that the British magistrate and most of the original settlers had sailed away to the Cape, to proclaim the Port Trekker territory. At the same time, it is probable that no final decision had yet been reached on the question of the future capital. Pretorius had written of Bushmansrand as the site of the principal city, but at that time Captain Gardiner, with his commission under the hated Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act, had been in possession of the Port. The inland site was thought to be free from the dreaded cattle-sickness of the coast, and it was unquestionably closer to those Trekker settlements beyond the mountains with which both Retief and Maritz had resolved to maintain contact. But the precipitate retreat of Potgieter after Italeni cooled the feelings of those who remained towards their kinsmen beyond the Drakensberg, whilst Gardiner's departure was interpreted as an indication that the British government might not be invincibly opposed to Trekker sovereignty at the Bay. Though

a small laager had been in occupation of the Bushmansrand site at least as early as July, the decision to form a town there was only finally taken on 23 October.¹ Many no doubt frankly preferred to make the Port the future capital.

Landman's visit was not protracted. On 16 May he assembled his small party and read to them a proclamation claiming possession of the harbour with its hinterland, in the name of the 'United Laagers'. He then hurried back to the main camp with fresh supplies of stores and gunpowder. But he left William Cowie, an English mechanic, in nominal authority as *veldkornet*, and he persuaded Alexander Biggar, whose sons had died fighting with the Trekkers, to accept the office of *landdrost*. At headquarters, Landman met J. N. Boshoff, secretary to the civil commissioner at Graaff Reinet. Boshoff was a man of considerable ability, patient and tactful, and with some knowledge of constitutional procedure. His official duties made it necessary for him to hasten back across the passes; but, before he left, he assisted Maritz and Landman to amplify the details of the Thaba Nchu *grondwet*. Boshoff recommended an enlarged Volksraad meeting at regular intervals. His departure, which was soon followed by the untimely death of Maritz, postponed the operation of the revised *grondwet*. But on 12 October the Raad met at Port Natal and indicated, by its resolution confining the initiative in legislation to full members, that it was determined to adhere to a formal procedure. Another meeting was held at the Port on 23 March 1839.² Meanwhile, British troops had landed at the Point, and the decision to locate the capital at Bushmansrand, where Piet Greyling had already laid out in rough parallelogram the ground plan of the new township, was probably the outcome of their unexpected arrival. It had already been decided that

¹ *Voortrekkermense*, ii, pp. 220, 246.

² The late M. Basson, archivist at Pietermaritzburg, called my attention to an important letter of Frans Roos, successor to A. Biggar as *landdrost*, in *Acc. 7. Correspondence*, xv (Natal archives). For the meeting at the Port in March, see *Zuid Afrikaan*, 28 June 1839.

the town should be named Pietermaritzburg, in honour of Piet Retief and Gert Maritz.

When Greyling rode down to mark out the *erven*, the main body of Trekkers were not far from despair. In the face of another determined onslaught from Dingaan's impis, repulsed with difficulty at Veglaager (August), the order had been issued to fall back on the line of the Little Tugela, hard by the passes through which the main body had poured down into Natal eight months earlier. Supplies of every sort were running short. Even candles were hard to come by. The death of Maritz (23 September) left the farmers without a leader of recognised distinction. Moreover, the Zulus were now armed with the horses and guns which they had captured at Umgungundhlovu and Italeni.

News of the tragic occurrences in Natal had by this time reached the Colonial Office in Downing Street. The British government still adhered to its intention not to establish a settlement at Port Natal and viewed the handful of Englishmen under Captain Gardiner as merely 'an assemblage of British subjects living in a foreign country'. James Stephen and his political chief, Lord Glenelg, were reluctant to attempt what seemed an impossible task of regulating the relations between the emigrant farmers and native races with which they had established contact. In May, however, Glenelg learned of the massacres at Umgungundhlovu and Weenen. At the Cape, Sir George Napier believed that the despatch of troops to the Port would stop the bloodshed in Natal, and perhaps even discourage the continuing exodus from the colony. He was now authorised by the Secretary of State to send a small detachment to Natal, as a temporary measure.¹ The troops sailed on 20 November, under the command of Major Samuel Charters, and accompanied, as native interpreter, by the youthful Theophilus Shepstone. Sir George Napier had no doubts concerning the wisdom of this procedure. He had tried,

¹ Glenelg to Sir G. Napier, 8 June 1838; Napier to Glenelg, 16 Oct. 1838; J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, pp. 398, 418.

and failed even with the help of the Dutch Reformed Church, to halt the emigration at the colonial frontiers. His military advisers now assured him that emigrants could be compelled to return through the interruption at Port Natal of the importation of gunpowder and essential stores. If, on the other hand, the farmers were allowed to establish a community of their own, with access to the Indian Ocean, their settlement would perpetuate the evils of slave-holding and open the way to foreign intervention in South Africa.

These arguments were in harmony with the humanitarian sentiment which was so influential in governing circles in the late 'thirties. In the years which followed the enactment of the bill to abolish slavery, the abolitionists were concerned to regulate the conditions of apprenticeship and guard against the virtual retention of slave labour under a new name. They were aware of the fact that the Act of Emancipation had destroyed a part, but not the whole, of the old slave system.¹ Sir George Napier realised that it was incumbent upon him to take steps to ensure that ex-slave apprentices entitled to full freedom on 31 December 1838 should be able to take advantage of their new privileges. He accordingly commissioned Gideon Joubert to visit the various Trekker encampments beyond the colonial frontier and explain to the apprentices the nature of their rights. Joubert's mission, followed next month by the arrival of Major Charters and his Highlanders at the Port, was a reminder to the Trekkers that they had not passed beyond the reach of the British authorities.

Charters arrived too late to stop further fighting. The Trekkers had only awaited reinforcements and an organiser of acknowledged ability whilst preparing their counter-blow against Dingaan's warriors. They did not doubt their overwhelming superiority on the field of battle, given only cautious leadership and competent reconnoitring. The Zulus had surprised Uys in undulating downland. In no instance had

¹ On imperial policy and abolition of slavery, see R. Coupland: *The British Anti-Slavery Movement*, 1933.

they broken through the laagered wagons. Returning from Graaff Reinet with welcome reinforcements and a bronze cannon, A. W. Pretorius was the inevitable successor to Retief and Maritz. He was in the prime of life and he had acquitted himself courageously in fighting on the Kaffir frontier. Moreover, his personal following was considerable. Elected without hesitation to the supreme command, Pretorius did not hurry his preparations for the decisive struggle. Not until 28 November did his commando move north in the direction of the Buffalo River drifts. Close to Danskraal, reinforced by a strong detachment from the Port under Landman and Biggar, Pretorius halted, and on 9 December, with all his followers, took oath that, if God would send victory, they would, on each anniversary, celebrate the day as one of thanksgiving.¹

Rounding the main peaks of the Biggarsberg, Pretorius moved in a north-easterly direction, crossing the Buffalo and forming camp on the banks of its tributary, the Blood or Ncome River. The position was one of considerable strength. Only two sides were open to assault, for the river ran strong and deep along the front of the laager, whilst a steeply banked watercourse protected one flank. Pretorius spent the afternoon of 15 December linking together the tented wagons with tightly stretched hides and mounting his two small cannon. At dawn the Zulus attacked in close formation, displaying the utmost courage and resolution. At point-blank range the smooth-bore flintlocks, loaded with slugs, wrought deadly

¹ According to Bantjes' *Journal*, the commando was at Danskraal on 5 December. See the well-argued account in E. G. Jansen: *Die Voortrekkers in Natal*, 1938, pp. 57-74. In a letter, 22 Dec. 1838, to the Volksraad, Pretorius linked this oath, taken in the neighbourhood of Danskraal, with the project of erecting a church at Pietermaritzburg. The oath administered before Sarel Cilliers appears to make no mention of a church, and it is not referred to in the original subscription list for the building (reproduced in A. F. Hattersley: *Pietermaritzburg Panorama*, opp. p. 22). The day of victory (16 Dec.) was not in fact continuously observed: and not until 1864 was a definite resolution in favour of its observance as a day of thanksgiving carried by the Natal Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church. The name 'Dingaan's Day' was suggested in 1906 by Mr C. Fergg of Utrecht.

havoc. After two hours of desperate conflict, Pretorius launched his counter-stroke with mounted burghers. The issue was soon beyond doubt. The impis were no match for the Boers, skilled in frontier fighting and armed with both guns and horses. Some 3000 perished. Dingaan fled away to Hlulhuwe.

The victory, though decisive, did not shatter the military fabric which Tshaka had constructed. Dingaan shifted his capital northward to the outskirts of the Ngome forest. His army was still formidable and he planned to use it against Swazi rivals beyond the Pongola. But the rebellion of his brother Mpande was to prove his undoing.

At the Port, Charters had endeavoured to adhere to his instructions. His first task was to build a fort and take possession of any stores of arms and munitions which he might find in the settlement. Napier had instructed him to make clear to all that the military occupation was temporary, and did not indicate an intention to annex the district to the British Crown. Lest this should give encouragement to the emigrant Boers, he was also to announce that the occupation of Natal by the farmers could not be sanctioned. Charters found the Trekkers on the point of entering Zululand. On 6 December, two days after the landing of the troops, he despatched messengers post-haste to Pretorius to halt the commando. The messengers were intercepted at the Tugela by a party of Trekkers and sent back without reply. Charters could do nothing but proclaim martial law in the vicinity of the Port, and hurry forward the defensive works at the Point. After the Blood River engagement, Pretorius's Raad allowed Landman to confer, in a representative capacity, with Charters on the subject of the independence of the Trekkers. Whilst Landman refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the British government, Charters could only reiterate that British subjects could not lawfully divest themselves of their allegiance to the Crown. He could scarcely do less, since Napier still hoped to turn back the Trek and had insisted time and again

that 'aboriginal tribes' must be protected against any invasion of their territorial rights.¹

In January, Charters returned overland to the colony, taking with him Theophilus Shepstone in order that he might enter into discussions with the Pondo chief, Faku. He left Henry Jervis in command at the Port, with instructions to negotiate a peace between Boers and Zulus. In the hope that the conclusion of peace would be followed by the withdrawal of the military, Pretorius consented reluctantly to meet Dingaan's envoys in the presence of Jervis as unofficial mediator. In May terms of peace were arranged. Dingaan undertook to recognise the Boer claim to Natal and to surrender 19,000 head of cattle, in addition to all captured guns and horses. But before the settlement came up for ratification by the Volksraad, the position had changed. Individual burghers began to clamour for reparation in view of their earlier losses, whilst Pretorius reached an understanding with the rebellious Mpande. Boer patrols made their appearance across the Tugela. On the ground that Dingaan was not delivering the promised cattle, the Volksraad insisted on the cession of a broad belt of Zululand extending north beyond the Black Umfulosi to the entrance to St Lucia Bay. This addition to the original treaty was not communicated to Jervis.²

The Raad now sat at the new capital city on the Bushmansrand. Here some 1000 people were congregated on the gently sloping site, to which water could be carried by furrow from a neighbouring stream. Alarmed at the losses in horses and cattle sustained on the coastlands, Pretorius had made up his mind that the middle terrace was preferable for the emigrants' chief town. Greyling and Nel were instructed to push ahead with the survey of *erven*. Within a reasonable time owners were to erect substantial dwelling-houses. The

¹ The principal authorities for occupation of the Bay are Charters's own despatches to Napier, to be found in C.O. 48 199-200 (P.R.O.); and T. Shepstone's *Journal* in the Natal archives.

² G. S. Preller: *Voortrekker Wetgewing*, 1-4.

transition from laagered camp to settled dorp was gradually accomplished. A church, built of local stone, was completed on 15 March 1840. Here for a brief year Erasmus Smit ministered to the congregation until, in March 1841, Sarel Cilliers removed the pulpit in protest against the services of a man who lacked ecclesiastical ordination. His place was taken by the American, Daniel Lindley. At the western end of the square, the Raadzaal was of green brick, 'a mere shell of an unfinished building', as Cloete described it in 1845.¹

Now that victory made possible the dispersal of Trekkers to their farms, machinery of government on the familiar Cape model began to take shape. At the capital and at Weenen and Congella, *landdrosts* were appointed to administer justice, assisted by *veldkornets* in the various wards. Meetings of the Volksraad became more regular, whilst a committee of five functioned in the intervals between sessions. But until Dingaan had been finally overthrown there could be no genuine security. In September 1839 Mpande had ventured to defy his brother and to cross the Tugela into Natal with no less than 17,000 followers. Large-scale Zulu incursions into Trekker territory, however peaceful the errand, were by no means congenial to the farmers. Mpande, however, was quite ready to return across the Tugela if he could do so in safety with some promise of support. On 15 October he came to Pietermaritzburg and won over the Volksraad to accept a plan for concerted action against Dingaan. He was formally installed twelve days later as 'reigning prince of the emigrant Zulus', his agreement providing that he should assume his brother's obligations under the May treaty and abolish the death penalty for witchcraft. It was understood that he would be assisted by a Boer commando to usurp Dingaan's throne, whereupon he would withdraw all his people north of the Tugela and rule

¹ The original survey of the town has been wrongly attributed to the Swedish naturalist, J. A. Wahlberg, who only reached Natal, in company with the Frenchman, Adolphe Delegorgue, in May 1839. On the history of Pietermaritzburg, see A. F. Hattersley: *Pietermaritzburg Panorama*, 1938.

as a vassal of the republic, consenting not to wage tribal warfare without the approval of the Raad.

For the moment, Trekker initiative was limited by the presence of British troops at the Port. Jervis, bound by his instructions to discountenance further fighting, refused to release supplies of gunpowder. But his command was too small to enable him to exercise a decisive influence in the direction of peace. Munitions of war could still reach the Boers by way of Delagoa Bay. Nor had the military occupation done anything to check emigration from the colony. These considerations were not without weight in London. On 17 September, Napier received instructions to abandon Port Natal. The departure of the troops on Christmas Eve enabled Pretorius to advance his preparations for invasion of Zululand. At the Port, where the republican tricolour was now displayed, burghers mounted guard as an indication of the Raad's resolution to hold fast its coveted outlet to the ocean and the outside world. The 'Republic of New Holland' was at length fairly launched.

For Dingaan the end came abruptly. In January the combined forces of Pretorius and Mpande overthrew his regiments at Magongo, near the upper Mkusi. The brunt of the fighting was born by Mpande's regiments under Nongalasa, but it was the fighting prestige of the farmers which broke the resolution of Dingaan's warriors. The defeated monarch fled across the Pongola to meet an ignominious death at the hands of the Swazi. In his stead, Pretorius proclaimed Mpande. The boundaries of his kingdom were to conform to the arrangements which had been kept a secret from Henry Jervis. For southern Zululand and St Lucia Bay were claimed as republican territory. Seldom has so much been accomplished for so small a military effort. Apart from the territorial concessions, 36,000 head of cattle and numerous 'apprentices' were secured by the victorious commando.¹ Moreover, Pretorius had ensured the subservience of Mpande to Trekker interests. Little

¹ E. A. Walker: *The Great Trek*, p. 204.

THE REPUBLIC OF NATAL

as the new king might comprehend the implications of 'suzerainty', there could be no illusions concerning the military supremacy of the Boers. Internal disunion, indeed, had played a part in the overthrow of the Zulu power. But only the statesmanship of Pretorius and the fighting prowess of the mounted farmer made it possible to lay in security the foundations of European colonisation in Natal. Advised by Pretorius, the Raad exercised a watchful supervision over its vassal, requiring him to keep his people north of the Tugela and refusing to sanction raids on neighbouring tribes except on the condition that it should receive two-thirds of the captured cattle.

The two years which followed the engagement at Magongo represent the period of republican predominance in Natal. At the Cape, Sir George Napier, declining to act upon the instructions of Lord John Russell to re-occupy the Port,¹ went so far as to invite the Volksraad to formulate its proposals. During the winter months the Raad had been occupied with constitutional questions which threatened to disrupt the community. Confusion and ambiguity in the interpretation of the constitution were fundamentally the outcome of political inexperience. But they were intensified by personal bickerings between the leaders. Pretorius quarrelled violently with Stephanus Maritz, brother of the dead leader, and was inclined to resent dictation from 'the civil authority'. Maritz, on the other hand, supported by the secretary, J. J. Burger, championed the sovereignty of the Raad, on which officials, even if they were head commandants, were not entitled to sit. In July these domestic feuds were temporarily healed. The arrival of J. N. Boshoff, who knew something of the conduct of public affairs, contributed to end the constitutional deadlock. It was easier to reach agreement on the subject of the republic's external relations. On behalf of the Raad, Burger now wrote to Napier offering to send commissioners to negotiate a friendly arrangement on the basis of recognition of the

¹ Russell to Napier, 23 Dec. 1839. J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, p. 620.

emigrants as 'a free and independent people'.¹ Four months later, this proposal was elaborated. In a detailed communication to the Cape governor, the Raad asked for an alliance between the British government and the 'Republic of Port Natal and adjoining Countries' and favoured treatment for its exports and imports. In return, the Raad offered to make no hostile movement against tribes to the south of Natal without due notice to the Cape authorities; and to 'give every encouragement for the spreading of the Gospel amongst and for the civilization of the Heathen Tribes which surround us or are residing under our Government'.²

Napier was honestly desirous of investigating the grievances of the emigrants. Officially, however, he was obliged to address them as British subjects. Meanwhile he sought instructions from Downing Street. Here, the interests of the Empire were considered to require that south-eastern Africa should be under the sole control of the British government. An independent state, controlling a serviceable harbour and territory suspected to be rich in coal, was a potential menace to the safety of the route to India. Moreover, the Colonial Office had been impressed by Napier's argument that the only security for peace and fair treatment of native peoples lay in the establishment of British authority at Port Natal. Only the probability of heavy expenditure and the anti-annexationist views of James Stephen caused hesitation to sanction re-occupation.³ In August, Russell instructed Napier that the emigrants should be promised the usual tariff privileges of a colony, conditional upon their agreement to receive a detachment of troops and refrain from hostile movements against friendly tribes.

In the long run, it was the native policy of the Natal Volksraad that determined the course of events. It was inevitable

¹ 4 Sept. 1840, printed in G. W. Eybers: *Select Constitutional Documents illustrating S.A. History, 1795-1910* (1918), pp. 158-9.

² Eybers: *op. cit.* pp. 159-62.

³ See Stephen's *Minute of 31 Jan. 1842* in C.O. 48/214 (P.R.O.).

that the Trekkers should seek to reintroduce into a community of their own making those conceptions of native relations the supersession of which, in the old colony, had in large measure provoked the emigration. A prominent feature of the old system had been compulsion, direct or indirect, on the coloured man to offer his services to the farmer. Even more important than the supply of labour was the question of security. For a community of pastoral farmers, this must mean a definite limitation of native immigration. In 1837 the Trekkers had found Natal temporarily denuded of its native inhabitants. In the succeeding years restoration of peaceful conditions induced many to return to their former homes. The earliest arrivals could be compelled to enter into labour contracts with European masters, whilst young natives might be registered as 'apprentices'. But, as the volume of 'intruders' swelled, the Volksraad began inevitably to debate the expediency of large-scale removal of natives.

There was common-sense, and, from the farmers' point of view, justice in these contemplated arrangements. It was impossible for some 4000 Europeans to farm the land of Natal without a sufficiency of native labour. On the other hand, unless there was racial segregation and strict prohibition on natives entering European areas, the Trekkers could not live in safety on their necessarily isolated farms. Volksraad legislation therefore provided for the strict sharing out of labour at the rate of five Bantu families to each occupied farm, the registration of Bantu children as 'apprentices'; and, when native labour threatened to become embarrassingly plentiful, the forcible removal of 'surplus' native population to areas unoccupied by Europeans. Application of this not unfamiliar policy involved the republic in unforeseen difficulties.

Farmers soon had cause to complain of stock thefts in the districts bordering the Drakensberg. It was not to be expected that they would forgo retaliation. In many cases the culprits were Bushmen. But there was good reason to suspect others,

notably the Amabaca chief Ncapaai, who lived close to the frontier lands of Pondoland. Thereupon Pretorius was commissioned by the Raad to recover the stolen cattle, and teach the erring chief a lesson. In the course of the expedition some of his younger men got out of hand, with the result that Ncapaai's suzerain, Faku, trusted friend and ally of the authorities at the Cape, took alarm. Though Faku's Wesleyan missionary exaggerated the extent of the disorder, it is clear that blood had been shed without necessity, and that the commando had ridden off home with 'orphan' children as well as 3000 head of cattle. Reports of the raid on the Amabaca seemed to Sir George Napier to indicate that no reliance could be placed on the promise of the emigrants 'that neither slavery nor slave trade will ever be permitted amongst us':¹ for unregulated apprenticing of captured children was evidently indistinguishable from virtual slavery. The action of the commando was doubtless disapproved by many of the leaders at Pietermaritzburg. But in response to Faku's appeal Napier could scarcely do less than order up a small force, under Captain Thomas Smith, to protect the Pondo frontier.²

Throughout 1841, though Smith made no move to intervene in Natal, relations remained uneasy. In the early months, the Raad was busily engaged in giving effect to its policy of land settlement. Original Voortrekkers and others who had resided in the district for a certain period were entitled, under the burghership law,³ to make application for two full farms of 6000 acres. These applications were entered provisionally, pending inspection and registration, in the books of the Volksraad. In many cases, descriptions were so vague that it was impossible to ascertain what particular farms were meant. Governor Pine, when shown the records by the secretary to

¹ *Memorial*, 1839, in G. W. Eybers: *Select Constitutional Documents illustrating S.A. History, 1795-1910* (1918), p. 154.

² Napier to Secretary of State, 6 Dec. 1841. J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, pp. 660-6.

³ For the burghership law of 14 April 1841, regulating the right to hold landed property, see Eybers: *op. cit.* pp. 162-4.

the government in 1850, found that 'one man applies for a farm where such and such a person shot a buffalo; another for a farm at the place where he and his companions outspanned upon a certain expedition'.¹ Several persons appeared as applicants for the same farm. In many cases, no official inspection took place. A thorough survey of the land of Natal was quite beyond the resources of the community. The manner in which claims were admitted opened the way to confusion and controversy. During the first two years, some two-and-a-half million acres of land were registered in favour of 254 persons, of whom only forty-nine seem to have personally occupied their grants. From an early date, absent speculators began to buy up registered farms. Under conditions which permitted even youths of eighteen to hold land on what amounted to perpetual ownership, in return for an annual recognition fee of twelve rix-dollars (18s.), a general fall in the price of land was inevitable.² In 1843, Henry Cloete was dismayed to find that farms had been staked out not only in every district of republican Natal, but even in territory claimed by Faku on both sides of the Umzimvubu, as well as north of the Tugela in Zululand.

These extensive land claims, involving wide dispersal of the small European population, made more likely conflict with native interests, and at the same time weakened the effective authority of the governing Raad. It was imperative that Trekkers, on their widely scattered farms, many of them in the vicinity of mountain fastnesses, should have a sufficiency of native labour, but no more. In the north-eastern districts they were soon embarrassed by the steady influx of Zulu refugees, who proceeded to build huts near European farms. At Pietermaritzburg the urgency of the problem was fully appreciated. Since *veldkornets* were powerless to eject the intruders and native headmen to control their movements, the Raad fell back in desperation on a policy of wholesale removal

¹ *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1851, xxxvii (1417), p. 45.

² *Minute*, Nov. 1849 of D. Moodie, *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1850, xxxviii (1292), pp. 152-9.

of redundant Bantu to land south of the Umtanvuna. This decision was taken on 2 August, without any thought of provocation to the British authorities at the Cape. To accompany the tribesmen and preserve order in territory which they claimed had been ceded to the republic by Dingaan, Raad members had discussed the appointment of resident commandants. In fact, the proposal bristled with difficulties. To Sir George Napier, it foreshadowed a renewed period of strain and unrest in Kaffirland. The crowding of thousands of impoverished Bantu into areas where Pondos, and a little farther south Tembus and Galekas, were already complaining of intolerable congestion could only mean further outbreaks of disorder on the colonial frontier. More than anything else, governors and secretaries of state alike had feared dangerous repercussions in the borderlands of Cape Colony as the probable outcome of the Great Trek. After some hesitation, for ministerial changes in England militated against the adoption of a firm and consistent policy, Napier decided to instruct Captain Smith to occupy Port Natal. His proclamation of 2 December stigmatised the proposal to remove surplus natives as 'a most unjust and illegal proceeding' from which there was 'reason to apprehend that warfare and bloodshed will be occasioned'. To Lord John Russell he expressed the opinion that the emigrant farmers were too weak and too disunited to establish a stable regime capable of dealing fairly with the natives.¹

At the Port, much as the handful of Englishmen under George Cato, and possibly a few of the emigrants themselves, might welcome the establishment of British authority, the Trekkers were inclined to organise resistance. Smith gave them ample time to place the Bay in a state of defence. Breaking up his camp on the Umgazi in the period of summer rains, he moved slowly and with infinite caution, for he had women

¹ Napier to Secretary of State, 6 Dec. 1841. For a suggestion that his intervention was inspired by merchants at Cape Town and Grahamstown, see C. J. Uys: *In the Era of Shepstone*, p. 13.

and children with his two companies of the 27th Foot and was unfamiliar with the difficult route. Not until 1 April did the column of sixty wagons cross the Umzimvubu. Meanwhile (21 February) the Raad at Pietermaritzburg had addressed Sir George Napier in formal protest against his proclamation as 'most unjust...and calculated, if carried into effect, to occasion the very thing which it is stated to be its principal object to prevent, namely wars and bloodshed'. Defending its resolution of 2 August, the Raad declared that, if permitted to settle among the farmers, the natives pouring across the Tugela would sooner or later rise against the Europeans, in order to take possession of their cattle. The old complaints against the British government, and its 'speculative politicians' were reiterated. It was claimed that the farmers had 'succeeded in establishing a form of Government which is daily gaining the public confidence more and more'; and that the outcome of Trekker settlement in Natal was not disturbance in native areas, but the establishment of effective restraint on the 'surrounding warlike Zoolahs'.¹

When therefore, on 5 May, Smith reached the Port and hauled down the republican colours, the *commissie raad* ordered him to leave the district within twenty-four hours. Pending the meeting of the full Volksraad and in expectation of support from across the Berg, the Trekkers had withdrawn to the small village of Congella. There Pretorius could do little without the reinforcements which would enable him to meet Smith's regulars on terms of equality. His tactics were well chosen, for the delay confirmed the now over-confident and irascible Smith in his disparaging estimate of Boer courage and leadership. The soldiers had laagered their wagons and thrown up light earthworks to protect the encampment. But the precautions against surprise were inadequate, and the garrison soon found cause for complaint in the shortage of supplies and the quality of the water.

¹ G. W. Eybers: *Select Constitutional Documents illustrating S.A. History, 1795-1910* (1918), pp. 167-74.

On 16 May the full Raad assembled at Pretorius's headquarters. Many were reluctant to appear in arms against the Queen's authority. A more tactful man than Smith would have held the Raad in negotiation until fresh instructions could be procured from the governor. But Smith took no notice of messages. And when Pretorius, heartened by the arrival of Boers from the Modder River under the redoubtable Jan Mocke, rounded up Smith's oxen, fighting became inevitable. Under cover of darkness and, as he hoped, of a howitzer operating from the Bay, Smith marched his small force against the camp at Congella. He expected to take his opponents by surprise, but his calculations were at fault. Though the redcoats moved quietly enough along the marshy shore of the Bay, the bright moonlight made them conspicuous targets for Boer marksmen stationed in the mangrove thickets. Whilst heavy sand encumbered the movements of the oxen drawing the guns, shallowing water kept the boat on which Smith had mounted his howitzer well out of range of the enemy's position. After the initial surprise, the artillerymen did their best to return the heavy fire, but the farmers were well concealed in the bush. Smith had no alternative but to order a retreat. His losses in killed, wounded and missing amounted to forty-nine. Both six-pounders were abandoned to Pretorius. With the Boers hot on their heels, the soldiers made good their retirement. But with a little more resolution Pretorius could have overwhelmed the small force and stormed Smith's encampment on the flats. He contented himself with a close surveillance which was gradually converted into a definite siege.

Before Smith had marched his force into the Bay, the Trekkers had found encouragement in the visit of the Dutch vessel *Brazilia*. Her supercargo, Johan Smellekamp, an ambitious and enterprising young merchant, had received instructions to seek openings for trade with the emigrant community in Natal. Probably Smellekamp, knowing something of the circumstances of the Trekkers through a society

(the *Diligentia*) in Holland, had himself suggested to his employers that he should be furnished with an elaborate address to the republican authorities. The address, despite its 'broad gold edging and many ribbons',¹ was in reality no more than a commercial prospectus drawn up by a firm of Amsterdam merchants. But the advent of the *Brazilia* at so opportune a moment, when the marching of Smith's force raised the whole question of Trekker independence, gave rise to the wildest expectations. Smellekamp was not the man to minimise his own importance. Soon after he came ashore, it was rumoured at Durban that he was the bearer of a letter to the Volksraad from William II, King of the Netherlands. At Pietermaritzburg, where he received a joyous welcome, many believed that the *Brazilia's* mission was political, and would be followed by the intervention of the Netherlands and the guarantee of Trekker independence. When, following Napier's report to Downing Street, enquiries were made in Europe, Smellekamp was promptly disavowed by William II's ministers. But, through the British minister at The Hague, it was discovered that Smellekamp had been financed by French capitalists.² In view of the uneasy Franco-British relations in Australasia and the Pacific, suspicion arose that in certain quarters at Paris embarrassment for Great Britain in south-eastern Africa would be very welcome. Smellekamp's activities during March and April gave the Boers courage to resist the British occupation. But in the long run they were distinctly prejudicial to Boer interests. For the apparent danger of foreign intervention in South Africa overcame the reluctance of the British government to sanction the annexation of Natal.

Enquiry into the *Brazilia* episode was set on foot by the Foreign Office in October; and it was not until December that the British authorities came to be seriously concerned by the evidence regarding French participation. Meanwhile, Smith

¹ E. A. Walker: *The Great Trek*, p. 268.

² J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, ii, p. 17; W. P. Morrell: *British Colonial Policy*, p. 142; C. J. Uys: *In the Era of Shepstone*, p. 19.

had been worsted at Congella and closely besieged in his encampment at the Port. Had it not been for this reverse, the troops would probably have been withdrawn in June. For Lord Stanley at the Colonial Office was inclined to agree with James Stephen that the Cape of Good Hope, despite its strategic position on the route to the East, was an unprofitable colony which it would be madness to enlarge. But a serious reverse to British arms was another matter. In June, Napier pointed out that, until peace had been restored and British authority vindicated, there could be no withdrawal with honour from Natal. He learned of Smith's plight when Richard King, formerly Albany settler and later prominent by reason of his great physical strength and patient good-humour among the Englishmen at the Port, rode exhausted into Grahamstown with tidings of the Congella battle.¹

Not until 25 June did relief come to Smith and his men. The digging of a well in the camp had solved the urgent problem of water, but for rations the garrison had been reduced to horseflesh, dried in the rays of the sun, biscuit-dust and rice. Their opponents, however, were scarcely in better plight. The Raad had no resources with which to sustain a prolonged campaign. Expected reinforcements from the high veld had not made their appearance, whilst, with burghers away from their farms on military service, provisions began to run low. At the Port, Pretorius could hold Smith's men but no more. With the arrival of the relieving force on the frigate *Southampton*, and its small consort, the *Conch*, he soon found that the cannon which he had mounted on both sides of the harbour entrance were utterly outclassed in range and weight of shot

¹ The 600-mile ride of Dick King and his native servant, 'Ndongeni, through densely populated native areas and by a route which involved hazardous river crossings ranks for heroism and endurance with the stoutest deeds of the Dutch-speaking Voortrekkers. The ride is described in G. E. Cory: *Rise of South Africa*, iv, pp. 154 *seq.*, on the basis of the description given to Miss Ethel Campbell by 'Ndongeni, who however did not accompany King during the final portion of the journey. For anecdotes of King's later career, see A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*.

by the armaments of the British frigate. When soldiers landed from the two vessels, the Boers withdrew to cover the road to the capital.

Colonel Josiah Cloete, in command of the expedition, judiciously refrained from marching his troops to Pietermaritzburg, and lost no time in entering into negotiations with Pretorius. He offered liberal terms but his appeal to the burghers to take the oath of allegiance met with small response. At Pietermaritzburg, where he presently proceeded to interview leading members of the Volksraad, he did what he could to break the confidence of burghers in the 'treaty' which Smellekamp had induced the Raad to sign in expectation of Netherlands aid. Nevertheless, it is probable that there would have been no submission but for ominous reports from Zululand. Though Cloete had forbidden Mpande to move his impi across the Tugela, there were indications enough that further resistance to British authority might involve the community in hostilities with its nominal vassal. Unlike the pugnacious Smith, Cloete was tactful and patient. He promised protection against the Zulus and inspired confidence by permitting them to retain their cannon. Whilst the men from the Orange River territory protested loudly against surrender of republican independence, J. N. Boshoff used his influence in the direction of conciliation. On 15 July (1842) the moderate party in the Raad carried a vote in favour of submission.

The terms were not altogether attractive. In return for submission to the Queen's authority and the surrender of captured firearms, Cloete promised a liberal amnesty, and security of land tenure until a final settlement was possible. Boshoff suggested to him that he should advise his superiors to set up a representative council for Natal, and send without delay a commissioner to adjudicate on land claims. These proposals were in due course submitted to Downing Street. The basis of the settlement, as finally sanctioned by the British government, was outlined in December by Lord Stanley.¹

¹ Stanley to Napier, 13 Dec. 1842. C.O. 49/36 (P.R.O.).

The difficult question of land grants was to be settled after examination of the registers by a commissioner, much indeed as Boshoff had suggested. But only lands actually occupied for a period of twelve months prior to the commissioner's arrival would be confirmed. No legal distinctions were to be based on colour, race or creed, and no slavery in any form tolerated. In other words, the future administration of Natal was to conform to principles of policy the enunciation of which at the Cape had provoked the Great Trek.

Cloete sailed from Port Natal on 21 July, taking with him a portion of the troops. Smith, now a major, was left in command to supervise the carrying out of the terms of the treaty. He soon discovered that, whereas the submission of the Volksraad had terminated in law the existence of the republic, it had not in effect superseded the jurisdiction, under the Crown, of the republican machinery of government. At the Port he strove to administer justice as magistrate under the Cape Punishment Act. But elsewhere *landdrosts* and *veldkornets*, and above them the Raad itself, continued necessarily to function for another two years and more.

Retief had contemplated one Trekker community north of the Orange with a port on the Indian Ocean. Whilst the farmers were still in the vicinity of Thaba Nchu, a form of government had emerged based on unwritten understandings which time would crystallise into a workable constitutional framework. In a community close-knit by ties of kinship, occupation and cultural outlook, law-making was a process upon which agreement was not difficult. On the high veld the people met in sovereign assembly, whilst executive and judicial functions devolved upon a small elected *burgerraad*.

Not until October 1838 were these simple rules converted into a written constitution defining in some detail the functions of the various organs of government. Boshoff's draft strengthened the civil authority and provided for a representative legislature which the people would be powerless

to override. No authority existed which could veto the Raad's resolutions or question its power to appoint and dismiss officials. Composed of twenty-four councillors elected by adult burghers, the Raad was intended to exercise sovereign authority. Apart from its function of legislation, it alone could conclude and ratify treaties, alienate the public land and define the jurisdiction of the local courts. In the judicial sphere it was the final court of appeal. An effective limitation of its authority lay, however, in the infrequency of its sessions. In the early years of Trekker rule the Raad met irregularly as circumstances warranted. The first formally constituted meeting was assembled at Port Natal on 12 October 1838, when the Raad resolved that only full members were competent to introduce proposals.¹ After March 1839, except during the crisis of 1842, sittings were held at Pietermaritzburg. The elaborated *grondwet* provided for meetings four times in the year, but burghers in the outlying districts could ill spare the periods of absence from their farms and sessions were seldom protracted beyond one week. One of the first duties of the assembled Raad was to elect a president, and with him, from March 1842, there were associated from four to six other members who, as a *commissie raad*, undertook the responsibility of administration after the main body had dispersed.

With the Natal Volksraad were associated adjunct raads at Potchefstroom and Winburg, maintaining in some measure that unity of the whole Trekker community upon which Retief had set so much importance. In theory, the council at Potchefstroom, where Hendrik Potgieter maintained paternal authority as commandant beyond the Vaal, was no more than a committee of the assembly which met in the Raadzaal on the market square at Pietermaritzburg. Twice a year, reports of its proceedings with protests and appeals were carried to Natal by delegates who, during their stay at the capital city, were entitled to the full privileges of Raad membership.

This loose federal tie was strengthened two years later, when

¹ *Supra*, p. 35.

the Vet River farmers organised a second subordinate council at Winburg, and agreed to send a delegation to Pietermaritzburg on the same terms that applied across the Vaal. Mocke's expedition in the winter of 1842 was an indication that ties of sentiment lay behind these measures of formal unity. But Trekkers could not be counted upon to act together in time of emergency. With the submission to Josiah Cloete of the community in Natal, the Volksraad ceased to be a sovereign legislature and unity dissolved in the face of growing dissensions. Though the Raad continued to function after 1843, Winburg and Potchefstroom were virtually independent. Natal was left to make its own terms with the British authorities.

From the date of Retief's murder at Umgungundhlovu, the republic lacked an executive head. Karel Landman, and later Andries Pretorius, succeeded to the office of head commandant, but that of governor remained unfilled. Want of mutual confidence played a part in perpetuating rivalries, some of which had originated during the course of the Trek itself. At Pietermaritzburg, suspicion of the military power induced the dominant party in the Raad to refuse Pretorius a seat so long as he held the office of head commandant. The chairman of the Raad could scarcely be regarded as civil head of the state, since he held office for only three months and exercised no special prerogatives. Communications with the outside world were drawn up by the secretary and signed by every member of the council.

Judicial functions were entrusted, on the Cape model, to *landdrosts* assisted by elected *heemraden*, with appeal to the Volksraad. A jury of twelve might be sworn in to assist the *landdrost* in the hearing of grave offences. In the wards, *veldkornets* exercised civil and military duties as agents of the central authorities.¹

¹ For constitutional details of the Republic of Natal, see G. S. Preller: *Voortrekker Wetgewing*; E. A. Walker: *The Great Trek*; J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, ii, pp. 207 sqq.; and J. H. Malan: *Die Opkomst van 'n Republiek*.

The weakness of the government was rooted, not in the provisions of the constitution, but in the inadequacy of its material resources. Execution of the laws was inevitably spasmodic when the republic could not afford to maintain salaried officials, other than the *landdrosts*, outside the two towns. Its principal sources of revenue were customs receipts and trading licences, for, until land was surveyed and title-deeds issued, fees and rents in respect of real property could only be insignificant. The Raad from the first gave out land with a generous hand without deriving any considerable income from its disposal. By 1843 its books were crowded with applications for farms. And, when emigrants from the old colony began to prefer the high veld, since land there was still abundant and natives far from embarrassingly numerous, customs receipts also showed a tendency to dwindle. Financially, the condition of the republic was seldom other than desperate.

In the outlying districts government was largely nominal. Laws might or might not be proclaimed. *Landdrosts* were behindhand with their reports and inclined to be casual in their methods of accounting. For the farmer the urgent problem was location of the natives. Though the Raad held Mpande to his promise to prevent his people coming south of the Tugela, nothing could prevent the persistent filtration of Bantu into republican Natal. The extent of the influx was soon seen to imperil the Raad's scheme of land settlement. It attempted to apply a policy of rigid racial segregation. Instructed by the civil power, Pretorius indicated for Matawan an unwanted and mountainous area in northern Natal, and claimed to have located Fodo on land adjacent to the Pondo country. These measures fell far short of a solution of the whole problem. The Raad could see no other way out of the impasse caused by wholesale Bantu immigration than to instruct its commandants to move on such natives as would not accept service with the farmers to 'vacant' land south of republican territory.

The Trekkers had come to Natal in the expectation that they would be able to re-establish beyond the colonial boundary the

social conditions which British administration in the preceding decades had threatened drastically to transform. Land in abundance, a sufficiency of labour and reasonable security were the cardinal necessities without which the *lekker leven* of the pastoral farmer must remain an unattainable ideal.¹ By August 1842 it was clear that these conditions were unlikely to be fulfilled. The settlement with Colonel Cloete foreshadowed firm enquiry into land claims. On all sides farmers were complaining of Bushmen depredations. In some districts native squatters were more numerous than the opportunities for their employment warranted: in others the labour supply remained inadequate even after the apprenticing of 'orphan' children. But, if the *lekker leven* was not to be fully realised, the community could point to substantial signs of material and spiritual welfare. At Pietermaritzburg the Raad had divided the town into wards, made provision for the construction of the essential water furrows, and begun to insist on the replacement of the original mud hovels by permanent structures in brick or stone. With Pistorius supplying bricks and tiles from his new brickyard beyond the *vlei*,² building materials were no longer scarce. By 1843, burghers no longer lived in their tented wagons, within the palisaded laager erected in the months which followed the Blood River battle. Soon the capital could boast of a weekly newspaper, *De Natalier*, produced (April 1844–December 1845) by C. Moll and C. E. Boniface. Regular services were maintained in the church on the market square whilst schools made their appearance for the elementary instruction of the young.

¹ E. A. Walker: *The Great Trek*, ch. 3. Cf A. Delegorgue: 'To pass away their time in frequent meals of meat, to sip their coffee at every hour, to have a wife who may beguile the dreariness of the evenings, to please themselves with the sight, by day, of large herds, of various colours, shining in their fatness and enamelling the green meadows, and at times to follow the chase—an employment at once profitable and refreshing to their limbs—such is the ideal common to them all, their notion of the comfortable and called by them "lekker leven" (a pleasant life).' *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe*, quoted in J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, i, pp. 563 sqq.

² A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, p. 115.

Port Natal was still a small village set among desolate sand-hills, with a few substantial warehouses and, at the Point, a stone customs house which was presently to be undermined by the encroachments of the Bay. It was, however, sufficiently important to justify the appointment of a harbour master to enforce the Raad's port regulations and control the slowly increasing volume of shipping. As yet, the two towns were not linked up by a permanent line of roadway. Wagons leaving the Port ploughed through the sand along the bay-side route to Congella, and reached Pietermaritzburg by way of Sterk Spruit and Uys Doorns.¹ No bridges had yet been constructed, and the fifty odd miles between Port and capital involved a journey of five days.

Like the pace of the trek oxen, life was leisurely in the years of tolerable security which followed Dingaan's overthrow. An occasional ball in the Raadzaal, with round games for the children, and the reading of plays, enlivened the evenings of burghers in the town. A theatrical company was projected by F. S. Berning in 1844. Horse-racing was the only form of organised sport, and the coming of the English garrison led to the inauguration of the Turf Club.

At London the British government had at length decided to defer to the views of Sir George Napier and assume some responsibility for pacification of the trans-frontier lands. North of the Orange River it was proposed to enter into treaties with the leading chiefs and arrange for the location of emigrant farmers on land rigidly separated from native territory. Natal was a more difficult problem. The fighting which had occurred there was clearly a threat to the hopes of tranquillity among the large Bantu population bordering Cape Colony. An emigrant republic in contact with the sea might invite the intervention of foreign powers, attracted by reports of rich coal deposits or by its strategic position on the route to

¹ For a description of the old wagon route from the Port to Pietermaritzburg, see the account in Barter's *Dorp and Veld*, quoted in *More Annals of Natal*, pp. 158 sqq.

India. On the other hand, a British settlement might be expected to serve as a wedge between the Kaffrarian tribes and the restless Zulus pouring down from the Tugela. The reports concerning the existence of coal in Natal were of peculiar interest in view of momentous developments in steam navigation. Even James Stephen, who was notoriously averse to any extension of British responsibilities in southern Africa, realised the vital importance of a station on the Cape route to the East where bunker coal could be obtained. He still believed that occupation of Port Natal would involve Great Britain in the continual feuds of settlers and natives, and that it was bad policy to attempt to follow the emigrants into the interior of South Africa. But in the two years from 1841 to 1843 commercial and strategical considerations began to influence both Stephen and his political chiefs. Rising competition from foreign nations made Downing Street anxious for the security of its interests in the East. The Anglo-American agreement of 1830 had thrown open the Indian trade to American ships, and been followed with significant promptitude by the appearance of American clippers on the south-eastern coast of Africa. Now, with reports of the *Brazilia* and of the activity of French capitalists, the British government came to the conclusion that an independent Trekker state in Natal would harm imperial interests. Lord Stanley accordingly informed the Cape governor that the annexation of Natal would be sanctioned.

Napier's first step was to issue a proclamation (12 May 1843), announcing the intention of Great Britain to annex the district, and the appointment of Henry Cloete as commissioner to arrange the details.¹ The proclamation was couched in conciliatory terms. Whilst Natal was to be 'recognised and adopted by Her Majesty the Queen as a British Colony', the new commissioner had been instructed 'to ascertain in the fullest manner the opinions and wishes of Her Majesty's subjects at Natal, relative to their judicial and other local institutions'. What those wishes were Cloete was soon to

¹ J. Bird: *Annals of Natal*, ii, pp. 165 sqq.

learn when, on 8 June, he eventually reached Pietermaritzburg. He had some reason to expect a friendly welcome, for his appointment had been suggested by J. N. Boshoff. He was a brother of Colonel Josiah Cloete, had practised at the Cape bar and was a member of the legislative council which had been conferred on the Cape in 1834. There could be no doubt as to his qualifications for the difficult mission entrusted to him by Sir George Napier. There had been Cloetes at the Cape since the days of Jan van Riebeeck. Official life had neither blunted his natural kindness of disposition nor mitigated his sympathy for the outlook and ideals of the Dutch-speaking population in the frontier districts. But he could be inflexible in the face of opposition and he was a stern critic of inefficiency and corrupt practices.

Nearly twelve months had passed since the original submission of the Volksraad. Many of those up-country Boers who had bitterly denounced the earlier surrender were back again in the little town to urge resistance to Napier's representative. Even Boshoff and the moderates were disposed to ask for a modification of the Secretary of State's terms. This Cloete could not grant. He listened with some patience to a violent harangue from the womenfolk in the crowded Raadzaal. In the long run, however, dissensions, which probably had their root in chronic financial instability (for Smith was retaining the customs receipts at the Port), made his path easier. At the critical moment, before tempers were badly frayed, Cloete allowed it to be known that British authority would be confined to lands eastward of the Drakensberg. Thereupon the men from the Orange River territory withdrew, and the Raad accepted Cloete's conditions.

The departure of the irreconcilables under Mocke made it possible for Cloete to proceed in earnest with land registration and the still more difficult question of location, or expulsion, of immigrant Zulus. In June, before the Volksraad had accepted the inevitable, only 120 out of 450 town *erven* had been registered with the commissioner. The position in the country

was much more involved. Claims of the most extravagant nature had found their way into the Raad's register. Thus Commandant Rudolph asserted that he owned forty farms.¹ The books were in bad order and Cloete experienced the utmost difficulty in identifying farms and their boundaries. His final report was not ready before 1844, but from time to time he addressed the Cape governor on the subject of land claims. His considered conclusion was that only a liberal settlement would satisfy the Trekkers and avert a second movement of emigration on a vast scale. Frankly he did not believe that more than 760 out of 1780 registered farms could be justified on the available evidence as to purchase and occupation. A large number, perhaps the majority, could not satisfy Lord Stanley's condition of twelve months' continuous occupation. On the other hand, many who would otherwise have lived on their farms had received, in time of danger from the Zulus, instructions from the Raad to concentrate, for greater safety, in central laagers. Cloete therefore advised that those who were unable to prove continuous occupation should receive grants, though not full 6000-acre farms, whilst all who had made *bona fide* purchases of land should receive back the purchase money. The first, but not the second, of these recommendations was eventually accepted by the Colonial Office.²

On the subject of native immigration, Cloete suggested the establishment of locations within the district. Removal of the Bantu to huge reserves in the south would probably be disastrous. If the Raad's proposal should be sanctioned, 'their moral improvement and civilization will be retarded by a century, and the rapid increase of population which, under such favourable locations, would soon take place, would only render every subsequent interference of the government

¹ Rudolph's claims to nine farms were subsequently accepted and registered by the commissioner, but as Rudolph left the district, the farms were not occupied. Moodie to Montagu, 9 March 1847, *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1847-8, xlii (980), p. 125.

² Cloete to Montagu, 8 Sept. 1843. C.O. 48/235.

dangerous, and the labours of the missionary extremely precarious and uncertain.¹ As regards native claims to land in Natal, he was inclined to adopt the Trekker point of view that Natal had been 'empty' when Retief and his followers first descended the Drakensberg passes, and that the 80,000-100,000 Bantu who had subsequently entered the district were 'intruders' and 'deserters' from the Zulu country. Only a few thousand natives had any incontestable right to the land occupied by them. For the rest, six or more locations should be selected, at some little distance from the neighbourhood of the two towns, and the natives encouraged, with the approval of their location superintendents, to enter into contracts of service with the farmers.

Whilst Cloete was examining the land registers, the Volksraad had been taking into consideration the future government of the country. Sir George Napier, in his proclamation of 12 May, had expressly reserved for the decision of the British government the question of legislative authority in Natal. This did not deter the Raad from formulating comprehensive proposals, which included the complete separation of Natal from the Cape and the establishment of an elected local legislature.² The proposals of the Raad amounted to a demand that Great Britain should establish a self-governing community under the protection of the Crown and in enjoyment of all the commercial privileges of a British colony. The handful of European farmers could scarcely be regarded as fit to receive representative institutions, which had not yet been conceded to the parent colony at the Cape of Good Hope. On the other hand, every consideration was given to the wishes of the inhabitants in the matter of judicial institutions and local government. Natal was to enjoy the system of *landdrosts* and elected *heemraden* which had always been acceptable to the Dutch population. Nevertheless, Lord Stanley resolved

¹ Cloete to Montagu, 10 Nov. 1843, *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1847-8, xliii (980), p. 61.

² G. W. Eybers: *Select Constitutional Documents illustrating S.A. History, 1795-1910* (1918), pp. 175 sqq.

that Natal must be a dependency of the Cape. Its lieutenant-governor would communicate with Downing Street through the governor at Cape Town, whilst the Cape legislature was to enjoy legislative authority over the district. These arrangements were elaborated in a series of despatches bearing the date 1844; but not until a year later was the local government actually constituted.

Meanwhile, Cloete had come to an arrangement with Mpande. Mindful of his superiors' insistence that the emigrants must be kept away from the sea, and also doubtless with a view to excluding further interference from the troublesome Smellekamp,¹ he obtained from the Zulu king the cession of St Lucia Bay. Henceforth, or at any rate until revision of the frontier line by mutual agreement,² the Tugela and Buffalo Rivers were to form the boundary between Natal and Zululand. Cloete thus abandoned the strip of southern Zululand which the Raad had insisted on annexing.

Cloete, now on comparatively friendly terms with the burghers in town and country, since he had made a personal inspection of their farms and learned their grievances, was able to complete his task in the early months of 1844. At the end of May, he left Natal to discuss his report with the new governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland. With Major Smith in control, relations with the Raad inevitably deteriorated. Smith had already moved a detachment of troops to occupy the capital and erect the first cantonments on the western eminence which the soldiers called 'Fort Napier'.³ His administration was roundly criticised in *De Natalier*. A new Raad, elected four months after Cloete's departure, refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Queen and began to blame Smith for permitting further native movements across the

¹ Smellekamp had made a second, and no less unwelcome, visit to Natal. E. A. Walker: *The Great Trek*, pp. 298 *sqq.*

² This clause was to lead to trouble in the Klip River district in 1847-8. The treaty of 5 Oct. 1843 is printed in G. W. Eybers: *Select Constitutional Documents illustrating S.A. History, 1795-1910* (1918), pp. 180-1.

³ A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, pp. 117 *sqq.*

Tugela. It further suggested the establishment of military posts to check Bushmen depredations. But Smith had neither the men nor the money to carry into effect such proposals. The real ground for discontent was the delay of the British authorities in making provision for the government of Natal. Annexation to the Cape Colony had been effected by letters patent, dated 31 May 1844, which conferred on the colonial legislature power to issue laws and ordinances 'for the peace, order and good government' of the district.¹ There was still some uncertainty regarding the administrative and judicial establishments. Cloete had advised that there should be a supreme court consisting of a single judge, and it was appropriate enough that he should himself be selected as recorder. Only in December 1845 did Martin West reach Natal in the capacity of lieutenant-governor.

Provision had been made by letters patent² for a separate government, Natal being regarded as a detached district of the Cape Colony. Until October 1845 the Raad continued to meet at Pietermaritzburg. But its prestige was declining and Stanger, newly arrived as surveyor-general, could afford to ignore its claim to be the constituted legislature for the district. Smith had already (August) left and been replaced by Edward F. Boys, commanding the 45th Regiment. At the end of the year West brought with him the remaining officials. His task, subject to responsibility to the governor at Cape Town, was to control the destinies of some 3000 Europeans, widely dispersed over the area lying between the Tugela and the Umzimkhulu, and probably no less than 100,000 Bantu.

¹ Eybers: *op. cit.* pp. 182-3.

² Letters Patent for erecting the District of Natal into a separate government, 30 April 1845, Eybers: *op. cit.* pp. 184 *sqq.*

CHAPTER III
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH
AUTHORITY, 1845-9

Britain thus embarked on a new colonial adventure at a time when ministers were most unwilling to sanction further burdens on the British taxpayer. Obligations across the seas were already onerous enough. The security of imperial communications or the reinforcement of established trade could doubtless be achieved without adding to Britain's colonial possessions. Even in the rich archipelago beyond the Bay of Bengal, Stamford Raffles had difficulty in persuading ministers to sanction occupation of ports necessary for the protection of British commerce. Colonisation was not a profitable method of expanding trade. The former North American colonies were now more satisfactory customers than they had ever been as units of the old colonial system. Surviving British possessions were relatively poor. Raw materials, among which cotton loomed large, were not coming forward from them in a way satisfactory to the home manufacturer. Since the market which they offered was unimportant in comparison with the highly developed community of the United States, the burden involved in their administration and defence impelled statesmen to avoid fresh commitments and even to consider withdrawal from existing responsibilities. A commercial, rather than a territorial, dominion was the goal of ministers and manufacturers alike. British colonies might be a trust which it was inexpedient to repudiate. They were not regarded as an economic asset.

Britain emerged from the wars with a total of forty-three colonies. The Canadian possessions were of potential importance, but Australia was as yet no more than a penal settlement. Changing world conditions and exhaustion of the soil had reduced the value of the British West Indies, already, by

reason of their slaves, a political embarrassment to ministers harassed by humanitarian societies. On the African west coast, Britain held isolated posts at Sierra Leone, Gambia and the Gold Coast, which were important as factors in the suppression of the contraband slave trade, and the islands of St Helena and Ascension. Had it not been for the parliamentary influence of the anti-slavery group, Britain would probably have withdrawn altogether from the coast. As it was, Lagos was acquired and exploration along the Gulf of Guinea promoted, in response to the demands of the societies. The southern half of Africa, however, was little more than an obstacle to navigation of the Indian passage.

As we have seen, the arrival of the Trekkers east of the Drakensberg created a new situation. 'It has perhaps been unfortunate,' wrote T. F. Elliot in 1849, 'that there has been such an extreme solicitude to force the benefits of British government upon Boers who did not want it. . . following a nomadic race into every part of Africa to which they might betake themselves in order to escape beyond our reach.'¹ To ministers the emigrants seemed to be merely roving bands of farmers, likely, if uncontrolled, to stir up conflict in the frontier lands. Since they could not be forced to return to the Cape, it seemed that Britain had no alternative but to follow them to Natal, even if this meant, as James Stephen insisted, multiplying relations with uncivilised tribes and bringing colonial authority into contact with fresh foes.

Prospects of commercial advantage were not indeed wholly absent. There were sub-tropical products of which a valuable source might be opened through inducing African natives to undertake their cultivation. Such were flax, silk, dyes, and above all cotton. With the invention (1792) of Whitney's saw-gin to separate the wool from the seed, the southern states had leaped to first place in the supply of cotton to the Lancashire mills. In the 'thirties, sea-island cotton from

¹ *Minute*, 22 Jan. 1849, on the *Report* (20 Jan.) of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners. C.O. 179/9 (P.R.O.).

Carolina more than equalled the best that the West Indies could produce. Nevertheless, the desire to encourage production within the Empire attracted attention to the Gold Coast and to Natal.

Natal was also of some interest to the Admiralty, since reports insisted on the presence of coal deposits. With the wider employment of steam navigation, it became necessary to find coaling stations on the Indian route. Coal brought from England for storage at colonial ports deteriorated rapidly, whilst the cost of conveyance was high. Early steamships consumed coal at an excessive rate. The Cape route would certainly figure more prominently in Empire communications if ships could obtain bunker coal at Port Natal. Since coal visibly outcropped at points along the coast north of the Bay, its presence was known to settlers and merchants, and steps had been taken to secure specimens (1840) for analysis at Calcutta.¹

A sense of responsibility for the welfare of the native inhabitants finally overcame the reluctance of ministers to make further territorial acquisitions in southern Africa. Earlier in the century Sierra Leone had been annexed as a centre from which the blessings of civilisation might be extended to adjacent African territories. It was with the same object that Natal had been annexed in 1843. 'I agree with him' (Theophilus Shepstone), wrote Earl Grey, 'in thinking that the present state of Natal and of the black population which has flocked there for our protection affords a noble opportunity for the diffusion of Christianity and civilisation which it would be a disgrace to this country to neglect.'²

The appeal was to the national conscience. Though not insensible of the fact that Natal 'appeared to afford a very desirable field for British enterprise and especially to give some promise that it might admit of being converted into a source for the supply of cotton,' Grey yet laid chief emphasis on the

¹ C. J. Uys: *In the Era of Shepstone*, p. 8.

² Earl Grey to Sir H. Smith, 30 Nov. 1849.

consideration that here was an opportunity 'under conditions more favourable than had ever existed before, to bring a large African population under the improving influence of a civilised government.'¹

The first civil official to exercise governmental functions under the Crown was Samuel Woods, who had been appointed acting collector of customs in 1843. On his death in the following year, William Swan Field was chosen to succeed him. But the key appointment was that of surveyor-general. It had not been easy to find the right man. Charles Bell was unwilling to leave the Cape, and not until February 1845 was William Stanger, of the Cape roads department, appointed. Born in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, in the year 1812, Stanger studied natural science at Edinburgh University. He had visited Australia, and in 1841 had accompanied as geologist the expedition which it was hoped would lead to establishment of an agricultural colony in the region of the upper Niger. When all the officers were prostrated with fever, Stanger, who had learned marine engineering from a treatise on board, worked single-handed the engine of the *Albert*, bringing the ship to port and simultaneously tending the sick with only one white sailor to help him. But his physique had been undermined by the hardships entailed, and he came to Natal at the age of thirty-three to undertake a task of immense difficulty. He was to devote himself to a general survey of Natal, leaving to L. Cloete and C. Piers the lay-out of the infant townships and the measurement of farms and allotments. His real interests lay in botanical field-work,² yet much of his time had to be spent on road construction. On his death in March 1854, he was succeeded by P. C. Sutherland, a man of no less adventurous a disposition, who had twice voyaged to the Davis Straits as medical officer on a whaling ship, and in 1850 again endured the Arctic cold in search of Sir John Franklin.

¹ Earl Grey to Sir H. Smith, 24 Dec. 1849; *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1850, xxxviii (1292), pp. 203-4.

² A plant '*Stangeria*', of the family of eyebees, is named after him.

Patronage served Natal well in bringing to her shores two men of such wide scientific attainments.¹

Recruiting for the tiny civil establishment made little headway until August 1845, when Maitland had leisure to give detailed attention to the needs of the district. For the office of lieutenant-governor, Martin West was, on the whole, a good choice.² The son of a Treasury official, he had entered the service of the East India Company, after going down from University College, Oxford. His talents lay in administration and he had risen to be registrar of the supreme court at Bombay. Ill-health moved him, whilst on leave at the Cape, to accept the appointment of resident magistrate and civil commissioner for Albany. In 1838 Lord Glenelg's policy of humanitarianism had been in the ascendancy among Cape officials and West had entered on his duties in entire sympathy with this point of view. Napier's opinion of his services is to be found in the confidential note, 'no magistrate ever gave greater satisfaction in his court'.³ But, though just and conscientious, he lacked firmness of decision and was unsuited for the bold exercise of discretionary power in a dependency situated among warlike and uncivilised tribes.

In selecting the remaining officials, Maitland found himself in a position of no small difficulty. Senior men in the Cape service declined office because salaries were to be small. Henry Cloete was the only advocate of the Cape bar to whom the appointment of recorder could be offered. His previous work as commissioner in Natal and his undoubted command of the Roman-Dutch law stood very much in his favour, but

¹ P. C. Sutherland: *Journal of a Voyage in Baffin's Bay and Barrow Straits*, 2 vols., London, 1852. His botanical collection brought back from the Arctic secured him a letter of introduction to Pine from Sir G. Barrow of the Colonial Office.

² There is some reason to think that the appointment was declined by Dr (later Sir) Andrew Smith. *Diary of Dr A. Smith* (ed. P. R. Kirby): i, p. 17.

³ C.O. 1887. *Confidential Reports on Civil Service (C.A.)*. For West's handling of a case of cruelty to a child emigrant, see the *Grahamstown Journal*, 6 Feb. 1840.

his frame of mind was arbitrary in the extreme. He was quick to detect criticism in the attitude of colleagues and reckless in his partisanship, when he had made up his mind that others were acting in hostility to him. Moreover, he was deeply in debt in the year 1845, and was only permitted to accept the appointment on condition that deductions from his salary were forwarded monthly to the master of the Cape supreme court.¹

Ranking next in precedence was the secretary to government. The choice had fallen on a retired naval officer, Donald Moodie, who had emigrated to the Cape in 1816 after several years with the Mediterranean fleet. His twelve years of service in the Cape civil establishments had brought him into contact with almost every aspect of colonial administration. A short, sturdily built man with classically formed features, he cultivated consummate blandness of manner and deportment. In Natal he headed the clique which, united by family ties, largely monopolised the administrative posts. Since West enjoyed poor health, Moodie, in politics a colonial Tory, was obliged to take important decisions on his own initiative, and his lack of intelligent foresight was to involve the district in no small difficulty, particularly in connection with distribution of the land.

Of signal importance was the selection of Theophilus Shepstone to be diplomatic agent to the native population. The son of a Wesleyan missionary, Shepstone had received his first appointment in 1836, when he became clerk and interpreter to the agent-general for the Kaffir tribes. Napier thought him 'an excellent, active, zealous young man'.² A kindly temperament allied to great strength of will and a gift of sympathetic understanding explains his unique influence over the Bantu mind. In 1845 he was government agent at Fort Peddie. By

¹ Pine to Duke of Newcastle, 9 May 1853. C.O. 179/29 (P.R.O.). Herman Merivale went so far as to write of Cloete: 'I think him a great misfortune to the Colony.' *Minute* on the complaint of H. Cope against H. Cloete. C.O. 179/38 (P.R.O.).

² C.O. 1887, Confidential Reports (C.A.).

a strange but revealing anomaly, he was at the same time elected chief of the Fingo tribe. His brief visit to Natal under Jervis had widened his horizon and stimulated his ambition. Already a fluent Xosa linguist, he had no difficulty in acquiring the cognate Zulu tongue. His genuine affection for the Bantu was founded on a knowledge of their history and traditions, and his tact and patience won the affection and esteem of those whom he was called upon nominally to advise, but actually, and without a single clerk or messenger, to govern. Born in England two years after the battle of Waterloo, he was only twenty-eight when he reached Natal as diplomatic agent to the tribes.

A less fortunate appointment was that of Walter Harding as Crown clerk or prosecutor. Since the tendering of legal advice, as well as the direction of public prosecutions, was within the scope of the office, it was important that its holder should be a member of the colonial bar. The son of a Peninsular War veteran, Harding had served as clerk to Menzies, senior puisne judge at the Cape, and he had found time to edit three volumes of ordinances and proclamations. He was active and zealous, but considered to be lacking in social refinement; and, as he was not a member of the legal profession, it became necessary to introduce a section into Ordinance 14 of 1845, establishing the district court of Natal, to allow him to act as an advocate.

Among subordinate officials, John Bird was to reveal abilities second only to those of Shepstone. His father, when assistant military secretary to the Duke of York, had gone to Paris in the early years of the French wars to confer with the Directory. At a later date, he became colonial secretary at the Cape. His son elected to follow Stanger to Natal in the capacity of a government surveyor. His urbanity, combined with varied talents and strict conscientiousness, brought him rapid promotion. He became chief clerk in Moodie's office and, when pluralism weighed too heavily on his chief, he virtually succeeded him as acting colonial treasurer. His conversation revealed an extraordinary range of precise knowledge, whilst

his geniality and good-humour did much to tone down asperities and harmonise the activities of the gravely understaffed departments.

For pluralism was inevitable at a time when less than twenty clerks were employed to manage the affairs of the entire colonial empire.¹ Under West, Moodie had to act as treasurer, registrar of deeds and postmaster. Only in November 1852 was Philip Allen's appointment as treasurer gazetted. An auditor had been found indispensable in the previous year to relieve Harding, who had acted gratuitously in that capacity for some years. The functions of government were indeed substantially concentrated in the hands of Moodie and Shepstone, a family compact of the Canadian kind, cemented by the marriage of Theophilus's brother, John, to one of Moodie's daughters, and reigning in the social sphere as much as in the political. In theory the lieutenant-governor was advised by his executive council, consisting of the senior officer of the garrison, the secretary to government, the surveyor-general, the collector of customs and the Crown prosecutor. Shepstone was not an original member of this body. Its composition indeed left much to be desired, for Stanger and Field were frequently absent from the seat of government, whilst Harding's deficiencies as a lawyer were responsible, after 1847, for much faulty draughtsmanship.

As secretary to government Moodie was daily in touch with the lieutenant-governor. But the peculiar circumstances of Natal required a virtually independent department of the administration to deal with native affairs. For many years the most important issues of policy concerned management of Natal's large Bantu population. The normal pattern of colonial government was necessarily modified. Moodie and his successors in the office were never chief advisers of the lieutenant-governor in the sense that they were responsible for all important decisions of general policy. Nor did all

¹ Herman Merivale stated that there were only nineteen clerks in the Colonial Office in 1854.

official correspondence pass through their hands. In 1876 the Secretary of State ruled that by rank and usage the colonial secretary was principal adviser to the governor, and should normally be consulted, in addition to the departmental officer concerned.¹ But in the vital department of native affairs, Shepstone soon became accustomed to act very largely on his own responsibility. Pine, who succeeded West, found that Shepstone had managed the whole native business of the district. His rule rested on general consent of the tribesmen. The peculiar feature of the system lay in the fact that, whereas in the Orange River Sovereignty, as arranged by Sir Harry Smith, native law was to be administered by chiefs, subject to a right of interference in the British resident, in Natal it was to be administered by government, either directly by Shepstone in open court, or indirectly through the agency of chiefs. When in 1853 Shepstone's office became that of 'government secretary for native affairs', magistrates were directed to correspond with him on matters relating principally to the natives, though the secretary to government was at all times to have free access to the papers in Shepstone's office. The system worked badly under David Erskine (1857-75), who complained more than once that he had been kept in ignorance of matters which might involve Natal in hostilities with its neighbours. Under representative institutions, the colonial secretary was required to defend in legislative council a policy with which he might well be insufficiently acquainted. Duality in the system of government seemed to him, as to the colonists, 'a dangerous novelty'. Nevertheless, the government of 120,000 Bantu 'with all the unextinguished but disguised savagery of the race'² was so formidable an undertaking, especially in view of the fact that so little was known of definite native usage, that Shepstone could not be a mere 'impotent interceptor of instructions'. Shepstone accordingly

¹ Carnarvon to Bulwer, 22 Nov. 1876.

² Comment of Lord Desart on the Pine-Shepstone dispute, 1853. C.O. 179/20 (P.R.O.).

retained sole responsibility for important decisions of native policy. His court sat in the open air under a tree, with native jurymen who were permitted great liberty of cross-examination. In nearly every case Shepstone's judgment satisfied all parties. It was the custom for the unsuccessful litigant to thank the native secretary. Though it had been necessary, in a few instances, to use force, to coerce a Fodo or an Isidoi or to persuade tribes to move to their assigned location, Shepstone's management produced a remarkable measure of internal quiet.¹

Martin West had been directed to correspond with the Secretary of State only through the governor at the Cape. And, though Natal was to be administered as a separate government, legislation was reserved to the council at Cape Town. Since it was wisely decided not to make Cape laws generally applicable, no time was lost in adapting Cape ordinances to the circumstances of Natal. The general effect was to subject Natal to the same kind of general control as that which was exercised by the governor-in-chief of the Leeward Islands over the lieutenant-governors of the subordinate islands.

Friction between the two sets of authorities first emerged over the awkward problems of land registration. Cloete's proposals, as amended and finally endorsed by the Secretary of State, attached to grants the condition of occupation. The Volksraad had permitted *landdrosts* to issue certificates of registration in respect of claims to unoccupied land. These certificates only became valid to confer title after subsequent inspection and report. Over 1000 such claims had thus been registered. In the majority of cases no occupation was alleged. But in some the requirement had been evaded by sending someone, usually a native servant, to live on the farm until a title had been issued. Many claims had been disposed of, sometimes for a mere trifle, to land speculators. Even men in government employment at Pietermaritzburg descended to shameful jobbery. Carl Behrens, son of one of the secretaries

¹ For the native policy of Shepstone, see A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, 1936, pp. 234-50; and *Later Annals of Natal*, 1938, pp. 209-39.

of the court of justice at Hamburg, purchased on his arrival in Natal from the Cape (1841) an unoccupied farm 'Duikerfontein' which had been neither inspected nor surveyed. Many such claims accumulated in the hands of individual speculators, Gert Rudolph holding no less than forty, amounting in all to some quarter of a million acres. Acting on Cloete's advice, the authorities disallowed claims of this nature until, in 1848, the intervention of Sir Harry Smith compelled the local government to modify its attitude. Smith was anxious, mainly for military purposes, to retain the Trekkers in the north-eastern portion of Natal, and his new land board was accordingly empowered to re-open every case. It was under these arrangements that Behrens finally obtained a Klip River farm in satisfaction of his claim.¹

Impressed with the danger of non-cultivation, the Secretary of State decided that Crown lands should be disposed of only by sale at an upset price of 4s. an acre. The regulation came too late. Smith's concessions, extravagant as they were, failed to induce more than a few to remain on their farms on the Natal side of the Drakensberg, and well-to-do Cape merchants were buying up claims at a 1*d.* or 2*d.* an acre. The large quantity of land thrown into the market inflicted an injury on all settlers by depressing current values. Proprietors were unable to cultivate to advantage since they could obtain capital neither by sale nor mortgage, nor in the ordinary course of credit. In the first five years of British rule, no Crown lands at all were sold for cash. Nor was any revenue received, prior to 1848, in respect of quit-rents.²

Reckless profusion had thus produced a situation which threatened to make impracticable the settlement of Natal by hard-working farmers. Most of northern Natal was a wilderness of uncultivated grassland. In the divisions of Pietermaritzburg and Durban, little or no land remained for the

¹ Behrens's case is dealt with in full in the correspondence of the emigration commissioners to H. Merivale. C.O. 386/56 (P.R.O.).

² Land Commission (1848) farms were subject to a quit-rent of £3.

location of immigrants. Even before the intervention of Sir Harry Smith, Martin West had been uneasily aware that the scattering of the white population on farms of immense size had dangerously reduced the amount of eligible land on which bodies of new settlers might be suitably located. Meanwhile, speculators were preparing to enter the field as promoters of private schemes of emigration from the United Kingdom, advertising their land as 'select and superior to those left to the Crown'.¹

Heading the list of proprietors who were ready to make land available for the needs of settlers was Francis Collison. A partner in the mercantile firm of Prince and Collison, Francis had taken the oaths of office as a member of the burgher senate at Cape Town in August 1826.

Through the agency of Henry Cloete's secretary he had purchased from individual Trekkers in 1843 no less than fourteen farms at a price averaging $8\frac{3}{4}d.$ an acre, with as little intention of himself using these 84,000 acres as 'the purchaser of railway shares has of handling a spade'.² But in the 'forties his firm opened a London house at 26 Nicholas Lane, Lombard Street; and in the grim days of commercial panic (1847-8) Collison realised that the land might be profitably sold to persons contemplating emigration. His slender volume, *A Few Observations on Natal*, published in 1848, described the country as 'having naturally the appearance of a nobleman's park...covered with grass of a most luxuriant growth frequently overtopping your saddle'. His largely imaginary account of the land as 'covered with fountains and streams', and ready for cultivation without preliminary labour in clearing the ground, was calculated to appeal especially to those who knew something of the hardships of the settler in Canada and Australia. A free passage for man and wife, with a 100 acres of land, was offered for a single payment of £100.

¹ Moodie to Montagu (1849). G.H. 8/23 (C.A.).

² Moodie's *Minute*, November 1849. *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1850, xxxviii (1292), p. 154.

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The Nicholas Lane office was inundated with enquiries concerning Natal, and Collison was instrumental in the sailing of the first emigrant ship to Durban, the *Gwalior*, on 29 August 1848. But he found that few emigrants could afford more than twenty or thirty acres. He therefore turned to men of capital and to the great shipping firms. In 1849 he sold two of his 6000-acre farms, 'Vaalkop' and 'Dadelfontein', both within ten miles of Pietermaritzburg and close to the road to the Port, to J. C. Byrne in partnership with the shipping firm of Marshall and Edridge. Byrne subsequently purchased 'Middel Bosch' at a price which worked out at 4*s.* 2*d.* an acre. By May 1849 these farms had been surveyed with a view to their disposal in twenty-acre allotments to settlers.

Though Collison may be said to have contributed towards the promotion of emigration to Natal,¹ his activities in the land market, imitated as they were by Edward Chiappini, J. C. Zeederberg and other Cape merchants, were distinctly prejudicial to the economic development of the country. The retention under private, usually absentee, ownership of such extensive tracts of unoccupied and unimproved land, in the expectation of an ultimate rise in price, created that 'want of disposable land in an almost vacant country'² which was the chief obstacle for many years to European colonisation. Chiappini had been even more successful than Collison in these questionable transactions, for by 1848 the price of land had fallen sharply, owing to the extravagant grants of Sir Harry Smith's commission. Chiappini paid no more than one and five-eighths of a penny an acre for his numerous farms. Zeederberg's fourteen farms were procured under the terms of Cloete's memorandum. The situation of some of them was unknown even to those who offered them for sale.

The withdrawal of the Trekkers from Natal had been hastened by the failure of an insurrectionary movement at the Klip River (1847), where an *ex-landdrost*, Andries Spies, had

¹ Henry Ellis and others were advised by Collison to buy grazing farms in Natal.

² *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1850, xxxviii (1292), p. 158.

endeavoured to set up a tiny republic under Mpande's suzerainty. West refused to recognise its proceedings; and when a party of redcoats advanced to Weenen, Spies and his followers withdrew beyond the Berg.

The 'second Great Trek', which Smith tried desperately to halt, largely denuded Natal of its Afrikaans-speaking inhabitants. W. R. Thompson, first chairman of the municipal commissioners of Grahamstown, reported as early as January 1846 that the number of Trekker families in Natal was not more than 400. A year later, a correspondent calculated that Natal could not muster sixty Boer families.¹ Those who remained to make their permanent home in Natal made a contribution of no small value to the progress and welfare of the colonial community. Men of the old Cape families, Uys, father and sons, the Boshoffs, the Nels, the van Bredas, to mention only a few, came to agree with the English-speaking colonists on common action and the broad outlines of colonial policy whilst preserving a free life of their own. From the year 1858, when C. Scheepers was permitted to address the legislative council in Afrikaans, he and his fellow-countrymen from the Cape were invariably listened to with attention and respect. Their attitude towards questions of native policy was coloured by those dreadful experiences which had befallen the Trekkers in the neighbourhood of Weenen and the Blaauwkrans River. Pine, in a despatch which revealed at the same time his humanity and his acumen, explained to his official superiors that the natives were 'associated in their minds with scenes of blood—blazing homesteads, foul acts of treachery, dastardly murders of women and children'.² But the policy which they urged on the executive government agreed in fundamentals with the standpoint of British settlers. Among them were men capable of calm and objective consideration of native questions, and few indeed were they who did not make

¹ The *Grahamstown Journal*, 3 Jan. 1846 and 9 Jan. 1847.

² Pine to Sir H. Smith, 9 Aug. 1851, *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1853, lxii (1697), p. 14.

some contribution of value towards final decisions in legislative council, or public opinion. In the social sphere also, their standards of conduct played an important role in colonial life. Through their kindness and their hospitality they endeared themselves to British newcomers, who remembered generous contributions towards the *Minerva* relief fund. Their deep reverence for the Bible, the sincerity of the family prayers, evening psalmody on the veld and the importance assigned to education sustained standards of manners and morals which humanised the environment of the frontier.

Politically the most able of the Trekkers was Jacobus N. Boshoff. Born at Montagu in the year 1808, his official training began in the office of the resident magistrate at Graaff Reinet. After an initial visit to the men in laager, he threw in his lot finally with the Trekkers when the community had settled down at Pietermaritzburg. The constitutional details of the simple republican *grondwet* had been drawn up with his advice. Except for a brief period of office as president of the infant Orange Free State, he spent the remainder of his life in Natal, representing the constituency of Klip River until he was succeeded by J. C. Walton. Members of his family were enterprising farmers in the Mooi River neighbourhood, Johannes Stephanus Boshoff arriving there from Swellendam in 1845. W. H. Boshoff was a pioneer in the importation of merino sheep. The marriage of Anna, daughter of J. N. Boshoff, to Alexander Gibson, a Scottish settler, was one of a large number of similar unions which made easy co-operation of the two peoples and helped both to forget cleavages.

At Pietermaritzburg, the Boshoffs, the Ottos, the Prellers, the Wolhuters, the Zeederbergs and the Zietsmans; in Umvoti county the Nels, the Bothas and the families of C. Scheepers and Jacobus J. Uys; at Impolweni Stephanus Maritz, son of Gert; and in the north the Landmans, the Labuscagnes and the Adendorffs (first white settlers in the neighbourhood of the present Newcastle)—these families from old Cape homesteads represented a distinctive and valuable way of life that

deserved to be more than just a local survival. The colonial community in Natal was the richer for what these men and women preserved of the Trekker outlook.

But numerically, the Afrikaans-speaking element was weak after 1848. The gaps in European settlement were in part filled by newcomers from Grahamstown, Algoa Bay, Butterworth and even from Mauritius.

On the eastern frontier insecurity had followed a period of tranquillity during which increasing wool production had sent up land values. In March 1846 the outbreak of the disastrous war of the axe sent Albany men in haste into laager as the tribesmen attacked and devastated outlying farms. Led by W. M. D. Fynn and the missionary Francis Gladwin, the entire European population of Butterworth took flight to Pondoland, whence a party, under James Calvery, trekked to Natal.¹ Merchants and tradesmen, many of them sons of 1820 settlers, had preceded them to Durban and Pietermaritzburg—W. G. Baker, the naturalist-trader, who was to procure over the years large numbers of African wild animals for shipment to the zoological societies of Europe, John Dunn, son of a Port Elizabeth surgeon and, in later life, friend and confidential adviser to Cetewayo, Lamont the tailor, A. T. Caldecott, Portland Bentinek Shortt and John Otter Jackson, whose parents had come to the Cape to undertake mission work in 1835. Professional men, and men with important social connections, reached Natal via the eastern province of the Cape. Benjamin Blaine, surgeon and intimate friend of Theophilus Shepstone in the days of his Cape service, accompanied W. R. Thompson, the Grahamstown merchant, to investigate the possibilities of cotton cultivation in Natal. Though Thompson returned to the Cape, he had purchased a considerable estate north of Wentworth and overlooking the Bay.² Blaine, who

¹ For a list of the Trekkers, see A. F. Hattersley: *The Natalians*, 1940, pp. 20-30.

² There is a portrait of Thompson in the Grahamstown City Hall. He may have been a Hull man. See Alice Mann: *Emigrants' Guide to Port Stephens, etc.* (Leeds, 1850) for a letter to a Hull friend.

found the soil well adapted for the production of cotton, sugar and indigo, elected to make his home in Natal, where he was presently appointed to the magistracy. Ralph Clarence was one of three sons of Richard Clarence (1759-1826) of Hooley Park, Surrey, all of whom emigrated to the Cape about the time of Queen Victoria's accession. From the Cape, Ralph took ship to Mauritius, where he became acquainted with the processes of sugar-cane production. But Mauritius suffered severely in the 'forties from the withdrawal of ex-slave labour, and Ralph decided to bring his family to Natal. His younger brother, Arthur, after a boyhood at Exeter and schooling at St Malo, joined him at the Cape in 1840, proceeding to Natal after the conclusion of the war of the axe.¹ He became sheriff of Natal (1861) and a director of the Natal Bank; whilst Ralph, on his 'Clare' estate, became a leading producer of cane. Ralph's connection with influential philanthropic interests in the United Kingdom was to lead to important developments in emigration to Natal.

In Durban, in the 'forties, the leading merchants were men who had been in business in the neighbourhood of Algoa Bay. George Christopher Cato, the son of a silk-weaver, was born in London in 1814 and accompanied his father to the Cape at the age of twelve. At Port Elizabeth he became shipping agent to the former Scarborough man, John Owen Smith, and paid an initial visit to Natal in 1838 in charge of the schooner, *Trek Boer*. Next year, George and his brother Christopher Joseph decided to form a connection of their own at the Bay. On good terms with the Trekkers, because he had rescued survivors of Trichardt's Trek and brought them by sea from Delagoa Bay, Cato soon became the most prosperous trader in the small settlement. It was Cato who sent Richard King away across the Bay to fetch reinforcements for the British garrison, besieged in 1842 by Pretorius's burghers:

¹ A permit, issued 10 Aug. 1834 by the lieutenant-governor of Jersey, describes Arthur Clarence at the age of thirteen as one inch over five feet in height with 'fair complexion, brown hair and dark eyes'.

and, falling into the hands of Pretorius's men, he suffered a period of detention in the stocks in Pietermaritzburg. Consular agent for the United States and for the Scandinavian countries, he was described in the 'sixties as 'having equal capacity to steer a ship, to drive the omnibus, to manage a bank or to lead a choir'.¹

Scarcely less prominent in the mercantile sphere were the three Milner brothers who carried on business from the year 1843 at the corner of Aliwal and Smith Streets. The firm owned the barque *Sarah Bell* which traded between the Port and Mauritius, and much property in Pietermaritzburg, including the long single-storied building in Church Street which the authorities had begun to rent as 'the colonial offices'. In 1852 Henry and Tom Milner began sugar cultivation at 'Springfield' behind the Berea.

Other notable pioneers of the 'forties were the Frenchman, Hippolyte Jargal, first president of the agricultural society, Samuel Beningfield, auctioneer, the Rev. W. H. C. Lloyd, rector of Norbury and chaplain to the Earl of Lichfield before his appointment by Earl Grey as colonial chaplain, Lloyd Evans Mesham, landing agent and later resident magistrate, and Napoleon Wheeler, at one time a sailor on the *Pilot* and the man who rowed Dick King across the Bay in 1842. At Pietermaritzburg, Afrikaans-speaking residents were more numerous. Two of the five original commissioners of the municipality, Dr Poortman and W. A. van Aardt, had been with the Trek and were shortly to leave Natal for the Free State. A third, P. Jung, German partner of Jargal, had been at the Cape and was interesting himself in cotton. Philip Ferreira, auctioneer and town treasurer, was the G. C. Cato of Pietermaritzburg. But the most interesting character was John Vanderplank, second son of Bartholomew Vanderplank of Bartholomew Close, Smithfield. The original Vanderplank was brought to England by William III's ministers to improve the manufacture of cloth, and the tombs of John's ancestors

¹ A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, 1936, p. 213.

are to be found in the Church of St Bartholomew the Great. John, with his brother Charles, emigrated to Van Diemen's Land, where he remained six years. In 1839 he turned up at the Cape in his own schooner, *Louisa*. After one or two trading ventures to Algoa Bay and Mauritius, he came on to Natal, opening business in the original Trekker laager in the vicinity of Bank Street, Pietermaritzburg. He became the most considerable resident landed proprietor in Natal, his principal farms being 'Camperdown', 'New Leeds', 'Mount Desire' near Richmond and 'Milton' adjoining the town lands of the capital. He died at the age of seventy-seven in 1882.

Few Englishmen of means came to Natal prior to the period of Byrne's emigration scheme. One who should be mentioned is Joseph Henderson, a Cumberland man and Vanderplank's successful rival at the first parliamentary elections in the capital in 1857. Henderson, miller and banker, was the most capable financier in the small colonial community. In the brief period of Shepstone's administration of the annexed Transvaal, he served as treasurer-general.

Natal's original exports were the products of the huntsman and the Zulu trader. But in 1846, the first full year of British administration, butter exported to Mauritius and the Cape exceeded in value ivory; hides, live oxen, and maize being the next most considerable items. Agricultural production, especially butter and maize, showed a sharp decline in 1848-9, due to withdrawal of the Trekkers beyond the Berg. On the other hand, ivory rose in value whilst shipments of cotton increased from 1740 lb. to nearly 14,000 lb. in the same period. Cotton seed had been brought to Natal in 1838 by D. C. Toohey. After the fighting of 1842 it was planted extensively in gardens round the Bay and on the mission station of the American, Lewis Grout.¹ One of the men whom Toohey

¹ C.S.O. 38. Private Individuals, etc., 1846. Statement of D. C. Toohey: *The Autobiography of Rev. Lewis Grout* (Brattleboro, Vermont, 1905). The original introduction of cotton seed from America has also been attributed to Aldin Grout.

had supplied with seed, Henry Francis, successfully tendered in 1846 for the supply of cotton seed to be distributed through the office of the diplomatic agent to the native locations.¹ Since its cultivation could be combined with subsistence crops, cotton was thought to be peculiarly suitable as a native crop. Returns were quick and the machinery inexpensive. Nevertheless, cotton exported from Natal was almost entirely European-grown.

Production was experimental in the 'forties and was promoted by the same group of Cape merchants that had made speculative purchases of land, essentially with the object of realising quick sales. Edward Chiappini, the Suffert brothers, Jonas Bergtheil and his cousin, Gabriel Kilian, and J. B. Ebden, member of the Cape legislature who was to come prominently before the public as chairman of the anti-convict association, were all interested in the enterprise. Chiappini had first visited the Bay in 1843 and had taken back with him samples of native-grown tobacco. He had reached the conclusion that Natal could produce cotton in considerable variety, though not the popular sea-island strain. Towards the close of the year 1845 a small bale of cotton was shipped at the Point. Chiappini was then in partnership with the German merchant Jung. Bergtheil put some capital into the undertaking, whilst Dr Blaine arrived overland from Algoa Bay to make independent investigations. Blaine experimented hopefully with Bombay seed, and in less than two years felt convinced that he had triumphed over every obstacle. In 1848 he was in Manchester, where his samples, though short in the staple, were pronounced by no less an authority than Thomas Bazley to be superior to the Bombay-grown article. Bazley, himself a cotton-spinner, presided over the Manchester chamber of commerce. Natal cotton stood up well to the machinery of the Manchester mills, and Bazley bought some sixty bags at prices which averaged 5½*d.* a lb. Meanwhile, W. R. S. Wilson ('Indigo Wilson'),

¹ Moodie to Shepstone, 22 Sept. 1846, accepting Francis's tender at £1 a *muid*. C.S.O. 2010, no. 253.

son of a Cape Town medico, had at last succeeded with sea-island seed and the sample which he sent forward to Liverpool was valued at 8*d.*

The Cape group soon realised the advisability of co-operation. In 1847 Jung, with Jargal, applied to the Natal government to sanction the formation of a joint-stock company for the cultivation of cotton. They were anxious to introduce European workers and asked for a grant of 30,000 acres. The Natal Cotton Company was constituted in March 1847 with Bergtheil as its managing director. Possession of 22,750 acres on the Umhloti was obtained on singularly advantageous terms. The authorities had sanctioned sales at an upset price of only 2*s.* an acre, and the purchase money, of which only ten per cent was actually paid, was to be devoted to the construction of roads, building of houses and introduction of immigrants. The company, moreover, was to receive a drawback for every approved settler from the United Kingdom. By arrangement with the Cape government, its agents persuaded twenty-eight men, women and children, who had arrived from London in the *Duke of Roxburgh*, to proceed to Natal. With John Bailie as superintendent, the party was established on the Umhloti within a few months of the auction sale.

The enterprise was a disappointment from the first. Five hundred pounds had been spent on bringing the new settlers from the Cape. When Bailie reported that only 4500 acres were suited to the cultivation of cotton, the shareholders refused to pay further calls on the £10 shares.¹ With a nominal capital of only £20,000, the company scarcely possessed the means for cultivation on the scale projected.

Meanwhile, however, Jung and Bergtheil had begun to grow cotton from sea-island seed on a Westville estate purchased from Edmund Morewood. Only one white man was em-

¹ J. Bergtheil to D. Moodie, 14 Nov. 1849. C.S.O. 10, no. 79. Ebdon had written on 13 August complaining that the land was unhealthy for cattle and covered with dense bush. The company had spent over £5000.

ployed—the Englishman, Brooker, who had no previous experience of cotton. Mechanics to operate the simple machinery were not to be found in the district and Brooker was obliged to work the gin single-handed. Even so, it was capable of cleaning 600 lb. of cotton daily, and Manchester had reported favourably on the samples delivered. George Macleroy, an immigrant on *Ina* who had been accountant at a Barrowfield factory, believed that good New Orleans green cotton of the type much in demand in Lancashire and Scottish mills for warp could be grown on the coastal lands. But skilled labour was another proposition. Bergtheil had gone to Europe and, experiencing difficulty in procuring his emigrants in Britain, sailed for Hamburg. With the help of Ernest Sufferit of Bremen, a connection of the Sufferits of Cape Town, he persuaded some thirty-five families of North German peasants to sail for Natal on the *Beta*. They disembarked at the Point in April (1848) and were located at a spot which was promptly named 'New Germany'. Here a village with neat gardens and, before long, a church, schoolhouse, and even a local yeomanry corps, bore witness to the thrift and industry of the newcomers. But, though acres were planted with cotton, cultivation never prospered. Skilful and laborious with crops to which they were accustomed—oats, rye, potatoes and beans, the settlers had no knowledge of cotton. Its cultivation was soon abandoned.

Natal growers had produced small parcels of cotton, but they had not succeeded in demonstrating that large-scale cultivation could be made a commercial success. The cotton company paid no further instalments of the purchase price of its land, which in due course reverted to the Crown and was utilised for the settlement of some of Byrne's settlers. In the United Kingdom, however, the display of bales on the Manchester Exchange had served the intended purpose of advertising land in Natal. J. P. Westhead, a Manchester merchant and Member of Parliament for Knaresborough, bought two farms on the Riet *spruit*, whilst Sydney Peel, relative of the

prime minister who had repealed the corn laws, paid 9s. an acre (more than twice the upset price of Crown land) for a farm near Pinetown. Peel came to Natal, residing for some years on the Berea.

Trade with Mauritius was slowly expanding. Fresh meat sold in the island at four times its price at Port Natal, and there was a good market for butter, maize and beans. The first ship to arrive off the Port from Mauritius was the small brig *Lady Leith*, which dropped anchor on 15 April 1846. Gradually a triangular trade developed with Mauritius and Table Bay. In 1849 the emigrant ship *Wanderer* went on to Port Louis with a cargo of butter and horned cattle, sailing thence with sugar for the Cape. Direct importation from Mauritius began in 1847, when the *Sarah Bell* brought sugar, rice, pineapples and coffee plants to Natal. This promising traffic was threatened when agricultural production fell off owing to the trekking of the Boers. In 1851 Mauritius began to import cattle from Madagascar. The island community had been hard hit by the commercial crisis of 1847, which sent four London firms trading with Port Louis into liquidation and brought about the failure of their agents in the colony. The collapse in the same year of the Bank of Mauritius helped to spread discouragement, and was a factor in promoting a minor emigration from the island to Natal. Prosperity returned in the early 'fifties with adoption of a revised system of Indian labour contracts.

An important, but hitherto unexplained, part was played in the fostering of emigration to Natal at the close of the 'forties by Christian missions and men in touch with the English humanitarian societies. The first missionary enterprises indeed were wholly innocent of ulterior objects. The original Americans, G. Champion, Aldin Grout and Dr Adams, who arrived in 1835 as representatives of the American board of commissioners for foreign missions, gave their attention exclusively to evangelisation, and, with the financial assistance of the Natal government, to the industrial training of natives. But the most

successful missionary organisation in south-east Africa was that of the Wesleyans, and they were at least as interested in promoting European colonisation. Under the guidance of William Shaw, superintendent of Wesleyan missions at the Cape, their ministers took thought for European congregations, and made themselves acquainted with the economic prospects of colonial territories. Shaw himself was interested in the future of cotton cultivation in Natal. James Archbell, who had spent his earliest South African years in Little Namaqualand, going later to the borders of Bechuanaland and the Orange River territory, became a considerable landowner and newspaper editor in Natal. When minister at Grahamstown, he came to know W. R. Thompson, and in 1841 rode on horseback through Pondoland to the Bay, a seventeen-day journey of some peril, to investigate the prospects of a Wesleyan mission at Natal. The first (1843) wattle-and-daub Wesleyan church was erected in Durban by Archbell. From 1845 he made Pietermaritzburg his home, severing his connection with Wesleyan missions but maintaining correspondence with friends in the United Kingdom. His farms, 'Oatlands', 'Woodlands' and 'Stocklands', lay in an arc to the north-west of Pietermaritzburg awaiting beneficial occupation or sale.¹

The Wesleyans were considerably strengthened in the years that followed. J. Richards and W. J. Davis followed Archbell from Grahamstown, Davis purchasing the Karkloof farm 'Halliwell'. W. C. Holden, author of the first *History of Natal*, reached Durban in 1847. Three years later, Natal was formed into a separate district under the chairmanship of the Rev. H. Pearse. Missionaries continued to arrive from all parts, one of them, J. Walton, from remote Dominica. Meanwhile, James Allison had founded the Indaleni station on the Illovo River (1847) with some hundreds of natives

¹ The farms are clearly shown north of the Umgeni in Watts' Map of Natal (1855). Archbell had originally come to the Cape in 1818. The *Natal Independent*, 21 Oct. 1852.

and coloured persons, some of them tribal refugees, others ex-slaves collected in the frontier lands. In 1851 he moved to the farm 'Wolverdiend', purchased from the Trekker commandant, A. W. J. Pretorius. Here, at Edendale, he erected a water-mill, trained natives as skilled carpenters, masons, thatchers and hedgers, and permitted them to own their own village allotments with neat cottage and cultivated garden plot. He had separated from the Wesleyan communion in 1851.

It was, however, the connection between Ralph Clarence and influential philanthropists that brought Natal prominently before the notice of Wesleyan congregations in the United Kingdom. Ralph's sister, Caroline, married Edmund Fry, brother to Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker preacher and prison reformer. At Spa House, Bermondsey, the Clarence family, before Richard moved to the Hooley Park estate in Surrey, had intimate contacts with the advanced anti-slavery wing of the philanthropic party. Ralph himself became a Quaker and an admirer of the wealthy corn-miller and Birmingham alderman, Joseph Sturge, who had played a leading part in the movement to abolish slavery in British dominions. Associated with Sturge was Sir Joshua Walmsley, Liverpool corn-merchant and presently Member of Parliament for Bolton, whose son was to be an emigrant on the *Nile*. When Ralph Clarence went out to the Cape, he agreed to correspond with Joseph's brother, Samuel Sturge, and to send him information in due course about Natal and its cotton-growing possibilities. Ralph's letter of 28 January 1848, written some four years after he had established himself at 'Clare' on the Umgeni, was sent by Sturge to *The British Friend*, and widely copied in nonconformist-owned journals.¹ 'There is no question', he wrote, 'that Natal could supply the greater part of the cotton required' by the Lancashire mills. This testimony moved the Hertfordshire farmer, W. J. Irons, to promote a considerable Methodist emigration to Natal. Clarence had also been in

¹ It was also reproduced in Christopher's *Natal*, pp. 62-3.

communication with William Shaw in Kaffirland, and what Shaw wrote, reinforced by reports from Natal of a missionary colleague, W. J. Davis, convinced many Wesleyans that Natal was a suitable field for the emigration of persons of moderate estate.¹ In the West country, particularly at Bristol, where the Sturges had many adherents, men of property like John Russom came to describe Natal as 'the key designed by the great Giver of every blessing for the opening and civilisation of the interior of this vast continent'.

At the Cape the Clarences were well known. Ralph was followed to Natal by his friend, David Dale Buchanan, to start a newspaper in the small capital. David's brother, Ebenezer, had served a London apprenticeship to an armourer and brazier. For some years he conducted at Cape Town a school on the Lancastrian model, leaving it to others to continue when the call came to undertake mission work among the natives of Samoa. In 1850, his career as evangelist terminated by the outbreak of native wars, Ebenezer sailed in the *Justina* for Natal. He became (1860-75) town clerk of Pietermaritzburg.²

In the anxious days of 1849 the most urgent need was clearly some reinforcement of the European population. Of the original pioneers at the Bay few now remained. Many had lost their lives in the fighting with Dingaan. Henry Fynn had returned to the Cape in 1834 to receive an appointment as resident agent to the tribes on the eastern frontier. Not until 1851 did he reappear in Natal, where he was to spend the remainder of his years, for the most part in magisterial office. Of those associated with Farewell, Saxe Bannister, an Oxford graduate who had been attorney-general in New South Wales, had never actually visited Natal, though in 1852 he was to project a company to open up the northern coalfields by

¹ 'There is no country under heaven better suited to the industrious emigrant than the colony of Natal.' *The Christian Times*, 10 May 1850.

² In 1863 Ralph Clarence embarked on another philanthropic enterprise, bringing to Natal boys from ragged schools in England.

building a railroad.' The fast-vanishing population of Trekkers had not been, to any considerable extent, replaced by newcomers from the eastern parts of the Cape Colony. At the close of the 'forties it seemed doubtful whether Natal would retain a permanent population of white colonists. When Pine arrived from Sierra Leone as successor to Martin West, the white inhabitants may have numbered 2000, apart from the small garrison distributed between Fort Napier and the Bay. This consisted of a wing of the 45th or Nottinghamshire Regiment, known as 'the old Stubborns', with tiny detachments of engineers and artillerymen. The commander, Edmund F. Boys, a veteran of the Peninsular wars, was content with the routine of the parade ground. But among his officers were men of initiative and technical skill. W. R. Preston, on succeeding to the command, obtained for the regiment in 1857 the title of 'Sherwood Foresters'. Major Grantham of the Engineers had laid out Aldershot camp. He was now to carry out an important survey of Natal for the War Office, in the course of which he discovered new mountain passes and named some of the Drakensberg peaks. Another officer, Captain H. B. Parish, eldest son of the Sir Woodbine Parish who had negotiated a commercial treaty with the King of Naples, married Henry Cloete's second daughter. Of the rank and file many took their discharge in Natal. Until the coming of the 1849 settlers, these ex-45th men were the skilled craftsmen of the community who erected several of the more substantial buildings of the 'forties. Not all were of the labouring class. Andrew Muirhead had been trained for the Presbyterian ministry. Retiring with the rank of paymaster-sergeant, he found his way back to Natal, opening a school and, when this did not pay, joining the staff of Hermannsburg School.

The prospects of Natal in the 'forties were not indeed bright.

¹ S. Bannister to Earl of Desart, 25 March 1852, requesting a loan in support of a 'Natal & South-East African Mining and Railway Company'. C.O. 179/27 (P.R.O.).

Largely as a consequence of the trekking of the farmers from the northern districts, agricultural production had shown a sharp decline. Wheat and flour were largely imported, and money was slipping away to the Cape to pay for essential food-stuffs. In the north, stock-farming was the only profitable occupation. Two snuff and two candle manufactories represented the entire industrial establishment of the district. It was possible to make a journey on horseback from Pietermaritzburg north-westward to the Drakensberg frontier without encountering a single occupied farmstead. Nearer the coast, good land in proximity to the Bay had been shown to be capable of producing crops of cotton, tobacco, indigo and arrowroot. Of these, cotton had certainly attracted wide attention: but the yield per acre was less and the costs of production greater than Bergtheil and his associates had represented. It was by no means certain that large-scale production of cotton could be undertaken on a remunerative basis. For every type of enterprise, the formidable sand bar impeding the harbour entrance was a source of injury. Even from the high-road connecting the Port with the small capital there were few signs of cultivation or industry. Such was the condition of Natal, largely untenanted and unimproved, prior to the arrival of the 1849-51 settlers.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMIGRATION COMPANIES

Eager pursuit of colonising projects of every description was a feature of the hungry 'forties. Emigrants' letters home and notes from the colonial empire crowded the columns of newspapers, whilst schemes for colonisation as a remedy for social distress flooded the old Colonial Office at the top of Downing Street. Colonisation societies were launched to assist the poor man to take his labour to Australia, where it was much in demand. In England and Wales alone more than half-a-million persons classed as 'vagrants' were in receipt of relief in the year 1848, whilst expenditure in support of regular paupers exceeded seven millions. Newspaper correspondents calculated that funds devoted to maintaining paupers for a single year would suffice to land them on the soil of Upper Canada with a sovereign apiece in their pockets, whilst the cost of two years' maintenance would carry them to the Cape or Port Natal. Australia was more remote, but in the 'thirties the authorities had induced shipowners to provide cheap steerage passages for the labouring classes. Skilled artisans were now permitted to emigrate. Indeed handloom weavers were among the most distressed of those whose labour was redundant in the home market. An Act of 1834 authorised guardians to contribute towards the cost of emigration of destitute persons. Few parishes made any considerable outlay, but there were also voluntary societies ready to assist in deserving cases. In the industrial towns it was realised that large-scale emigration of redundant hands would, in the long run, extend the market for home manufactures.

Paupers indeed were not the type of settler that the colonies themselves desired. Persons of good character and industrious habits were in demand, and accumulated savings were held to be a guarantee of respectability. The voluntary societies pre-

ferred those who were able to make a contribution towards the cost of their passages, feeling that such persons were likely to reveal 'steadiness and eligibility as a labouring population'.¹ Though the emigration of the late 'forties was in the main the outcome of distress, it attracted many of the propertied classes. Organised labour was no longer hostile to emigration and several trade unions had funds set apart for this purpose. Land was purchased, usually in the United States, and members who had kept up their weekly contributions were eligible for grants.

By the year 1849 the Colonial Office had reached the conclusion that North America alone afforded prospects of any considerable relief to the problem of surplus population. The distant colonies in Australia and New Zealand were indeed in urgent need of both capital and labour and they possessed, in virtually unlimited quantities of Crown land, a great potential source of wealth. But the cost of passage and outfit was high, and it was doubtful whether the Antipodean colonies could absorb a greater number of immigrants than were finding their way there without much encouragement from government. As a serious remedy for social distress only emigration in full flood, such as was pouring largely uncontrolled across the Atlantic to occupy the western regions of the United States, was of any real importance.

Yet to Englishmen and to Scotsmen there was the attraction of carrying his race, his sturdy British outlook and his social and religious institutions to take root and flourish in new Britains beyond the sea. Political and cultural links across the ocean were as important to unemployed labourers who had drilled with Chartist forces at Leicester, Bradford, Glasgow or Aberdeen as they were to men of the landed gentry class who contemplated settlement in one or other of the colonies. Gold had just been discovered in California and love

¹ *Speech of Hon. Francis Scott, M.P., November 1848, in moving a resolution for the establishment of a branch of the Colonisation Society at Leeds (London, 1848, 16 pp.).*

of adventure, coupled with the mania to achieve riches, brought about a boom in emigration.

The westward movement across the Atlantic reached its peak in 1850, when nearly a quarter of a million left Liverpool and other ports for the United States. Over the twenty years 1831-51 the total emigration amounted to 2,640,848. More than one-half left Britain during the last five of these years, when the average annual migration worked out at 284,534 persons.¹

Much of this was financed from individual savings, and by the remittances of those who had gone before. Government did little more than regulate and supervise this spontaneous outflow. Only in the case of Australia and other distant parts was a public emigration fund required. This was provided, largely on the recommendation of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, by utilising the proceeds of the sale of Crown lands. In some colonies, notably in New South Wales and the new colony of South Australia, the supply of unused land was so great that large tracts remained uncultivated through lack of labour. Free grants of farms had merely accentuated the evil. Wakefield's plan was to dispose of the land by public sale only, using the proceeds to convey selected emigrants from the United Kingdom, where so much labour was classed as redundant. In 1831 the government decided to adopt for the colonies in general the principle that Crown lands should be 'appropriated to public uses'. This meant that a portion at least of the income from sales would be applied to the transport of emigrants.

The official agent of the government in carrying out this plan was the board of Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, set up in January 1840. The original commissioners were T. F. Elliot, formerly agent-general for emigration, Robert Torrens, who had written a book on the colonisation of South Australia, and Edward Villiers. Stephen Walcott was engaged as secretary and offices procured in a private house overlooking St James's Park. When in 1847 Elliot

¹ 12th *General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners*, 1852.

was appointed under-secretary at the Colonial Office, he was succeeded as chairman by T. W. Clinton Murdoch. The board's functions were of considerable importance in the 'forties, when colonial self-government was virtually confined to North America. Its main concern was to arrange the sale of land in Australia and use the proceeds for the selection and conveyance of settlers to the antipodes. But it was also to issue information in regard to colonial territories in all parts of the world, and, through emigration agents at the chief ports, to supervise the application of the Passenger Acts which Parliament had enacted for the protection of emigrants.

Before the commencement of organised emigration to Natal, the commissioners had learned from circumstances how best to proceed in the selection and transportation of settlers. Young married persons of the labouring class were considered to be the most suitable. The Australian colonies required in the main shepherds, a few rural mechanics and female farm-servants. Tenders were invited from shipowners according to standards of berthing and feeding laid down by the Passenger Acts. Care had been taken to afford protection during the voyage without insisting on provisions that would raise the cost of the passage beyond a reasonable figure.

In 1847 the principle was adopted of permitting persons who had deposited money for the purchase of Crown land in a colony to nominate emigrants for free passages to that colony. This system was originally to apply only to New South Wales, South Australia and the Cape Colony, of which Natal was then a dependency.

Selecting a destination might present a very real dilemma to the early Victorian emigrant. He had to consider not only the length and cost of the voyage, but the prospects of life, and particularly of economic security, in new homes across the seas. To enjoy independence as a landowner was to many the primary consideration. But there was also the calculation that certain colonies reproduced in their political, religious and social institutions the pattern of life in the mother country.

North America was the inevitable choice of the majority of those who left the United Kingdom in the middle of the century. Emigrants could be conveyed from Liverpool to New York at rates which might be as low as £2 a head. The prairie soil was rich, and free grants were available for the industrious settler. Water communications were unrivalled. Then in 1848 came the news of gold discoveries in California. On the other hand, the long and rigorous winter set back progress on the farm. In the agricultural Middle West, where all were producers, low prices for wheat might not cover the cost of transport to the nearest market.¹ Canada, the land of promise for thousands of British agricultural workers, seemed to unacclimatised newcomers to be a country of great silences where the lonely settler faced the prospect of cold and starvation during the long winters. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were covered with dense forest and strangling undergrowth. The climate was raw and damp by reason of the sea fogs. In the West, British Columbia was an undeveloped land of majestic trees and bald-headed eagles. For those to whom the solitary life of the backwoodsman appealed, these parts of the future great Canadian dominion were a stimulating challenge. Others might agree with Cobbett, who had expressed the hope that 'the whole of these horrible regions would be left to the bears and the savages'.²

Loneliness was also the lot of the sheep farmer in Australia. Large families emigrating as a unit were able to overcome the hardships of frontier pioneering and resist the lure of the Australian town. Female emigration promoted by humanitarian societies, such as Sidney Herbert's association with its headquarters in Wiltshire, did something to remedy the disproportion of the sexes, besides promising relief to distressed needlewomen employed at a weekly wage of less than 5s.

¹ C. H. Hilliard, an emigrant on the *John Bright*, found the average price of wheat in Wisconsin, where he had farmed for several years, 2s. 3d. a bushel. *The Natal Independent*, 17 June 1852.

² *Rural Rides*, 19 April 1830.

But the relative absence of women in squatter homesteads added to the discomfort of life in 'the great southland where solitude has reigned for ages'.¹ The sheep-runs were unfenced, and the labour and anxiety of looking after the vast flocks told heavily on emigrants who were unused to the dry heat of the antipodean summer. Yet wages were good in the middle 'forties, averaging £30 per annum with monthly rations of meat, flour, tea and sugar in the open country above the lower Murray River. In the towns, before the discovery of the Victorian goldfields, professional men and shopkeepers were not welcome. Manufacturing industries lay in the future, and employment was hard to find. An Oxford man found hundreds out of work in Adelaide in 1849.²

New Zealand had its organised settlements reproducing the social strata of Britain. In the South Island, remote from the dangers of Maori wars, there were abundant acres of level plain, intersected by countless streams and fertile beyond expectation. Quail and duck awaited the sportsman, and within a few years the gentlemen of Canterbury were discussing the importation of hares and packs of hounds. But in some of the settlements land was priced at 40s. an acre, in order that funds should be available to finance further emigration and the construction of roads and bridges. The market for farm produce was easily overstocked and the settler had to compete with the Maori, living rent- and tax-free and seldom engaging himself for service with the white man. Scarcity of transport animals made almost insurmountable the difficulties of conveying produce across rugged hills and deep valleys. Though there was much here to make life delightful for the enterprising settler, the atmospheric moisture was severe on town-bred constitutions. The great distance in days of sail made emigration to New Zealand appear to be a particularly formidable undertaking.

Emigration to other parts of the Empire was inconsiderable. The Cape began in 1847 to employ public funds to bring to the

¹ Thos. Embling, reported in the *British Banner*, 18 Sept. 1850.

² *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 25 May 1850.

colony in four years a total of nearly 3000 persons at a cost which averaged £9 per statute adult.¹ A few hardy pioneers ventured to the Falkland Islands with its troops of wild cattle and streams of stones descending headlong into the valleys. Through the energy of Samuel Fisher Lafone, who refused to believe that the soil was too swampy for sheep, a chartered company was formed which secured a small party of emigrants to tend its flocks.

When Natal first came prominently before the British public in the year 1849, it seemed to offer a number of advantages scarcely found in other parts of the British dominions. Crown land, in the absence of a Gibbon Wakefield system, could be purchased at only 4s. an acre, and it was open grass land unencumbered by dense forest. Natives made tolerably good servants, and their labour could be procured for a monthly wage of 5s. Whilst the trekking of the Boers left ample room for the newcomers, Natal avoided the 'lonely misery of the Falklands'² and the terrific density of tree growth in many parts of British North America. Unlike Australia and New Zealand, the climate, away from the narrow coastal strip, lacked extremes of moisture, and with dry winter seasons was congenial to those suffering from pulmonary disorders. For the sportsman and the young man of spirit, all parts of Natal were a paradise, its unfenced grasslands the haunt of elephant and gnu, whilst buffalo, quagga and wildebeest invaded the uplands during the dry winter months. Travellers and men in service or trade out East knew of Natal's attractions. Johann Marinus Struben, a friend of Lord Byron and of the first Rajah Brooke, who had been in command of a squadron re-charting the Straits of Malacca, came to Natal in 1850 when his wife, daughter of a Scottish shipowner, was advised to seek a warmer and a drier climate.³ From

¹ 11th General Report of the Commissioners, 1851.

² Thomas Embling's words, the *British Banner*, 18 Sept. 1850.

³ Captain Struben, born 1806 at Oosterwijk Castle, Holland, was appointed by Benjamin Pine to the Klip River magistracy. Mrs Struben was a daughter of Alexander Beattie. H. W. Struben: *Recollections of Adventures*, 1920.

Canada came men like John Gibson, who as a boy had journeyed up the Ottawa River in a canoe, and Charles Barter, scholar of Winchester and of New College, Oxford, who had experienced the hardships of a New Brunswick lumber camp.

No public funds were applicable to the promotion of emigration to Natal. But the general regulations for sale of colonial lands permitted anyone depositing £100 to the credit of the emigration commissioners to nominate eligible persons for the privilege of a free passage. Patrick Maxwell's application, and his subsequent deposit of £100, made it necessary for the board to decide how many adult emigrants could be transported for this sum. For the Cape seven were allowed; and, as the additional cost of a passage to Port Natal was not expected to be considerable, the same figure was authorised for Natal. When Hugh Maclean, proprietor of the island of Coll, suggested that land at the disposal of the government in Natal was inferior in quality to farms under private ownership, and that emigrants might be well advised to see the country and judge for themselves before payment, the Secretary of State agreed that the privilege of nominating settlers for a free passage should be allowed on subsequent purchase of Crown land in the colony.

The so-called bounty system was thus brought into operation for Natal on the initiative of Patrick J. Maxwell. A Scotsman and an acquaintance of the 5th Duke of Buccleuch, who was presently to arrange for the conveyance to Natal of tenants from his own Hampshire estates, Maxwell had served in the Austrian army. He and his wife and family, with four emigrants in the steerage, sailed from London in the 404-ton barque *Gwalior*. The first emigrant ship to reach Natal from the United Kingdom, the *Gwalior* dropped anchor in the outer roadstead on Christmas Eve (1848), crossing the bar thirty-six hours later. Maxwell proposed to erect a brick and tile yard in Durban, and to employ his emigrants in brick-making. He found it more profitable to grow cotton and coffee

at Umzinto, whilst serving as lieutenant in the Royal Durban Rangers.

The *Gwalior* was followed to Natal by the tiny schooner *Elizabeth Jane* and the 156-ton brig *Lalla Rookh*. The schooner conveyed twenty-two passengers paying their own fares and not under the regulations of the emigration board. The *Lalla Rookh* was one of the new Aberdeen clippers, built at Peterhead. She brought to Natal, in the fastest passage so far achieved (sixty-five days), Natal's first settler medico, Dr W. H. Addison, the solicitor J. R. Goodricke, and Hugh Maclean's two eldest sons, who were to take into consideration the suitability of Natal for the emigration of several of their father's tenants.¹

Private enterprise had thus forged a link between the United Kingdom and Natal before the intervention of the speculator. But migration on a considerable scale only came about when J. C. Byrne opened his Pall Mall offices.

In middle age, Joseph Charles Byrne was a tall, sturdily built man with a fresh complexion and an impressive manner. Essentially an adventurer, bringing misery to many who committed their fortunes to his care, he was a plausible speaker, quick-witted and able to discern more clearly than most the economic and social possibilities of emigration. The son of a Dublin cattle-dealer, he had married well and had travelled widely in many parts of the British Empire. Visiting Australia in 1839, he had with two companions made large speculative purchases of cattle and had followed the Murrumbidgee River as far as its junction with the Murray, surviving more than one violent encounter with the aborigines. From Australia he had gone to New Zealand. There, as well as in Adelaide and Sydney, he had seen much distress among unemployed emigrants. In 1843 he was at the Cape, having exhausted his capital. According to his own account, he

¹ Hugh Maclean to the Secretary of State, 30 Jan. 1849. C.O. 179/9. The Maxwell correspondence is printed in *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1849, xxxvi (1059).

visited Natal from Colesberg, travelling overland with a hunting party.¹ A timely loan from an Irish friend enabled him to transport his family to London, which he reached altogether without means. But in the good years before the potato famine in Ireland and the commercial crisis of 1847 he established himself in Liverpool as a prosperous stock and share broker. The two guide-books which he induced Effingham Wilson of the Stock Exchange to publish sold very well, and he was presently to be seen driving to his office in a handsome equipage. Then came the railway mania and the commercial depression, bringing severe losses. Finding that a growing public was interested in emigration, Byrne made a careful study of available Blue Books. He learned from a clerk in the Colonial Office that promoters of colonisation could earn a title to thousands of good colonial acres, and he decided to forestall competition by offering attractive terms for settlement at Port Natal. An ex-stationer lent him money to furnish, at 12 Pall Mall East, his 'Natal Emigration and Colonisation Office'.

Before approaching the Secretary of State, it was necessary to make sure of professional and financial assistance. Byrne had no intention of himself accompanying his emigrants, and the services of an agent and surveyor was the first consideration. Here Byrne was distinctly fortunate. John Moreland, a surveyor and engineer of considerable ability, was on the point of concluding an agreement with Dr John Dunmore Lang, Presbyterian minister and newspaper editor in New South Wales, to return with him to Australia when, crossing Pall

¹ In a speech at Manchester on 15 May 1850, the *Manchester Examiner*, 18 May 1850. At Byrne's examination in bankruptcy, the commissioner was apparently satisfied with his statement that he had visited Natal in 1843 or 1844, but it is certain that he was quite unknown in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. For the facts of Byrne's career, see J. C. Byrne: *Twelve Years' Wanderings in British Colonies, 1835-47* (London, 2 vols., 1848), and the Letters of W. J. Irons to his brother, in the *Papers* of the Christian Colonisation Society, deposited with the C. Bird Collection in the Natal Archives.

Mall, he saw a placard advertising Byrne's scheme. A Yorkshireman by birth,¹ his early professional career had brought him employment in his native county. In 1833 he had surveyed the town of Kingston-upon-Hull. The feverish activity in railroad construction, characteristic of the early 'forties, led to valuable contracts for the Birmingham Railway Company. When the Royal Agricultural College was opened at Cirencester in 1846, he was appointed professor of surveying and civil engineering. The college, however, was in reality a private venture, and its funds were dependent upon subscriptions from the public. Moreland thought it wise, when the depression came, to look about for other employment. The offer of a government post at the Falkland Islands was not attractive. Earl Grey gave him to understand that he could have, for the asking, an appointment in the survey department of the Ceylon government. But Moreland wished to find a home for his wife and family. When he had read Byrne's prospectus, Natal appealed to him more than either Ceylon or New South Wales. His first idea was to project a scheme of his own. Finally he decided to engage himself to Byrne. Under the contract, Byrne guaranteed that he should receive not less than £100 annually in respect of fees for survey and conveyance of emigrants' allotments. Moreover, for every year of his agency, Moreland was to be assigned a quantity of land varying with the number of emigrants introduced in any year, but not less than 100 acres. He was also to receive £50 annually in travelling allowances.²

The needed financial support was forthcoming from a group of interested shipowners. It was probably Francis Collison who introduced Byrne to Marshall and Edridge and other

¹ The address from which his letters of 1849 to the Colonial Office were written was 'Maidensworth House', Gilling.

² For the terms of the contract, see C.O. 179/39. Moreland's memorandum of 3 Dec. 1855, addressed to Sir William Molesworth, gives a detailed account of his career (C.O. 179/42).

shipping firms in the City of London.¹ For Collison had been early in the field with suggestions to emigration companies that they should advertise passages to Natal to which grants of land were attached. In the long run investment in colonising projects was likely to be amply repaid by the steady development of colonial raw materials to pay for needed consumer goods. In the course of 1848 Byrne came to an agreement with Marshall. The original application forms were obtainable either from Byrne's Pall Mall office or from Marshall and Edridge at 34 Fenchurch Street. The shipping firm, jointly with Byrne, purchased two of Collison's farms; and, though Marshall appears in the books of the emigration board as interested in no more than £2000 of the £14,000 finally deposited, it was believed in official circles that he had provided most of the capital required.²

On the Australian route George Marshall's ships were well known, though their reputation was not always sustained by the verdict of the emigrants conveyed.³ His partner, Thomas (later Sir T. R.) Edridge, was an insurance broker in the City of London.

In 1850, Marshall and Edridge became reluctant to commit themselves to further support of Byrne. Assistance was forthcoming from the eccentric John Lavicount Anderdon, at that time engaged on his *Life of Bishop Ken*. The son of John Proctor Anderdon of Bristol, he had gone from Harrow to the City of London, where he became a prosperous West India merchant, able to devote much leisure to literature. He was part-owner of the *Minerva*.

Even with Anderdon's assistance, Byrne could not long have

¹ The letter introducing Byrne as a 'gentleman celebrated in the old Country for his advocacy of the cause of emigration' to Martin West, 1 Feb. 1849, is signed by Collison. C.S.O. vol. 17 (N.A.).

² Murdoch's *Report on Present State of Emigration to Natal* (1850). C.O. 179/12. Benjamin Pine in his despatch of 23 Nov. 1850 wrote that Marshall was spoken of as the real maker of the deposits. C.O. 179/14.

³ See the *British Banner*, 3 April 1850, for complaints of emigrants on the *Aden*, travelling to Adelaide.

sustained the responsibilities of his considerable enterprise, had it not been for the intervention of William Schaw Lindsay. An Ayrshire man by birth, Lindsay had shipped as cabin boy on a brig bound for the West Indies, and had risen to the command of his ship before retiring from the sea in the year 1840. Moving to London, he founded, with W. O. Young, the firm of W. S. Lindsay and Company, shipbrokers, of 11 Abchurch Lane. In later life he became Member of Parliament for Tynemouth and North Shields, and author of a voluminous work entitled *A History of Merchant Shipping*. Though Byrne's name continued to be used, it was Lindsay's firm that chartered the *Sovereign, Ina, Edward, Lady Bruce* and *Henrietta*, paying the necessary deposits to the credit of the emigration commissioners.¹ At Byrne's bankruptcy the principal creditors were Lindsay and Young, Francis Collison, Marshall and Edridge, Manning and Anderdon and smaller shipowning firms to whom Byrne had had recourse when his credit became impaired.²

In the late autumn of 1848 Byrne was ready to approach the Secretary of State. He had visited Hull, Leeds and other towns and found much public interest in emigration. He had also discussed with Marshall and Edridge the cost of conveying emigrants to Port Natal. The latest contract price to the Cape had been £6. 17s. 6d. per adult. It was decided that a steerage passage with twenty acres of land could be offered for a payment of £10. Since native labour was available in Natal, the Colonial Office rule limiting free passages to persons of the labouring class, which was strictly applied in the case of Australia, was relaxed. Byrne was informed that small farmers and mechanics could be approved. His application was for permission to select and send out his own settlers. This was a new principle; but, provided that lists were sub-

¹ E. P. Lamport's statement on arrival in Natal as agent for Lindsay and Young. C.O. 179. 33.

² The chairman of the creditors was David Halket, owner with William Wilson of the *Emily*. When Byrne filed his petition on 6 Sept. 1850, Wilson was in command of the *Emily* outward bound for Natal with emigrants.

mitted beforehand and that all came within the category of those who intended to work for their subsistence, there seemed to be no very valid objection to this course. By 20 February 1849 it had been finally agreed that Byrne was to make deposits in sums of not less than £1000, select, subject to the approval of his lists by the emigration commissioners, his own emigrants, and make what terms he could with them for a passage, provided that the charge for accommodation in the steerage did not exceed £10. Byrne on his part undertook to give each approved settler on landing twenty acres, with a right of choice from at least double that quantity. A certificate would be issued by the colonial authorities stating that the emigrant had been well treated during the voyage, landed in Natal and put in possession of his acres; and, on receipt of this certificate in London, £10 of his original deposit would be repaid to Byrne.

The scheme had been carefully scrutinised by the emigration board. Byrne had laid emphasis on the objection which settlers of the 'better class' had evinced to going out as 'government emigrants'. The commissioners believed that their interests would be adequately safeguarded by the provisions of the Passenger Acts and by the power which they possessed of withholding repayment of deposits, if the emigration had not been conducted to the satisfaction of government. At the same time, the agreement stimulated private enterprise. With the price of Crown land standing at 4s. an acre, Byrne and his associates stood to acquire a property of 3000 acres for every £1000 deposited. It was not understood at the time that Byrne's means depended upon his making a profitable sale of this land without delay.¹

Byrne, jointly with George Marshall, deposited the first sum of £1000 on 12 April 1849. He had begun to advertise in the provincial press during the first week of the New

¹ For the correspondence leading to the agreement, see *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1849, xxxvi (1059), pp. 91-7, and more fully in C.O. 384/84 (P.R.O.). Children under fourteen were to receive five acres.

Year, offering passages with twenty acres attached at the following rates: steerage £10, intermediate £19 and cabin £35. His prospectus of 1 January announced that arrangements had been made with Her Majesty's Government for the encouragement of emigration to Natal; and when a cautious applicant made enquiries at the Colonial Office, he was informed that the prospectus 'correctly describes the arrangements concluded between Her Majesty's Government and himself' (i.e. Byrne).¹ The commissioners in Park Street did their best to watch over the interests of emigrants. Strict scrutiny of Byrne's lists revealed several not of the class considered eligible. In January 1850 the government, through Stephen Walcott, secretary to the commissioners, issued supplementary regulations applicable to Natal, excluding from the category of approved persons those in habitual receipt of poor relief, families with more than four children below the age of fourteen years (since the presence of young children on board emigrant ships tended to increase the mortality rate), and young persons of the age of fourteen to eighteen unless they were accompanied by parents or married relations. The ships engaged and the name of the agent acting in Natal had to be promptly notified to the board. Finally, in July 1850, the minimum deposit was raised to £5000, and the land allotted to emigrants was required to be cultivable.

Passages were found for Byrne's first batch of fifteen approved emigrants² on the 174-ton brig *Wanderer*, which hauled out of St Katharine's dock on 22 January, landing its passengers on 16 May before proceeding to Mauritius. All were offered allotments at New England, east of Pietermaritzburg, but two years later the land remained unclaimed and

¹ C.O. 179/11. This letter was the basis of complaints that emigrants had been misled by government. Byrne in a speech at the Hall of Commerce, Threadneedle Street, had said: 'Now this emigration was not on his own responsibility, but on that of the Government itself.' *The British Banner*, 10 April 1850.

² The London list shows twenty-six names nominated by Byrne but some were not approved. C.O. 384/85 (P.R.O.).

unoccupied. Of the passengers the most prominent was R. B. Willey, who was elected to represent the ship's emigrants at subsequent meetings of Byrne's settlers. The *Washington* followed on 17 April, also bound for Mauritius, with over seventy settlers for Natal, mostly from Lancashire and Yorkshire, and including John Moreland, the Macfarlane brothers, Richard Broughton the attorney, Hughbert Baker, railway engineer and surveyor, and E. Few. Their arrival at the Port on 18 July foreshadowed a period of great activity in land survey and settlement. Moreland hurried to the capital to prepare land on the Little Bushman River, west of the small town, which Byrne had purchased at a figure exceeding the upset price of Crown land.

Ships followed at intervals, the peak of emigration occurring as circumstances worsened in the United Kingdom during the ominous winter of 1849-50. On 28 November emigrants left simultaneously from Glasgow (127 on the *Ina*) and from London (198 on the *Sovereign*). Thus encouraged, Byrne announced on 2 January 'monthly packets for Natal', and ships sailing regularly from Liverpool for the convenience of passengers in the north. With Lindsay and Young supplying capital, he was able to make up his total of deposits to £14,000, and to send out in all some 2500 approved emigrants. When deposits were exhausted, he continued to charter ships. The *Unicorn*, which left Liverpool on 13 June, carried over 200, after inspection but without certificates of approval since no further deposits had been forthcoming. All his ships contained passengers whom the emigration commissioners had been unable to accept, the total of unapproved persons amounting to at least 800.¹ The last vessel which appears to have carried persons under arrangement with his firm was the *Bernard*, which anchored off Port Natal on 18 February 1851 with fifty-four settlers on board. Such a venture could no longer be described as 'under the auspices of government', and Byrne

¹ Byrne stated himself that he had located 800 unapproved persons. Pine to Sir H. Smith, 4 Dec. 1851 (C.O. 179/18).

had been declared bankrupt before the ship left St Katharine's dock.

The causes of Byrne's failure are not hard to discern. He had assumed that land capable of sub-division into small farms was readily available in Natal, that emigrants would take up and improve their allotments, and that their settlement would enhance the value of adjoining lands belonging to his company. Though he doubtless contemplated the profitable sale to them of agricultural implements and consumer goods, the only direct source of profit was the quantity of land to which he became entitled through his deposits. Since a large proportion of the emigrants refused their allotments as not worth the cost of survey and conveyance, he could not, until the local government came to his support with an ordinance, even obtain receipt of certificates of location. Eventually, Byrne or the assignees received the full amount of the £14,000 deposited, less legal expenses incurred. The accounts showed that passage money from emigrants (£30,262 odd) almost exactly balanced payments to shipowners, subsistence money to emigrants, in consequence of detention of ships, and surgeons' fees, which together absorbed £30,310. The proceedings in bankruptcy underlined the fact that a profit of nearly £3000 would be realised when the whole of the original deposits became due for repayment. Much indeed was secured to creditors who had lent money or, as in the case of Sir J. Walmsley, had supplied hardware and tools for sale in Natal. But Byrne succeeded in the end in realising to his own advantage some of the drawback certificates.

Much to the amazement of the Colonial Office, Byrne was not only granted a first-class certificate but appointed by the assignees as joint agent, with E. P. Lamport, for administering the estate. In Natal, Benjamin Pine seems to have permitted him to secure land of the nominal value of £2500. He had lost none of his amazing effrontery; and at a public dinner in his honour at Hugh McDonald's hotel in Durban he informed his audience, which included the lieutenant-governor, that he had

been approached by the Brazilian ambassador to promote emigration from Ireland to Brazil.¹ Leaving Natal for Mauritius, he later proceeded to Melbourne and was next heard of 'employed driving a wagon at the gold diggings in Australia'.² In 1857 he submitted a project for the colonisation of New Caledonia to the government of Napoleon III. His last scheme was the transportation of South Sea islanders as 'apprentices' to serve in Chile and Peru. His death was reported in the year 1863.³

Byrne had not really been first in the field. Apart from Francis Collison, there was Jonas Bergtheil, whose settlement at New Germany has already been mentioned. When the *Beta* anchored off Port Natal, Bergtheil had been a young man of twenty-nine. He did not abandon hope of introducing British emigrants, and, with his personal knowledge of Natal, he was able to appreciate the conditions imposed on all contemplating cultivation by the physical formation of the country. It was a great improvement on Byrne's undertaking when he offered 150-acre allotments, with grazing rights over a much larger area. The settlement which he visualised was one of persons of moderate capital. He owned two 6000-acre farms at New England, and a similar quantity on the Umgeni ten miles north of Pietermaritzburg, which he named 'New Scotland'. Nevertheless, as Sir B. Pine pointed out,⁴ there were several defects in this plan. No settler was likely to find more than a small portion of his 150 acres suitable for cultivation, and the grazing rights were only guaranteed for a period of ten years. There was some response to his advertisements and, in December 1850, Bergtheil was able to despatch a small party, destined for his New England location, on the frigate-built Indiaman *John Line*. The settlement did not

¹ The *Natal Times* (Durban), 2 April 1852.

² C.O. *Minute* on J. C. Byrne. C.O. 179/31.

³ For the reply of the emigration board to the enquiry 20 Nov. 1857 of the French ambassador, see C.O. 179/48.

⁴ Pine to Sir H. Smith, 11 Oct. 1851, *Brit. Parl. Pap.*, Natal, 1853, lxii (1697), p. 19.

prosper; for, by this time, well-stocked farms of 6000 acres could be rented within fifteen miles of Pietermaritzburg for a very modest sum.

It is possible that Byrne had met in London Joseph Steer Christopher, who had opened a Cape of Good Hope Emigration Office in Leadenhall Street in 1845. A West-country man of good yeoman stock, Christopher had travelled widely in the East. Prior to 1845 he had not visited the Cape, but he was impressed with its strategic importance on the route to India. When the bounty system was made applicable to the colony, he invested a sum of approximately £1000 in the purchase of Crown land, the upset price of which had been fixed at only 2s. an acre. A few hundred emigrants went out to the Cape under his auspices, and presently Christopher and his brother, William, followed them. William had been a pupil of Dr George Hilliard at the Middlesex Hospital. At Grahamstown he began his medical practice, whilst Joseph became cashier in the recently established (1847) Frontier Commercial and Agricultural Bank. Hearing from W. R. Thompson and Dr Blaine of the potentialities of Natal as a cotton-producing district, Christopher decided to revive a proposal which he had submitted to the Secretary of State as early as 1845. Natal had been his original choice for the settlement of small tenant farmers 'of the respectable sort'; and on his arrival there from Grahamstown in 1848 he at once made application for a grant of 300,000 acres.¹ The land, which he had selected with a view to the cultivation of cotton, was situated along the coast between the Umkomanzi and the Ifafa Rivers, and he asked to be put in possession without making any previous deposit whatever. His means had been exhausted in the purchase of two farms and in fees to surveyors. The authorities at Pietermaritzburg could do no more than promise that the purchase money would be applied to the expenses of locating emigrants. Whilst his

¹ The correspondence in Natal is to be found in *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1850, xxxviii (1292), pp. 7-11. Compare C.O. 386/57 (P.R.O.).

brother brought from Grahamstown agricultural labourers to prepare the ground, Christopher hastened to London to discuss with the Colonial Office the terms of what he called his 'agreement'. What he was proposing, in letters addressed to the Secretary of State from the North and South American Coffee House in Threadneedle Street, was that nearly a quarter-of-a-million acres should be assigned to him without auction, and that he should be permitted to liquidate the price by drawbacks for such emigrants as he might introduce. He was well enough known in the City to obtain the backing of men like G. E. Cottrell and Frederick Torrens, with whose support he provisionally registered a 'Natal Company'. Before the emigration commissioners had sanctioned the undertaking, the company, in an endeavour to outbid Byrne, offered twenty-five acres with a steerage passage for £10 and had certificates printed in the form of land orders. 'I see', wrote T. F. Elliot, 'numerous projectors crowding into this office, each seeking to gain some advantage over the other.'¹ He pointed out that, in default of deposits, the emigration commissioners would be unable to guarantee proper treatment during the voyage or settlement in accordance with the terms of Christopher's prospectus. Earl Grey, thus advised, refused to allow the government in Natal to convey Crown land without public sale, and the undertaking had to be abandoned. A well-meaning man, Christopher had no talent for affairs. The community of emigrants which he contemplated was to include 'at least four clergymen, four doctors or surgeons, and gardeners, an engineer and surveyor, horse-breeder, tallow-chandler, tanners, miners, millers, a bookseller or two with a good useful library' and even a manorial court. But his book, published by Effingham Wilson, apart from its value as a guide-book, contained the first printed Zulu vocabulary and a useful list of Cape and Natal timber.²

¹ *Minute of T. F. Elliot on J. S. Christopher's 'Natal Company'*, C.O. 179/12.

² J. S. Christopher: *Natal, Cape of Good Hope*, London, 1850, pp. 118-19, 137-44.

Christopher belonged to the group of merchants and professional men who were bound by ties of commerce or residence to the Cape and whose interest in Natal was in no sense inspired by the platform activities of Joseph Charles Byrne. But there were others who followed closely in Byrne's footsteps. It was indeed permissible for anyone to take advantage of the regulations governing the sale of Crown land in Natal, and thus to become entitled to advertise schemes of emigration 'under the sanction of Her Majesty's Government'. The Colonial Office only made objection if no previous deposit of at least £1000 had been made, or if fresh announcements were issued after the original deposit had been exhausted. Byrne strongly resented the intervention of newcomers. He was not slow to report to the emigration board that printed handbills over the signature of Thomas Bond had been displayed in Leeds, claiming official approval for a scheme which resembled his own. The board ascertained that Bond was acting for Richard Merchant Hackett of Jewry Street, Aldgate, and it compelled Hackett to admit that his first advertisement had been premature.¹ But, the deposit having been duly made, Byrne could not prevent Hackett from becoming entitled to all the privileges extended to himself. Hackett's appeal was addressed primarily to Wesleyans, and he offered them better terms than they could get from the Pall Mall office. Thirty acres were attached to a steerage passage, whilst an intermediate fare, with a forty-acre bonus, amounted to only £16. Early in 1850 the *Hebrides* left London, calling at Plymouth for West-country passengers. Hackett's agent in Natal was one of the Milner brothers and land was secured at the Karkloof. The settlement was not a success. Samuel Stead rode over the allotments in 1862 to find signs of occupation only at one point, where a notice attached to a solitary shanty conveyed the melancholy information 'gone away'. One hundred and nine of the *Hebrides'* 129 passengers had been approved by the emigration commissioners and drawback

¹ *The British Banner*, 5 Dec. 1849 and 23 Jan. 1850.

certificates were issued in Hackett's favour on 28 April 1851. He made no further deposits, but he co-operated with John Lidgett in the despatch of the *Nile*, *Choice* and *John Bright*.

Byrne was roused to greater indignation by the proposals of George Pavitt Murdoch. For Murdoch was a clerk in the employment of Byrne's solicitors and his agency for the conduct of emigration to Natal was a patent imitation of Byrne's own regulations. His suggestions were elaborated in a letter of August 1849 addressed to the Colonial Office. He was prepared to offer free passages and land grants to a clergyman and teacher accompanying each batch of emigrants, and to make the allowance for a child ten instead of five acres. Murdoch succeeded in interesting in his project the influential Samuel Gurney, 'the bankers' banker' and a brother of Elizabeth Fry, and in March he duly deposited £1000 to the credit of the emigration commissioners. His posters, issued from the King William Street offices of yet another 'Natal Company', promised for £10 a comfortable passage with twenty acres 'of the most fertile and prolific description, selected by themselves with great liberty of choice and an unlimited right of commonage'. Murdoch had no experience whatever of conditions in Natal, and it was impossible to make good this promise, no matter what care was taken in the selection of farms for the location of his settlers. For this misapprehension Edmund Morewood, who acted as Murdoch's agent in Natal, was no doubt responsible.

Nevertheless, in many ways this was a well-conducted undertaking. Murdoch had promised 'ships of fast-sailing qualities, adapted to cross the bar'. His first batch of ninety-five emigrants left on the *Ballengeich*, a 478-ton ship, which had a good passage, anchoring in the roadstead on 26 July 1850, sixty-eight days out from the Downs. Morewood had purchased a land commission farm from the German Krogman for £300, and land was also procured on the Umhloti. The *Ballengeich* settlers, among whom were Robert Upton, the architect, John Millar, H. J. Meller, Hugh Gillespie and the

respectable shipowner of this City', John Lidgett had also made arrangements for the conveyance of emigrants to Natal. Passages by his ships were advertised in northern newspapers during December 1849 at fares exactly the same as those fixed by J. C. Byrne. Lidgett was well-known among Methodists, especially in the north of England, and he had agents at Leeds, Hull, Bridlington and other places. Through the Hull merchant, George Ellison, he got into touch with James Erasmus Methley, author of *The New Colony of Port Natal*, a widely read book which gave a very favourable account of the district. Since it was experience in emigration agency together with understanding of the conditions of life on the hard-baked African soil that was wanted, his enterprise was perhaps more likely to succeed than those of his competitors. Methley, recently returned from an initial visit, supplied the local knowledge of Natal and had procured 12,000 acres of good pastoral land north of the Umgeni, whilst Lidgett attended personally to the despatch from St Katharine's dock of the 600-ton barque *Herald* which was to inaugurate his scheme. The *Herald* sailed with forty-eight emigrants; but misfortune attended the voyage, for the ship was lost with all hands during the return passage.

When the demand for passages began to fall off, Lidgett and Hackett wisely co-operated. The three ships, *Nile*, *Choice* and *John Bright*, conveyed approximately 200 further settlers under arrangements with one or other of the two ship-owners. They were smaller than the *Herald* but not ill-found ships. Lidgett's Methodists predominated on the *Nile* and most of them were located by Methley and his partner, Edwin Parkinson, himself a Byrne settler, on the uplands round Dargle at places presently to be known as 'Lidgett's Town' and 'Caversham'. The comparative success of the agency may be calculated from the fact that, fifteen years later, John Shedden Dobie found several of the *Nile* men on their original allotments.¹ Lidgett himself made no fortune out of his agency.

¹ J. S. Dobie: *South African Journal*, 1862-6 (ed. Hattersley), Van Riebeeck Society, 1945.

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¹ J. S. Dobie: *South African Journal*, 1862-6 (ed. Hattersley), Van Riebeeck Society, 1945.

Owing to the fact that Methley was absent at the time, whilst Parkinson had not been given his power-of-attorney, actual conveyance of the title deeds was delayed until November 1853. The drawback certificates were only despatched to London four months later.¹

The emigration of 1849-51 was in the main an outward movement from the United Kingdom, inspired by hopes of an independent and healthy living on the land which it was no longer easy to find in the mother country. But there was also a flow of migrants from other parts of the British Empire, attracted by reports of Natal as a potential producer of cotton, sugar and other sub-tropical commodities. In the 'forties the British West Indies and Mauritius were alike suffering from a serious deficiency of labour. Attempts to recruit free indentured labour in West Africa had met with little success. In 1846 the sugar duties Act provided for gradual removal of the duties which had so far protected the colonial article from the competition of the slave-grown sugar of Cuba and Brazil. Economic depression in Jamaica and the smaller islands was responsible for several planters making the decision to seek their fortunes elsewhere. For many the deciding factor was the collapse in 1848 of a number of West India commercial houses, followed by the failure of the West India Bank with its headquarters in Barbados. Among those who, in search of a warm climate and agreeable occupation, now came to Natal, to strengthen materially the economic prospects of the coastlands, were the Nimmos, from St Kitts, Mark McKen, who had served for ten years on an estate in Jamaica, and Thomas Lewis, ex-overseer of a group of plantations at Trelawny, Jamaica. Lewis's commendation of the soil at 'Compensation' encouraged Morewood to persevere with his enterprise, whilst McKen became curator of the botanic gardens at Durban, introducing China grass, ginger and French arrowroot. George Marcus, an emigrant on the *Aliwal*, had planted sugar and coffee

¹ Parkinson's report, explaining the delay, in C.S.O. 63 (N.A.): Lidgett's memorial, 8 Feb. 1853 in C.O. 179/31 (P.R.O.).

in Ceylon as well as Jamaica, and was located by Moreland at the Tongaat. Among Byrne's emigrants there were also young men like J. D. Holliday who had journeyed widely and seen much of the world though without actual experience of sub-tropical cultivation.¹

Mauritius was as severely affected by the commercial crisis as any of the West Indian islands. Its principal bank had closed its doors in 1847, and the price of sugar fell to unexampled levels. One of the first to make the short journey to Natal was E. F. Rathbone, who had entered the civil service at Port Louis seventeen years earlier. Though with some knowledge of sugar cultivation, Rathbone preferred pastoral pursuits, moving from the coastlands to the neighbourhood of Utrecht. Henry Shire, born in Ireland but of German extraction, had bought discharge from his regiment in Mauritius in order to open an academy for girls, on his marriage at Port Louis. The academy not prospering, he left for the Cape, and in 1846 came to Natal, to settle down there as a sugar-planter. His homestead at Melkhoutkraal, purchased from A. Spies and J. J. Uys, was the first substantial house built (1849) in Victoria County.² The outward flow from Mauritius to Natal, though numerically insignificant, was important as a stimulus to the sugar industry. Twenty-five persons reached Durban from the island in the *Flora* in March 1850 to settle and grow cane on the coastlands.

There was even a trickle of emigration from British North America. Peel had lowered the duty on foreign timber despite angry protests from Canada. Anthony Wilkinson, a Hull man who had been master of a sailing ship, reached Natal from Canada, naming his new home and sugar estate 'Ottawa'. From Nova Scotia, accompanying Moreland in the *Washington*, came James Osborn Francis, who had spent his boyhood in Halifax.

¹ Holliday, who had been to Barbados as a boy, was a passenger on Lidgett's ship *Herald*.

² The Pietermaritzburg mason, John Mullins, who built Melkhoutkraal for Shire, had been employed at Westminster on Barry's new House of Lords. H. Shire to T. Shepstone, 7 Feb. 1850. C.S.O. 14.

THE EMIGRATION COMPANIES

The publicity given to Natal in these years attracted settlers of every description from almost every quarter of the globe: older men like Joseph Newell, civil engineer with thirty-five years of professional work behind him in Europe and India; men of an adventurous disposition, such as Joseph Dicks, who had taken part in the ill-starred Swan River settlement, and James W. Winter, owner of the schooner *Sea Nymph* trading between the Bay and Madagascar, who in earlier life had been veterinary surgeon to Mehemet Ali; intrepid missionaries from North Germany, among them J. L. Dolne, the linguist, and C. Zunckel, to establish lonely stations among the Zulus; cultured persons in search of a restful home, such as Mrs M. Bowen from South America, to settle amid the papaws and other fruits and plants of Brazil in the dense bush of the Berea hills beyond Congella. The majority came to Natal hoping to find easier conditions for the settler than were offered by Canada, Australia or the Cape. Almost all hoped to stamp the pattern of Victorian respectability on the new land of great open spaces under an alien sun.

CHAPTER V

EMIGRATION TO NATAL FROM THE INDUSTRIAL TOWNS

In the hungry years 1847-9 the figures of total emigration from the British Isles jumped up to the level of a quarter of a million souls per annum. Repeal of the corn laws in 1846 meant indeed cheap bread, benefiting operatives in the industrial towns; but there was acute anxiety lest the inflow of foreign corn should drive many thousands of agricultural labourers into the ranks of the unemployed. In Ireland and Scotland failure of the potato crop more than balanced in poor homes the advantages of a cheap loaf. Nor was distress confined to the rural districts. The condition of England as a whole revealed rotten patches in an economy which had never been altogether wholesome since the prolonged strain of the Napoleonic wars.

The situation was aggravated by reckless speculation in railway shares. In the 'thirties and early 'forties railways had been a new and attractive field for investment. Their construction gave employment to the iron and steel industry as well as to countless hands overcrowding the labour market. But England could not afford to find the capital for railroads on the European continent in addition to her own commitments at home. Yet during the 'mad year' of 1845 more than 1000 companies were in course of promotion, among them fantastic proposals such as that of 'Pillbrow's Atmospheric Railway and Canal Propulsion Company'.¹ Some had been launched merely in order that their promoters could make a fortune by selling shares at a premium. When, however, Parliament laid down that railway companies must deposit by February 1846 five per cent of the proposed capital, heavy calls upon investors became unavoidable. At this juncture the

¹ D. M. Evans: *The Commercial Crisis, 1847-8*, London 1849, p. 35.

potato famine and bad harvests on the continent forced up the price of wheat. With other factors, notably high prices for cotton, contributing to the adverse balance of trade, business seemed depressed beyond hope of recovery. There was great suffering in the textile trades, with ten per cent reductions in piece-work rates. Women suffered no less than men, thousands crowding into millinery and dress-making to receive a weekly wage of 5s.

Despondency reached a height in the winter of 1848-9. Railway shares had begun to slump even before the sensation which caused the resignation of the 'railway king', George Hudson. Men who had invested their savings, perhaps without even enquiring whether a route had been surveyed, were ruined overnight. Thousands of surveyors, engineers and workmen were thrown out of employment when work was abandoned on uncompleted lines. Indirectly the collapse in the railway world depressed every industry, for the apparent prosperity had been a stimulus to over-trading. To protect its gold reserves, the Bank of England had begun to contract credit in 1847. Commercial firms and private banks were brought down when the crisis came in its full intensity. In the towns the public began to hoard coin and notes. Stocks of manufactured goods accumulated owing to the general lack of confidence. But foodstuffs and cotton continued to be in short supply and, to meet the country's minimum needs, heavy shipments of gold were made across the Atlantic.

The situation was to right itself in 1851 and subsequent years, with recovery in the world's markets, better harvests and, above all, the new demand created by the gold diggings in California and Australia. But in 1849 the condition of England remained precarious. Gold reserves had not been restored and enterprise was stagnant. Though England had escaped the revolutions of 1848, Chartists had been openly drilling in the industrial towns of the midlands and north. To fill the cup of misery, cholera had broken out sporadically in June. Over 3000 fatal cases were reported during the last week in

July and 72,180 deaths from cholera occurred for all parts of England during the year.

Such were the conditions which promoted the great emigration. In London, where the Fleet River had not yet been enclosed and diverted underground but still served as a common sewer, the cholera of 1849 surpassed earlier epidemics of the century. It reached its climax in September, when a weekly rate of over 1000 was officially recorded. Though the dark alleys of the East End fared worst and the districts adjacent to the Thames where, at high tides, the river water was likely to rush into the sewers and flood low-lying streets, even the drawing rooms of Mayfair with their silk curtains could not exclude infection.

London at this date was bounded by the Marylebone Road in the north, the quiet streets of Camberwell in the south, rustic Kensington in the west and Poplar with its docks in the east. Even within this area, meadows separated Kensington from Pimlico, whilst the busy streets of Holborn and Westminster were interspersed with fields and gardens.¹ Camden Town was a leafy village. Byrne settlers remembered the site of Paddington station as a market garden. As boys, some of them had no doubt fished in the open West bourn, just as their sons were to angle for crabs in the picturesque *sluits* of Pietermaritzburg. Beyond Regent's Park green lanes stretched away to wild heath in the neighbourhood of Hampstead.

This was the London of Charles Dickens, early Victorian London of the hansom cab and the penny omnibus which commenced running between the South Eastern Railway and the Bank in September 1850. Colour was lent to its streets by a vast army of street-sellers and costermongers thronging its pavements. Vendors of muffins, Chelsea buns, brandy balls and whelks mingled with showmen in charge of dwarfs, performing bears or punch and judy shows. Official London was very much what it had been in Regency days. Barry's new

¹ Sir John Clapham wrote that pig-keeping was a common occupation in Westminster as late as 1856. *Economic History of Modern Britain*, ii, p. 443.

Houses of Parliament were not yet completed, the Marble Arch still graced the approach to Buckingham Palace, whilst the Westminster Bridge had not even been begun. But the Thames Tunnel had been opened in 1843, and the new Royal Exchange, with its Corinthian portico, confronted George Dance's Mansion House and the austere buildings of the Bank of England.

The commercial crisis and the slump in railway shares had shaken the City, bringing repercussions which affected all classes. Spencer Cope, barrister of Inner Temple Lane, Henry Rock, city missionary, Randal F. Bennett, a descendant on his mother's side of the Sir Thomas White who had founded Merchant Taylors' School and St John's College, Oxford, and a member of the Stock Exchange, G. B. S. Darter, pianomaker at Collard and Collard's famous establishment, William Boyd Varty, followed by his brothers Arthur and Tom, sons of a wholesale merchant in Friday Street, Cheapside: these men, like many others, signed their names to an enterprise which was to carry them across the seas to Queen Victoria's new colony of Natal. The crisis brought together men of every calling. Cope, before writing to the Colonial Office to enquire whether free grants of land could be made in the case of a co-operative emigration, explained that nearly 100 men had resolved to emigrate with him to Natal.¹ Similar parties were collected from Brixton by Dr Charles Johnston, who was to become one of Natal's first elected legislators; and in the City by Henry Horneman, merchant of Crutched Friars.² Individual emigrants were attracted from all parts of London: tradesmen like William Henry Stonell, farrier of Park Street, Kensington Cross, and Robert W. Plant of Brixton, who was to succeed McKen as curator of Durban's botanic gardens; engineers of the type of H. W. Currie, who supplied

¹ Cope's letter of 29 Oct. 1849 is in C.O. 179/9. Cope left Natal for Australia in 1853.

² Horneman's application was made as late as May 1851 and his scheme was not approved. C.O. 179/18. Charles Johnston's first application to the emigration board was dated 14 Oct. 1849. C.O. 179/9.

Durban with its water and manufactured writing and copying ink from indigenous nuts; millwrights represented by the Bermondsey man, Henry Ellis; small shopkeepers of the type of Charles Florey, whom Barter met at the Bushman River military post 'with his large-eyed theatrical-looking wife from the sweet shades of Norwood'.¹

Typical of the London-born emigrants who came to Natal was George Russell. Born at Foot's Cray, Kent, where his father was a landed proprietor, George went to school at Turnham Green, sharing a room with George Augustus Sala. A haunting love of the sea led to his apprenticeship with a firm of shipowners, and to a nautical career in which he obtained his mate's certificate. Meanwhile his father had speculated disastrously in railway shares. Land had to be sold, and a living sought as a miller in East Greenwich. The son arrived home, after leaving his ship at Bombay, to find that the family, confronted with accumulating misfortune, had resolved to emigrate to Natal under Byrne's scheme. In May 1850 the Russells sailed in the converted frigate *Minerva*, which had been in the service of the East India Company. In the same ill-fated vessel other Londoners had taken passage, the Ralfe family from Islington,² who were to settle in an isolated position on the Bushman River, and two men of the law, R. R. Ryley, who elected to follow an outdoor occupation, and George Gain, who, though describing himself in the official lists as a 'farmer', was a solicitor of the High Court of Chancery.

A further cause of depression in the City was the published intention of the government to bring to an end the protection extended to British shipping by the operation of the Navigation Acts. Huskisson's amending Act of 1825 had reserved for

¹ *Dorp and Veld*, London, 1852, p. 61. Florey, who was twenty-nine when he emigrated on the *Dreadnought*, became landlord of the 'Crown' hotel, Pietermaritzburg, in August 1851.

² In the first half of the eighteenth century the Ralfes were landowners at Burbage, Wiltshire. James and Robert, sons of a naval surgeon, originally intended to emigrate to Australia, where a cousin had surveyed the coastline from Port Macquarrie to Sydney.

British ships the carrying trade between British ports and the colonies. The threatened removal of this monopoly intensified the dullness of the market in the year 1848. Despite agitation from the society of shipowners, supported by shipwrights and sailors, who expected to suffer from the competition of the soft-wood clippers of America, repeal of the Acts of navigation came into operation on 1 January 1850. Foreign shipping crowded into Port Louis and Trinidad, and British ships cleared in British ports fell off during the year. Recovery indeed came soon, and Britain more than held her own in the East. The transition in shipbuilding from wood to iron gave her a great advantage, whilst the American civil war in the 'sixties temporarily destroyed the American mercantile marine.

Nevertheless, in 1849-50 anxiety regarding the employment of British ships and British crews sustained the interest in emigration, and induced shipowners to continue their promotion of the colonisation of Natal after J. C. Byrne had filed his petition. That Londoners continued, despite this shock, to have faith in the colony is to be attributed in part to the energy and enthusiasm of William Josiah Irons.

The son of a small yeoman farmer of Potter's Bar, William was a man of unquestionable sincerity and infectious optimism. The Irons family were Methodists and in close touch with the humanitarian and missionary wing of the Church. Born at St Albans in May 1825, William Josiah Irons grew up in an atmosphere of generous enthusiasm for projects of social betterment. From the Rev. William Shaw at the Cape he learned that Natal was capable of growing cotton; and when distressed Methodists wrote to him of their anxiety to leave 'poverty-stricken England for a land of food and plenty', he threw himself with characteristic energy into promoting emigration to Natal. Full of the spirit of William Penn and the Pilgrim Fathers, he wrote to his brother, Theophilus, whom he had despatched to the colony on the *John Gibson* in May 1849: 'Colonisation is one of the noblest occupations in which a man can engage.' He believed that he had interested

in his project the second Earl of Verulam, whose father had been Member for St Albans before his elevation to the English peerage. His settlers were to be 'Verulam Pilgrims'. Encouraged by what he had learned from the Rev. William Shaw and Samuel Sturge, Irons and his friend Thomas Ludlam had written direct to the lieutenant-governor of Natal, enquiring whether a sufficient number of settlers would be entitled to the amenities of a school and magistrate's office.¹ This was as early as October 1848, before J. C. Byrne had come to any arrangement with Earl Grey. Forming a mutual benefit society, with himself as manager and secretary, Irons enlisted the support of Methodist journals, and announced that a vessel would be despatched as soon as a sufficient number had joined the society. At this stage the Earl of Verulam was lending his patronage to the scheme. Enough progress was made during 1849 to justify moving the headquarters of 'The Christian Emigration and Colonisation Society' in February 1850 from St Peter's Street, St Albans, to an office in Fleet Street, lent by the *Wesleyan Times*. The society was nominally unsectarian, an Anglican clergyman serving on the committee; but the members who emigrated were almost exclusively Wesleyans. One of William Shaw's missionaries, Richards, who had been in Natal, addressed a crowded meeting in January at Radley's hotel in Blackfriars. It was at this juncture that Byrne came forward with the proposal that the society should make its arrangements through his agency. Byrne was a fluent and persuasive speaker, and as yet the demand for accommodation on his ships showed no signs of slackening. The terms finally arranged provided that two blocks of 6000 acres each should be set aside on the coast, that members of the society should receive temporary accommodation on arrival at the Port, and that they should be conveyed free of charge to their allotments. Irons, who had made plans to address public meetings and display placards

¹ C.S.O. 12. The chief authority for Irons's enterprise is the letter book deposited with the C. Bird collection in the Natal archives.

throughout the provinces, was to devote his whole time to promoting emigration, and he was to receive £1 (15s. over the first £50) in respect of each emigrant introduced. His brother, Theophilus, was guaranteed employment as a surveyor.

Irons's settlers, in all some 400, were thus absorbed into Byrne's scheme, sailing on the *King William* and others of Byrne's ships. The society nevertheless retained its identity. Its members were separately located, and John Russon, the Bristol lay preacher, himself an emigrant on the *British Tar*, acted as agent in Pietermaritzburg to issue the title-deeds. Credit must be given to Irons for the zeal and efficiency with which he organised the emigration. His settlers were advised to take the tools of their trade. The need for some capital resources was emphasized. The schoolmaster, John Wade, passenger with his wife and sons on the *Minerva*, brought with him a lathe to turn colonial wood into furniture and even the framework of a house. All was lost in the wreck.

The earliest news of the settlement was encouraging. Theophilus reported that Zulu trading was a profitable sideline to cultivation. The first parties had been located on land formerly allotted to the defunct cotton company, and it was a short journey to the Zulu country, where a young ox could be procured in exchange for a blanket. The *King William* settlers were industrious, and reports from the village, which had been hopefully christened 'Verulam', encouraged Irons in the dark days which followed news of Byrne's insolvency. Emigration of Wesleyans continued despite this shock to public confidence; and in May 1851 William took passage himself on the *John Line* with his wife and the last batch of the society's settlers. These later parties emigrated independently of the land bounty scheme, intending to procure land for themselves in Natal. All faced hardship in the early years, and in June 1852 Irons is found making application for the post of secretary of the harbour board at Port Natal.

The story of this emigration is deep-rooted in the streets

and squares of old London. There is poignancy as well as romance, especially for those left behind to go their quiet ways with what patience they could muster. Official records do not altogether conceal the anguish of loving relatives. In November 1851 the Secretary of State received a letter from Mrs Amelia Dyer of 8 Watling Street, close to St Mary Aldermanbury, that area of silent little churches set amid the labyrinth of streets and huge warehouses which was devastated in the second world war. Mrs Dyer asked whether the Colonial Office could trace her young son James, who, accompanied by a friend Robert Summers, had sailed for Natal in December 1849 on the *Sovereign*. Nothing had been heard of him and letters had been unanswered.¹

The towns of the Midlands were on the whole more prosperous and certainly less austere in aspect than the industrial centres of the north and west. Contrasts between wealth and poverty were less glaring than in Liverpool and Manchester. In 1849, Birmingham and Sheffield were still full of small master-craftsmen, and were scarcely factory towns in the same sense as those of Lancashire, dominated by 'King Cotton'. Work-people in Birmingham were more independent and enjoyed more leisure than the factory hands of Leeds and Bradford. Outside the towns, even in thickly populated areas, wages at 14s. a week were much higher, owing to the proximity of urban centres, than in the purely agricultural counties of England. Nevertheless, there was considerable distress in the Midlands in the latter half of the decade. The black country and Birmingham felt severely the abrupt cessation of orders from the railway companies. Hosiery was in worse plight, since it remained on a domestic basis and could not easily compete with the new large-scale factory production. In the villages around Leicester rural framework-knitters got work intermittently and at starvation wages. Women and children were still being exploited in the lace

¹ C.O. 179/18. Both young men reached Natal in the *Sovereign*. James was a boy of sixteen when the ship sailed; Summers was thirty-six.

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industry of Nottingham. Wool-combing machines had begun to oust the hand-combers.

Unemployment was a fertile ground for emigration projects. Francis Collison had been first in the field in Birmingham, where Scott's agency had advertised his original offer of 100 acres of Natal land, with a free passage, for £50. At a time when a £5 note would procure a passage across the Atlantic, proposals involving so considerable an outlay had little chance of acceptance. Collison moreover was unknown in Birmingham. When, however, Dr Charles Johnston suggested co-operative emigration on the same basis as Byrne's scheme, he found several prepared to book their passages. Born in the year 1812, Johnston was a Birmingham man who, rather than settle down to medical practice, had preferred employment with the East India Company. He knew nothing of Natal beyond what he had seen of the coastline on a return journey from Abyssinia. But he was interested in Dr Stanger's account of its climate and geographical features. In the early 'forties, leaving the East India Company's service, he took up literary work, editing the *Pictorial Times* and the *Lady's Newspaper*. The depression led to his contemplating emigration to Natal, which he discussed with his friend William Garrod, a surveyor thrown out of employment as a result of the halting of railroad construction. The two men deposited £100 and thus became entitled under the original bounty scheme to nominate for a free passage seven persons. The co-operative system, which they hoped to extend, did not operate smoothly, but Garrod, a man of fifty, got together a small party, for which berths were found on the *John Gibson*. Johnston himself shipped as surgeon. Misfortune attended the enterprise. The *John Gibson* was a 300-ton vessel built with broad bows for the Baltic timber trade and incapable of a speed exceeding two knots. The hardships of a four months' Atlantic passage were accentuated by careless provisioning. Finally the crew mutinied over the captain's treatment of one of the deck hands. Garrod's party was mostly composed of

small tradesmen. The son of one of them, W. E. Bale, was destined to become chief justice of Natal. Johnston himself was elected a member of the first colonial legislature under the charter establishing Natal as a colony separate from the Cape. His *Observations on Health and Disease in Natal* was the first treatise of its kind to be published, affording at the same time information on the geology and ethnology of the district. Returning to England in 1860, he died at Barnstaple in the year 1872.

Not many of the Natal settlers came from Midland towns. Thomas Phipson, a writer of some facility, emigrated early in 1849 from Brentwood, Middlesex, where his youngest child, Martin, was born. But Phipson had spent most of his life in Birmingham, where he had served an apprenticeship in politics at the time of the agitation for the great Reform Bill. The experience left him with a distaste for politics. But he was an active, well-read man; and on arrival in Natal he attached himself to the group of men who formed the Natal Political Association. He accepted employment as reporter and proof-reader on Buchanan's *Natal Witness*, and later was appointed sheriff of Natal.

William Lister, born in 1828 on a farm in the Derbyshire parish of Pentrich belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, had been a scholar at William Wright's Steel Bank Academy in Sheffield. He was then apprenticed to an uncle, a Liverpool merchant trading with Canadian ports. Depressed by the almost complete paralysis of business in 1847-8, when timber cargoes were reaching the Mersey port to fetch barely the cost of their freight, young Lister sailed for Natal (October 1850) in the *Wilhelmina*. He became a successful sugar planter, after an initial experiment with coffee plants which he brought back with him from a visit to Mauritius.

Other settlers from Midland towns were Edwin Vale, a Coventry man, and Samuel Watton, a Birmingham brass-founder. Watton and his wife both died within a year of landing at Port Natal.

EMIGRATION FROM INDUSTRIAL TOWNS

The Lancashire towns were inevitably interested in Natal by reason of the reports of its cotton-growing potentialities. All had suffered from the high price and relative scarcity of cotton, in addition to the troubles originating in the railway mania and the crisis of 1847, which they shared with the rest of the country. It could not be said that there was a cotton famine. But there was not enough raw material to supply the hand-loom weavers who manufactured the cheaper products, especially fustian, as well as the hungry power-looms in the great towns. Work became slack in the middle 'forties, and the situation steadily worsened until May 1848, when several mills closed down. Hand-loom workers, of whom there were still some 40,000, either joined the ranks of the unemployed or carried on with diminished earnings. It was no longer possible to secure work on railway construction. Factory hands were in better plight, but the 1847 Act reducing the legal hours of women and young persons to a maximum of ten per day operated at first to lower wages. Third-grade cotton-spinners earned a weekly wage of only 18s., whilst the first-grade men received 34s.¹ Nor was shortage of raw materials the only source of anxiety to manufacturers, for British exports of cotton-piece goods to the European continent had begun to fall off.

Other industries were on short time. Confronted with falling prices for timber and wheat, Liverpool merchants found it difficult to obtain advances. Though the Bank of England did what it could, both the Royal Bank of Liverpool and the Liverpool Banking Company suspended payment in 1847. From Liverpool the panic spread to Manchester, at this time, with Salford, a town of some 400,000 inhabitants, including many recent Irish immigrants in search of employment. Overcrowding caused both cities to suffer severely from the cholera outbreak, Liverpool reporting 210 deaths for the bad week at the end of August 1849.

¹ The wage rates, which apply to Manchester in 1849, are taken from A. L. Bowley: *Wages in the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century*, 1900.

Responsibility for finding a way out of the commercial impasse weighed heavily on the Manchester chamber of commerce, and particularly on its chairman (1845-59), Thomas Bazley. Well set-up and above middle height, Bazley is the standing figure on the extreme right of John Rogers Herbert's well-known painting of Richard Cobden addressing the council of the Anti-Corn Law League. Himself a cotton-spinner, he was a wise adviser, not easily led astray by enthusiasm unbacked by detailed knowledge. He had urged on the government a project of state emigration for unemployed cotton operatives, believing that it would be possible for them to cultivate cotton in some parts of the British Empire. When Natal was reported to be suitable, he took pains to investigate its claims. He knew that the Lancashire mills needed more cotton of good, long-fibred quality than the West Indies could possibly produce, and that the Indian article was definitely inferior. The United States was sending long-fibred sea-island cotton in increasing quantities, but prices were high, and there was obvious danger in complete dependence on one foreign source. Attempts to improve cultivation in India never achieved a thread that the mills could profitably use, except for the coarser fabrics.

The first specimens of Natal cotton sent home were valued at 3*d.* to 4*d.* a lb. They were not clean and they were short in the fibre. In 1849 samples grown by 'Indigo' Wilson near Durban were more even, and were judged by a committee of Liverpool cotton brokers to be worth 8*d.*¹ The first considerable consignment arrived in 1850, when biddings for forty-seven bales ranged from 7*d.* to 1*s.* 5*d.* These were inspected by Bazley himself, and pronounced to have fine tenacity and excellent spinning qualities.² A reel of sewing-cotton, manufactured from this consignment, was sent out from Manchester to Jung and Company a few months later.

¹ The *Cape of Good Hope and Port Natal Shipping Gazette*, 7 Sept. 1849.

² The *Manchester Examiner*, 15 June 1850. The cotton had been grown on Bergtheil's estate.

The arrival of cotton from Natal attracted widespread attention. Edward B. Clough, a young Devon man who had come to Manchester in search of employment, happened to see five of the Natal bales. He at once made up his mind to seek his fortune in Natal, sailing within a few weeks on Byrne's ship, *Henry Tanner*. John Galloway and Alfred Southam, of St James Square, Manchester, had already invested capital in the purchase of 800 acres believed to be suitable for cotton. Galloway had previously visited Canada and the United States; and now, impressed by the quality of the early samples, both men decided to settle in Natal and investigate its suitability for growing the sea-island variety, seed for which Galloway had brought back from South Carolina. They found that cotton-growers were not prepared to extend cultivation, but anxious only to sell their land, and they were quickly confronted by the difficult problem of labour. Nevertheless, Galloway's earliest reports were on the whole favourable. Considerable expense had been involved in breaking up the hard-baked soil, and it had been difficult to retain native labourers in permanent employment. But he found that it was possible to grow the much-desired long-fibred strain. The estate was at Isipingo, and at the end of the first year twenty acres were under cultivation. Samples sent to Lieutenant-Governor Martin West had all the characteristic features of the cotton which American producers were growing along the coasts of Carolina and Georgia. At this stage Galloway was certainly hopeful that Natal might be able to supply cotton of the type needed by the Lancashire mills.¹ His partner, Alfred Southam, declared at a later date that the sea-island strain, nearly three inches long in the staple, grew to perfection on the coast; and that, whereas the plant was an annual in America, in Natal it lasted many years without requiring very much attention.² But in 1850 Galloway returned to

¹ J. Galloway to M. West, 12 April 1849. C.S.O. 13, no. 136 (N.A.).

² A. Southam to Cotton Supply Association, 14 May 1857, *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1860, xlv (596).

England, convinced that large-scale production could not be made remunerative. Apart from the uncertainty of labour, greater profits were to be made from transport-riding and the cultivation of crops for the Mauritius market. All growers found that they were involved in heavy expenditure for eradicating weeds, and in transporting their cotton to the Port. Galloway's criticism of ill-considered emigration projects was a sore trial to J. C. Byrne, who found himself obliged to reassure public opinion on the points which the Manchester man had raised. By the spring of the year 1850 it was generally known that the Natal cotton company had failed and that numerous plantations had been deserted by their proprietors. Emigrants, in their letters home, had exposed the nakedness of the land. Very little production for export had yet been achieved in respect of any commodity. It was difficult to procure sufficient cattle and agricultural produce to freight a single ship for Mauritius, and no ships could be freighted direct to the United Kingdom. The usefulness of the harbour was sadly limited by the sand bar at its entrance. Even good virgin soil required both manure and labour before crops of any sort could be obtained. Manure was difficult, owing to the cattle sickness, whilst natives engaged for the month and went home to their kraals when the fancy took them.

These weighty considerations, expressed by men and women who had ventured their all to make new homes in Natal, did much to slow down the outward flow of emigration. Byrne had spoken well at the mechanics institution in Manchester on 15 May 1850, agreeing with Galloway, who was present, that it was not yet sufficiently proved that cotton-growing would yield profits, but insisting that the plant was indigenous (which was not true), and that the position would improve when machinery for cleaning arrived from America. He urged Lancashire manufacturers to send an agent to Natal to purchase the crops when baled.¹ There were many prepared to support him. Dr Blaine and Jonas Bergtheil had spoken of

¹ *The Manchester Examiner*, 18 May 1850.

Natal in 1848 as a fine cotton-growing country. In January 1850, J. S. Christopher had introduced himself to Bazley, after communicating with the Commercial Association on the subject of cotton. Behind Byrne and those who were urging thorough investigation of Natal's prospects, were Liverpool shipping interests and influential individuals such as Sir Joshua Walmsley and Sir William Feilden. Walmsley, the friend of Cobden and of the anti-slavery group, became Member of Parliament for Bolton in 1849. As mayor of Liverpool, he had headed the agitation against the corn laws. He was now anxious to promote the colonisation of Natal, and had entered into arrangements with Byrne to freight his ships with hardware and other necessities which his settlers would require. Feilden, cotton manufacturer and Member for Blackburn, was deeply concerned over the problem of cotton supplies. Both men were to send sons to Natal. John Leyland Feilden, born in 1821, made his first voyage in the *Edvard*. Returning to marry Elizabeth Kennedy of Manchester, he sailed in 1852 on the *Jane Morice*, intending to make his home in Natal. Settling at Sea View, Feilden soon found that sugar was likely to be more profitable than cotton.¹ The younger Walmsley came to Natal in Lidgett's ship *Nile*, to receive from Benjamin Pine a magisterial appointment on the Tugela frontier. Here he raised and maintained, largely at his own expense, an armed native force for the protection of Natal against Zulu aggression. He died in May 1872.

Emigration was fairly brisk in 1850, two of Byrne's largest ships, *Henrietta* and *Unicorn*, sailing from the Merseyside port. Approved emigrants embarking there for Natal numbered 546 for 1850 and 103 for the following year.² When Edward Parke Lamport landed at the Point, he came in a dual capacity,

¹ Feilden returned to England in 1856 and lived there until his death in 1915. His father, Sir William Feilden (1772-1850) had moved in the Commons the bill (1847) to limit the hours of workmen in factories.

² During the three years 1849-51, 4144 approved emigrants (i.e. nominated by purchasers of Crown land and approved by the emigration commissioners) embarked for Natal from British ports.

to represent, with J. C. Byrne, the interests of Byrne's creditors, and also to act as local agent for the shipping firm of Lampport and Holt, which his elder brother had established at Liverpool. Holt's daughter had already emigrated to Natal with her husband, William Walsh, on the *Minerva*. Lampport combined with his agency the cultivation at Merebank of the sugar-cane. In the literary and social sphere, he popularised in Durban the 'penny readings' and scientific lectures so much admired by Victorian audiences in the home country. Lampport and Holt, owners of the barque *Jane Morice*, announced regular sailings between Liverpool and Natal in 1855.

Lancashire men were prominent among the emigrants of 1849-50. The professional classes were represented by Daniel and Edward Whittaker, sons of the vicar of Blackburn, William, Thomas and Elizabeth Walsh, children of a Southport surgeon, J. Riddall Wood and his family, and John Piper Hathorn. An Ayrshire man by birth, Hathorn had moved to Lancashire when he married a granddaughter of one of the last Duke of Bridgewater's agents. He was employed as accountant at the offices of the Bridgewater Trust in Crown Street, Manchester, but his home was at Salford. Here he came to know the Wesleyan minister, James Methley, and it was probably through Methley that he heard of Natal, with its healthy climate and economic prospects. With his wife and four young sons, he took ship on the *Henrietta*. In Natal he was almost at once appointed despatch clerk, then acting auditor and finally master of the supreme court. His youngest son, Kenneth, born in Salford the year before the family left England, chose a legal career and became a puisne judge. With William Lister on the *Wilhelmina* was Commander Francis Severn Maxwell, accompanied by his family and two Irish servants. As a retired naval officer, Maxwell was entitled to a free grant of land. He was now sixty-one and could look back on an adventurous career. During the wars with Napoleon he had escaped from a French prison and served with gallantry in the Mediterranean. The prospects of cotton-growing in a land

of sunshine seemed to him more attractive than employment in Liverpool as agent of an insurance company. Tom Maxwell, youngest of his sons, was to become chief of police in Pietermaritzburg.

Men who had been prosperous tradesmen brought to Natal some of the commercial acumen of Lancashire towns. Edward Few, who took passage on the *Washington* with the intention of growing cotton, soon went into business as a timber merchant, acquiring the Boston saw-mills. Joseph Few followed him to Natal, the brothers, who were skilled cabinet-makers, becoming leading merchants in the commercial community of the 'sixties. Charles Green, a Gorton man, was to be the first white settler beyond the Umkomanzi, and a notable pioneer in the introduction of merino sheep. Edward Tomlinson, Charles and Edward Collier, Robert Woodhead and the Pietermaritzburg watchmaker, Charles Smith, were all Manchester men. Tomlinson became mayor of Pietermaritzburg, and his garden parties at 'Lark Hill', four miles to the east of the city, were memorable social occasions in the days before the great depression of 1865-70.

The West Riding of Yorkshire was less affected than Lancashire by the general depression of the late 'forties. Its raw material was either grown on the Pennine moorlands or imported from Australia and the Cape; and sales were fairly constant, because little of the output was sent abroad. Hand-combers might be in a bad way, but hand-loom weavers were still making a tolerably good living, despite the transition to machinery in the Bradford and Leeds mills. During the winter of 1849-50 operatives in the woollen area were fully employed on large orders, and dyeing establishments were working day and night. There was a large export demand for Bradford worsteds. In the Aire valley the spindle-making works were fully extended. Broad-cloth weavers were earning 20s. a week in Leeds, less indeed than wages in the cotton industry but with greater security of employment. John Marshall's factory for the spinning of flax by

steam power had put Leeds in the forefront of the flax industry.

Inevitably there was some distress, especially among hand-workers menaced by one mechanical invention after another. Savings might have gone into railway shares. Food had been scarce in the days of the potato blight, and a number of factories had worked four days in the week only during the bad years 1846-8. Cholera struck Hunslet early in September 1849. The outbreak was not so severe as at the great northern ports, but there was much anxiety and a considerable demand for Captain Waterton's cholera powder.

Leeds at this time had a population of 170,000 and was growing fast. But the neighbourhood of New Wortley was still, in the main, green fields. Heather could be found on Woodhouse moor. Hunslet Lane and Meadow Lane, leading out into the open country, were lined with the stately residences of prosperous merchants. The town proper scarcely extended beyond Albion Street and Lady Lane in the north, its boundaries fixed by the Bars. Its aspect in 1840 was still decidedly pleasing. Park Row, its elegant Commercial Buildings with fluted Ionic pillars facing the Georgian Yorkshire Bank at the corner of West Bar, was spacious and dignified. The town's prosperity in the eighteenth century had provided the money for the handsome cloth halls, the new theatre in Hunslet Lane and the commodious library. The old moot hall, with its statue of Queen Anne between the upper windows, had been removed from the centre of Briggate in 1825; but the upper portion or 'Cross Parish' retained a rural charm with its rows of stalls and circular market cross. The swine market in Lower Head Row, the cow market in Vicar Lane and the narrow street of butchers' shops called 'The Shambles' spoke of the normal activities of a country town. There were mellow brick houses, and numerous inns for the villagers coming to market.

The cloth halls were the centre of social life and entertaining. Pleasant assembly rooms had been added in the eighteenth

century to the white cloth hall. In its enclosed yard would be held the circuses and balloon ascents popular in the early nineteenth century. Political meetings were assembled either at the coloured cloth hall or at the music hall in Albion Street. Here Byrne was to launch his northern campaign.

In this Leeds, still full of individual character and not yet wholly industrialised, Methodism was strong. There had been a notable increase in Methodist churches in the generation which followed Waterloo, and a tendency to introduce pew rents. Edward Baines the younger (1800-90) had made the *Leeds Mercury* a powerful organ, with perhaps the widest nonconformist circulation in the northern counties. In the late 'forties Methodist congregations were decidedly interested in southern Africa. Several of the Cape missionaries of the Church were Yorkshiremen. James Archbell, himself a Tadcaster man, had married a Leeds woman. Among the ministers on the Leeds circuits was James Methley, son of Willoughby Methley of Shafton, the West Riding hamlet where Joseph Priestley's mother had lived as a child. Whilst the elder son, Joseph Stocks Methley, remained at Shafton and became a linen manufacturer, James was ordained into the Wesleyan ministry, serving first at Ledbury (1814) and Oxford, before moving north to the Yorkshire and Lancashire circuits.

His son James Erasmus Methley was born at Oxford. No single individual was responsible in so large a measure for promoting emigration to Natal from Yorkshire homes. As a boy he went to Woodhouse Grove School in the days before the old playing-field with its school pump was cut by the railway line between Leeds and Bradford. With him at the school was John Philip Archbell, second son of the missionary, who was born on the banks of the Modder River. The two boys became close friends, 'going out of bounds together with pistols' and organising a political club to discuss the problems of Lord Melbourne's administration.¹ Young Archbell re-

¹ J. E. Methley, *Correspondence*, in the possession of Mrs W. L. Methley; the *Grahamstown Journal*, 31 Dec. 1853.

turned to the Cape in 1840, joining his father in Natal, where he was to employ the talent which he had evinced in the publication, whilst still at Woodhouse Grove School, of a weekly journal, in assisting his father to edit the *Natal Independent*. Methley was apprenticed to a draper in Deansgate, Manchester, but long hours in the warehouse wore down his health. After an interval in the country 'following the hounds', he was advised to seek restoration of health in a warmer and less moist climate. It was natural that he should ask John Archbell and another school-friend, Sam Shaw, son of the superintendent of Wesleyan missions at the Cape, to send him information about the colony. Archbell, now at Pietermaritzburg, advised him to come to Natal. A preliminary visit in 1847 convinced him that the dry winters would be beneficial to his chest, and also satisfied him in regard to the economic possibilities of the country. Land there was cheap, and it was fairly certain that the price would rise as soon as the potentialities of Natal were realised. Having arranged with James Archbell to purchase land beyond the Umgeni falls, he returned to England and published with a London firm a slim but attractively written volume entitled *The New Colony of Port Natal*.¹

Extensive quotations from the book were made in many of the leading Yorkshire newspapers. Methley had written with enthusiasm about the climate and natural scenery of Natal. But what chiefly impressed intending emigrants was his confident statement about the land. 'Farms which had been sold within the year for two shillings an acre have been re-bought at two guineas. . . . Better land can be obtained in any wheat-growing district for five shillings per acre, either from government or private individuals, than can be purchased in Canada or Australia for four times that sum.' Methley's father was now living at East Parade, Leeds, and he had served during the 'forties in Bradford, Hull and Salford. He was therefore

¹ The book was republished by H. Walker, Leeds. The quotations are taken from the *Leeds Times*, 22 Sept. 1849.

well-known in Yorkshire Methodist circles. His son's obvious eagerness to return to Natal convinced many who were unlikely to be unduly impressed by the advertisements of emigration agencies.

J. C. Byrne began to advertise passages in the *Leeds Times* in January 1849. Conditions seemed ripe for public announcement of his scheme. Two months earlier, Leeds operatives had been told by the Hon. Francis Scott, M.P., that 'the pauper here was a burden upon the parish which afforded him unremunerative employment of £8 a year. In the Australian colonies he was a profit to his employer by remunerative labour of no less than £50.' Scott's eloquence secured acceptance of a resolution to form a branch of the Colonisation Society to assist emigrants to 'exchange want and penury for plenty and abundance'.¹ Byrne, when he addressed a public meeting at the music hall on 20 December 1849, recommended Natal to the working classes, criticising the Gibbon Wakefield system as the source of high land prices in Australia. Cotton, he declared, was destined to become the staple export of Natal. Referring to James Erasmus Methley's book, Byrne intimated that 150 persons had already gone out to the colony from Leeds and its neighbourhood.

Some of these emigrants had not reported favourably on the prospects of Natal. Samuel Lumb, an auctioneer who had served an apprenticeship as a printer, had sailed on the *Henry Tanner*, with Peter Lennox, a linen draper of Upper Head Row, Isaac Canning, Charles Mayne, tobacconist and snuff manufacturer, William Boocock, cabinet maker, and other Leeds folk. They had been located either on the Slang *spruit* above Pietermaritzburg or on the farm 'Vaalkop' in the dry thorn country. Very few accepted their allotments, and Lumb wrote home to say that the land could not be cultivated. Settlers on the *Dreadnought* were also offered land at 'Vaalkop', which Byrne had purchased in England from Francis Collison. Among them was Frederick William Good, son of a Leeds

¹ *Speech of Hon. F. Scott, M.P., Nov. 1848, London, 1848, p. 15.*

wool trader. John William Ludolf, the Bond Street merchant, had entrusted to him the purchase of land on his behalf, and Ludolf subsequently claimed to have been the first Yorkshireman to buy farms in Natal.¹ Disdaining his twenty-acre allotment, young Good opened a store at the point where the wagon-track to the Drakensberg crossed the upper Tugela. He was drowned in the Tugela in January 1852. His brother, Charles Henry Good, had followed him on the *Devonian*. In the long run, Charles made a success of farming in the Klip River area; but his early letters home, published in northern newspapers, were decidedly unfavourable to Natal as a home for the British farmer.

Byrne had to meet criticisms of his emigration scheme when he spoke again at the music hall in May 1850. The land, he said, was capable of producing wheat in abundance: and, where there had been failure, this was attributable to neglect to fence the crops. Natives were industrious, and the cost of their labour worked out at from 9*d.* to 10*d.* a month. There was no one with local knowledge of Natal to contradict these assertions. Byrne's chief concern at this time was with rival emigration companies. Methley's book had caused quite a sensation in the West Riding, and Richard Hackett seized the opportunity to call attention to his 'Wesleyan emigration to Natal'. In October 1849 he had sent Thomas Bond to Leeds with handbills which were widely circulated. Byrne hoped to call a halt to Bond's proceedings by reporting them to the colonial land and emigration commissioners, and announcing, through his agent, Joseph Sharp, that 'Byrne and Company's arrangement is the only one authorised by the Government'.² But Hackett lost no time in making the required deposit, and Byrne was obliged to fall back on warnings that the public should not allow itself to be misled

¹ C.O. 179/62. His letter of 11 May 1853 enquiring of F. W. Good is to be found in C.O. 179/31.

² The *Leeds Times*, 10 Nov. 1849. There is a reference to Bond's action, following the 'excitement' caused in Leeds by Methley's book, in the W. J. Irons' letters, in the Natal archives.

by irresponsible persons who could not fulfil their promises. Bond left for Natal in the *Hebrides*, taking with him a small party of Leeds folk, among them Josiah Turton.

The *Henry Tanner* brought to Natal the largest party of West Riding emigrants. But there were Leeds men on most of the ships subsequently chartered by J. C. Byrne. John Kitching Matterson and his brother George embarked on the *Henrietta*. Sons of Edward Matterson, chemist and apothecary of Briggate, they had been educated at the old seventeenth-century grammar school fronting Vicar Lane. John entered the school in January 1832, when Dr Joseph Holmes had been headmaster for less than two years. His predecessor had been in the habit of going out during school hours with the fox-hounds. The humanising of the public schools began at Leeds under Dr Holmes, who gradually suppressed the pitched battles with outsiders, even, if snow lay on the ground, with regiments marching down North Street, and the indiscriminate use of the birch rod. When the Mattersons attended the school, it had come to be the custom for the upper school to entertain the headmaster and his ushers to an annual breakfast in the old coaching hostelry, the White Horse inn, which was pulled down in 1867 when West Bar, now a part of Boar Lane, was widened.¹ In Natal the brothers became prosperous wine merchants. John Kitching Matterson served as captain in the volunteer rifles, and when the regimental officers at Fort Napier kept hounds, gave hospitality to the meet at his 'Rosedale' home.

Another Leeds man who rose to considerable prominence in Natal was William Hartley. Born near Halifax, he came to Leeds as a boy and was apprenticed to Charles Smith, the Briggate draper. Serving with him behind the counter in the late 'forties was James Erasmus Methley's brother, Richard. The two young men discussed Natal, and Hartley borrowed a copy of *The New Colony of Port Natal*. He decided to

¹ A. C. Price: *A History of Leeds Grammar School*, Leeds, 1919. The *Leeds Mercury*, 28 Dec. 1850.

emigrate, taking passage with J. E. Methley, now ready to return to the colony, in the *Sovereign*. His friend, Thomas Handley of Rotherham, decided to accompany him, and the little party was completed by the addition of George Spearman, a Devonshire man by birth who had settled at Leeds after his marriage. Spearman, a linen-draper by trade, had been a prominent member of Mr Ely's church in Leeds, and he was to become a foundation member of the Congregational church in Durban. He married a second time, choosing as his bride a sister of Ralph Clarence, and farmed on the Umgeni flats. Hartley and Handley were both young men of ambition and enterprise. In December 1852 they bought from the underwriters the small ship *Liverpool* which had run ashore at St Lucia Bay; and, despatching men and materials to repair her, brought ship and cargo of ivory safely to port. Two years later, Hartley repeated this success with the purchase of black pepper, apparently ruined by sea-weed and salt water, after a disaster to the *Ariosto* on the back beach. Hartley rightly judged that he could dry the pepper, bag it and sell it at a profit on the London market. He utilised his considerable profits over this venture to stock an emporium with Manchester goods. By 1860 he had become mayor of Durban, and was definitely one of the 'carriage folk', with English coachman and silver harness. He built 'Overport House' in this same year. J. S. Little at a later date described him as the 'Sir John Bennett of Natal'.¹

Sydney Platt of Uppermill near the Lancashire boundary of the West Riding had been a passenger, with Patrick Maxwell, on the barque *Gvalior*. Uppermill was in the cotton area, close to Oldham, and Platt had been impressed by the reports of Natal cotton emanating from Manchester. His brother Laurence, from Saddleworth, soon followed him to Natal. When cotton proved a disappointment, the brothers attained success as pioneer sugar-planters. Other West Riding

¹ J. S. Little: *South Africa, A Sketch Book*, London, 1884, i, p. 131. For Hartley's career, see *More Annals of Natal*, pp. 78-81.

emigrants were Matthew Middlebrook from Birstall and John Taylor of Pontefract.

Hull in 1849 was a more promising centre for the promotion of emigration than either Manchester or Leeds. George Hudson's spectacular fall brought the railway panic in its full intensity. Then came the Danish blockade of the River Elbe, intended to coerce the recalcitrant duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, followed by the outbreak of war in earnest next year. The blockade caused an almost complete, if temporary, paralysis of the trade of the port. Some 6000 men were thrown out of employment and retail trade had never been worse since the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars. Cholera seems to have broken out first in September 1848, when three fatal cases were reported on a ship at Hull. The outbreak only reached formidable proportions a year later, 116 deaths occurring in the last week of August 1849.

Shipping interests suffered most from the depression. Thirteen ships left the stocks in Hull shipbuilding yards in the year 1839, after which there was a gradual decline. By the close of 1850 the yards were empty and shipwrights were refusing to accept apprentices.

Byrne spoke at Hull, in the county court room of the Town Hall, on 5 January 1849. He addressed his remarks to those with a little capital. 'A man would be justified in going out with forty pounds.'¹ His audience was left to infer that it was the government that was offering a passage and twenty acres for £10, and that his company were no more than agents. His description of the land as covered with luxuriant vegetation and capable of producing the best sea-island cotton in the world was intended to emphasise the contrast with the 'arid sandy plains' of Australia and the dense undergrowth of parts of North America. His scheme was favourably received both in the press and in the counting-houses of Hull. George Sheppard, editor of the *Eastern Counties Herald*, was himself contemplating emigration. Both Hull newspapers

¹ *The Eastern Counties Herald*, 11 Jan. 1849.

devoted much space to colonial settlement. Sheppard delivered lectures in Hull and Beverley, and for a few months there was some prospect of his throwing in his lot with J. C. Byrne. But he eventually decided on the American state of Iowa; and in May 1850 his party, mostly drawn from homes in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, left for Liverpool to join the *Columbus*. Arriving safely at their destination, they laid out Sheppardsville on land near the Buffalo River.

Byrne failed to divert the Iowa society to Natal, but he found many interested in his project. Some proposed to make their own arrangements with the emigration commissioners, others to take advantage of Murdoch's agency advertised by John Nicol in the High Street. Nothing came of the proposals of the 'Colonial Ship and Land Company, Hull' which desired to form an independent 'colony either at Port Natal or some other convenient locality, allotting one hundred acres to men of capital and twenty to poorer emigrants'.¹ Henry Boast's co-operative scheme will be considered in the next chapter. Among those who possessed professional qualifications or a little capital, Byrne found passengers for his ships. Several sailed with Moreland on the *Washington*, notably Joseph Ellis West. Born in Hull in 1822, West became manager of William Hartley's bank at Durban, and later sought a fortune at the diamond diggings. He died in March 1907. George Robinson, first editor and, with Jeremiah Cullingworth, the founder of the *Natal Mercury*, had been secretary of the Hull Savings Bank. W. M. Ford, a passenger with his wife on the *Minerva*, had been a customs house officer in Hull. Several emigrated to Natal from the villages immediately north and west of Hull.

After the collapse of Byrne's scheme, emigration slackened to a mere trickle. Shipowners were still anxious, however, to secure passengers and freight, and there were Hull merchants prepared to risk shipments of essential goods to the colony.

¹ T. Cartwright (chairman) and A. Pearce (secretary), to S. Walcott, 28 May 1849. C.O. 179/9. They submitted a series of questions regarding conditions in Natal.

EMIGRATION FROM INDUSTRIAL TOWNS

When J. E. Methley returned on the *Sovereign*, he took with him an assortment of goods, mainly hardware and including a mill, which the Hull merchant, George Ellison, had supplied. For several years Ellison continued to consign goods to Natal, which were sold on long credit. Passages were arranged through Joseph Rylands, managing director of the Hull flax and cotton mills, who was the owner of a number of ships engaged normally on the India and China routes. One of these ships, the *Haidee*, conveyed Henry Boast's settlers to Natal. Another, the *Pallas*, had been condemned as unseaworthy by the emigration commissioners: but in September 1850 she was chartered by H. J. Barrett for the conveyance of eighteen cabin passengers, proceeding to Bombay after calling at Port Natal. Barrett had been a partner in the firm of Barrett and Ashton, agricultural implement makers, of the Ceres iron-works, Hull, and he took with him to Natal iron ploughs, harrows and other machinery.

Inevitably, emigrants from the industrial towns tended to enter mercantile pursuits in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, or to follow professional callings. The majority either refused allotments altogether or took up landed property mainly as a speculation. Nevertheless, by their intelligence and their professional and commercial skill they contributed to the economic and cultural progress of Natal.

CHAPTER VI

THE RURAL COUNTIES OF ENGLAND

Emigrants to Natal from the villages and small country towns of England belonged in the main to the class of cultivating freeholder. More than 100,000 farmers in England and Wales in the middle of the century held less than fifty acres, managing their land with a little casual assistance at harvest or hay-making but employing little hired labour. These were the men who, dismayed by the sharp fall in corn prices and apprehensive of the effects of repeal (1846) of the corn laws, were considering emigration to a country where conditions would be easier. Apart from men and women brought out as indentured servants by cabin passengers, there were extraordinarily few agricultural labourers among the Natal settlers. This was no doubt because passages could be obtained free of charge on the emigration commissioners' ships to Australia. If contributions from poor law guardians or friendly societies were available, farm servants, if they had any choice, usually preferred to go to North America. There had been a continuous flow of many thousands of English working people across the Atlantic; and, when savings had to be used, it appeared to be desirable to select the shortest and cheapest passage and follow where friends, and perhaps relatives, had blazed the trail. The only organised party to come to Natal was sent by the Duke of Buccleuch from his Hampshire estates at Beaulieu, travelling in the *Lady Bruce*.

Agriculture was not in fact unprosperous in the late 'forties. The towns might be full of grim-faced artisans, but rural England remained a pleasant, smiling land. Not indeed a land of contentment, for agricultural wages were low, 7*s.* a week in the remote, purely rural, counties, but averaging 8*s.* 6*d.* in the south, exclusive of special earnings at harvesting or hay-making. In the north the average wage was 3*s.* higher,

and close to the great manufacturing towns might even reach 14s. Falling food prices, with bread very cheap indeed at the time of the emigration to Natal, added to comfort in the cottage and compensated for the fact that wage rates remained relatively stationary. Outdoor relief indeed was no longer given to the able-bodied; but the coming of the railways had opened up a new avenue of employment for those accustomed to the spade and the barrow. In all parts of England, in the early and middle 'forties, contractors were recruiting armies of labourers to build the embankments and excavate the cuttings for the new lines. In many of the towns there was a good demand for the able-bodied workman who could handle horses. Then came the railway crash, which temporarily closed down employment of this kind. Uncompleted lines were abandoned and much labour dismissed.

Farming, viewed in comparison with that of other countries, was progressive and enlightened. Cultivable land was intelligently treated, with attention especially to fodder crops. Drainage of heavy land was widespread. At the same time, the grazing advantages of the English countryside were now at last systematically utilised, with intelligent breeding of sheep and cattle and a correct association of pasture farming with arable cultivation. Until 1847 home harvests were abundant and normally sufficient to feed the population at a reasonable price.

For the remainder of the decade, home harvests were very bad. The danger to England's food supplies was averted by large importations of foreign corn, which checked a calamitous rise in prices. But farmers, and especially the hitherto prosperous class of cultivating smallholder, suffered severely. James Caird, commissioner for *The Times*, calculated in 1850 that rents in the preceding eighty years had risen 100 per cent whilst wheat prices at 40s. 3d. were the same as in 1770. Actually over the bad years 1846-50 wheat prices seem to have averaged 51s. 10d. whilst the yield per acre had

risen slightly.¹ But neither tenant farmer nor small freeholder possessed much reserve of capital. In some parts they had never recovered from the impoverishment of the disastrous period following the Napoleonic wars. Liable to be overwhelmed by a single bad season, tenant farmers were the first to feel the menace of rising rents and high rates. The cold and rainy summer of 1848, combined with apprehension regarding the influx of foreign corn, decided many to emigrate. With ample supplies of foreign wheat in the country, corn merchants hesitated to bid for the home produce except at reduced prices. Disaster threatened to overwhelm all classes of the rural community. Shopkeepers suffered because farmers found their purchasing power reduced. Only the stock farmer, with good prices for his butter and meat, was in a relatively secure position.

Apart from the financial anxieties of home farming, many felt acutely the humiliations and embarrassments of rural life, still largely dominated by the squire and the parson. The title indeed was less of a burden than it had been earlier in the century. But the right to kill ground game was still denied to the tenant farmer. It was with the object of enjoying to the full rights of property in a colony where the farmer would not be burdened by rates, land taxes and tithe that many decided to emigrate. To the man with a little capital, brought up on the land, Natal had many advantages over other regions of colonisation. It was possible to sleep in comfort in a tent all the year round. Land was cheap and game abundant. Reports insisted, not altogether truthfully, on the well-watered character of the soil and the industry of native labourers.

Many carriers, stage-coach drivers and ostlers, ruined by the competition of the railways, were among the emigrants of the late 'forties. To keep coaches running to a schedule of eight to ten miles an hour, one horse was required for each mile of the

¹ C. R. Fay: *The Corn Laws and Social England*, Cambridge, 1932. Lord Ernle (*English Farming, Past and Present*, London, 1936) gives 40s. 3d. a quarter as the average price of home wheat in 1850, and 38s. 6d. for 1851. For agricultural wages, see J. Caird: *English Agriculture*, 1850-1.

route traversed, and the cost of maintenance of a horse worked out, in the south-western counties, at 25s. a week. Expenditure might be heavy, but it went largely to support thousands of stablemen, drivers and postboys whose livelihood was now in danger. In the towns the Victorian four-wheeler and the smart hansom cab might find more work conveying passengers to the railway stations. But the old-time carriers and coachmen, with their spanking bays, were gradually driven off the roads. Posting inns, with their small army of ostlers, seemed to be survivals of an age that had passed.

Wheelwrights were also faring badly. Apprenticeship to any of the rural crafts was losing its attraction. A large number of wheelwrights, blacksmiths, and millwrights were enumerated among Byrne's emigrants.

Fortunately for Natal, the bulk of the small-holding farmers who emigrated thither came from areas where agriculture was progressive. Steam ploughing indeed was little known, but ploughs and harrows were now made of iron and considerably improved. Corn was almost universally drilled. Men were experimenting with reaping machines, and the sickle at any rate had been largely displaced by the scythe. Most of the Yorkshire farmers who came to Natal used the threshing machine. There, and in Northumberland and the Scottish lowlands, a five-course rotation had superseded the Norfolk four-course, praised by Arthur Young. Phosphates, manufactured on the farm from bones, were coming into general use. Even on relatively poor land reclaimed from the heath, farmers who had well drained the soil and were using home-made phosphates were producing thirty-two to thirty-six bushels per acre from their wheatfields.

The largest body of men and women from the land to come to Natal in the years 1849-51 left village and farm homesteads in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Many of them had farmed on the wolds north-west of Hull, in Arthur Young's days little better than a rabbit warren but now cleared of furze and broken up into enclosed estates. Oats and barley were cultivated on

the higher ground, but the greater part, its fertility restored by root crops, was devoted to sheep. In the neighbourhood of Driffield and Market Weighton, farms had a comfortable and prosperous look. Drainage had made it possible to grow turnips, and a light and serviceable wheel plough had been introduced. At Sledmere, Sir Tatton Sykes had enclosed his considerable estate, dividing it into large farms used mainly for sheep, Leicesters with later a Lincoln strain.¹ Nevertheless, in the bad years at the close of the decade, there was much distress. The two-crop and fallow rotation still survived on the heavy clay soils. It was difficult to extend the area of land tilled, and discouraging even to make the attempt at a time when prices were falling. At Hull and Leeds, in January 1850, there was very little demand for wheat except at drastically cut prices. Farmers were obliged to sell stock to pay their rents, whilst labourers could no longer afford a meat and flour diet for the family, and fell back on bran puddings for the children. Nor was alternative employment easily procurable. The railway lines between Malton and Driffield, and between Market Weighton and Beverley, begun some years back, had not been completed and work on them was in 1849 abandoned. Coaches began to run again on the roads. In the villages there was less work for those with hand-loom, and less demand for the knitted stockings and woollen caps worked for seamen. The country towns lived largely by the manufacture of agricultural requisites and corn mills, for which the demand showed a steep decline.

Such were the conditions in the East Riding when Henry Boast conceived his project of co-operative emigration to Natal. The son of a prosperous North Dalton farmer and a nephew of Mark Boast, the anti-corn law pamphleteer, he had been appointed by the Yorkshire agricultural society to carry out, with the secretary, a survey of the southern counties. The society was a most progressive body, with its own journal and

¹ G. E. Fussell: *Farming Systems in the N. and E. Ridings of Yorkshire*, York, 1946, pp. 22-3.

a record of widespread improvements, stimulated by prizes. Boast himself had been something of a pioneer in the application of chemical manures, and when in 1843 he took a lease of Osgodby Hall, near Thirsk, he received pupils to study farm management. He was a warm advocate of the improved agricultural machinery which firms like that of William Crosskill of Beverley were now manufacturing. And as a Wesleyan local preacher, he had personal contacts which made him well known outside the East Riding. When troubles finally overwhelmed him, the Colonial Office wrote of him as 'much beloved in his neighbourhood'.¹ The onset of hard times led to widespread discussion of emigration, and Boast heard of the various schemes, some of them under Methodist auspices, for the colonisation of Natal. Methley's book made a strong appeal. It was eventually decided to form a committee to study the details of Byrne's agreement with the Colonial Office, and to frame a plan for a co-operative system of settlement. Boast's principal associates were William Lund of Sheriff Hutton, James Tutin of Brompton and Benjamin Lofthouse.

The details of the scheme as finally adopted followed closely the arrangements made by Byrne. Depositing £2000 to the credit of the emigration commissioners, the committee calculated that administrative expenses, including advertising, would be covered by sale of land to which it would become entitled, after allotting twenty acres to each participating adult. Whilst Lofthouse and others toured the North and East Ridings interviewing interested parties, Boast went to Hull and chartered one of Joseph Rylands's ships, the *Pallas*. Lund and Tutin took advantage of Lidgett's 'Wesleyan emigration' to embark on the *Herald* in order to select the land in advance of the arrival of the main party.

Boast could not have taken more trouble, and he had generously utilised his personal fortune for the common

¹ *Report on Present State of Emigration to Natal*, 1 July 1850, in C.O. 179/12. See also *Memorial of Mrs H. Boast*, 25 Jan. 1853 in C.O. 179/34; and the *Hull Advertiser*, 31 May 1850.

advantage. Needing a surgeon, he persuaded his cousin, Dr Charles Bird Boast, who was in general practice in London, to accompany the party. The Boast clan was indeed well represented. Henry Boast, in 1850 still a young man at thirty-four, proposed to take with him his wife and three young children. Dr Boast had a two-year-old son, Charles, born at Bow in Middlesex, and there were various cousins, William Boast and his sister, Hannah, and David Boast. Some 230 emigrants in all had been collected and the *Pallas* was to sail on 3 April. Most of the men were working farmers with some capital. A few, to whom the cost of passage for themselves and their families was prohibitive, went out under the old system of indentured service. Thus Benjamin Lund, a prosperous young farmer, paid for the passages of William Wilkinson and his wife, Alice, who in return were to serve Lund for three years at agreed rates of wages. There were families from the North Riding villages of Ampleforth, Coxwold and Helmsley, where John Moreland was well known, and a handful from the bigger towns, including the Doncaster man, James Merryweather. But the majority came from the countryside inland from the coast and stretching from Bridlington to the neighbourhood of Beverley and Market Weighton. Advice as to what should be taken with them and when they should assemble for the voyage had been carefully circulated.

The trouble began when the representative of the emigration board, Lieutenant Lane, condemned the *Pallas* as unseaworthy.¹ Rylands seems to have been reluctant to substitute another ship, and it was discovered that the agreement with Boast had never been properly stamped. Considerable delay followed. Rylands was eventually induced to offer the *Haidee*, which was to call at Port Natal on its voyage to Bombay. But the ship did not get away, as agreed upon, on 20 April. Discomfited emigrants sued for redress in the magistrate's court, to discover that Boast not Rylands, was technically liable for

¹ The commissioners sometimes accepted ships classed 'on the black diphthong' in Lloyd's register. C.O. 386/127.

subsistence money. Overwhelmed by trouble, Boast succumbed to brain fever before the *Haidée* sailed. Deprived of their leaders, for Lund and Tutin were now in Natal, the party might have broken up and abandoned the enterprise, had it not been for the indomitable resolution of Mary Boast. Encouraged by her father, the sixty-four year old Joseph Smith, grocer and draper of Market Weighton, who now decided to emigrate with the party, and by the generosity of Hull citizens, she overcame all difficulties, the ship weighing anchor on 10 July 1850.¹

The emigration commissioners were much concerned over the tragedy of Henry Boast. It is clear that they considered that the subsistence money for detention of the emigrants in Hull should have been paid by Rylands and that Boast had been the victim of his inexperience. To protect in the future persons of moderate capital from the cares and responsibilities of arranging for the conveyance of large numbers of emigrants to a distant colony, the Colonial Office accordingly raised the minimum deposit required to £5000.

Detained in quarantine off Grimsby owing to two suspected cases of smallpox, the *Haidée* only received a clean bill of health on 14 July. Two days later she was off Dover. She was sighted from the Bluff on 7 October. The number of approved emigrants on board proved to be 216. Meanwhile, Lund and Tutin had found it difficult to select a suitable block of Crown land. Available land remaining to the Crown within reasonable distance of port or capital was for the most part in detached fragments of broken and hilly ground. Lund purchased a land commission farm, 'Mieliehoogte', from the widow of a Voortrekker, paying the 4*d.* fine per acre to be free of restrictions on alienation. Eventually land was procured for the main party about twenty miles north of Pietermaritzburg in Umvoti

¹ Under the 33rd section of the Passenger Act, emigrants detained at the port of sailing were entitled to 1*s.* per diem subsistence money. Hull collected £170 for the relief of the *Haidée* passengers, the mayor (T. W. Palmer) witnessing their departure.

county, good agricultural land on which the township of York was laid out.

There were experienced and progressive farmers among the *Haidee* men, notably perhaps Thomas Botterill, who had learned to handle the plough at the age of ten. Emigrating as a boy to America, he spent three years in Delaware and Pennsylvania. His father farmed 200 acres at Spaldington, an East Riding village seven miles south-west of Market Weighton. On his return, Thomas took up land adjoining his father's farm. But rents and rates were too high for him, and the falling prices of the late 'forties decided him to join Boast's party. A resourceful farmer, he had experimented with the new farm machinery devised and manufactured by William Crosskill of Beverley, the man who was to introduce Hussey's American reaping machine in the year that it was on show at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Botterill was later to demonstrate use of the Hussey reaper in Natal. At the time of his emigration he was acquainted with Crosskill's clod-crusher, for rolling land in preparation for a root crop, and the improved Crosskill iron plough. His son, John Horsley Botterill, a child of two when the *Haidee* sailed, was to farm land on the Bushman River.¹

East Riding farmers had sailed for Natal under Byrne's scheme before Boast and Lund had made their final arrangements. The *Henry Tanner* conveyed Leonard Wright and his family from Little Kelk, near Driffield, where they had occupied a 100-acre farm. After a couple of years in Pietermaritzburg, Wright followed Frederick Good to the Tugela and became ferryman, hotel-keeper and butcher. With the Wrights was Thomas Puckering, also an East Riding farmer. John Stabler, a passenger on the *Edward*, had grown wheat at Kilham, six miles along the 'Wold gate', the famous old drove road, from Bridlington. Another Kilham man, William Chaplin, threw in his lot with Boast. By birth a Driffield man,

¹ Light is thrown on the success of the Botterills in Natal by the statement in support of J. H. Botterill's application for a farm in the Langalibalele reserve. See C.S.O. 1910 (N.A.).

Chaplin served in the Life Guards from 1826 to the year of Queen Victoria's accession. He then married a Pickering girl and, procuring his discharge, settled on Colonel Craik's estate at Kilham. In Natal he went first to the Karkloof, then to Pietermaritzburg to assist Paul Anstie at the new Belvidere mill. From Watton, on the Driffield-Beverley road, William Nicholson and his brother had sailed on the tiny brig *Sandwich*, despairing of a living on the family farm 'Watton Grange' during the days of the railway panic. The Nicholsons settled at Richmond, William's six-year-old son, born on a Hampshire farm, accompanying Dr Sutherland in 1862 to demarcate, with Sir Walter Currie, the frontiers of Adam Kok's Griqualand. J. D. Nicholson, a man with a keen Yorkshire sense of humour, became a prosperous miller at Richmond and in the 'seventies sat for Pietermaritzburg county in the legislative council.

Along the Yorkshire coast north of the Humber there were several whom bad times induced to emigrate to Natal. There was considerable depression on the waterfront at Bridlington. The harbour was tidal, dangerous to approach and inaccessible at low tide. In any case the railways spelled decadence to the smaller ports, for distribution was now an easy matter from the larger places such as Hull or Hartlepool, with their docks and other facilities. Catering for summer visitors had become more important than trawling, which was in visible decline; but Hull merchants and shopkeepers, injured by the Elbe blockade, could not afford the usual seaside holiday.

One of the first to get away was William Allerston, a Bridlington man by birth. His father, Francis Allerston, had helped at the dockyards at Chatham and Sheerness to build Nelson's men-of-war: and, on retirement, had settled down at Bridlington Quay as innkeeper of the 'Cock and Lion', destroyed in the air raids of the second world war. William went to school in London, his master being another Horatio Nelson, a one-legged ex-seaman. On the termination of his schooldays, he returned home by sea and the voyage brought

him his first taste of adventure. The ship was dismasted in a storm, and in danger of foundering, when she was picked up and towed into port. In due course William became a linen-draper. He invested his savings in railway shares, and in 1849 found himself without means. William Watson's agency on the promenade was advertising passages on Byrne's ships, and Allerston sailed on the *Henry Tanner*. Other Bridlington men joined Henry Boast, and sailed on the *Haidee*—Richard Mason, corn miller, perplexed by the fall in wheat prices, to become in Pietermaritzburg a prosperous corn merchant and lessee of the Alice mill, George Potter, saddler in the High Street who eventually farmed in the Noodsberg, and Tom Nurse, among them.

The North Riding ports were in similar plight. Scarborough indeed was an elegant resort, 'the Queen of British watering places', with summer performances at the Theatre Royal under the patronage of the officers in garrison at Scarborough Castle. Nevertheless, its season depended largely on the prosperous tradespeople of the West Riding; and in 1849 few tradespeople were prosperous. Its fishing was now a small affair; and though sailing ships were still built there (among them John Lidgett's ship, *Choice*), the industry was fast declining. Scarborough men had commercial and social contacts with the Cape of Good Hope and Natal, ever since John Owen Smith had emigrated to the Cape. In the late 'forties, when the colonial government was providing funds to assist emigrants to come to Cape Colony, Scarborough men, especially carpenters and mariners, went to Port Elizabeth, with letters of introduction to Owen Smith. Moreover, the surgeon of the regiment (45th) in garrison at Natal, Dr Best, had been in medical practice at Scarborough. It was the professional classes that took most interest in the small district to the north-east of the old colony. Dr John Hulme no doubt heard of Natal from Dr Best. At any rate he accepted the post of surgeon-superintendent on Byrne's ship *Henrietta*, intending to settle permanently in Natal. But professional employment

there was even more difficult than in the mother country, and, disliking the life of a pioneer farmer in a wattle-and-daub hut, Hulme soon returned to England. Daughters, however, remained in Natal, one marrying Thomas Tunmer, a *John Line* emigrant, and the other Francis Upton, the surveyor.

William and John David Shuter, the former certainly a Scarborough man, had been educated for the law. John David, his sister and brother-in-law, John Andrew Stirton, emigrated together in the *British Tar*. On arrival, the ship was driven ashore in an easterly gale. No lives were lost; and Shuter became at an early date clerk of the peace for the county of Durban, acting as Crown prosecutor in sensational criminal cases of the 'fifties. William Shuter seems to have sailed from London on the *Globe*. He was admitted attorney by the supreme court. Another Scarborough man, Brian Coulson, sailed on the *Haidée* with his wife and family, opening a lodging-house in Durban.

Even more than Scarborough, Whitby had been a prosperous port, building its own ships. One hundred and seventy-six vessels of over 100 tons were registered at Whitby in the 'twenties. It had played its part in the traffic of the age of expansion and its merchants and sea captains had built for themselves stately houses on the west cliff. But in the late 'forties its livelihood as a shipbuilding centre, if not as a trawling port, was vanishing. It now depended largely on the facilities which it offered for repairs and for vessels to lay up during the winter season. With this object it kept its dues and tolls comparatively light.¹ Its output in the future would be trawlers rather than vessels of the type of the *King William* built by R. and N. Campion, bankers and shipowners of the Regency period, to convey emigrants to Canada. As a holiday centre it could scarcely rival Scarborough.

In 1823 there had been seven shipbuilding firms.² One of

¹ H. B. Browne: *Chapters in Whitby History*, Hull, 1946.

² E. Baines: *Yorkshire Directory*. Thirty-seven master mariners were enumerated.

them was the firm of Francis Watkins, a descendant of General Sir Peregrine Lascelles, born at Staithside, Whitby, who served in the war of Spanish succession and later in the Jacobite rebellions of the eighteenth century. Francis, at the height of his prosperity, lived at Aislaby Hall, the lovely old stone building with grey slates north of the village of Sleights. Thomas, the eldest of his thirteen children, was brought up as a shipwright and as a young man sailed in one of his father's ships to Jamaica. It was the calculation, made at a time when misfortune threatened him, that the climate at Natal might be similar to that of the British West Indies that decided him to come out to the new colony. In the 'forties he was farming at Danby in Eskdale. He was a man of resourceful and independent temperament. An uncle, William Watkins, had published nine volumes of plays, poems and stories. His brother, John Watkins, had married a daughter of Ebenezer Elliott, the 'corn-law rhymmer' and became a Chartist, publishing some slight volumes. Thomas had made up his mind to marry Harriet Searle,¹ a young lady descended from a Huguenot family. They decided to live abroad, sailing for Natal on the *John Line*. They were married in Durban on the ship's arrival. Knowing something of sugar cultivation from his visits to Jamaica, he planted cane on the Little Umhlanga. The entire property was destroyed by fire, but with indomitable pertinacity the Whitby man resumed operations, appropriately renaming the estate 'Phoenix'. He retained his interest in things maritime, and his signature is to be found on a petition of November 1859 praying for prosecution of the harbour works at Port Natal.² Later, he joined the old stage-coach driver, John Welch, in his transport-riding enterprise. His son, Frank Watkins, became editor of the Johannesburg *Critic* and a member of the second Volksraad. He was an intimate

¹ The volume of early marriage declarations (C.S.O. 2282, in the Natal archives) shows that Thomas Watkins was forty-one when he married 'Harriett Searle', the marriage taking place in 1851.

² C.O. 179/53 (P.R.O.).

friend of Cecil Rhodes. Thomas Watkins died in Pietermaritzburg in the year 1903.

Robert Thompson Gibson, son of a North Shields ship-owner, also came to Natal, sailing on the *Conquering Hero*. Preferring the high altitudes, he went at once into the interior. After a visit to India, however, he settled in Pietermaritzburg, where he died in 1868.

The rural parts of the north of England suffered severely from the crisis in corn. Freight upon American flour shipped in 1847 from New York to Liverpool stood at from 5s. to 9s. a barrel. Three years later, it had fallen to 1s. 6d. American wheat brought down prices in the northern counties to 38s. a quarter. In the North Riding the dalesmen were in a bad way. Agricultural labourers in the Ampleforth district in January 1850 were working for 6d. a day, whilst the workhouse at Thirsk had never been so full.¹ James Caird found that wages generally in the North Riding averaged 11s. a week. Provisions had fallen in price, but not so sharply as reductions in wages. Tenant farmers were little better off. In the West Riding wages were 14s. a week, but cottagers who had eked out a living by hand-spinning and hand-combing were finding it increasingly difficult to do so. Combing had become a machine industry and the cheapness of cotton goods was harming employment in the woollen areas. Nor was farming so progressive in all parts of Yorkshire as it was, generally speaking, in the East Riding. Caird foretold destitution to farmers who persisted with the two-crop and fallow system, and would not drain heavy land. Finally, the chaotic position on unopened railway lines increased the spirit of unsettlement. On some lines coaches were still being drawn along the rails by horses.

Such conditions led to considerable emigration, especially from the depths of the country. Those who elected to come to Natal were representative of almost all trades and walks of life.

¹ *The Yorkshire Gazette* (York), 26 Jan. 1850.

From the depressed Ampleforth and Helmsley district came the three Comins brothers, Helmsley farmers, who took with them to Natal wagon, cart, implements and seed, prepared to reproduce as far as possible under the hot African sun the type of farming to which they were accustomed. With them on the *Haidee* was George Bentley, cricketer and yachtsman and Robert Garbutt, cordwainer from Ampleforth. Several of Byrne's ships conveyed emigrants from the North Riding. Among them were J. G. Thompson, from Richmond in Yorkshire, William Reid from Stokesley on the *Aliwal*, John Clark on the *Lady Bruce*, Ripon wheelwright and carpenter and an eloquent Methodist preacher, and Robert Gazley Mack from 'The Old Orchard' near Thorner. Mack was a Norfolk man by birth, but in the late 'forties he was farming in the neighbourhood of Wetherby. He emigrated with a son, James, on the *Henrietta*, 'to take possession of a new unploughed country with half-a-crown in his pocket'.¹ Bravely planting sugar at Isipingo, he succeeded by sheer grit and perseverance; and in 1857 he guaranteed the passages to Natal of three other children who had been left behind at Thorner.² Peter Humble emigrated with his family from Brafferton, causing considerable anxiety to the Rev. William Gray, incumbent of the parish, who wrote to the Colonial Office when no news of Humble was received by relatives.³

These north-countrymen, many of them from the rough moors and lonely dales, made fine pioneering stock for a new colony. One of the most prominent in later years was the Yorkshireman, Joseph Baynes. Sailing on the *Devonian* as a boy of eight with his father, Richard Baynes, he was to do perhaps more than anyone to develop the agricultural

¹ E. W. Feilden: *My African Home*, London, 1887, p. 311.

² Nominations for assisted passages to Natal, 1857. C.O. 179/46. Mack nominated William, Mary and John Mack of 'The Old Orchard, near Wetherby'.

³ Vicar of Brafferton to Secretary of State, 4 Feb. 1857. C.O. 179/48. Humble became insolvent, January 1852, in Durban; and his wife and children sailed for the Cape.

resources of Natal. Under responsible government he became minister of lands and works in Sir George Sutton's administration.

East Anglia, on the whole a prosperous agricultural area, showed little interest in emigration to Natal. Those who went out to the colony belonged chiefly to the small landowner or prosperous tradesman class. Richard Webber Tyzack, born at Wells in Norfolk, emigrated in the *Edward*. His wife, an Ipswich woman, had lived for some years in the United States and Newfoundland. Tyzack, with Peter Lennox, founded the Smith Street Congregational Church and became mayor of Durban in the 'sixties. Another Norfolk man by family connections, though actually born at Boulogne, Daniel Burton Scott, became mayor of Pietermaritzburg. The partner of Joseph Henderson and friend of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Scott and his sons did much for Pietermaritzburg. James Watson of King's Lynn, a passenger on the *Sovereign*, and Fred Lawrance, a young carpenter from Hingham on the *Minerva*, were also Norfolk men. From Suffolk came W. H. Ablett, to become in the 'sixties manager of the Commercial and Agricultural Bank in Pietermaritzburg, and Elizabeth Tye, who married in April 1852 Edward Tomlinson. Robert Langford, on the *King William*, and the Dacombs, on the *Edward*, were Essex men, the Dacombs from Walthamstow. Colchester was the home of Tom Garland, and of William Tunner and his family on the *John Line*. Garland, one of the most active of the original Verulam pioneers, was to represent Victoria county on the legislative council. Very few agriculturists emigrated from these counties and from Lincolnshire, doubtless owing to the high state of cultivation since the days of Coke and Townshend. The land was devoted to mixed farming which was capable of employing a large number of men. Lincolnshire folk among the Natal settlers were small professional men or tradespeople. They included John Waller, from Alford, a hydraulic engineer who emigrated with his brother, Samuel, and son, John Parker Waller, on the *Lady*

Bruce, James Smarfit, local Methodist preacher and a carpenter by trade, and Henry Chatterton from Barton, a brick and tile manufacturer.

In the south agriculture appeared to be in greater straits. Wages in Lincolnshire averaged 13s. In the purely rural counties, such as Dorset and Wiltshire, where no towns created a strong demand for agricultural produce, they were 8s. The most competent men at centres such as Blandford and Devizes might earn an extra 1s. a week. Meat would be too dear for the average workman, who had to fall back on a diet of potatoes. According to James Caird, the worst counties were Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, with Hampshire and Oxfordshire a little better, enjoying weekly wages of 9s. The supply of labour was superabundant and much land was unlet. In the south and south-west hundreds of small farmers were ruined in the years 1848-50, with even cattle fetching low prices and capital reserves utterly exhausted. On the other hand, South Wales, and ultimately Somerset and Gloucestershire, came to profit from development of the steam-coal seams in the Aberdare valley, relatively high wages being offered for work which the ordinary labourer could undertake.

Wiltshire in 1849 witnessed the depths of the depression. Feeling against repeal of the corn laws was particularly strong in the northern parts of the county, where there was much agricultural unemployment. For twenty-eight years the price of wheat had stood, on the average, with no very great fluctuations, at 55s. 6d. a quarter. In March 1849, 45s. was quoted at Devizes, where angry meetings of protest were held.¹ Agricultural servants found that reduction in the cost of the bread loaf was more than offset by the steep rise in price of butter and meat. Since Arthur Young's memorable tour of 1770-1, their wages had risen in Dorset and Wiltshire thirty-four per cent, but the rents of their cottages had more than doubled. From the national standpoint, indeed, there was much

¹ *The Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 10 March 1849.

that was promising in the agricultural situation. Production had been vastly stimulated by the extensive use of green crops and the sensible feeding of stock. Farmers now got twenty-seven bushels of wheat from one acre. At task work Dorset labourers were earning 10-15s. a week. But tenant farmers with high rentals could not survive a series of bad years. At the end of July 1849, Wiltshire-born farm workers, estimated to number 100, crowded the Devizes market-place in search of employment.¹

Wiltshire towns are noted for their old-established hostelries. The coach routes linking up the south-west with the Midlands and London had afforded employment to thousands of men whose livelihood depended upon brisk road traffic. By 1850 coaching companies had been compelled to alter their routes to cater for traffic not yet captured by the railways. The 'Celerity' was still running daily from the 'White Hart' in Bath to Southampton through Warminster and Salisbury; but the famous runs to the 'White Horse' cellar in Piccadilly and the 'Swan with Two Necks' were a thing of the past. Those employed by the turnpike trusts faced a bleak future. There were no bidders in January 1851 when the right to take tolls at the gates on the roads leading south and west from Bath was put up to let by auction. The new lines in course of construction would, in the long run, give an impetus to the production of milk and vegetables for the London market. At the moment they merely ruined the farmer's market for oats and hay.

Emigration on a large scale from these counties proceeded in the late 'forties, but it was mostly directed to Australia. Branches of the Colonisation Society were formed and the first party of emigrants to sail under its auspices from the neighbourhood of Blandford left for Sydney in March 1849. Wiltshire formed an emigration association of its own to offer free passages to Australia, though it was later announced that it was not intended to confine the choice to any particular

¹ *The Bath Chronicle*, 2 Aug. 1849.

colony.¹ On its committee sat the Rev. J. B. Skipper, who was to propose, with the support of Stephen Neate, a 'Wiltshire Emigration to Natal.'

John Benson Skipper had been vicar of Marden near Devizes since 1844. His eldest son had resolved to emigrate to Natal, and a small party of friends and dependents was collected. In March 1850 he suggested, through the correspondence columns of the *Wiltshire Gazette*, that tenant farmers should follow the example of Yorkshiremen and found a new Wiltshire overseas. He had evidently been much impressed by the resolution of Henry Boast's followers, and he considered that Natal was the ideal colony for the man with a little capital. His ideas were warmly seconded by Stephen Neate of Cricklade, a cousin of the Stephen Neate who had been mayor of Devizes in 1816. The Neates were an influential family in North Wiltshire, and an earlier Stephen, at one time Lord Mayor-elect of London, lies buried in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral. Skipper and Neate drew up a plan suitable, as they believed, for the yeoman farmer with some capital. Subscription of £100 would entitle a member to receive 350 acres of land in Natal and free passages for five labourers. Neate expounded this scheme to the Swindon Political Farmers' Club in November 1850² and printed handbills headed 'Wiltshire Settlement in Natal' which drew from the emigration commissioners a mild letter of reproof.³ He hoped to make the required deposit of £1000; but by this time adverse reports on Natal had found their way into the newspapers. Some emigrants had left for Natal a few months earlier from the Fisherton suburb of Salisbury, but there was insufficient response to make feasible any co-operative scheme. Young Skipper duly sailed on the 118-ton schooner *Ceres*, reaching Natal in May 1851; but he did not long remain there, sailing

¹ The records of this association, mostly dealing with South Australia, are to be found in the county archives at Trowbridge.

² The *Wiltshire Gazette* (Devizes), 4 Nov. 1850 and 30 Jan. 1851.

³ S. Walcott to Stephen Neate, 23 Nov. 1850. C.O. 386/127 (P.R.O.).

for Australia on the *Hannah* in September 1852, doubtless attracted by news of the discovery of the Victorian gold-fields.

Byrne obtained, through his agent, the Rev. Just Henry Alt, a few emigrants from the county. Alt, son of a Northamptonshire farmer, had been to Pembroke College, Cambridge, as a sizar and, after holding an academic post in India, became vicar of Enford in Wiltshire. A first cousin of Richard Jefferies, the famous naturalist and writer, came out with his wife, a Marlborough girl, on the *Minerva*. This was William Jefferies, born in Devizes in 1811, the son of a yeoman farmer. The sixty-five acres of Natal land to which he was entitled were at Byrne, near Richmond. Moving to Pietermaritzburg, he became the leading baker and confectioner in the capital. Through his initiative the first fire brigade was organised. An earlier settler from Devizes was Paul Anstie, eldest son of Paul Anstie, senior, who had been a pillar of strength to the town authorities in the difficult times of the reign of William IV. Head of a firm of tobacco manufacturers established in the eighteenth century, the elder Anstie had carried measures (1835-40) which restored the financial prosperity of Devizes.¹ A cousin, Benjamin, had been mayor of the town in 1836. When the younger Paul went to Natal, William Anstie became head of the tobacco firm. A third son, Francis Edmund Anstie, became in the 'seventies physician at Westminster Hospital and editor of the *Practitioner*. For some reason, Paul Anstie, junior, decided to settle in Natal, where the tobacco plant was reported to be indigenous. Sailing from Plymouth on the schooner *Enchantress*, he took with him a letter of introduction from Admiral Sir James Dundas. At Table Bay he secured, after a month's wait, passage to Natal on the *Lalla Rookh*. In Pietermaritzburg he established himself as a snuff merchant, stocking 'plain and scented rappee' until he could import machinery to manufacture the finer sorts. To the discomfort of the executive government, to whom Admiral

¹ J. Waylen: *History of the Devizes*, London, 1859.

Dundas's letter had been duly presented, he became an active and irrepressible secretary of the Natal Political Association. His means, however, were largely exhausted in the building of the Belvidere mill, close to the point where the road to the Port crossed the Little Bushman, or Umsindusi, River. In 1855 he went to the Cape, apparently to purchase wheat, sailing thence in an American ship, *Star of the Empire*.¹ A tall spare man, with dark blue eyes, Anstie had a striking presence and his considerable ability might have been of great service to the colony. He died fighting for the North in the American Civil War, whilst his family found a home in Vancouver.

A Melksham man, Charles King was an emigrant on the barque *John Bright*, settling at Isipingo. Henry Webb, on the *Jane Morrice*, came from Marlborough.

William B. Withers, a farmer from Whitchurch who sailed in the *Henry Tanner*, claimed to have been the first Hampshire man to settle in Natal.² Actually he was preceded by William Pink, in Byrne's first party on the *Wanderer*. In 1851 the barque *John Line* brought out the Andover Wesleyan, John Palmer, who was to build the old Exchange Rooms, subsequently used as the offices of the *Natal Courier*, at the corner of Printing Office Street in Pietermaritzburg. Palmer, who had travelled extensively in America, died in Pietermaritzburg in 1865 at the age of sixty-four.³ But the most considerable body of Hampshire settlers were the forty or more Beaulieu tenants of the 5th Duke of Buccleuch.

The expenses of the emigration were wholly born by the Duke, whose steward, Henry Pocock, had made arrangements with J. C. Byrne. The party was to sail on the barque *Lady Bruce*, an Alloa ship belonging to Alexander McFarlane, and a barge, *John Samuel*, was engaged to convey them from

¹ R. Rawson to W. C. Sargeant, 6 May 1856 (Cape Archives).

² *The Christian Times* (London), 5 July 1850. Letter (dated 22 April 1850) from W. B. Withers.

³ Another John Palmer, with his wife and family, sailed on the *Aliwal*. His son, William, was born in Southampton. A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, pp. 85-92.

Buckler's Hard to Portsmouth, where the barque was to call on its way from London to Port Natal and Calcutta. An initial mishap, when the *John Samuel* grounded in Gilbury reach, did not discourage the party, which left Portsmouth on 25 February, arriving in Natal on 9 May, 1850. Pocock had furnished tents and camping outfits for use on arrival and had arranged that wagons should be provided to convey the emigrants to their allotments on the Illovo. Survey fees had been paid, and outfits, even seed, provided. The Duke's tenants were accordingly among the first to be satisfactorily located.¹ Both John Moreland in 1852 and Bishop Colenso a few years later reported that they were happy and doing well. A few took employment in the two towns, but the majority either cultivated their small plots at Byrne, or got good wages as wagoners. Among 'they old Port Natalers', as they were affectionately spoken of in Beaulieu for many years, were Ambrose Foss, William and John Crouch, John and Isaac Godden, Charles Gregory, William Burgess, James Stote, John Warn, Charles Bound, William Willis, Charles House, Thomas Coombs and the Westbrook brothers.

In the extreme south-west, employment was affected by the depression in Cornish lead-mining. Nor were the copper and manganese mines any longer flourishing. In tanning, chemicals had begun to replace oak bark. Village industries were suffering from the growth of the towns. In the eighteenth century Devon and Somerset had been prosperous centres of the woollen textile industry, but by 1840 this had largely migrated to Yorkshire. Exeter's warehouses were standing empty and few ships now came up the ship canal. The two counties were not yet covered with a network of railway lines and the mails still used the country roads. But the threat to those who lived by road traffic was unmistakable. There were food riots in Exeter in May 1847.

¹ John Crouch, a man of forty-six with a large family, however, wrote that five of the Duke's settlers had not received their land. C.O. 179/31 (P.R.O.).

Byrne arranged that several of his ships should call at Plymouth. The first to do so was the *King William*, on which so many of Irons's Wesleyans were travelling. Some fifty joined the ship at Plymouth. Subsequent ships calling there were *Sovereign*, *Edward*, *Hebrides*, *Herald*, *British Tar* and *Emily*. In all, 235 persons embarked at Plymouth over the three years 1849-51.¹ The earliest Devon settler appears to have been Alfred Raddon, who was married in Natal on 30 April 1849. Many travelled to London to embark at St Katharine's dock on one of the earlier ships. The *Henry Tamer* brought out John and Paul Henwood, Cornish millwrights. Paul soon began to import agricultural machinery for the business which he established in Durban. W. E. Bale sailed the same month in the *John Gibson*, after serving an apprenticeship to an Exeter painter. A man of versatile intelligence and great personal energy, he never hesitated to give vent to his feelings. An impetuous temperament led him into difficult situations. On one occasion in 1857 he had listened with some impatience to the debates of the infant legislature, and, on leaving the 'public gallery', scornfully covered his head. An undignified scuffle had its sequel in an action brought by Bale against the usher for 'violently knocking off his hat'.²

Natal's first organ-builder, George Vinnicombe, born at Sidmouth, took passage on the *Dreadnought* to join his brother. The latter, a ship's carpenter, had been wrecked on the Pondoland coast and walked to Durban along the wagon track which Farewell and King had used. George built the organ for Bishop Colenso's cathedral of St Peter. Samuel Williams took ship on the ill-fated *Minerva*. The son of the parish clerk of Winkleigh in Devon, he had gone to London and taken employment with the well-known saddlery firm of Peat. Railway developments reduced the demand for saddlery, but Williams, a shrewd and genial man, rightly calculated that he

¹ The numbers were: 99 in 1849, 126 in 1850 and 10 in 1851. *General Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, 1850-2.*

² *Natal Parl. Pap.* 234. Select Committee Proceedings, 1857.

could establish a flourishing business in a colony where steam transport lay in the future. A keen churchman (in opposition to Bishop Colenso) and an officer of the Natal Carbineers, Williams was a prominent figure in the civic life of the small colonial capital. At Durban the Acutt brothers from Torquay were among the most prosperous merchants of the 'fifties. Robert and his family travelled as cabin passengers on the *Borneo*. He was to hold the first auction sale of Natal-grown sugar on the Durban market-place. Richard, an uncle through his wife of Leonard Courtney, soon followed him to take up cane cultivation on his Umhlanga estate 'Trenance'. Another member of the family, W. H. Acutt, had come out on the *Edward*.

Emigrants from the south-west predominated on Byrne's ship *British Tar*. John Harvey, 'a Cornishman of Hayle with spirits like quicksilver', engineer and smelter at the old tin mines, brought with him to Natal his son, Thomas, others of his family and even the domestic servants. Another cabin passenger was the Bristol man, John Russom, with his daughters, Jane born when Russom was at Tarporley in Cheshire, to become the wife of the Yorkshireman, William Holding, and Catherine, who was to marry Robert Finne-more. A prolific writer on religious and temperance subjects, John Russom was to become mayor of Pietermaritzburg. John W. Akerman, son of a Wiltshire clergyman, was born at Plymouth in 1825. His father died in 1848 at Penzance, where John had entered upon his career as an articled chemist. The loss decided the younger members of the family to emigrate. His sister, Mary, married John T. Polkinghorne, son of a Penzance corn-factor, and the three young people took passages on the *British Tar*. The crisis in the home corn trade made young Polkinghorne anxious to strike out on new lines, and in 1849 cotton seemed to have the most promising future. In Natal he soon turned to coffee and finally to sugar, where prosperity awaited him. He was elected to the legislative council for his integrity and sincerity, but he was a poor speaker and critics referred to his restless and fidgety manner,

and his 'round moon-like face with its halo of grey whiskers'.¹ He rose to be colonial treasurer (1879-93); and, under responsible government, president of the upper house until his death in 1901.

His brother-in-law, John (later Sir John) Akerman, after a few years of struggle as a farm tutor, entered into partnership with Nicolas van Zweel, Pietermaritzburg's first apothecary-chemist, but his real interest was politics. He strongly criticised the countenance extended to native usages such as polygamy and the administration by magistrates of an entirely oral system of native law. On the death of Ridley and the retirement of Charles Barter, he became leader of the elective members of the legislative council.² Ultimately he was chosen to succeed Walter Macfarlane as speaker. In the 'eighties he was often to be seen, a tall, spare and studious figure with long beard and shaven upper lip, driving a low phaeton. Placidly holding the reins, he would, when necessary, urge into activity a fat, lazy nag. He possessed none of the gifts of the orator, and his speeches were long and laboured. But he was a man of fundamental honesty of intention, and a strict and impartial upholder of parliamentary tradition.

There were other men of note from Devon and Cornwall. John Moore Chadwick, a relative of Sir William Knighton, physician and private secretary to George IV, sailed on the *Justina*, taking with him a letter of introduction to Lieutenant-Governor Pine from Earl Grey. With H. J. Meller, he had served under General de Lacy Evans in the British Legion against Don Carlos in Spain. He came from a village near Redruth in Cornwall and had been an officer in the Devon and Cornwall militia. Edward Tyrrell was a son of the recorder of Tiverton.

We have seen that, except for the East Riding of Yorkshire, the majority of those who emigrated to Natal, even from

¹ The *Natal Witness*, 12 Feb. 1881. Article by 'Kate the Critic' (probably Theresa Longworth).

² A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, pp. 181-96.

predominantly rural counties, did not make their living directly from the land. Many were indeed enumerated in Byrne's lists as 'farmers' or 'gardeners'; but the regulations drawn up by the emigration commissioners were very easily evaded. Byrne had found in Australia that men shipped there in the early 'forties as shepherds or agricultural labourers proved only too frequently to be mechanics or clerks. He was informed in 1849 that the classes of persons for whom drawbacks could be claimed were farmers with a small capital, agricultural labourers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, masons, carpenters and female domestic and farm servants.¹ But Dr Johnston referred to the 'very easy and merely *pro forma* mode of passing emigrants for approval which has been acted upon by Mr Byrne'.² Actually, the lists were scrutinised with some care by Stephen Walcott, who was not slow to point out to Byrne that he had nominated Alexander McDonald, describing him as an 'agriculturist, operative cotton-spinner and teacher'; and that, of his two adult children, one was a brass-founder and the other a milliner. His age had been given as forty-five. McDonald, an emigrant on the *Unicorn*, had been master of Abbotsford Place Academy in Glasgow, and his age in 1850 was fifty-four. There was no machinery for investigating the validity of descriptions inserted on application forms. References were required from magistrates or ministers of religion, but these were often given without personal knowledge or enquiry. It was not necessary to produce birth certificates, and there was little opportunity to check statements. On one occasion the commissioners complained to John Lidgett in regard to one of his emigrants that 'there appears also reason to suspect from his appearance that he was more than 45 years old'.³

¹ C.O. 386/57. S. Walcott to J. C. Byrne, 6 April 1850.

² C. Johnston to S. Walcott, 4 May 1849. C.O. 179/9.

³ The maximum age was forty-five. Cf. Walcott's letter of 12 July 1850: 'I am also to observe that an infant is added to the certificate of James Wood who was passed as a single man: and I am to request that you will furnish an explanation.' C.O. 386/127.

What the authorities at London and in all the colonies were chiefly concerned to avert was the considerable emigration of persons who had no intention of settling on the land, but proposed to establish themselves as merchants or clerks. Here they were unlikely to secure co-operation from men like Byrne, who were interested purely in the profit to be derived from promoting emigration. Byrne, it is clear, made it easy for shopkeepers to participate in his scheme, as in the case of the greengrocer of Little Buttery Lane, Deptford.¹ On arrival in Natal, his settlers hastened to set up straw-hat and bonnet manufactories, open lodging-houses or livery stables, or, at a higher social level, acquire offices as general merchants or agents. Many were indeed quite prepared to change their occupation, and naïvely confident of their ability to do so. Edward Ross Dixon, a Felsted man by birth, was employed in 1849 as a draper in Wood Street in the City of London. When attention was drawn to Natal as a likely producer of cotton, Dixon wrote to a Manchester firm manufacturing machines for cotton-cleaning for information regarding roller gins and hydraulic presses.

There were certainly some emigrants among the Natal settlers of the type 'specially in request' in the colonies, prepared, that is, to work on the land for wages. Cabin passengers on Byrne's ships, and men going out on their own initiative without prior deposit of money in the purchase of Crown land, commonly brought out with them a few labourers and servants. Thomas Phipson paid the passages of three young men on the *Mary Ann* who were ready to accept employment as farm servants. When additional land, over and above the quantity allowed in respect of the passage money, had been purchased in England, it was common practice to take family servants, as well as supplies of agricultural implements and seed. From the public point of view, the Yorkshiremen on the *Haidee* represented the type of settler most required. Other ships,

¹ 'A Week's Canter Northwards', in *Cape Monthly Magazine*, 1859, pp. 158-9.

especially *Washington*, *Lady Bruce* and *Conquering Hero*, contained a considerable percentage of rural craftsmen, blacksmiths and carpenters. Gardeners found Natal a paradise, and were perhaps the most contented of all who now came to the colony. A twenty-six-year-old man on the *Henrietta*, David, son of Samuel Teeson, gardener to the 6th Viscount Downe of Cowick Hall, near Snaith, wrote with much enthusiasm about the country: 'The woods abound not only with flowers which highly perfume them, but with birds of the richest plumage, butterflies and moths in endless variety.'¹ Isaac Finnemore had been land steward to the Marquess of Normanby, who succeeded Lord Glenelg as secretary for war and the colonies in Lord Melbourne's second ministry, and to Archbishop Howley. An Irishman from County Wicklow, he laid out Brompton cemetery. Coming to Natal at the age of forty-six in the *Minerva*, he cultivated at Pietermaritzburg a great variety of plants, advertising as early as January 1856 'blue and red gum trees and double-flowering oleanders and shaddockes ready for transplanting'.

The emigration of 1849-51 was clearly one of all classes and almost every variety of manual or intellectual occupation. All the professions were represented. There was a sexton (Walter Geddes, on the *Hebrides*), a butler (Henry Brenton, on *Justina*), an artist (James Lloyd, who sketched the scenes on the Durban market square for the *Illustrated London News*), and even a conchologist (H. R. Thompson, on *Washington*). Some were reported by the colonial officials to be totally unqualified for any form of physical exertion. Others, arriving with no particular qualifications, though perhaps of distinguished parentage, became sawyers, hotel-keepers and transport riders. J. R. M. Watson, landlord in the early 'sixties of Pietermaritzburg's 'Crown' hotel, was the son of Bernard Lindsay Watson, inventor of the system of telegraphs which linked Hull with

¹ David Teeson's letter, 24 July 1850, is printed in the *Eastern Counties Herald* of 14 Nov. 1850. The 8th Lord Downe (then the Hon. Hugh Richard Dawnay) served in the Zulu war.

the floating light and Liverpool with Holyhead. Letters of recommendation from noble and illustrious patrons were legion. The royal Duke of Cambridge wrote to Earl Grey to recommend Richard Garner, surveyor of the highways for the Kentish parish of Patixbourne.

In Natal the distinction between town and country was of course less marked than in England. Pietermaritzburg, in the 'fifties the larger of the two towns, had standing crops growing on its central *erven*. The burgess roll of 1856 enumerated 396 burgesses, of whom forty-two were described as farmers or agriculturists, and twenty-one as carpenters. Merchants and store-keepers numbered thirty-two and clerks seventeen.¹

¹ Two hundred and eighty-eight owned their houses; the *Natal Witness* 13 June 1856.

CHAPTER VII
SCOTLAND AND EMIGRATION TO
NATAL

Scottish emigrants came chiefly from Glasgow and the Highlands. It was not possible to embark from any Scottish port for Natal until the end of November 1849, when the *Ina* left Broomielaw. But owing to the enterprise of Hugh Maclean of Coll, emigration had begun before Joseph Byrne despatched his first party to Port Natal. *Washington* brought out John and Walter Macfarlane and Donald McDonald. John King from Perthshire and Alec Jamieson followed on *Henry Tanner*. The eastern side of the country showed less interest in emigration. John Smith, a Montrose man, came out in 1850 in the *Unicorn*. His family were bakers at Aberdeen, and he started life in the colony as a confectioner. Farming, however, was more to his taste; and in 1856 he purchased 'Fox hill', so named for its popularity with regimental huntsmen. Known in later life as 'the laird of Fox hill', Smith was elected to the legislative council in 1886 and became a strong advocate of responsible government. From the neighbouring county of Kincardine, William Taylor was induced by Lidgett's description of Natal as a fine farming country to book a passage on the *Herald*. Though a practical farmer whose forebears had worked the land for generations, Taylor had a hard struggle to establish himself, making a home after many trials at 'Fordoun' in the Nottingham area, which Bushmen so frequently raided in the 'sixties.

W. M. Collins, on the *Devonian*, was one of the few Edinburgh men to come to Natal. His wife was the daughter of Alexander ('Sandy') Morrison, dean of the legal faculty in Glasgow. Offered government employment in Natal, Collins became (1853) postmaster-general. In 1859 he was sent to Calcutta and Madras to engage Indian labourers for the coastal

plantations. The original immigration of Indians in 1860 was conducted under his management.

The railway panic brought great distress to Scotland. Investment banks had been set up, particularly in Glasgow, to lend money on the security of railway shares. When the slump came, many closed their doors. Temporary cessation of railway construction brought to Natal men who had been engaged as engineers and surveyors, among them Samuel Strapp, Humphrey Evans Knight and George King. Strapp was a Biggleswade man, but he had spent thirteen years of his life in Scotland and had married a Glasgow girl. His father had contracted to build the Glasgow-Barrhead-Paisley line and the works had been supervised by young Samuel. Proceeding to Natal in the *Conquering Hero*, he took up farming at Richmond. Knight and King joined forces in Durban, opening a retail shop. Both ultimately went to Klip River, King to erect a mill and, in later life, to enter the legislative council, Knight to grow maize and tobacco on his farm 'Anderson manor'.¹

Captain Alexander Gordon, an emigrant on *Ina*, sold his commission in the 1st Royal Scots in order to settle with his wife and children in Natal. Bringing with him Andrew Ferrier, a youth of nineteen, to act as farm servant, he settled in a wattle-and-daub hut at New Glasgow on the Umhloti, whilst Ferrier became a Zulu trader. In 1856, Gordon was granted the farm 'Aberdour' in the Noodsberg, undertaking missions to Pondoland on behalf of Lieutenant-Governor Scott. In 1860 he was murdered whilst on a trading visit to the Transvaal.

Glasgow had grown prodigiously in the 'forties through immigration from Ireland and the Highlands. The failure of the potato crop drove thousands of crofters and kelpers to Clydeside, where they competed with the Irish crowding Glasgow's squalid wynds for unskilled work. A Glasgow

¹ J. S. Dobic: *S.A. Journal*, pp. 82-5. A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, pp. 91-2.

emigration society had been founded in 1825, mainly to assist unemployed weavers; and in the next decade, when government assistance became available, many went to Australia. Occasionally ships left the Clyde chartered by voluntary associations formed to relieve tenants and smallholders, and supported largely by private subscriptions.

It was not only in the rural areas that depression was evident. The panic hit many commercial houses on Clydeside. In 1847 the great East India house of Gemmell Brothers failed. There was uneasiness in the textile industries. Cotton had leaped up to first place in Scotland's economy in the period of the industrial revolution. Large-scale spinning began when David Dale opened the New Lanark mills (1786). In the early nineteenth century, power-spinning ousted the hand-jennies, but the hand-loom weavers were still employed in their thousands in the 'forties. Manufacture of cotton cloth was now Glasgow's chief industry, and when Byrne opened his emigration campaign there were nearly 170 mills in Scotland, the majority on Clydeside. Invention of the sewing-machine in 1846 stimulated the demand for sewing-thread, which was manufactured chiefly at Paisley. All this amounted to great material progress, and it was accompanied by growth in population of the towns of the south-west. On the other hand, the rural counties such as Argyllshire and Perthshire were showing a decline, with much displacement of labourers and crofters to form sheep-runs. These men flocked to the factory towns. Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee showed the greatest gains but there was also a considerable influx into such towns as Paisley, Kilmarnock and Greenock, especially in the hungry 'forties, when the flight from Ireland reached its maximum. Glasgow was indeed a pleasant city for those who could afford to live in the new western suburbs. Theatres, assembly rooms and literary clubs for the well-to-do, and the mechanics' institutions for the working classes, were a source of civic pride.

Work had been plentiful in the 'thirties, with cotton-spinners

earning as much as 21s. a week when the mills were fully employed. The pace of progress fell off when the European continent began to manufacture muslins on a large scale. Raw cotton was not coming forward from America in the quantities desired, and reduction in the wages of operatives became inevitable. In the long run, the metal industries were to overtake textiles, and to lead to an era of even greater expansion. But in the late 'forties the falling off in orders from the railway companies depressed the iron and steel works. Unemployment caused a panic in March 1848, when mobs pillaged food shops in the centre of Glasgow. Overcrowding in the wynds and closes, where living-rooms below street level often had earthen floors, brought about a heavy toll from cholera in the succeeding year.

There were some, especially hand-loom weavers, who could have no illusions regarding the future of their crafts in the United Kingdom. They were among the first to consider emigration. Whilst those whom poverty and distress had made incapable of any considerable effort to help themselves flocked across the Atlantic, or to colonies offering free passages, men who had not exhausted their capital found much to appeal to them in the accounts then circulating of the new colony of Natal. William Campbell, born in county Donegal of Scottish stock, had been employed, under Samuel Strapp, as foreman of the new line between Glasgow and Paisley. His father had died when he was little more than a boy, and William had studied at the mechanics' institution and at night school under Dr James Boyd to improve his prospects. In 1850 he was a married man of twenty-nine, whilst Strapp was twenty-two. Persuading Samuel's brother, William, a carpenter, to join them, the two young men, with Campbell's wife and children, took passages on the *Conquering Hero*. Other Glasgow men on the ship were Gavin Pettigrew, a mason, and James Millan, the tailor. Two years later Millan was advertising in Pietermaritzburg 'a fashionable suit completed in eight hours'.

David Gray, a Paisley weaver who had risen to be foreman at the Collinslea print works, had already sailed on the *Aliwal*. Gray had four children and the wage depression was of incalculable duration. In Natal he opened the first roadside inn at Weston on the Mooi River, later farming at 'Cathkin', close to the Berg. The farm was named after Cathkin hill near Glasgow.¹ David's sons, William and James Gray, were the first (July 1871) to spend a night on the famous Kimberley diamond mine.

The *Aliwal* settlers contained a large percentage of young unmarried men. Under the Gibbon Wakefield system as applied to the Australian colonies, emigrants would serve for wages for several years as servants or shepherds in the employment of older settlers. The drawback system applicable to Natal, with its 'bonus' of twenty acres in full property, appealed more strongly to men of independent character and initiative. Three young Scotsmen, the eldest of whom was only twenty-two, thus preferred Byrne's proposition to carrying out an original intention to emigrate to Australia. These men were William Slack, James Bell and John Smith. None accepted the acres to which they were entitled, for 'Vaalkop', where Moreland was locating *Aliwal* passengers, was situated in the dry thorn country. On the discovery of the Victorian gold mines, Slack went on to Australia. Bell, whose father had been a small tenant farmer, took up sugar-planting, whilst Smith, a cabinet-maker, fashioned some of the furniture which is still to be found in old colonial homes in Natal.

The reports of the emigration commissioners show that 249 persons nominated by purchasers of Crown land in Natal emigrated from Glasgow. They sailed on the two ships chartered by Byrne and Company, *Ina*, a 450-ton barque, built at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the smaller Sunderland-built *Conquering Hero* (290 tons). Eighty-seven of the *Ina*'s emigrants were Scots, the remaining thirty-three being English

¹ Cathkin Peak and Champagne Peak were named by Gray and Captain Grantham, J. S. Dobie: *S.A. Journal*, p. 76.

or Irish. Ten travelled at intermediate rates of passage. During 1851 three small ships sailed from the Clyde carrying a handful of settlers for Natal.¹ Scotsmen could book passages on Byrne's later ships through his agents in the larger towns, and interest in emigration to Natal was kept alive by the newspapers, particularly by the *Glasgow Examiner*, which printed extracts from Methley's book in its emigration columns. Several emigrants from Scotland sailed from Liverpool on *Henrietta* and *Unicorn*.

There were no specifically Scottish schemes for promoting emigration to Natal. But the notorious Alexander McCorkindale who was to persuade the Transvaal President, M. W. Pretorius, in the 'sixties, to allow him to conduct an emigration scheme and trading agency on the Swazi border, made more than one application to the Colonial Office to obtain land by special contract for the location of settlers. A commercial traveller for Glasgow and Paisley firms making machinery for the cotton mills, McCorkindale's first idea was to despatch unemployed operatives to grow cotton in Natal. Unlike Byrne, he had himself visited Natal, sailing in Murdoch's ship *Ballengeich*, and he persuaded Thomas Bazley to write from Manchester in support of his application. In 1855, despite official discouragement, he brought out in the *Portia* twenty-two boys from English reformatory institutions under indentures of service.²

Men of enterprise and ability sailed on *Ina*, notably George Macleroy, John Sanderson and Archibald Keir Murray. Macleroy was in no financial difficulties, but he was threatened with pulmonary disorders. Manager of a large cotton mill at Dalmarnock, he was a good accountant, and had some knowledge of the kind of raw cotton suited to the Lanarkshire mills. Advised to seek a warmer climate, he wisely selected Natal,

¹ The *Glasgow Herald*, 9 Nov. 1849. The *Ina* was on a voyage to Singapore. The three small ships were *Albinia*, *Lady Sale* and *Isle of Wight*.

² C.O. 179. 18 and 41. For the *Portia*'s emigrants, see the *Natal Witness*, 25 April 1856.

going up-country with a fellow passenger from Glasgow, John Dunlop, and finding that nights on the open veld did not impair his new-found health. Returning to the coast, he sent home valuable reports on the prospects of cotton,¹ and agreed with Pine to act as immigration agent. When immigration came to an end, he became registrar of deeds and ultimately manager of the Natal Bank. He died in 1881. Sanderson was a man of letters and a keen student of politics. He had written for Glasgow newspapers, and in Natal became chief contributor to Jeremiah Cullingworth's *Times*. Later, he established and edited the *Natal Colonist*. Keate, lieutenant-governor 1867-72, wrote of him that he had 'the character of seldom agreeing with anybody about anything'.² But his vigorous opposition to the ill-considered Welborne railway scheme of the 'seventies was of great service to the colonial interest.

Archibald K. Murray was a son of William Murray, a Paisley stationer. With his elder brother, Thomas, a bookseller and publisher who became a bailie of the city of Glasgow, he drew up the first Scottish railway guide. Bradshaw's first edition had been published in 1839, and Murray's Scottish guide followed only two years later. An uncle, Gilbert, had emigrated to New South Wales and discovered the courses of the Murray and Gilbert rivers. Archibald married in 1841, and his three eldest sons were born in Glasgow. The fourth, Thomas (later Sir T. K. Murray), was born in Natal. On arrival, Murray was much attracted by the beauty of the valley in which the present village of Pinetown lies. Purchasing originally some 3000 acres, he divided the land into small allotments, and was the virtual creator of Pinetown. His sons had large interests in transportation.

The Scottish Lowlands were an area of enlightened farming. The smaller lairds were deeply interested in their crops and prepared to experiment with new rotations. Good land yielded thirty-six bushels of wheat an acre. James Small, a Berwickshire

¹ *The Glasgow Examiner*, 31 Oct. 1850.

² R. W. Keate to Secretary of State, Feb. 1871. G. H. 298 (N.A.).

cartwright, had invented in the eighteenth century a light plough which could be drawn by two horses; and seventy years later James Smith, manager of a Perthshire mill, produced a sub-soil machine adapted to deep ploughing after drainage of the land. In the 'forties progressive Lothian farmers were using steam to drive their threshing machines. Labourers' wages were considerably higher than in the purely rural counties of England.

Nevertheless, occupying farmers, compelled to pay the greatly increased rentals, were in no small difficulty. Robert Aitken had good wheat-growing land near Falkirk, but he was paying 88s. an acre rent, in addition to taxes and poor rates. His last three years as a Lowlands farmer involved him in losses exceeding £300. Coming with his wife and family to Natal in the *Conquering Hero*, he was entitled to ninety acres of land on the Illovo. The wheat which he brought with him from Falkirk was not suited to the climatic and soil conditions, but his oats were as good as any crop in Scotland. He did not regret having emigrated to Natal.¹

George Trotter's experience was similar. A West Lothian farmer, he decided to convey his family, which included three daughters and an eleven-year-old son, John, on the *Unicorn*. 'Nice, old-fashioned people...after the style of the big Lothian farmers' was the comment of John Shedden Dobie, himself an Ayrshire man, after an initial visit in 1862.² Trotter bought land in the Karkloof valley and received a commission as justice of the peace. His eldest daughter, Isabella, born at Burnshott in the parish of Carriden, married William Mackenzie, an Edinburgh man, son of a writer to the signet. William had graduated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and after ordination had been appointed chaplain to the Duchess of Sutherland. He emigrated on the *Edward*, and, not caring to undertake clerical duties, studied farming under Piet Otto at 'Upper Saxony'. His sons, at Cramond in Umvoti county, were pioneer wattle growers.

¹ The *Natal Independent*, 29 April 1852.

² *S.A. Journal*, p. 24.

Ayrshire men included John and William Craig, John Brown and the Macfarlane brothers. The Craigs were millwrights; in Pietermaritzburg they built wagons of the Voortrekker type. Brown, a Saltcoats man, established himself in the 'sixties as the leading shipping agent and general merchant in Durban. The Macfarlanes belonged to the Highland gentry class, though John was born (1809) in the county of Ayr. Their emigration on the *Washington* had attracted much notice, and gave confidence to several who were to follow them in the later ships. After a short lease of the farm 'Wilgefontein', they went up-country, John to be magistrate of Weenen county, where his strict administration caused native chiefs to apply for removal to another location. Whilst John exercised authority after the manner of a Highland chieftain, Walter, a broad, sturdy man of grave, thoughtful countenance, entered politics as chief colonial critic of the native policy of Theophilus Shepstone. He drafted from the chair the report of the 1852 native commission. The best debater in the new legislative council, because he never allowed himself to become heated in the verbal exchanges, he was elected to succeed Donald Moodie as speaker.

Some Scotsmen came to Natal after previous settlement in the eastern Cape. The Proudfoots of upper Annandale had traded with Table Bay since the Napoleonic Wars, importing Cape wool. Thomas Proudfoot in due course purchased the estate 'Craigieburn' near Moffat. Whilst his eldest son, who was to inherit the property, studied law in the county town, James and William both emigrated to the Cape, James at the age of seventeen but William only after attending classes at Edinburgh University, to which he had gone after schooldays at Moffat Academy. In 1842 William began his South African career as a farmer in the Baviaans valley, soon being engulfed in the bitter war of the axe. Trading prospects, and, in the case of James Proudfoot, love of big game hunting, brought the brothers to Natal. James set up a store on the Bay, and was to become a principal shareholder in the little Point railway.

William went as a stock-farmer to Riet Vlei, settling at 'Craigieburn' and turning his frontier fighting experience to good account in the expeditions against predatory Bushmen. Captain of the Karkloof troop of the Natal Carbineers, Proudfoot was virtually responsible for the security of emigrants who settled north and west of the Umgeni, the country which Leyland Feilden described as 'the very picture of some parts of Forfarshire and Aberdeenshire'. He was the Garibaldi of Natal, and in the 'sixties repeatedly led the Carbineers on service.

The Proudfoots were known by reputation to Lowlanders who came in Byrne's ships. Peter Lennox, a tailor on the *Henry Tanner*, was a Scot from Galloway; David Barton was from county Dumfries; William James from Aberdeen. Walter Brunton, a Peebles man on *Ina*, set up as a boatbuilder at Cato's Creek, and twice crossed the Indian Ocean in his own ship, the *Sea Nymph*. The Arbuckle family on *Conquering Hero* came from Larbert. One of the five children, William, a ten-year-old boy when the ship left the Broomielaw, was elected to the legislative council and became (1897-1902) colonial treasurer.

We have seen that Hugh Maclean was the first Highland laird to contemplate removal of his tenantry to Natal. The sixteenth and last Maclean of Coll, he had already sent some 300 of his people across the Atlantic, providing the capital and hoping that it would be possible for the emigrants to make eventual repayment. Serving in the Napoleonic wars, he retired from the army with the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Guards, and bought extensive estates in the island of Mull. Then came the depression, and he fell into debt. The population of Coll had been 1442 in 1841; within twenty years it had fallen to 781. In 1849 the laird was anxious to remove some of his people from the island to Natal. His letter of 30 January announced his intention to send ahead two of his sons in order that they could judge the suitability of Natal for the settlement contemplated. Alexander the heir, eldest son of Hugh by his second wife, Jane Robertson, and William accordingly sailed

for Natal on the *Lalla Rookh*. The occasion was a melancholy one for the Coll islanders, the departure of the heir, 'Alasdair Og', as he was locally known, being bemoaned in much Gaelic verse.¹ Alexander, who was a young man of twenty-two, found on his arrival that surveyed land along the coast was unhealthy for cattle, but his reports from Morewood's 'Compensation' estate were optimistic in respect of sugar cultivation. Meanwhile, his father had despatched William Hector Maclean on *Ina*, and two tenants of the same name, Alexander and John, on *Conquering Hero*. This second Alexander Maclean was a farmer from Perth.² Hugh's heir (Alasdair Og) eventually purchased from J. B. Miller cane land on the Umhlali, naming it 'Oaklands'. The land was sold with mill and machinery intact, and Maclean brought an experienced man (Jarman) from the West Indies to supervise production. The rest of his life was devoted to travel, with visits to British Columbia and South America. He was a staunch and sincere friend, and a sportsman of considerable repute. William Hector Maclean was elected in due course a member of the short-lived Victoria county council.

The Macleans were not the first Highlanders to emigrate to Natal. Those who arrived in 1849 and 1850 found a compatriot, Hugh McDonald, presiding over the hotel facing Durban's sandy market square. Hugh had been twenty-eight years at sea, and, as master of the 104-ton brig *Pilot*, had made twenty-four voyages between Table Bay and Port Natal. Up-country, new settlers might meet John Anderson, the shoemaker, one of the Andersons of Glen Ogle. Emigrating from Auchliterarder at an earlier date, he had been some years in Natal, and in 1850 was in very prosperous circumstances.

¹ Information from Hector MacLean MacDougall. For Hugh Maclean and his family, see A. M. Sinclair: *The Clan Gillean* (Charlottetown, 1899).

² There has been confusion between Alexander Maclean of Perth, age thirty-four in 1850, who subsequently married Jessie Robertson, and the heir of Coll, who died single in 1875 at the age of forty-seven. The latter's correspondence in Natal is to be found in C.S.O. 14 (N.A.).

Life in the Highland glens had been increasingly difficult since the larger landowners discovered that they could obtain more rent by letting their pastures to Lowland sheep farmers, themselves driven north by the progress of agriculture, than by allowing them to remain in the hands of small tenants. At the same time, grouse-moors were being profitably let for shooting. In the early nineteenth century emigration had been a family affair, and almost entirely directed to North America. Those who came to Natal were largely the young people whose field of employment was progressively diminishing. Destitute and landless folk had no opportunity to make their homes in a distant colony which offered neither free land nor the certainty of employment. Small farmers, bought out or unable to afford the increased rents, were the largest class taking part in the migration to Natal. Most of them realised that the glens could not support a large population living in decent comfort; and in 1848-9 reports from the towns suggested that factory workers and shopkeepers might have no better prospects of advancement.

Such were the conditions that brought to Natal men of the fine pioneering stamp of Duncan McKenzie. His home was at Loch Aweside, and in 1849 the Highland clearances were in full swing. Despite widespread indignation, fanned by James McCosh's new *Inverness Advertiser* and expressed by rioting in Inverness and Aberdeen, as well as by more peaceful means, evictions continued, promoted by the apprehension of landowners regarding poor law burdens. Highland shootings were increasingly advertised, and it seemed that nothing could stop the clearances. Newly married, McKenzie and his wife, made the passage on *Unicorn* their honeymoon—a brave entry to a new life of risk and hardship. Rejecting his allotment, McKenzie preferred to accept casual work till he could afford to purchase 'Leeuwbosch', with its natural forest of giant yellow-woods. Here he engaged sawyers and soon had yellow-wood planks for disposal either in the towns or to the Free State burghers in exchange for live-stock. Of his sons,

educated at Newnham's Hilton College, Duncan became a distinguished military commander, and Archibald a medical practitioner and generous benefactor of his old alma mater.

Another Argyllshire man, Donald McArthur, settled in the Nottingham district in close proximity to 'Leeuwbosch'.¹ A little farther north-west, with no friendly farm on the berg-side to give warning of marauding Bushmen, was 'Lynedoch', where John King was living with his family and brother-in-law, James Ellis. King, a small farmer from the Perthshire village of Methven, emigrated on the *Henry Tanner*. As indefatigable a farmer as any of Henry Boast's East Riding friends, he was perhaps the first man in the whole emigration to get a dairy-farm of the home type into full production for the Pietermaritzburg market. A Perthshire neighbour, John Forbes, followed on *Ina*. Bringing with him a large family, he was entitled to 135 acres, which proved to be good land on the Umhloti. 'I do not think', he wrote, 'that there is a finer country upon the earth.'² John Duff and his son, Thomas, also hailed from Perthshire. To the south, Stirlingshire sent George Gibson, a practical farmer, accompanied by his four sons.

Some were professional men. Charles Scott, minister of the Church of Scotland and parish schoolmaster at Peterhead, had thrown in his lot with the Free Church when the historic disruption occurred. The Free Church appointed him professor of humanity in a new college which it hoped to establish at St Andrews. Bad times supervened, and after an attempt to support his family by maintaining a boarding school Scott decided to emigrate. As the son of an owner of a fleet of whaling boats, and a man who had been obliged from the age of fifteen to maintain others, Charles was not at all dismayed at the prospect of having to make a new start. His wife's mother, the widow of a naval lieutenant killed in action with a French

¹ McArthur, who is not to be confused with the Durban merchant, Alexander McArthur, a Dumbarton man, is 'the General' of Dobie's *S.A. Journal*.

² Letter, 13 May 1850, of 'J.F.', in the *North British Mail*, 20 Sept. 1850.

frigate, and her aunt, whose husband had been lost in an Antarctic expedition, elected to throw in their lot with him, and the family party which joined the *Unicorn* at Liverpool numbered in all ten. There was quite a contingent from Peterhead, for James Arbuthnot and his wife and a servant, Peter McKay, had also booked passages. This interest in Natal may have been the outcome of discussions with another Free Church minister, named McCrindle, who in his younger days had been a fellow clerk with Walter Harding, Crown prosecutor and later chief justice of Natal, under Judge Menzies of the Cape Colony. Moreover, the *Unicorn* was to convey to Natal William Campbell, Free Church minister at Alexandria. A Caitliness man, Campbell had been educated at Aberdeen University and had begun his ministry in Ireland. Poor health induced him to accept J. C. Byrne's offer of cabin passages for himself and family on his taking up duties as minister to the emigrants. Some seventy persons, mainly agriculturists from the Highlands, embarked with him and Charles Scott on a small steamer at the Broomielaw, to connect with the sailing of the *Unicorn* from Merseyside.

Whilst Charles Scott, on the pressing invitation of A. K. Murray, took his family to Pinetown, Campbell set about organising the Presbyterian Church in the colony. As early as November 1850 he severed his connection with the Byrne scheme. As the causes which had brought about disruption in the mother Church were inapplicable in Natal, he soon achieved a united congregation; and, with subscriptions raised at the Cape and in Scotland, erected the original Presbyterian Church in grey random rubble.

A familiar and welcome figure at social gatherings of the 'fifties was that of John McPherson, who, as a mason, had helped the minister to build the church. On the ship list (*Conquering Hero*), he is described as a 'plasterer and fiddler'; and it was in the latter capacity that his services were so much in request. He had all the true Highlander's instinct for rhythm; and, unless the regimental band was in attendance,

it was McPherson's violin that had to supply the music. In January 1851 he opened dancing classes at Pietermaritzburg, charging half-a-guinea a month for 'juvenile pupils'.

James McKenzie and his wife, *Minerva* passengers, who farmed at Richmond, were Caitliness folk. With 'Alasdair Og', on *Lalla Rookh*, sailed the seventeen-year-old William McDonald, who had been apprenticed to a baker in Aberdeen.

Though there was no direct emigration from Ireland, Irish men and women found their way to Natal through British ports. The district of Dargle, to the north-west of Pietermaritzburg, was so named by Thomas Fannin, a Dublin man, who had been struck by its resemblance to the neighbourhood of the Dargle stream south of the Irish capital. The Fannins were shipowners, and Thomas's father, in command of his own ship, had had more than one brush with enemy frigates during the French wars. In 1821, at Clonmel, Thomas Fannin married Eleanor Robinson, whose brother, an amateur artist of some repute, had given drawing lessons in a Cork garret to young Daniel Maclise. Moving in 1833 to Liverpool, he was in comfortable circumstances until the onset twelve years later of the commercial depression. Deciding to realise his assets, Thomas sailed for Table Bay. An adventurous trek to Namaqualand to investigate the possibilities of copper-mining brought no commercial returns, and in 1847, learning of the fertility of Natal, he took passages on the *Flora*. A 6000-acre farm, 'Buffels Bosch', was secured from a Methodist missionary, which proved to be surrounded by indigenous yellowwood and sneeze-wood forests. At the time, the country north-west of the capital was virtually unoccupied, save for occasional Bantu kraals. Moving up to occupy 'Buffels Bosch', Fannin passed only one habitation, the deserted homestead of A. W. Pretorius. In some places, solitary peach trees marked the sites of rough sod houses where Trekkers had made temporary homes. Fannin and his sons, of whom George Fox Fannin was a pioneer botanist, despatching to Dr Harvey at Trinity College, Dublin, specimens of the

flora of the midlands, were the first to colonise this lovely area of inland Natal.

Three years before the Fannins moved to Liverpool, Robert Speirs made the crossing in the opposite direction, from Greenock to county Antrim. Scottish born (1802), he found it impossible to bring up a family in an Ireland which had been stricken by the potato famine. Rejecting Australia, he decided to move with his family to Natal, sailing from the Clyde in *Conquering Hero*. He fortunately brought with him the machinery for a saw mill; and, rejecting his Richmond allotment, bought from Carl Preller land in the neighbourhood of the present Lidgetton, where there was both timber and, with the Lion's River running past the farm, water. In 1855 he obtained the Dargle farm 'Mount Park', where his eldest son, Charles Speirs, married to Helen, daughter of John King of Lynedoch, eventually settled.

Other Irishmen among Byrne's emigrants were John Butler Troy from county Tipperary on *Emily*, Abraham Nickson (*Minerva*) and James Leech and his family (*Ina*) from Dublin, the Belfast farmer, William Dean, on *Unicorn*, and John Byrne, a military pensioner, born in county Wicklow, on *Sovereign*. John Troy had returned in disappointment from America. In Natal he helped Benjamin Pine to collect native levies for the force which was to assist Sir Harry Smith in the frontier war of 1851-3, and entered the government service when Dr Sutherland became surveyor-general. Abraham Nickson, a miller by trade, went to Estcourt and married a sister of David Gray. In the 'sixties he opened a hotel at the crossing of the Bushman River.

Several of the 'Old Stubborns' who took their discharge from the 45th Regiment to settle in Pietermaritzburg were Irishmen by birth. Later, in the 'fifties, some very notable Irishmen came to Natal in the government service. Two successive chief justices, Sir Henry Connor and Sir Michael Gallwey, were Irishmen.¹

¹ See 'Some Recollections of Natal Judges', in A. F. Hattersley: *Later Annals of Natal*, London, 1938, pp. 202-8.

CHAPTER VIII
ARRIVAL IN NATAL

Emigrants to Natal profited from the fact that in 1849 Parliament had amended the Passenger Acts, applying to all routes provisions which had hitherto governed only the North American traffic. The new Act¹ was designed to avert overcrowding. A ship could not carry passengers in excess of one for every two tons of its capacity, and each emigrant was to be allowed at least twelve square feet of space. In addition to bread and water, flour, rice, tea, sugar and molasses in prescribed quantities were to be supplied, the cost to be included in the passage money. Copies of the Act were distributed to masters of ships by the customs officials.

The teak-built *Minerva* of 987 tons was the largest ship to convey emigrants to Natal during these years. She was advertised by Byrne as of 1300 tons, the average size of the ships chartered by the East India Company from private owners. This was presumably gross tonnage. Lloyd's register for 1841 shows only eighteen ships of above 1000 tons. The largest sailing-ship in the world in 1850 was the clipper *Donald Mackay*, with a gross tonnage of 2486 tons.²

Byrne's ships were not all of the slow and shabby type. Most of them were chartered to proceed, after calling at Port Natal, to Calcutta or other Indian port, and had been designed along the roomier lines which the East India Company considered important, since carrying capacity was more valuable than speed. The *Henrietta* was coppered and copper-fastened. Some of the small barques were both old and slow. On the other hand, their reputation was, generally speaking, better than that of the 'cheap system vessels' employed by Marshall and Edridge on the emigration service to Australia.

¹ 12 & 13 Vict. c. 33.

² B. Lubbock: *Colonial Clippers*, Glasgow 1921.

ARRIVAL IN NATAL

The ships which carried fare-paying passengers or the emigrants of other companies were for the most part smaller, but not necessarily slower. *Lalla Rookh*, a new vessel built at Peterhead with a high proportion of length to beam, belonged to the true Aberdeen clipper type. In 1849 she made the shortest passage yet accomplished, anchoring off Port Natal sixty-five days out from London. The *Ballengeich*, chartered by Murdoch, completed the voyage in sixty-eight days. Emigrants were safely landed; but two ships, *Minerva* and *British Tar* went ashore at the Port's entrance. Lidgett's ship *Herald* foundered with all hands on the return voyage. The Scarborough barque *Choice* sprung a leak in July 1851, when on a voyage from the East Indies to Demerara with a cargo of rice. The long-boat, with Captain Robertson in charge, was presumably lost, and only one boat reached Cayenne.

Internally, most of the ships left much to be desired. The smaller ones had two decks; if not, a temporary deck was made by laying planks along the beams. Berths, each containing from two to six beds, would be fitted along the sides. Intermediate was usually a portion of the steerage, separated from the rest by a temporary partition. Shipmasters were prohibited by the 1849 Act from berthing passengers on the orlop deck. Ventilation was required and inspected in port. Nevertheless, even when the hatches were open, it was commonly so poor that lanterns burned with a blue flame; and in bad weather, when the ship was battened down, the atmosphere below deck was overpowering.

At London, embarkation was at St Katharine's dock, constructed in the 'twenties by Telford. Here, and at Liverpool and other ports, the emigrant was liable to be harassed by 'runners' and 'crimps', who gave misleading information regarding sailings of ships and might offer to secure accommodation at neighbouring boarding-houses. Manuals for emigrants issued warnings against entrusting money and baggage to these men or relying on their statements. Shipmasters or those with whom passengers had engaged their passages, were

liable at law for subsistence money, should the ship be detained in port beyond the advertised date of departure. Nevertheless, delays were frequent. Henry Johnson, of Queen's Square, Westminster, complained that he had thrown up a situation, relying on Murdoch's statement that the *Justina*, on which he had booked a passage, would sail on 1 July. It was not until 16 August that the ship left its moorings. Wootton, a Margate lodging-house keeper, sold all his effects in order to procure passages for himself and family on one of Hackett's ships. He had been instructed to be ready to sail on *Toronto*, leaving London on 12 December. After a long wait in London, he learned that the *Hebrides* had been substituted, but she did not leave till 8 February. Wootton was told to make his complaint to the Lord Mayor, but few emigrants could afford to wait and sue for breach of contract.¹

Arrived at the port of departure, the emigrants' chief concern would be to discover for themselves the ship's berth. They were officially advised 'not to enter into conversation about their intentions of going to this place or that', and warned that there were 'numerous well-dressed, plausible deceivers waiting at railways and steamboats who pretend to have ships of their own going'.² In his printed prospectus, Byrne notified intermediate and steerage passengers that they must provide themselves with 'knife and fork, a table and teaspoon, a metal plate, a hook pot and a drinking mug'. All were to find their own bedding. But it was only when the ship was out of sight of land that emigrants would be likely to realise the full extent of their discomfort. All the polish and finery displayed in port, the brass knobs and ornaments, even perhaps the cabin doors, would be taken down and stowed away. Food was perforce provided, but steerage passengers at any rate would be required to cook it themselves. Without

¹ The Wootton case, reported in *Morning Chronicle*, was copied in the *Leeds Times*, 26 Jan. 1850; Johnson's in the *Hull Advertiser*, 12 July 1850.

² W. Gorsuch: *Caution to Emigrants*. Gorsuch was the emigration agent at the port of Liverpool.

ARRIVAL IN NATAL

bribery, it might be difficult to obtain access to the galley, and some of the manuals written for the use of emigrants advised them to take brandy in order to be able to bribe the cook. Rations were dealt out daily, or at less frequent intervals, from barrels brought on deck. Towards the end of the voyage, mouldy biscuits and rotten potatoes were almost a matter of course. Water, which the law required to be stored in sweet casks or tanks, was often carried in casks previously used for hides or molasses, and undrinkable until vinegar had been added. Murdoch indeed advertised 'good and experienced stewards' to prepare the passengers' food, but this service was confined to the cabin. Intermediate passengers on Byrne's ships were promised attention to their comfort; but, once at sea, it was common to divide them into gangs, with one to act as superintendent, responsible for order and for the weighing out of provisions. If service was required, it would have to be engaged by employing stewards from among the steerage passengers.

Conditions were better on some of Byrne's ships. On the *Aliwal* the steerage was simply the hold fitted with two rows of bunks. Baggage, chests and utensils, containing the rations issued at weekly intervals, were placed in the centre. When bad weather struck the ship, there was neither ventilation nor, except for a central lantern, light. For days on end it might be impossible to carry bedding on deck to be aired. But, where both master and surgeon were conscientious, the voyage might not be comfortless. On *Henrietta* Dr Hulme attended to the necessity of ventilation, and provided medical comforts for the sick. The ship carried a schoolmaster, and Byrne had supplied books which were to be the nucleus of a library in Natal. Scotsmen on *Ina* paid generous tribute to the excellent order on the ship and the kindness of the officers. On *Nile* Dr Samuel Gower did what he could for the emigrants in his charge. Nevertheless, even cabin passengers on *Ina* were called upon to assist in rotation in the galley.

Inadequate supply of water was the commonest cause of

trouble. Shortage on *Bernard* was explained by the unexpected length of the voyage. The vessel encountered merciless winds south of the line and was driven considerably out of her course. In the case of *Unicorn*, where disorder broke out, the supply originally taken on board was insufficient, and spirits had to be distributed out of stores. Sailing ships coming through the south-easterly trades, with the wind close on the port beam, might be driven westward towards the South American coast. To pick up their bearings, masters might aim at making a land-fall at the island of Tristan da Cunha. The *Sovereign* was driven to take this course. She took in provisions at Tristan, and when she sailed away on 16 February, left on the island two young men, W. E. Thompson and H. A. Smith. According to J. E. Methley, who was returning to Natal on the ship, they discovered that, by immemorial custom and the stern dictate of Governor Glass, they would be expected to take in marriage daughters of Glass, in rotation according to age. As the daughters were peculiarly ill-favoured, Thompson and Smith thought themselves lucky to obtain a passage to St Helena, where they succeeded in finding a ship bound for Table Bay.¹

The length of the voyage increased the difficulty of victualing, and provisions ran out on *Sovereign*, compelling the master to feed his cabin passengers mainly on almonds and raisins. But compared with the passages to America and Australia, mortality on the Cape route was low. It was heaviest on *King William*, owing to bad ventilation. Byrne had been warned that mortality was to be expected when a large number of children were aboard; and it was for this reason that the regulations did not permit more than four children under fourteen to accompany their parents. On *King William* there was an unusually high percentage of children; and, until a bulkhead had been broken down to provide more air, little could be done to halt the ravages of scarlet fever. There were

¹ The Cape authorities sent them on to Natal on the *Gem*. Montagu to Moodie, 5 June 1850. (C.A.)

eighteen deaths during the voyage.¹ But there were no cases of cholera on any of the ships; and, for most, the passage was dull and uncomfortable, rather than painful or dangerous. There was generally a school on board for the children, and some attempt at social entertainment of the 'penny reading' type for the adults. Passengers' diaries record occasional acts of kindness and consideration. On *Henry Tanner*, the master allowed the ship's cook to assist even the steerage passengers, and Leonard Wright's wife recorded that he baked her pork and flour into palatable bacon cakes. George Potter noted that provisions on *Haidee* were good and abundant, and the captain kind, steady and obliging. Murdoch provisioned his first ship, *Ballengeich*, with exemplary liberality.

The only major disaster was the loss, on the night of 3 July 1850, of the Indiaman, *Minerva*. In an easterly wind, which however was not particularly strong, she dragged her anchor. When the second anchor was dropped, she was drifting at three or four knots and the chain snapped, the ship driving on a ledge of rock off the Bluff. Donald Moodie, who witnessed the occurrence, thought the wreck unaccountable. The master, Moir, was a capable and gallant commander who, the previous August, had rescued the crew of the Dutch ship *Gertruyda* in a storm. In 1861 he was to be in command of the British mail steamer *Trent* when it was stopped by a Federal cruiser for the purpose of removing two Confederate agents. The enquiry into the disaster produced no very definite conclusions. Anchorage off the Port is good, and the sea room is ample. The only ship which had driven at the outer anchorage was the *King William*, which was badly found in anchors and cable. It is clear that the *Minerva* lay too close on shore and at single anchor; but the *Henrietta*, which arrived the day following, lay even nearer to the Bluff, and was brought up on the first sign of drift within two cables' length of her first position.

¹ The *Manchester Examiner*, 5 Oct. 1850. Another correspondent gave seventeen deaths of children, and two washed overboard. A. F. Hattersley: *Portrait of a Colony*, p. 35. Five children died on *Henry Tanner*.

The joint-owner, with the shipping firm of Manning and Anderdon, W. H. Anderson, was a passenger, and landed before the disaster occurred. No lives were lost among either passengers or crew, but a sailor who went to the assistance of the ship was drowned. Byrne's emigrants on the ship lost almost all their baggage.¹

Arrival in the roadstead was indeed the prelude to what might well be the most dangerous part of the voyage. Six or seven weeks' delay before a ship could cross the sand-bar at the entrance to the harbour was by no means unusual. The depth of water on the bar varied considerably from week to week and even from day to day, and information as to the deepest channel was not always available. As a rule, ships drawing more than eleven feet of water preferred to discharge their cargo at the outer roadstead, but *Washington*, drawing thirteen and a half feet, crossed the bar without difficulty. Masters of the larger ships considered that they had fulfilled their contract on arrival off the back beach. The *Amazon* of 490 tons, which entered at half flood on New Year's Day 1850, was the largest vessel to cross the bar. Six months later, even the 150-ton schooner *Hannah*, with mails from the Cape, and drawing only seven feet, had to wait a month before finally getting over the bar in safety.

With stormy weather threatening, ships were often obliged to sacrifice anchor and cables and run out to sea. This happened to the barques *Emily* and *Choice*, and in October 1850 both were awaiting a favourable opportunity to recover their anchors. The *British Tar*, less fortunate, went ashore on the back beach. When an easterly gale was blowing, the surf broke with great violence on the bar, and emigrants, battened down in lighters, would have anything but a comfortable time. *Edward* brought out a surf-boat, ordered by Byrne to enable passengers to make the crossing in some safety; but the

¹ For the enquiry, see C.O. 179/11. It is not clear whether she dragged the first anchor or whether the chain parted. It seems that the disaster might have been avoided had a greater length of cable been on deck.

boat, leaving the ship at 9 a.m., only landed its passengers at the Point at five in the afternoon.

Shipmasters complained bitterly of the incompetence of the port captain's department. There was a signal station on the Bluff, but no semaphore, and communication with the outer anchorage was maintained by using flags. In September 1850 a *Unicorn* emigrant, Alexander Forbes, was appointed signalman. In the previous year visiting ships had much cause for complaint. Sutton, master of *Wanderer*, on arrival hove to, four or five miles out, and hoisted a jack as a request for a pilot. A gun had been fired which he naturally interpreted as a danger signal. But no further notice was taken of the ship's presence, and in consequence of this neglect *Wanderer* was delayed a week.¹

Under such circumstances landing of baggage was attended with no small risk. If the ship succeeded in crossing the bar, there might be no great delay and the charge for unloading and delivery in Durban was 9s. 6d. per ton. The *Ina's* charter-party stated that, should the ship not enter the port, the master must use the ship's boats to land passengers and their personal baggage. In *Sanderson v. Moreland*, the recorder, Henry Cloete, ruled that 'port' must be construed to mean the inner anchorage. Sanderson had brought with him cotton gins and ploughs, which Moreland had detained as security for payment of costs, and the ruling required him to deliver the goods at the cost of his principal. Emigrants on *King William* had found that the cost of unloading their goods fell on themselves, and the charge made for bringing them ashore from the outer anchorage was 29s. 6d. a ton. In the case of the *Henry Tanner*, Moreland had to obtain an advance of £170 from the colonial government before Cato, acting for the charterers of the vessel, would release emigrants' luggage.

Charter-parties usually stipulated that the ship would proceed to Port Natal 'or so near thereunto as she may safely get'. Passengers would be expected to wade ashore or suffer

¹ H. Sutton to D. Moodie, 9 June 1849. C.S.O. 15 (N.A.).

themselves to be carried in the arms of stalwart but naked Africans. This shock to Victorian sense of propriety would be felt most by steerage passengers unaccustomed to travel. More prosperous folk would know that, at Boulogne and other continental ports, travellers landing from boats must expect to be seized by fisherwomen waiting on the beach and carried ashore, resistance notwithstanding, on their backs.

First impressions were decidedly favourable. Of the usual signs of a settled community—roads, wharves, buildings and the paraphernalia of law and order—there was indeed little trace. The only substantial building at the waterside was the customs house, built by the Cape merchant, Chiappini, and sold by him to the Natal government. But nature was altogether charming. Beyond the low sandhills of varying shape, since constantly buffeted by the wind, the green plain stretched park-like towards the dense bush of the Berea hills. At the western end the Bay shallowed to form quiet waters, the haunt of countless sea-fowl and bordered by tall mangrove trees. In the nearer distance the two considerable islands, low and overgrown with jungle, gave picturesque foreground to a scene dominated by the bold outline of the Bluff, its rocky base lashed by the angry surf.

Considerable interest was displayed in the arrival of the first parties from the United Kingdom. Mrs Leonard Wright, from Little Kelk, noted with interest 'the soldiers, the magistrate, and several gentlemen riding on horseback on the beach'. 'The port captain's boatmen wore feathers on their straw hats.' Emigrants who had been brought from their ship in lighters would land close to the point where Dick King had entered the rowing boat, on the first stage of his celebrated ride of 1842. Moreland was permitted to draw upon the colonial treasury for unavoidable expenditure in landing emigrants and erecting barracks for their temporary accommodation. As more arrived, it became necessary to release fifty tents from military stores. The concession came just in time to provide

¹ Letter (1 Nov. 1849) in the *Leeds Times*, 9 March 1850.

for the considerable body of Wesleyan emigrants who reached the roadstead in *King William*. Byrne had contracted with Irons to accommodate his settlers at the Port until their allotments were ready for occupation. The Ramsgate man, Thomas Moss, however, complained that 'there was no reception of any kind, no shelter till the government gave tents'.¹ The barracks, finished just in time for the rainy season, provided bunks in tiers round the two rooms of a wooden shed, floors being of beaten earth. This was largely used for the accommodation of single persons. Byrne indeed had warned emigrants that they must expect to encounter discomfort.² Nor was privation confined to the emigrants themselves. Moreland, and the agents of rival companies, worked hard to prepare allotments and care for the newcomers. 'One night', wrote Methley, agent for Lidgett's settlers, 'I may spend on horseback perhaps amidst heavy rain, the next perhaps drenched in salt water, whilst superintending discharge of ships' cargo from outside the bar.'³

During the year 1850 better arrangements were made. In London the emigration commissioners required companies to state what provision had been made for the accommodation of emigrants whilst their land was in course of survey. Boast's Yorkshiremen brought covered wagons and tents of their own. Murdoch replied that he had sent out canvas and other materials for temporary housing, whilst John Lidgett reported having despatched an iron house and two cottages. Of the sixty-eight double tents which Byrne claimed to have sent, there is no trace.⁴ But he certainly consigned to Moreland an iron hotel with a circular roof of fifty-eight feet span, which had been on show for some weeks at Islington before shipment on the *Globe*. Nevertheless, when the emigration was at its height, Moreland was overwhelmed by his responsibilities to Byrne's

¹ The *British Banner*, 5 June 1850.

² J. C. Byrne: *Twelve Years' Wanderings in British Colonies*, 1848, p. 4.

³ J. E. Methley to Rev. J. Methley, August 1850 (Methley Correspondence).

⁴ *Report on Present State of Emigration to Natal*, 1850. C.O. 179 12.

settlers, and George Macleroy had to be appointed as immigration agent with special instructions to see that representatives of companies 'lose no time in placing the emigrants upon the lands which are to be given them', and, in the meantime, 'provide for their temporary lodging'.¹ Perhaps the most fortunate in this respect were passengers on Murdoch's ship *Ballengeich*, who, after a quick passage from the Thames, found wagons ready at the Point to convey them to their land on the Umhloti. Many Wesleyans had reason to thank W. J. Irons for his insistence that they should be transported free of charge to their allotments. For the expense of hiring wagons was very great. Land for emigrants by *Washington* had been purchased in the neighbourhood of the capital. All located up-country were understandably anxious to transport their families and goods without delay. In any case, occupants of the barracks received notice to move out when another ship arrived, whilst the living conditions at the sandy Point did not invite a prolonged sojourn. Pietermaritzburg could be reached only by tented ox-wagon, the hire of which involved an expenditure of £3.

Little could be seen of Durban from the vicinity of the customs house. The short but tiresome journey through the bush brought the settler in two miles to the first group of cottages, that of Napoleon Wheeler being the nearest to the Point. It was disappointing to find that barren sand dunes and primitive bush existed in the very centre of the village, where Hugh McDonald's hotel faced the unfenced market square. Here the houses were single-storied buildings of wattle-and-daub, whitewashed externally and with verandas and thatched roofs. G. C. Cato's store conformed to this pattern, and could be regarded as the headquarters of the mercantile community. The business was shortly to be taken over by two of the new settlers, W. H. Middleton and G. Wirsing, who erected a new building of two storeys with iron roof at the corner of

¹ Moodie to Macleroy, 19 June 1850. *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1851, xxxvii (1417), p. 37.

Smith and Gardiner streets. On Bayside were the stores, catering largely for the sportsman, of James Proudfoot and Hippolyte Jargal. No roadways had yet been constructed, but the outline of a street was visible at certain points. The most substantial house in 1849 was that built by Henry and Tom Milner in Aliwal Street, a brick residence of five rooms, roofed with slates. At this period, it was let to a tenant, the brothers occupying a wood-and-iron villa overlooking the Bay. During the three following years the building of wattle-and-daub was to give place, at any rate for mercantile establishments, to the warehouse of corrugated iron, having usually a circular roof. The Exhibition of 1851 caused iron to be greatly admired as a building material; and a sugar store, later erected in Commercial Road, was actually a portion of Paxton's Hyde Park edifice. The eastern end of the village was to some extent protected from drifting sand by milkwood and pear trees, and here accordingly were the fashionable sites for residences. Durban at the west end terminated in loose drift-sand, a foot or more deep. In windy weather it was not uncommon to discover that one's veranda had drifted up during the night with sand, much as would happen with heavy falls of snow in a severe British winter. On the other hand, excessive rain would convert the hollows of West and Smith streets into impassable swamps. There was more than one recorded case in the 'fifties of a citizen finding his horse sink with him into a veritable quicksand, so that little more than the animal's neck was visible.¹ At the close of the decade a measure had to be introduced into the legislative council to compel owners of *erven* to fence their properties so that foot-paths should not be obstructed by drifting sand.

In 1850 the ox-wagon was the only vehicle seen in Durban streets, but the enterprise of settlers accustomed to the omnibus and the carrier's cart resulted in gigs, dog carts and American 'spiders' soon making an appearance. An open wagonette was plying between the Point and Durban as early as 1854,

¹ The *Natal Mercury*, 11 March 1858.

driven by the son of a Northamptonshire clergyman. But until the 'sixties there was no street-lighting; and this, apart from swampy places, ducks and geese frequenting the main thoroughfares, and cattle outspanned there, made journeys by night perilous undertakings.

The public buildings of Durban were of the type which might be encountered in remote parts of the British Isles. There were three places of worship. James Archbell had constructed a Wesleyan chapel of wattle-and-daub with thatched roof at one corner of the market square, whilst a mission house, occupied by the Rev. W. C. Holden, was reached by a tree-shaded path leading towards the Bay. Anglican churchmen hired as parish church the large store of Lloyd Evans Mesham, landing agent and later magistrate. St Paul's Church, with oiled calico hastily inserted in lieu of glass for the windows, was not opened for services until 1855, a month before the arrival of Bishop Colenso.¹ The first post office at Durban, as opposed to the Point, where the customs house originally did duty for the purpose, was a front room of V. A. Schonberg's cottage at the Bay end of Gardiner Street. Schonberg, an elderly German, acted as postmaster, sorting the mails and being at singularly small pains to ensure that addressees received their correspondence. 'Everyone that chooses,' protested an indignant citizen, 'without ever asking our worthy Mr Schonberg's leave, rushes into his house and, without caring for directions, so long as the papers are of late date, quietly pockets them, thus depriving us of our own.'² The military camp was an entrenched position on the bush-covered flat to the north of the village, whilst a stockaded fort with a couple of cannon, connected with a thatched stone barrack on the summit of a dune by a palisade of mangrove poles, served as military protection for the inner harbour.

¹ Dr Colenso had of course already spent ten weeks in Natal on his original visitation.

² A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, p. 66.

ARRIVAL IN NATAL

Emigrants who were resolved to surrender their allotments and settle in Durban were concerned to find the cost of living higher than they had anticipated. Only the comparatively well-to-do could afford to stay at McDonald's hotel, which, in the early summer of 1850, was in process of conversion into a building of two storeys, the bedrooms with five or six narrow truckle-beds in each being reached by climbing a ladder. In 1851 there were two rival establishments, Platt's Trafalgar Inn, in Pine Terrace, where board and lodging cost only 3s. a day and 'a hot dinner in good style' could be obtained for 1s.; and the Britannia, kept by John Wishart, who had been master of the *Mountain Maid*. Coffee-houses, the early Victorian equivalent for restaurants, existed in both towns. In Durban the 'Leopard' coffee-house in West Street offered dinner 'from a hot joint' for 9d. The London Tavern, opened by Alfred George, was no more than a canteen, though it followed the practice set by London landlords, combining the sale of spirituous liquors with music-hall programmes. In 1852 George advertised 'theatrical entertainments including "Box and Cox" for the benefit of shipwrecked sailors', and set aside two nights in the week for 'sword exercise' and 'select quadrille parties'.¹

Small cottages, roughly constructed in wattle-and-daub with roof thatched with tambookie grass, could be rented for £3 a month.² The rapid sequence of ships arriving at the Port kept up both house rents and the price of provisions.

Emigrants complained that bread was four times as dear as in England. White flour, imported from the Cape in 100-lb. bags, fetched 38s. to 40s. a bag, and was sold retail at 1s. 8d. a stone. Loaves were usually of brown Boer meal and sold at 3d. Maize sold at 14s. a *muid* of 180 lb., or 3d. a lb. retail, but it might be as low as 4s. Potatoes were unprocurable until the arrival of the first parties of settlers, after

¹ The *D'Urban Advocate*, 5 Oct. 1852.

² L. Wright had to pay 10s. weekly for two rooms in a hut without windows or plaster on the walls. The *Leeds Times*, 9 March 1850.

which prices averaged 12s. the *muid*.¹ The staple articles of diet were beef (2d. to 3d. a lb.), mealies, pumpkins, butter, sent down in old casks and sold for 1s. 6d. a lb., cheese (1s. 6d. to 2s. a lb.) and milk at 2d. a pint. Native sheep might fetch 4s. to 5s., the price of mutton, which was scarce, working out at 6d. a lb. Fowls could generally be procured for 3d. to 6d. each, but a duck would cost 2s. 6d. and a turkey 7s. Of goods imported from overseas, Brazilian coffee of inferior blend could be bought for 1s. 2d. a lb., tea, packed for the Cape market, for 3s. 6d. Sugar from Mauritius might be 28s. to 32s. per 100 lb. wholesale, and 4d. to 5d. retail.

Casual employment, at a wage varying from 2s. 6d. to 6s. a day, was possible as boatmen, tide-waiters, overseers of native labour or in the employment of Durban merchants. Thomas Puckering from the East Riding, who had emigrated to Natal with Leonard Wright on *Henry Tanner*, was a butcher, and he had no difficulty in finding employment at his trade. 'He has a house, candles and firewood with a servant and as much meat as he likes for his family, and £6 per month,' wrote his friend.² A new settler wishing to build a house or prepare his land could obtain native labour for 5s. a month.

The settlers brought with them from the homeland the spirit of political reform. In 1850 Durban was without institutions of local self-government. A meeting to promote the establishment of a municipality was held in the mechanics' institute in September 1851, the principal movers being John Millar, who had reached Natal a few months earlier in the *John Line*, and Dr Charles Johnston. Millar lost no time in enquiring of the secretary to government whether a municipality could not be established on the English, rather than the Cape, model.³ In 1854 this came about, through the good-

¹ A *muid* was a little short of three bushels, but its weight varied according to the article sold.

² The *Leeds Times*, 25 May 1850.

³ J. Millar to D. Moodie, 10 Sept. 1851. C.S.O. 14 (N.A.).

will of Lieutenant-Governor Pine, himself a barrister of Gray's Inn. Mercantile enterprise had already begun to impose a check to the reign of King Sand. The disastrous floods of April 1856 set back progress and produced an epidemic of sickness, following the extensive inundations. But in 1857 the new municipality set about filling in the swampy places, and invited tenders to erect an embankment across the head of the eastern *vlei* in the hope that this would keep the Umgeni within its banks. The streets were no longer impassable in wet weather, since the council had constructed brick culverts to drain Pine Terrace and other thoroughfares which had been breeding grounds for snipe and wild-fowl. Presently gaily painted delivery carts were to be seen in the streets, and even an omnibus hired for special occasions from the livery stables of Boulton and Seal. Wedding cakes, plain or iced, could be ordered from Baumann and Wilson.

In view of the imperfections of a scheme which took no account of the nature of the soil in Natal, Benjamin Pine wisely agreed to add to the stipulated allotments a further twenty-five acres so that families could be allotted land on the basis of forty-five acres for each adult and twelve and a half for a child. Since it was not easy to find blocks of Crown land in suitable positions, at no great distance from port or capital, delay in location of settlers was unavoidable. The best land was in private ownership and held with a view to subsequent appreciation in value. Some had made special terms with Byrne, permitting them to select their own land; all had been promised priority of choice according to the order in which passages had been engaged. Moreover, Byrne had described the land as 'amply wooded and abundantly watered'. Under these circumstances, Moreland could make little progress. His prompt survey of the Uys Doorns farms, purchased from Francis Collison in England, and his lay-out there of a village had been brought to nought by the refusal of emigrants on *Henry Tanner*, *Dreadnought* and *Aliwal* to accept their allotments. Many sold them at 6*d.* an acre, and Moreland subsequently acknowledged that the

land was not worth the survey fees. After that experience, Moreland was naturally reluctant to undertake survey until he knew that the land would be taken up.

There was much criticism of the British government on the ground that the emigration commissioners had endorsed Byrne's prospectus. Byrne had therein stated that arrangements had been made with Her Majesty's Government for the encouragement of emigration to Natal.¹ But the commissioners had been at some pains to insist that emigration was carried on exclusively by private enterprise, and that government was not responsible for the fulfilment of any promises.²

Much was done to assist those who were prepared to take up their land. To save transfer duties and registration fees, the colonial authorities permitted the issue, immediately on completion of survey, of title-deeds direct to individual emigrants.³ A settler who did not propose to cultivate his plot could, before it had been surveyed and legally vested in him, sell it to a fellow immigrant. Had he been compelled to wait until the land had been marked off, the fees charged would have amounted to more than the value of the land itself. Only those who had retained their allotment certificates received the additional gratuity of twenty-five acres. If they really intended to cultivate their holdings, they were now in a position to obtain additional land at a low price by simple transfer of certificates in the presence of a magistrate.

By such means what might have been a complete failure was converted into a partial success. On 30 August 1850, Pine calculated that some 500 of Byrne's settlers 'have been satisfactorily settled on their allotments'.⁴ To this number must be

¹ Walcott's letter of 9 Feb. 1849 intimating that the prospectus 'correctly describes the arrangements concluded between Her Majesty's Government and himself' was read at a Durban meeting, presided over by E. Few. C.O. 179/11.

² Government Notice, 20 Feb. 1850. C.O. 179/12.

³ Moodie to Moreland, 18 Aug. 1849. *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1850, xxxviii (1292). p. 81.

⁴ *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1851, xxxvii (1417), p. 24.

added emigrants who had taken up land under other schemes. Hackett's ship *Hebrides* landed her 129 passengers on 10 May 1850. On 11 June his Natal agent, Henry Milner, wrote that the emigrants had appointed a committee to select their own land.¹ Those who complained of delay in the issue of title-deeds took insufficient account of the difficulties of the colonial government with its tiny staff of clerks and surveyors. But it was another matter when hundreds were waiting to be placed on their land. On the one hand, there were cases like that of W. A. Fraser, who had purchased 500 acres at Byrne's Pall Mall office. Twelve months after he had landed from *Alival*, his acres, which he had selected at Tongaat adjoining the 'Compensation' estate, were still unsurveyed. But he was making beneficial use of his land. The position of those who could not get possession of acres to which they were entitled was far more serious. John Shipley, a Manchester brush-maker, may be taken as an example. He took passages, with his wife and children, on the *Henrietta* and was to have received 115 acres. To support his family he was obliged to sell stock and implements. In despair he moved to the Cape Colony, and his grievance was still unredressed in 1853.²

It is clear that Byrne had been grossly misled as to the character of the soil in Natal and the possibilities of irrigation. He had purchased from Francis Collison farms in the Uys Doorns district which settlers to whom portions were offered described as 'bare rock and iron crag'. Mrs Leonard Wright wrote that her husband's allotment was 'chiefly large stones, and unfit for cultivation'. In the winter the soil was hard baked by the sun, the watercourses were dry, whilst the stunted thorn bush merely emphasised the desolation. Moreland admitted that the land was ill adapted for agriculture; and Macleroy's first report of 25 October 1850 stated that none of the lots in that neighbourhood had been occupied. The lands

¹ H. Milner to Moodie, 11 May 1850. C.S.O. 14 (N.A.).

² Emigration Commissioners to H. Merivale, 8 Oct. 1853 on Memorial of John Shipley. C.O. 179/31.

of the defunct cotton company on the Umhloti, and generally allotments in Victoria county, were less barren. Village and country lots were mostly taken up, and settlers with some experience of cultivation were not discontented. But the land was not all good. Surveyor Bell described some 160 acres near Verulam, which had been allotted to John Steele, an emigrant on *Sovereign*, as not worth 6*d.* an acre. There was not a drop of good water in the vicinity, and it would cost £7 an acre to clear the land. It 'would then be found so precipitous as to render it totally unfit for any purpose whatever'.¹ Byrne had told the emigration commissioners that, should land offered them not be approved by emigrants, his surveyor was under instructions to purchase other land which would meet their wishes. He subsequently claimed that he had been the dupe of the colonial authorities, who had named 5*s.* as the prevailing average of prices and given misleading information regarding the character of the soil.² On the other hand, Byrne had spoken in public of his personal acquaintance with Natal, and he had certainly disposed of thousands of acres at that price to intending emigrants in the United Kingdom. Those who bravely settled on their small lots were charged sometimes as much as 5*s.* 6*d.* an acre for any additional land which they might require. It was certainly true that land on the Little Bushman, or Umsindusi, River, bought by Moreland for some of the *Washington* settlers, fetched more than the upset price of 4*s.* But this was an exceptional case, due to the fact that the land was suburban and only four miles from the centre of Pietermaritzburg. Even this land was not suited for sub-division; and though Byrne described its recipients as 'contented', there was much in what George Holgate, an earthenware dealer, said when he complained that his 100 acres were 'without a vestige of wood, and of a most disadvantageous form, being in shape of an enormously long wedge, almost literally pointed at the best

¹ Affidavit of J. Steele. C.S.O. 15, no. 63.

² See Moreland's Memorandum in C.O. 179/42 (P.R.O.).

end'. Only thirty acres were fit to plough, and, to keep off grazing animals, he must erect a fence, which he could not afford to do.¹

Moreland's most successful settlement was undoubtedly Richmond, or Beaulieu, as he had originally named the village out of compliment to the Duke of Buccleuch. His selection of a site for the village was well advised, and it was not difficult to lead water from the Illovo. Here, as in other parts of Natal, the paramount consideration was irrigation. Scotsmen on *Ina* were located in close proximity to Irons's settlers on the former cotton lands. With Pine's bounty added, most were well contented, especially John Forbes, who, coming out at the age of sixty with children and grandchildren, was to receive in all 276 acres. 'We have nearly a mile of river frontage to our farm', he wrote.² In other parts the land was good enough, and only wanted cultivation by skilled hands. Settlers who emigrated with the Boasts or under John Lidgett's auspices fared better, partly because their land was chosen by men with some knowledge of farming in Natal, but also because a greater percentage were themselves agriculturists. Lund and Tutin had time to look round the country before the *Haidee* arrived, and both were competent farmers. Richard Comins of Helmsley found the soil at York 'not rich'. The grass was withered in the winter season, and the surrounding country was bare veld, with low brushwood but little water. Nevertheless, a practical farmer with capital could breed cattle and grow maize and vegetables for the Pietermaritzburg market.

Men dissatisfied with their allotments could obtain privately owned farms, either by purchase or on very easy terms for a period of years. A condition of earlier grants of Crown land had been that it should be under *bona fide* occupation for at least seven years. In order to fulfil this condition, proprietors were glad to offer use of the land on quite nominal terms.

¹ G. R. Holgate to A. Roberts, 18 Jan. 1850. C.S.O. 14, no. 6.

² *The North British Mail*, 10 Sept. 1850.

Leonard Wright, the Little Kerk farmer, was offered a seven-year lease of a 6000-acre farm, with the valuable right to cut wood, without rent. He preferred to accept what he considered to be a better bargain, a two-year lease at a rental of £40 of Sheriff Zietsman's farm, within eight miles of Pietermaritzburg. Though only ten out of 6000 acres were actually under tillage, the farm was well stocked, with fruit trees, wagon, span of oxen and forty milking cows. Farms were advertised for sale or lease at attractive terms. A 6000-acre farm in reasonable proximity to Pietermaritzburg might fetch £300. Prices worked out at from 6*d.* to 1*s.* an acre, according to the value of the improvements effected. Leases were more attractive to those who lacked capital or had not made up their minds about Natal. The *Natal Witness* advertised in 1850 a farm of 12,000 acres, fourteen miles from the capital, at a rental of only £30, the lessee to have full use of the stock on the farm. The contrast between Byrne's charges and prevailing prices explains the total inability of Moreland to effect sales in Natal, once the real value of land was appreciated. 'I paid Byrne five shillings for land', wrote the Hampshire farmer, W. B. Withers, 'and since my arrival I have purchased 3000 acres at sixpence.'¹

Surveyors were not the only men to whom these long months of 1849 and 1850 meant exhausting days on the veld or in the saddle. The emigration of well-known men belonging to the landowning or professional class in the United Kingdom encouraged humbler folk to follow their example. In such cases, the responsibility for seeing that they were comfortably located was willingly born by their patrons. James Wray, a joiner and wheelwright from Burton, came out with Edwin Parkinson, son of a West Riding surgeon, on the *Emily*. Wray had been born in Shafton Green, the village home of

¹ Withers and James Ellis jointly bought a land commission farm from P. Potgieter, who was permitted to sell on condition that Ellis and Withers accepted the occupation condition. C.O. 179.19. Withers's letter in the *Christian Times*, 5 July 1850. George Potter, from Bridlington, paid 2*s.* an acre for land near Durban. The *Hull Advertiser*, 14 Feb. 1851.

Parkinson and his wife, Mary, cousin of James Erasmus Methley. Hainsworth Tarboton and others from Yorkshire accompanied Methley on the *Sovereign*. These men were placed on land in the Karkloof, and lent stock and seed to begin agricultural operations.

A return of land forfeited to government by Byrne settlers under ordinances of 1849 and 1851, which required them to take occupation of their allotments, showed that nearly 12,000 acres of rural land and 165 village and suburban allotments were refused.¹

The immediate necessity of those who settled on their land was a roof over their heads. Free-stone of good quality is found in many parts of Natal, and whin-stone is quarried in the neighbourhood of Pietermaritzburg. At Durban stone was originally obtained from the Bluff, but the needs of the harbour works caused this source of supply to be closed to private enterprise. Durban bricks were poor in quality and considered unsuitable as a foundation on the light, damp soil. In 1850 they cost 25s. per 1000. Bricks from Pietermaritzburg clay were not of the popular brindled colour and, without the addition of lime, proved to be lacking in durable qualities. Local thatch provided an almost universal roofing material, until the ravages of lightning and the insistence of the Natal Fire Assurance and Trust Company moved citizens to replace it with tiles or iron. Tiles of a sort were made in the capital in the 'forties by Carl Pistorius. In 1851 a better quality of pantile, and ultimately some Broseley tiles, began to be manufactured by two Lincolnshire men, James Smarfit and Henry Chatterton, who came out on the *Haidee*. Chatterton discovered a bed of clay north of the town, and his handsome pantiles, some of which are still in use on older cottages in Pietermaritzburg, came on the market in 1853 at £7 per 1000. No tiles were made in Durban at the time of the arrival of Byrne's settlers, but the *Ina* was expected to bring

¹ 11,902½ acres of rural land were forfeited to the Crown. *Return*, 2 Feb. 1857. C.S.O. 56 (N.A.).

teak-wood shingles on her return voyage from Moulmein. Timber was readily procurable, for several settlers brought out with them saw mills and water-wheels, and much indigenous yellow-wood was found north and west of the capital. In the middle 'fifties Joseph Few sold yellow-wood planks, cut at his Boston mill, for 130s. per 800 feet and sneeze-wood for £10 per 600 feet, whilst the cost of transport from Boston worked out at 62s. 6d. for a load of 1000 feet.

Settlers from the Scottish Highlands and the remoter rural areas of England would find little amiss with the wattle-and-daub hut, refloored every ten weeks with cow-dung and sand. Low-roofed, single-roomed cottages, sometimes lacking a chimney, were by no means uncommon in Britain of the hungry 'forties. There were nearly 8000 single-roomed, windowless houses in Scotland ten years after the conclusion of the Byrne emigration. In Natal distinctions of class were reflected in the housing projects of settlers. Whilst James Erasmus Methley quarried free-stone and planed yellow-wood, cutting the glass for his Gothic-style windows with a diamond, hundreds of humbler emigrants set about constructing their homes with upright posts, interlaced with laths, adding three or four coats of mud before whitewashing the finished walls. The Yorkshireman, William Granger, on the *Haidee*, was a thatcher, and many of the Durban cottages of the 'fifties were thatched by him. In the country the settler worked with his own hands and the assistance of his family. Men from the southern counties would know that cob walls, clay and gravel worked together with straw, could resist heat and damp as well as brick, especially when protected with a coat of plaster. In Pietermaritzburg, George Holditch Mason and his brother, young men fresh from their studies at Cambridge, built houses for themselves and others. The new municipal bye-laws of 1855 laid down that walls were to be not less than nine inches thick and, if of green brick, must be painted, lime-washed or coloured. From 1 January 1856 it was not permitted to build in wattle-and-daub. Fencing of *erven* and cultivated

fields was usually by sod bank, on which might be planted a quince hedge.

The majority of settlers either passed through Pietermaritzburg on the way to their allotments or decided to make it their permanent home. In 1849, though considerably larger than Durban, it remained essentially a village, its cottages with their narrow stoeps and simple gables set amidst fields of growing corn and oats. Even *erven* in the centre of the village were customarily advertised as land with standing crops, perhaps ready to be cut. Fifty on the burgess roll of 1854 described themselves as farmers. Water for irrigation, as well as for domestic use, was led down the principal streets in unlined water channels, much as it was in the Yorkshire dales and other parts of the home country. Though the purity of the supply might not be above question, settlers remarked on the softness of the water, and the beautiful colour of the linen washed by the native women. On first impressions, Pietermaritzburg was undeniably charming. The open runlets irrigated the hedges of quince and wild rose. Gardens were planted with fig, pomegranate and other fruit trees, whilst geraniums and flowering verbena twelve feet tall made the approach to cottages across the narrow plank bridges that spanned the water a riot of lovely colour. On sultry days syringa gave welcome shade to the neighbourhood of the market square, their leaves making bright patterns in the sun on the yellow walls of the gabled houses. The surrounding hills might be bare of timber but in winter the veld was majestic with its sunny-gold tints.

There were no imposing public buildings. The appeal lay rather in the variety of house and roof, the contrast between red brick and plastered wall. After nightfall the gable ends of the cottages stood out a ghostly white in the cold moonlight. In comparison with the sandy desert of Durban's streets, the village looked unbelievably trim.

The colonial government, entering upon its duties in 1845, had not yet begun to construct buildings for public use, but it

had repaired and whitewashed the walls of the old Volksraad chamber which, with its small-paned windows and exposed yellow-wood beams, was to do duty as court-house until the opening of a new supreme court in 1871. The thatched barn-like building which the government rented at the corner of Chapel and Longmarket streets served as school, church, concert room, theatre and ballroom, before it was monopolised by the authorities as a legislative council chamber. Even Government House was no more than a country cottage; but, with veranda of great width and steeply pitched roof of thatch, it preserved that neat and demure exterior which was characteristic of Pietermaritzburg's buildings.

There was plenty of room in this overgrown village for newcomers who arrived during 1849. In January of that year 319 of its 486 *erven* were totally unoccupied and only forty-four were described as 'fully cultivated'.¹ Houses fetched high rentals, Lieutenant-Governor West paying originally £95 a year for a four-roomed cottage, the property of J. N. Boshoff. When Boshoff moved out, he could not find accommodation for his family for less than 50s. a month.² As ships landed their emigrants in hundreds at the Point, it became increasingly difficult for government to find the accommodation for one month which it had originally promised. Farmers of the type of the East Riding man Thomas Botterill were prepared, immediately on arrival, to cultivate the *erven*, erecting rough hut and sod wall until such time as building of a permanent character could be undertaken. Sowing his land with oats, Botterill realised three crops within eleven months, filling in spare time ploughing, harrowing and carting potatoes for others. Early in 1852 he could point to a house, cart, plough and span of ten oxen as his property. Lodging with a private family cost one young man from an Essex vicarage 70s. a month. The small inns and boarding-

¹ Moodie to Montagu, 2 Jun. 1849. G.H. 633 (N.A.).

² See the interesting record of household expenditure in 1846 in A. F. Hattersley: *The Natalians*, pp. 185-6.

houses were crowded with emigrants of the less self-reliant type. The charge at the inns was 5s. a day. There were also eating-houses, one in Church Street kept by John Harris, erstwhile cook to the lieutenant-governor, who advertised 'everything from a snack to a dinner of three courses. . . at the most moderate rates and at any hour'.

The most economical way out of the housing difficulty was to build for oneself. Green bricks, which would require to be plastered, cost in the late 'forties 10s. per 1000. For the roof a settler could either procure thatch at 6s. to 7s. for 100 bundles, or use Pistorius's tiles at 15s. a 100. Timber would be the most serious item, with yellow-wood beams fetching 7s. and planks for the floor 2s. 6d. to 3s.

Foodstuffs, at any rate agricultural produce, were a trifle cheaper than in Durban. Butter, which in 1846 sold for 1s. to 1s. 2d., fell to 7d. to 9d. with the increase in output from farms taken over by early settlers. Wheat, maize and oats also sold on the Pietermaritzburg market at prices which Durban merchants would have considered poor. Roasted Java coffee could be bought in the shops at 1s. per lb.

Dissatisfaction with their allotments and lack of faith in Natal led to a few settlers going to the Cape or returning to the United Kingdom. Henry Johnston, a young Clydeside joiner, went back in the *Conquering Hero*. Two singularly unfortunate men on *Herald* elected to sail with the ship on her return voyage and perished when she foundered with all hands before reaching England. Others stayed a year or so before, overwhelmed by personal misfortune, they decided to seek new homes. The Colonial Office received an application from a Huntingdonshire farmer on behalf of friends who had invested their entire savings in equipment for Natal, and lost everything in the *Minerva* wreck, for free passages to take them to Australia or back to their English homes. In many cases, emigrants left Natal only to return to the colony at a later date. Prideaux Selby, an *Ina* passenger, went to California. He was soon back in Natal, where Dobie found him in the 'sixties, with

a magistrate's commission for Klip River county. Thomas Crowder, landing from the *John Gibson*, stayed three years in Natal, returned to London, where his eldest son was born, and came back permanently in 1872.

With the discovery of gold in Victoria, Australia inevitably attracted several. The first licences were issued to diggers in September 1851. Within a few months Melbourne, its streets, with three exceptions, narrow lanes between wooden houses of one storey, was overrun with eager newcomers. Its population rose to 70,000, more than three times what it had been prior to the discovery of gold at Ballarat. Stories of the immense richness of the fields percolated through to South Africa. It was said that diggers boarded emigrant ships on their arrival at Port Phillip and scattered gold on the deck to be scrambled for.¹ The first ship to sail for Australia from Natal was the schooner *Hannah*, carrying forty-two steerage passengers 'stowed like slaves to sleep three in a berth'. There were also eighteen cabin passengers, including the Wiltshire parson, Skipper's, son, and Peter Zolrab, farmer and sportsman who had run the Durban races of the previous January, as secretary of the course. The *Hannah* crossed the bar on 23 September 1852. Two other ships followed within six months: the 149-ton brig *Sarah Bell* in December, and the *Wee Tottie* in February 1853. Dr Dimock was among the forty-six passengers on *Sarah Bell*. The *Wee Tottie* took seventy-four in all, with several cabin passengers, notably Tom Milner, Francis Spring, postmaster-general who had previously organised the postal department at Hongkong, T. Spencer Cope, special pleader on the Somerset and Bristol sessions, who had come to Natal on Marshall and Edridge's ship *Iris*, and Bernard Schwikkard, the consul for Hanover, Hamburg and Lübeck. In the steerage was the architect, George Hiecks, who was to become sub-editor of the *Melbourne Argus*.

In all, these three ships took 180 passengers. Few found Australia to be quite the land of promise they had anticipated.

¹ B. Lubbock: *Colonial Clippers*.

ARRIVAL IN NATAL

Henry Dixon, brother of Edward Ross Dixon, one of the first to get away on the *Hannah*, after a few disappointing weeks at the diggings, drifted to Melbourne, where he was unable to find employment. Others, alarmed at scenes of violence, returned to the ship in the hope of working their passages back to Natal. There was already in the winter of 1853 talk of a return emigration from Australia. Direct sailings from Melbourne to Durban were inaugurated by the barque *Golden Age* early in 1854.¹ In the long run, several of those who had left Natal for the Victorian goldfields or the Swan River settlement found their way back. Two Yorkshiremen in Boast's party, Tom Cass and Richard Brough, returned within a few years. George Franklin, a Carmarthenshire man who had come to Natal with Dr Gower on the *Nile*, took passage on the *Hannah* for Melbourne, coming back to Natal in 1859. William Frank Ellis, a Norfolk farmer, who reached Natal on the *Henrietta*, spent several years on the Ballarat diggings. But he was back, farming at Mooi River, before the close of the decade.

The bankruptcy of Byrne and publication in the home journals of letters from disappointed emigrants checked the flow of new settlers to Natal, even before news of the discovery of the Australian fields. Shipowners still advertised in 1851 passages to Natal, but without land gratuities, since no further sums were deposited for the purchase of Crown land. Marshall and Edridge thought it worth while to send an occasional ship to Natal on its way to Ceylon and the East. The barque *Iris*, which brought forty-three cabin or intermediate passengers to Natal, left London on 19 September and anchored in the outer roadstead on 30 December. There was no steerage accommodation, and some of her passengers were not making their first journey, but returning from a visit to the United Kingdom. The *Borneo*, also a Marshall and Edridge ship, had her accommodation fully booked up. Earlier in the month *Devonian*

¹ The *Golden Age* left Natal on her return voyage to Australia on 15 July 1854 with forty-seven passengers. Europ. Immigration Dept., vol. 87 (N.A.). The permanent loss of population to Australia did not exceed 200.

had brought some new settlers from Liverpool. There were still enquiries, especially in the northern counties, but they came mainly from the mercantile and professional classes, and from persons who had been advised by their medical attendants to avoid a damp and cold climate. H. J. Barrett and his friends chartered the *Pallas* in 1851, the ship sailing for Natal with nineteen cabin passengers and a cargo of agricultural implements.

W. J. Irons had done what he could, after Byrne's insolvency, to keep public interest alive. He had gone to Leeds and lectured at the Stock Exchange rooms, but the attendance was small. Recovery from the commercial panic was more rapid than had been expected, and there were signs that emigration had passed its peak. The 'fifties were to be prosperous years both for the farmer and for the urban artisan. After failing to bring together Bergtheil, Morewood, Methley and the shipping firms interested in Natal, to form a new company on a sounder basis, Irons took ship for Natal on the *John Line*, with the last batch of his Wesleyan settlers.

As early as December 1850 the Colonial Office had reached the conclusion that the organisation of emigration by private companies must be brought to an end. Henceforth, 'assisted' emigration to Natal could only be by deposit of sums of £100 or more to secure passages for the depositor and any servants or labourers whom he might desire to accompany him.¹ From time to time, however, independent parties were made up and vacancies advertised. But numbers were small, since passage rates were high and no land bounty was available. An advertisement in the *Leeds Mercury* called attention to the fact that 'a party of gentlemen have chartered the 350-ton *Bernard* (Captain G. Morton) to sail for Natal from London 30 June, intending to cross the bar'.²

Emigration to Natal virtually came to an end in 1852, until it was resumed after 1857 on a new basis. Funds were voted by

¹ *Minute* on Pine's despatch, 5 Dec. 1850. C.O. 179/11.

² The *Leeds Mercury*, 22 June 1850.

ARRIVAL IN NATAL

the new legislative council to assist immigration from the United Kingdom of persons who were nominated for a passage by relatives or friends already in the colony. Over the period 1858 to 1864 nearly 1500 persons reached Natal under this scheme. Since the way was to some extent smoothed for them by earlier settlers, these 'assisted immigrants' were scarcely pioneers in the sense in which that term has been interpreted in these pages.

CHAPTER IX
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE
COASTLANDS BY THE SETTLERS

The settlers soon discovered that Natal consisted of at least two types of region: the upland grass veld, some of it thorn country with low precipitation but generally suitable for grazing purposes and including land capable of producing good crops of oats, maize and even wheat; and the sub-tropical region along the coast, unhealthy for stock on account of the heat and moisture, but climatically well adapted to such plants as coffee, indigo and cotton.

The area of greatest fertility lies parallel to the coast, and is represented by undulating bush-covered land with deep red soil. Here arduous clearing of the bush might be necessary. But potash was available after burning of the felled timber, and on the freshly cleared land, with its rich vegetable mould, maize was found to grow luxuriantly. A few seasons sufficed to show that the richness of the red soil was far from being inexhaustible, and settlers soon experienced the difficulty of restoring fertility to very sandy land where manure is apt to be washed through the surface by heavy rains. In extent the valuable red sandy loam is narrowly limited, and it was here that the first serious experiments with cotton were made. The flats are of black soil, covered with coarse grass. Much of it is open parkland, attractive in appearance to settlers from the United Kingdom, but offering a stubborn resistance to all but the strongest ploughs and harrows. The soil is not rich and is deficient in lime. The settlers endeavoured to remedy this deficiency by the burning of shells to make lime-manure, but this was only possible in the neighbourhood of the beach. Those who undertook hopefully to raise cereals to which they were accustomed found that rust destroyed the wheat, whilst the phenomenal growth of weeds strangled nearly every

crop. The land was no better suited for stock. Owing to the constant humidity, the grass could never be properly burned, and the ravages of ticks and other parasitic insects could not be controlled. Alluvial soil is rare and quickly reveals signs of exhaustion.

In the late 'forties it was thought that the coastal regions could sustain a dense population. They were relatively well supplied with water, and cotton, coffee, tobacco and indigo could all be seen growing in tiny patches in gardens on the Berea or to the north of the Umgeni River. It was not known what success would attend their cultivation for purposes of export. An initial problem was wise selection of sites for experimental cultivation. Settlers soon learned to avoid the low-lying valleys, especially for the coffee plant; but on the exposed ridges it was difficult to afford shelter, unless strips of bush had been left unfelled. Most of the coastal district contained good fertile land, but it was interspersed with rocky, barren tracts. Even in the 'fifties the menace of soil erosion was understood. The granite rocks did not readily absorb moisture. Rain flowed over the surface of the land, washing away the soil and hollowing out deep gulleys.

Men like George Macleroy were quick to discern that cultivation of the soil had never been seriously intended, but only the production of samples as a means of advertising the capabilities of the land. Beans alone had been produced for export, to meet the demand in the Mauritius market. Durban merchants made their living from Zulu trading, and by sending wagons loaded with imported goods to the Orange River Sovereignty, whence the return journey was made with ivory, cattle or horses.

Among the settlers from the United Kingdom there were several who had resided in the West Indies and had some acquaintance with tropical and sub-tropical products. Robert W. Plant, who emigrated with his wife and children on the *Lady Bruce*, brought to Natal from Kew Gardens the first tea plants. He had some knowledge of the preparation of the leaf;

and in 1862 tea from seed planted by his wife was sent home to the exhibition in London. But there were many obstacles to be overcome. Though Natal's winter season gave rest to the plant, ensuring a good yield when fully grown, the shrub was of very slow growth and outlay of capital without return for several years was inevitable. In Natal it reached maturity only some eight years after planting. The general adaptability of tea to the soil and climate of Natal was understood as early as 1851, and confirmed three years later by the Java planter, W. van Prehn.¹ But the early planters could not afford to wait for a profitable return. Some experiments were made, sufficient at any rate to indicate that the industry would be extremely profitable when once established. Good Assam seed was imported in 1877 by James Brickhill, manager of the Durban branch of the Natal Bank, who had emigrated on the *Herald*. Brickhill was without experience of the plant, but his employment as banker brought him into contact with Calcutta, and it was through an agent in that city that the Assam seed was procured. The enterprise remained a small-scale affair until it was taken up, in the 'eighties, by James Liege Hulett, son of a schoolmaster in the county of Kent, who had come to Natal in 1857. The Hulett Company dates from 1892, and before the close of the century annual production for the colony exceeded one million pounds.

Byrne's emigrants had been advised to concentrate on cotton. Their first reports were enthusiastic enough to satisfy even Byrne. Cotton was to be found growing wild in abundance.² Whereas in the southern states of America it was an annual, in Natal it was a perennial plant, though not indigenous. Alfred Southam, the Manchester merchant, had successfully grown sea-island cotton resembling silk in quality and nearly three inches long in the staple.³ Though labour was

¹ The *D'Urban Advocate*, 24 Oct. 1851. For van Prehn's observations, see A. Coqui: *Practical Remarks on the Colony of Natal*, London, 1857.

² The *Glasgow Herald*, 3 Dec. 1849.

³ A. Southam to Council of Cotton Supply Association, 14 May 1857. C.O. 179,49.

uncertain, the plant required very little attention. Settlers noted hopefully that those who had succeeded, including Jung and Bergtheil's manager, Brooker, had been without previous experience of cotton. These first impressions were unduly optimistic. Edmund Morewood was abandoning cotton for the sugar-cane; Chiappini was converting his Tongaat estate to the production of maize; and Ralph Clarence on the Umgeni was doing no more than clearing his costs.

Lancashire men, as was to be expected, were prominent among those who made serious attempts to overcome the initial difficulties. Apart from John Galloway and Alfred Southam, who had come to Natal in 1848, there were Joseph Few and his brother, John Ecroyd on the Umhloti, and F. Fuller, emigrant on the *King William*. Southam had sold his estate at Isipingo in 1849 to Sydney Platt.

Planters in Natal lacked the capital and the facilities to ship cotton on their own account. When John Baseley, the ex-railway surveyor, proposed to cultivate cotton at Richmond, he discovered that the cost of transport to the Bay would render the enterprise unremunerative. In individual cases good yields were obtained as far inland as forty miles but the cotton could only be disposed of in the seed (i.e. uncleaned) at 1*d.* per lb. Brooker was really in the position of a tenant. With no capital resources of his own, he was obliged to dispose of his crop through the agency of Jung and Bergtheil, who paid him an advance of 1*d.* per lb. and sold his bales on the Liverpool Exchange. The difficulty of lack of purchasers in Natal was to some extent overcome when John L. Feilden announced in January 1851 that he was prepared to buy cotton, and had purchased land on the Bay for the erection of buildings where it could be cleaned and packed for shipment by hydraulic pressure. Some of Byrne's settlers arrived with their own machinery for cleaning and packing. Feilden hoped to erect gins at Verulam and Richmond; and in May he applied for permission to build a wharf and warehouse at the foot of the Bluff so that the heavy expense

of landing goods in small boats at a rate of 40s. per ton could be avoided.¹

Settlers had been led to expect that Bantu labour would be both cheap and abundant. Feilden found no difficulty with labour in the early stages. But the work, though not continuous and involving no great physical strain, required men to be constantly in the fields ready to pick the pods as they ripened. In the wet season the rapid growth of weeds added to the anxieties of the planter. Parasitic pests appeared in the early 'fifties with the advent of the bollworm, which fed on the seed pod, whilst the jassid bug attacked the under side of the leaf. Bollworm is produced by the deposit in the folds of the cotton flower of the larvae of night moths; and it was found that the spring planting of mealies among the cotton served as a decoy to the moth, provided that they were not allowed to ripen.

The cotton grown by Brooker was from upland seed, of a creamy shade and short in the staple. It was produced on elevated land of no great fertility but free from frost. Neither Jung nor Brooker believed that the best sea-island cotton could be grown with success in Natal. It required good soil out of reach of floods and yet in a low sheltered position. It was injured by high winds and the expense of cleaning was relatively high. Most of the early samples sent home in the 'forties were yellow-brown in colour. John Galloway found it possible to improve both the colour and the evenness of the cotton by using white Orleans fibre. His bales of the year 1848 were fine, strong and some two inches long in the staple. The popular sea-island grade was eventually produced on the deep red sandy soil parallel to the coast and in the neighbourhood of the Umhloti. South of the Bay, Michael Jeffels, son of a rural parson who had emigrated with his wife on the *Sovereign*, and others on the Isipingo River planted in the main Green seed, obtained from Mauritius. Ecroyd was not successful with white Orleans. But by planting his cotton among crops of

¹ *Memorial*, 2 May 1851, of J. L. Feilden.

potato and maize he made a qualified success with both Green seed and sea-island, finding, in the latter case, that five pounds of seed were required to produce one of clean cotton.

The usual method of cultivation in the 'fifties was, after ploughing the land, to introduce Indian corn (maize), taking perhaps two crops before the cotton seed was sown. The hoe was used freely to keep down weeds and prevent undue evaporation of moisture in the soil, but the necessity for thinning out after sowing was not fully realised. The plant normally made its appearance within three days, and the first crop might be ready for picking in four months. A second from fresh shoots could be expected after a similar period. In Natal the plant thrived for five or six years. The trees were frequently planted too closely together; and, unless they were pruned and kept clear of undergrowth, the warmth of the sun's rays and the necessary moisture would not penetrate to the roots.

Feilden found that the yield of an acre of good soil was approximately 2000 lb. of raw cotton. In a cleaned condition, this would represent two bags of some 330 lb. Galloway and the American missionary, Aldin Grout, both calculated on the basis of 600 lb. to the acre. Much of the land, however, was inferior in quality or situation. In his best year as a cotton-planter, Ralph Clarence obtained 3300 lb. of clean cotton from an estate of ten acres.¹

The first twenty bales of Natal cotton grown by the new settlers were despatched to England in the *Amazon*, which left the Port on 5 February 1851. Small quantities of a very fair quality continued to be exported in the years immediately following. But maize, Zulu trading in ivory and cattle, and transport-riding proved to be much more certain sources of commercial profit. The uncertainty of labour supply accentuated the disadvantages of the planter. By 1857 cotton had been virtually abandoned as a European enterprise. Alfred

¹ J. S. Christopher: *Natal*; E. W. Feilden: *My African Home*. The *D'Urban Observer*, 9 Jan. 1852.

Southam had suggested that the native population should be instructed in its cultivation and encouraged to grow the plant by the acceptance of cotton in payment of hut tax. John Scott, who arrived in 1856 from Labuan to succeed Benjamin Pine as lieutenant-governor, found that Shepstone approved of the experiment. He accordingly procured from America seeds of several varieties cultivated in the southern states and provided, out of the £5000 reserved for native needs, funds to finance a scheme of industrial training. When, in 1857, the Cape government asked for quantities of cotton seed to be sent from Natal, one bag was obtained from Bishop Colenso, 'the only person here who possesses any'.¹ Colenso's farm manager at Bishopstowe had made experiments with sea-island cotton as early as 1856 on the understanding that cotton would be accepted in payment of tax, and similar small undertakings were conspicuous on mission lands in the coastal regions. Scott and Shepstone utilised a portion of the annual reserved revenue to buy ploughs, the cost price of which was to be refunded by natives in the form of cotton grown by themselves. In 1859 the American missionary, H. A. Wilder, received £50 to construct a watercourse for his mill and a further £20 to purchase a cotton gin worked by the water.² Despite criticism from elected members of the legislative council, who feared that these measures would make the Bantu less dependent on European employment, the colonial government persisted in its plans to give industrial training to intelligent natives and to distribute cotton seed to the locations.³

In the long run, little success attended these efforts. On some locations natives destroyed the plants, alleging that the government had given less than the promised payment. Official returns showed cotton to the value of only £17 among the colonial exports of the year 1860.

¹ P. Allen to Secretary to Cape government, 10 Sept. 1857. Foreign Governments and Natal, 1857 (C.A.).

² J. Scott to Secretary of State, 31 Dec. 1859. C.O. 179/53.

³ A grant was made to assist Colenso to secure the training under Pietermaritzburg master-tradesmen of suitable natives. C.O. 179/53.

The civil war in the United States, producing a sudden and complete stoppage of supplies of American cotton to the Lancashire mills and trebling the price of what could be obtained from India and other sources, led to a temporary revival of cultivation in Natal. Two thousand five hundred and eighty acres were under cotton in the critical year 1864. This was largely the outcome of the formation in London of a company which acquired land and sent out up-to-date machinery. The Cotton Plantation Company operated in several parts of the colony, but chiefly in Weenen county and on the coast, using a Fowler steam-plough, Platt roller-gins worked by steam power and hydraulic cotton-presses. Its insolvency in 1870 was brought about by the ravages of fly and of the boll-worm; but the resumption of American supplies and the big fall in prices were contributory factors.¹ Pioneers in the 'sixties had shown that the dry valleys of the midlands were suitable for cotton. The yield per acre in the Umkomaas valley, where John D. Conyngham was the principal planter, was in excess of 500 lb. of clean cotton. Cecil Rhodes worked for some months with his brother, Herbert, on a small plantation. But cultivation was virtually brought to an end by the bollworm in 1871. Cotton was now only grown to rest the land after other crops such as coffee or sugar had been taken. Cultivation on a serious scale was not resumed, except for an experiment (1893-6) in the valley of the lower Umzimkhulu, until the twentieth century.

Byrne, Christopher and Morewood had all drawn the attention of their emigrants to the potentialities of indigo. There was a good market in Yorkshire and Lancashire, where increasing quantities were required to dye cotton and wool materials. India had been the principal source of supply; but, after the 'forties Indian labour was attracted to the more profitable cultivation of rice. Indigo was found to be indigenous in Natal; and since the plant requires ample moisture, it flourished particularly in the mist-belt area of the *houtboschrand*.

¹ *The Times of Natal*, 27 Aug. 1870, and 8 Oct. 1870. C.O. 179/68.

W. R. S. Wilson earned the appellation 'Indigo Wilson' for the attention which he gave to its cultivation in the 'fifties. Van Prehn was of opinion that the Natal variety gave a larger yield than Javanese indigo. He and his colleague, J. Colenbrander, made a large capital outlay in the planting of indigo at Pinetown and later on the Umlhali, and their example was followed by some of Byrne's settlers. In the 'sixties, however, the market for indigo was ruined by the development of synthetic dyestuffs.

Arrowroot was a popular crop with settlers on account of the relative simplicity of the processes of production. It was brought from Mauritius by E. F. Rathbone and cultivated at 'Compensation'. At much the same time Mark McKen, emigrant on *Emily*, introduced a single plant which he had procured from Kew Gardens in the confident expectation that arrowroot would become an important article of export.¹ No expensive machinery was required. Settlers used zinc graters to scrape the tuber, exposing the granulated powder on calico trays to the rays of the sun. The demand in the United Kingdom, however, was limited; and when the market became overstocked, production declined. It continued to be a small item in colonial exports and, in 1870, nearly 400 acres were still under arrowroot.

Tobacco was grown, largely for the local manufacture of snuff, though small quantities were exported to the Cape. The first man to grow flax was James Kinghurst, who came to Natal in 1850 and settled at Uys Doorns. As a boy of seventeen, he had been in the naval engagement at Navarino, when the Turkish fleet had been destroyed (1827) by Admiral Codrington. Thomas Goodwill, one of Boast's sturdy Yorkshire settlers, had two acres under flax on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg in the middle 'sixties, and a small mill was set up to crush the bolls. But export was on an infinitesimal scale, and cultivation disappeared in the difficult years of depression at the end of the decade. Crops of Bombay linseed were nevertheless

¹ W. C. Holden: *History of Colony of Natal*, p. 276.

reaped by the Scotsman, John Smith, on his Fox Hill farm fetching a good price in England in the year 1871.

Before the arrival of Byrne's first batch of settlers, the paw-paw had been introduced by the widow of an Army officer, Mrs Bowen, who had spent some years in South America. The Brazilian red banana and the smooth-leaved pineapple seem to have been brought to the colony by William Middleton, who twice made voyages in sailing-ships round the world. The commoner pineapple was imported from Mauritius in 1847. A considerable variety of sub-tropical fruits and plants arrived with Mark McKen from Kew Gardens.

Settlers who had spent some years in Jamaica knew that the coffee plant matured in elevated and relatively cold regions, as well as in the warmer parts of low altitude. Gently sloping hill-sides with well-drained subsoil represented the ideal situation, especially if shelter could be afforded from prevailing winds. Leonard Wray, who edited the short-lived *D'Urban Observer*, advised emigrants to plant in the rainy season in prepared holes, lined with vegetable manure and affording shade without excluding light and air.

Early experiments were on the dark red soil of the Berea hills. The wood was burned off and, as stones were relatively absent, little energy was required in clearing the land. Quick returns were combined with light labour costs. On the Berea the Durban auctioneer, Samuel Beningsfield, was the original pioneer. But Edward Philipps and George Marcus provided the expert knowledge. Marcus's skill was based on the experience of several years on plantations in Jamaica and Ceylon. Edward Philipps, son of an Albany settler, came to Natal in the *Flora* and took up land at Claremont. Here, in partnership with W. H. Middleton, he experimented with several varieties, finding that seed from Ceylon was not adapted to conditions in Natal, and that the shelter provided by leaving large trees standing on the ground deprived the plants of necessary heat and light. He accordingly selected rich, well-drained soil, left a belt of natural bush every 300 yards, intending

ultimately to replace this by orange trees, and placed the plants in regular rows nine feet apart, to facilitate hoeing. Returns were forthcoming after the third year, giving some nine per cent on invested capital.¹ In 1856 van Prehn turned from indigo to coffee, which he had grown in Java, selecting an estate on the Umlilali.

Heavy crops in the early years accentuated the disappointment when the coffee on the red soil of the bush-covered hills began to die away in patches. It was difficult to provide shelter. The dry windy weather which often follows the humid summer caused the plant to fall away just when it most needed rest. On the gravel soil at Riet vlei the plants fared better.

The moisture, and still more the frost, of the valleys was equally fatal. Colenbrander attributed the decay of the coffee industry to exhaustion of the red soil and the scarcity of loam.² Promising crops had been grown at considerable altitudes, even without irrigation,³ but nowhere over an extended period of years. 1868 was a good year, with over 3000 acres under coffee and prices on the London market reaching 84s. a hundredweight, equivalent in value to the best Ceylon coffee. At this period the most successful planter was a Byrne settler, William Lister, on his Red Hill estate.⁴ This prosperity culminated in the production of over one million pounds of coffee in the year 1870, despite loss of population to the diamond diggings. Production fell off sharply after 1873, when 4800 acres were still under coffee. This was due in the main to the advent of parasitic pests. The borer-beetle, which had ruined the industry in many parts of southern India, made its appearance in Victoria county and soon spread to every estate. Its prevalence was attributed to

¹ A. Coqui: *Practical Remarks on the Colony of Natal*. London, 1857.

² See his statement, reviewing the experience of the previous decade in the *Natal Mercury*, October 1875.

³ Coffee was grown by W. E. Blackburn at 'Broadleaze', four miles from Pietermaritzburg, in 1867.

⁴ *The Natal Herald*, 11 June 1868.

lessened vigour of the trees, which had suffered from drought and soil exhaustion.¹ The borer had not touched younger trees at Ifafa and the Umzimkhulu, and it was recommended that fresh seed, of the Bourbon or Jamaica variety, should be procured.

No doubt the large profits of the early years, when as much as twenty hundredweight of cleaned coffee had been gathered from an acre, had created over-sanguine expectations. The land had not been kept in good condition by systematic manuring from the start. In the late 'seventies sugar was fetching high prices, and in their disappointment planters rooted out the coffee trees and planted cane. A little was grown in subsequent years for local consumption, coffee selling retail at Durban for 1s. 3d. per lb.

Nathaniel Isaacs came across sugar-cane growing wild in Natal and assumed it to be indigenous. Nevertheless, so rapid had been the expansion of neighbouring Mauritius as a sugar producer (its output in the middle 'forties almost equalling that of the much larger island of Jamaica) that Byrne counselled his emigrants not to embark on its cultivation.

The climate of Natal, neither so warm nor so moist as that of Mauritius, was not indeed so favourable to sugar. Only the coastal belt, warmed to an average temperature of seventy-seven degrees by the Mozambique current, is really suitable, and even here the cane matures more slowly. On the other hand, since the soil was less stony, the plough could be used to a greater extent. Adolphe de Terrason and E. F. Rathbone, who came to Natal from Mauritius, both pronounced Natal's prospects to be equal to those of the island colony, where the soil was to some extent exhausted and required to be fertilised by guano. Rathbone considered that the saccharine content of Mauritius cane was less than that of cane cut on Morewood's estate at 'Compensation'. And Thomas Lewis, who had worked on a sugar estate in Jamaica for close on twenty years, believed

¹ *Report*, July 1881, of the Cotton Cultivation Commission, printed in the *Natal Almanac*, 1882, pp. 155-62.

that cane planted on the coastlands would mature in sixteen months, compared with fourteen in Jamaica, and produce approximately three tons to the acre.¹

Edmund Morewood has generally been regarded as the pioneer of sugar cultivation in South Africa. Distinction should, however, be made between cultivation of the cane and manufacture of the sugar. It was on Morewood's initiative that cane was introduced from Mauritius. It was procured by Tom and Henry Milner on Morewood's order.² Probably the original suggestion was that of Rathbone. Appreciating the difficult labour problem of the Cotton Company, Rathbone had advised recourse to sugar on the ground that the sweetness of the cane would attract Zulu labourers. The company, fearing forfeiture of its land, refused to abandon cotton, but it permitted Rathbone in February 1849 to make experiments with cane on five acres close to the Umhloti. The cane, grown with the assistance of four Indians brought from Mauritius (apparently the first Asiatics to work among cane in Natal), was given by Rathbone to Morewood to be replanted at 'Compensation', whilst Rathbone himself proceeded to Mauritius, bringing back with him on the *Flora* twenty-five new settlers, desirous of cultivating sugar on the cheap land of Natal where hurricanes were rare and cattle procurable on easy terms.

Advised and assisted as he was by men from Mauritius, Morewood is nevertheless entitled to the credit of having introduced into Natal serious cultivation of the sugar-cane. On the other hand, his attempt to manufacture sugar was insignificant. George Marcus, the ex-West Indian planter, an emigrant on Byrne's ship *Alival*, and Michael Jeffels, who

¹ The *Natal Independent*, 8 July 1852. W. C. Holden: *History of Colony of Natal*, pp. 302-4.

² George Lamond definitely gives the credit to Morewood, rather than the Milner brothers. Lamond to Colonial Secretary, 8 Oct. 1858. G.H. 337 (N.A.). But Rathbone saw patches of cane growing near Durban on land belonging to the Milners, at a time (1848) when Morewood was managing the Cotton Company's land; the *Natal Mercury*, 30 June 1859.

sailed in the *Sovereign*, were the real pioneers in all the processes of manufacture.

Morewood had limited capital resources, but much enterprise and pertinacity. His estate at 'Compensation', later 'Albert', some thirty-five miles north-east of the Bay, was very imperfectly equipped. For crushing the cane, he employed two rollers, eighteen inches in length, hewn from an old mast. Four long arms, attached to this simple 'mill', were turned by human power, natives pushing at the end of each pole. Ox power was substituted within a few years. When crushed, the cane yielded from 65 to 70 lb. of juice to every 100 lb. of cane. After boiling, it was placed in pans to cool and the molasses run off. McKen, who helped Morewood in the boiling-shed, calculated that they were obtaining 110 lb. of dark-coloured sugar and 60 lb. of molasses from 100 gallons of liquor.¹

Early in 1852, Peter Zohrab, a Londoner who had come to Natal in the *Ballengeich*, sent samples, thus primitively manufactured by Morewood, to Ingram Travers, a City merchant. Travers delivered them for testing to the refiner, John Fairrie, by whom they were pronounced equal in quality to ordinary Berbice sugar. But by this time Morewood was in financial difficulties. Very little sugar was manufactured at 'Compensation'.² The molasses was sent to Durban and disposed of by retail sale.

Morewood's competitors in the early 'fifties similarly relied on crushing machinery operated by cattle. Teams of oxen kept rollers perpetually revolving, cane being fed into the machine by hand. The expressed juice was usually conveyed along zinc gutters into the boiling-shed, where large iron pots were used. The operation of drying was performed by simply

¹ For the experiments at 'Compensation', see E. Morewood: *Description of the Farm 'Compensation'*, 1853: the *Natal Independent*, 8 July and 26 Aug. 1852; and Holden: *op. cit.*

² Edmund Drummond, master mariner, in whose ship the naturalists, Delagorgue and Wahlberg, had visited Natal in 1841, claimed to have actually manufactured Morewood's first lot of sugar at 'Compensation'.

spreading the 'green' sugar in the sun. For planting the cane, ploughing was not considered to be necessary, holes being dug in the cleared ground by hand.

Rivalling 'Compensation' at this time was the Springfield land run jointly by Henry Milner and J. B. Miller. From this estate came the first sugar put up to auction by Robert Acutt (23 June 1854) on the market square at Durban. Morewood had already left Natal for Brazil. His operations had been on too small a scale for commercial success, and he could not hope to increase his output with the primitive appliances at his disposal. But in 1855 Barron, an engineer serving the Mauritius estates, brought a small steam-engine, which he erected on the land at Springfield. Fuel was obtainable from the coal which outcropped at several points on the north coast. A centrifugal machine to convert the syrup into dried sugar was at the same time installed. It was now possible to carry out all the various processes from crushing of the cane to manufacture of the sugar in a matter of twenty-four hours. Milner and his partner clearly hoped to provide a central factory which would be utilised by growers along the entire coastal belt. Miller began to instal tenants on his Umhlali land, and among those now induced to take up cultivation of the cane were many who had come out from the United Kingdom under one or other of the emigration schemes. Apart from Marcus and Jeffels, there were Alexander Maclean and his brother on the Umhlali; the Scot, William Joyner, a *Conquering Hero* emigrant, near the Umkomaas; Robert Mack, the Norfolk farmer, and his two sons at Isipingo; David Sparks from Ipswich, who had come out on the *Ballengeich* with Zohrab, at Springfield; Robert Babbs, fellow passenger with Charles Barter on the *Globe*, at the Umlaas; and at Umzinto the bachelor Lewis Reynolds, keen colonial volunteer, who had emigrated to Natal on the *Justina*.

The time had evidently come to separate the process of manufacture from that of cultivation of the cane. Though some settlers, for instance, the indomitable Robert Mack, proposed to

manufacture his sugar in his own mill, the majority preferred to concentrate on good tillage, delivering the cut cane to a central mill and taking one-half of the net proceeds. In this way they avoided expenditure on buildings, machinery and the labour required in the actual manufacture of the sugar, and became rent-paying tenants, able to devote all their energies to efficient cultivation.

By 1861 the lead had passed to Isipingo, where Michael Jeffels had erected a slightly more up-to-date crushing mill. Some 1270 acres were here under a species of cane known as 'Green Natal'. All the early steam-mills were indeed primitive affairs, with three horizontal rollers of small dimensions. In the centrifugal machine the molasses was forced through the perforated walls of a revolving cylinder and escaped through an open spout into a basin. The resulting (unrefined) sugar was brown in colour and might fetch 20s. a hundred-weight on the colonial market. Some of the more elaborate mills of the late 'fifties endeavoured to cater for all the mechanical needs of the cultivator. Treatment of the juice and conversion of the syrup into sugar took place on the ground floor. The cane was crushed in a compartment above, whilst an additional storey was provided where the grinding could be effected of all sorts of cereals grown for consumption on the estates. There might even be a rum distillery.¹

An important landmark was adoption of the vacuum pan process. The juice, after boiling, was forced into the vacuum pan, where it was thickened to the consistency of toffee before being passed through revolving centrifugals worked by steam. When the syrup had percolated through this machine, dry and perfectly white sugar was obtained. The molasses was reboiled and again subjected to the process. The first vacuum pan in use in Natal, manufactured by Pontifex and Wood, was installed on Ralph Clarence's estate, 'Clare'. By the close of the 'sixties its introduction was widespread, though on some

¹ 'A Week's Canter Northwards', in *Cape Monthly Magazine* (1859), see also 'A Month's Trip to Natal' by A. Douglas, in vol. xiii (1876).

of the smaller estates, which could not afford the expenditure involved, treatment of the juice remained amazingly primitive.

The vacuum pan process, by reason of its capital cost, encouraged the process of consolidation of estates. In the early 'fifties a Natal sugar company had been projected, in the confident hope that the authorities would make a grant to it of 20,000 acres of the Umlazi location. Its chairman was X. R. Breede, who had come to Natal on the *John Line*, and the new settlers were strongly represented on its provisional committee. The Secretary of State, however, refused to re-establish the system of free land grants, pointing out that a company which could not afford to make the outlay of £4000 required to purchase the land at the prevailing price was unlikely to succeed in its proposed undertaking.¹ Other companies operated for some years, without enjoying privileges from the Crown. Among them were the Umzinto Company, and the Springfield Company, which suffered such heavy losses in the disastrous Umgeni floods of April 1856. But centralisation came slowly. Bad communications made it costly to transport cane to a distant factory. Moreover, cane, once cut, deteriorates rapidly and many planters found it more profitable to do their own crushing, obviating the possibilities of delay at the factory.

The problem of labour had been solved by the decision to follow the example of British Guiana and Mauritius in importing indentured servants from the East. The early settlers were by no means unanimous as to the wisdom of this step. The first dark-skinned labourers to be imported for work on the sugar fields were a handful of Creoles from Mauritius; but Morewood got on very well with Zulu assistants. Most of the planters found that Zulus rarely worked continuously and were constitutionally incapable of appreciating the terms of a European labour contract. When it came to cutting of the crop, continuous labour was essential, and it was very difficult

¹ *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1853, lxii (1697), pp. 101-2, 139. The Company's prospectus, 23 Feb. 1853, is to be found in C.S.O. 54, no. 20.

to obtain this from tribesmen whose manner of life for many generations had been that of the pastoralist and hunter. Leonard Wray, who had spent some years in Malacca, preferred Chinese workers who in the Malay states earned 15s. to 16s. a month.¹ Some Chinese and Malay servants were actually brought to Natal by Crawford, manager of the Umzinto Company, on his return in February 1858 from Java. Characteristically enough, J. C. Byrne warmly advocated introduction on a large scale of indentured labour, either from Madras or from Madagascar. This point of view was urged by most of the absentee owners of Natal land, who gave some thought to developing the economic resources of the colony, but none at all to the character of the social problems which such an immigration was likely to produce. When the matter was debated in the legislative council, the majority of the elected members was not in favour of the employment of public funds; but a select committee, presided over by Byrne's former surveyor, John Moreland, was prepared to recommend negotiations with the government of India to secure permission to proprietors to make their own arrangements.² It was eventually decided, in a moment of unguarded optimism, to make the project a public measure, sending an official agent to Calcutta to engage coolies there and at Madras, and following closely the local ordinances adopted by West Indian legislatures. From 1860, when the first shiploads arrived, until 1911 the sugar industry depended upon indentured service, and its difficult times were, for the most part, those years when permission to recruit in India was temporarily withdrawn. The industry of the first batch of Indians pushed up the acreage under cane to 8980 in 1862. Sugar mills numbered nearly forty, and good land on the coast was fetching 50s. an acre. The first shipment of sugar from Durban had been in 1854, but this was a sample shipment of little more than a

¹ *The Cape Town Mail*, 15 April 1851.

² Select Committee Report, 21 April 1857, in G.H. 337. Correspondence, 1852-8.

hundredweight. But in March 1860 the *Henrietta* left the Port with some 230 tons of manufactured sugar. The early 'sixties were indeed prosperous years, with output mounting, before the close of the decade, to nearly 10,000 tons.

Morewood's experiments had been with Bourbon cane, imported from Mauritius. The variety known as 'Green Natal' was popularised by Michael Jeffels, and may have been related to the indigenous cane discovered by Isaacs in the 'twenties. It was found to exhaust the soil with disconcerting rapidity, and it was customary to alternate planting with the less productive China cane. Disease made its appearance in the 'sixties, attacking both 'Green' and China cane, the borer pest in particular playing havoc with the crops. Not until 1883 was a variety found which was suited to the climate and resistant to disease. This was the Uba strain, introduced from Calcutta by a member of the well-known Anglo-Jewish family of de Pass. Daniel, son of Aaron de Pass, merchant and ship-owner at Cape Town since 1846, bought the 'Réunion' estate in 1867 and equipped it with the most up-to-date machinery, including a vacuum pan. His success with Uba followed many years of experiment with varieties, most of which were brought from Mauritius or Bourbon. At a later date Uba proved to be immune from the formidable mosaic disease. The average yield per acre was, in the nineteenth century, not particularly high, averaging one-and-a-half tons of sugar on an acre of reasonably good land. In the long run, the original Uba succumbed to disease, but the pathological department of the Natal herbarium, organised by Dr Pole Evans, succeeded in 1915 in finding a virus-resistant strain. This made it possible for the industry to supply the consumption demands of the other provinces within a decade after Union.

The 1849-51 settlers played a noteworthy part in development of the sugar industry. Many of the original pioneers have been mentioned. In the later stages, when Natal's sugar had to meet formidable competition in oversea markets, gifts of organisation were required. The fortunes of the Campbell

family bridge the two periods. William Campbell turned from arrowroot to cane at the end of the 'fifties. By the year 1861 his 'Muckleneuk' estate was well equipped with crushing machinery imported from Glasgow. His son, Marshall, an infant when the *Conquering Hero* slipped its moorings at the Broomielaw, inherited the 'Muckleneuk' enterprise, and became eventually manager of the Natal Estates. Lawrence Platt, from the industrial West Riding, was similarly followed on his sugar estates at Isipingo by his son, Alfred, and in due course his grandson, Cecil Platt. The firm of Hulett's Sugar Refineries was brought into existence through the energy and business acumen of Sir Liege Hulett, who came to Natal only in 1857; but grandsons of the early settlers sat on the directorate. The Mount Edgecombe factory, which dates from the years immediately preceding the Zulu war, owes much to the experience of trained men who came from Mauritius, among them Alfred Dumat and the Labistours. But the pioneer work at Mount Edgecombe was done by Henry Smerdon. On the Umhloti two emigrants from the *Sovereign*, Joseph Jee and Matthew Barr, helped to lay the foundations of the industry. Among the Wesleyans on *King William*, there were some notable pioneers, John C. Blamey on the Umvoti and H. F. Fynney at the Tongaat.

The coastlands were too hot and too moist for the type of agriculture which farmers had practised in Britain. With land cheap and natives bringing in cattle in payment of hut tax, settlers expected to do well. The beasts could be permitted to forage for themselves, whilst native labour appeared to be absurdly cheap. Unhappy experience soon showed that, though potatoes, oats and maize grew well if the land was manured, cattle could only with infinite risk and trouble be kraaled to provide the manure. Ticks in the sour grass were a trial of a totally unfamiliar nature. The small Zulu cows might be cheap but they yielded little or no milk. When slaughtered, beef could be sold for no more than 2d. per lb. Foot-and-mouth disease appeared among the cattle in 1852-3,

though the majority recovered. The much more devastating onset of lung sickness came in 1854.

A little wheat was grown experimentally, R. B. Willey, *Wanderer* emigrant, sending specimens to the agricultural show in Durban on New Year's Day, 1855. But he soon turned to cotton. Rust and locusts ruined many crops, but not the Algerian and Cape oats, which did well at Pinetown. Bergtheil's German settlers had some success with rye, potatoes, beans and mealies, but not with wheat, which succumbed to rust. Buckwheat gave them in good years three crops annually. The chief difficulty was the phenomenal growth of weeds, and here settlers learned to depend largely on their own industry. For, though native labour was inexpensive, it was quite untrustworthy. Experienced as cattle-herds, Zulus had little interest in cultivation of the soil. Continuous and repetitive labour was uncongenial.

Every kind of cultivation was prejudiced by the poverty of communications. In the early 'fifties, except for the main road to the capital, which was kept in some sort of order by the surveyor-general, communications scarcely existed. 'Roads' were wagon tracks across the veld, and rivers were unbridged, though pontoons might be provided at some of the important crossings. Lieutenant-Governor Pine, when he wished personally to inspect the Zulu border agency at the Tugela, was obliged to swim three rivers before he could reach his destination.

A major disaster for many years was the inability to keep open a secure crossing of the harbour bar. The outer roadstead gave good anchorage and was safe enough for ships well found in anchors and cables, except when a strong easterly gale was blowing. The almost land-locked sheet of water, home of innumerable wild-fowl, which constituted the inner harbour was entered by a narrow channel close under the Bluff. Masses of sand had accumulated to form a bank or bar which impeded entrance. The tide ebbing and flowing was not sufficiently strong to clear away this bank; and early projects

for improving the harbour rested on plans to strengthen the current, either by increasing the volume of water or constructing works to confine the channel and so provide an effective scour. If, for instance, the Umgeni could be made to discharge itself into the Bay, a current strong enough altogether to sweep away the bar might be created. Should this be impracticable, the harbour might yet be improved by such works as would utilise the natural scour provided by the waters of the two small streams which flowed into the Bay at its upper extremity.

Fortunately, the emigration of 1849-51 brought to Natal an engineer of no small experience and ingenuity. John Milne, 'Old Mortality Milne' as he was affectionately called, came to the colony in November 1849 in Byrne's ship *Dreadnought*. Since he was then fifty years of age, his passage was not approved by the emigration commissioners. An Edinburgh man and an associate of John Rennie, he had no desire to farm twenty acres of land. Within a month he had received a commission from the government to do what he could to arrest encroachment of the sea on the customs house and the back beach. But the larger problem was soon brought to his notice, and in May he could write to friends: 'I am engaged by government as engineer for the harbour here.'¹

Accustomed as he was to work with ample materials under men of the calibre of John Rennie, it was a sore trial to be obliged to rely on makeshift contrivances. The public finances did not admit of harbour works of solid masonry. To narrow the channel and bring to bear on the troublesome sand-bank the greatest possible momentum of tidal waters, he originally projected two piers. For the north pier, of which some 500 feet were completed by Milne, stone was quarried on the Bluff and brought to the jetty along a tram-line constructed of milkwood rails, ox power being employed to draw the trucks. The stone was dressed and, under Milne's superintendence,

¹ The *North British Mail*, 9 Nov. 1850. His (provisional) appointment as resident engineer was not made until 1852. C.O. 179/49.

placed in position by two of the new settlers, Richard Godden, from the *King William*, and the same William Campbell who was to plant cane at 'Muckleneuk'. The immediate problem of resisting the encroachment of the sea had to be solved by much more primitive means, and Milne erected groins of rubble and wattle-work to contain the drifting sand.

Milne's works were abandoned when John Scott was advised that they involved dangerous narrowing of the harbour entrance. Various projects were considered, and in the 'seventies the eminent harbour engineer, Sir John Coode, was called in to advise the government. His report adhered to principles on which John Milne had originally insisted. No radical solution of the problem of the harbour was found until the close of the century. But Milne's impromptu groins protected the low sandy Point, whilst his entrance works did temporarily increase the average depth of low water on the bar. His figure 'hovering over the sand dunes or lingering around the stone workings, dressed in a long nankeen coat and wearing a broad Manilla hat, from under which his grey hair and thoughtful face could be seen as he plodded, long walking-stick in hand, over his works or round the scorching Bluff', has been immortalised by his fellow-emigrant, George Russell.¹

The opening in 1860 of the small railway connecting the Point with Durban was of some importance to the mercantile community, especially after its extension to the Umgeni. But not until 1876 was work begun on a coastal line to link the sugar-estates with the Port.

There was little to attract the British settler in the Durban of 1850. If he were an artisan, he might find employment as carpenter or mason. In the early 'fifties the small population was in process of re-housing. So great was the initial demand for building materials that several of the new settlers were

¹ G. Russell: *History of Old Durban*, Durban, 1898, p. 261. For a concise account of the various harbour schemes, see *Proceedings of Information Concerning the Colony of Natal* (The War Office, 1879).

employed in their production. Some, such as the Yorkshireman John Daddy from the *Haidee*, had been bricklayers in the home country. Others had no such experience. C. H. Dawes, who had been a porter in the City of London, set up a kiln and made bricks. John Whipp, the Hull man, had intended to sell boots but his stock went down with the *Minerva*. Ill luck continued to haunt him, for marauding elephants destroyed his brickyard under the Berea.

Industrial Durban lay in the future. Wagon-building, furniture-making and boat-building employed mainly native labour. There were occasional jobs for millwrights, John Anderson from county Kirkcudbright building Henning's windmill, the sails of which first revolved to the coastal breezes in October 1852.

Wage rates in 1849 were 7s. a day for bricklayers and joiners, 6s. 6d. for masons, and 4s. 6d. for the unskilled labourer. Wood was used to burn the bricks and lime for the mortar procured from sea shells. There was little demand for better-class work, though George Willson, skilled carver and gilder, gradually established himself as a cabinet-maker, constructing the large frame of colonial woods that was sent home for the London Exhibition of 1862. By the year 1851 there was a superabundance of mechanics in both towns. Wages had fallen and men without capital were obliged to go from one kind of work to another. Edward Kermode, the Manxman, emigrant on Byrne's ship *Edward*, whose son was to write a readable book on Natal,¹ had to take a job discharging cargo at the Point before he could begin more congenial work as a baker. Those who possessed stock or capital were more fortunate. Richard Harwin, landing from the *Dreadnought*, opened a business, taking as his assistants two young men who were to rise to considerable eminence in the commercial world, Tom Harvey, West-country man on *British Tar*, and, later, Benjamin Greenacre. Settlers with wives and children able to contribute to the family income soon obtained a self-sufficiency,

¹ W. Kermode: *Natal*, 1882.

if they were industrious. Thomas Bond, Hackett's persistent agent, was a tailor, his wife a bonnet-manufacturer and corset-maker. At Pietermaritzburg also was the pastry cook, C. Clark, whose wife was a milliner. Clark hoped 'not merely to satisfy the eye with a large loaf, but also to please the palate with a sweet one for sixpence'.¹ Wages for women workers were a decided advance on those earned by London's 'distressed needlewomen'. Straw-bonnet makers and milliners made £2 a week.² Domestic servants living with the family might earn £25 per annum. It is clear, however, that too many of the settlers were small mechanics and shopkeepers and too few producers. Moreland complained that Durban had more than sixty retail stores. In one street at Pietermaritzburg, with a white population of only 1500, there were thirty-five shops.³

Native servants in the towns could command more than the 5s. a month earned by 'raw' Zulus. In Durban there was even some competition with the white settler from Hottentots and coloured men employed in some of the trades. Zulu grooms and household servants received up to 12s. with their keep. An ordinance (no. 2 of 1850) permitted masters to make deductions from wages for absence or neglect, whilst magistrates could order imprisonment or a whipping for 'misconduct'.

When bad times supervened, casual white labour could be engaged for 2s. 6d. a day. This rate held good as late as 1871, when current wages for unskilled European labourers were from 2s. to 3s., whilst native 'helpers' received, without food, 9d. to 1s.⁴

¹ *The Natal Witness*, 4 April 1851.

² *The British Banner*, 5 June 1850.

³ *The Natal Independent*, 11 March 1852.

⁴ *The Natal Almanac* for 1872, p. 198.

CHAPTER X

BRITISH FARMERS AND THE GRASS VELD OF NATAL

The greater part of Natal consists of elevated grassland interspersed with bush. Grass veld, with indigenous hardwood trees in the valleys, is characteristic of the country extending north-westward from Pietermaritzburg to the confining Drakensberg. The grass is coarse and often sour. In the summer its height will conceal a mounted man's saddle. It withers quickly in the dry season to a golden-brown hay. The soil on the elevated plateaux is shallow, often overlying volcanic rock, and unsuited to intensive cultivation. Under the berg, vegetation is short, scanty and poor, and the surface of short, wiry grass is broken by out-cropping granite. Though generally well-watered and adapted to stock-farming, midland and northern Natal contains little land that can be profitably cultivated by small farmers. 'I conceive', wrote Benjamin Pine,¹ 'that, taking the average of the whole district, not more than 200 acres out of every 6,000-acre farm are capable of being brought under tillage.'

Climatically, the coastal area can be said to include the neighbourhood of Pietermaritzburg. The conjunction to the south of Madagascar of the Mascarenhas' current with the equally warm Mozambique current causes a large volume of warm water to flow southward off the coast of Natal. Its influence is felt as far inland as the capital. Even at an elevation of over 2000 feet, bananas ripen on the slopes above Pietermaritzburg.

Trekker occupation, outside the villages, meant lonely farm-houses with tiny patches of cultivated ground in the midst of interminable grazing land. Cultivation was generally neglected, though late-comers who intended to make their

¹ Pine to Sir H. Smith, 11 Oct. 1851. *Brit. Parl. Pap.* lxii (1697), p. 20.

employed in their production. Some, such as the Yorkshireman John Daddy from the *Haidee*, had been bricklayers in the home country. Others had no such experience. C. H. Dawes, who had been a porter in the City of London, set up a kiln and made bricks. John Whipp, the Hull man, had intended to sell boots but his stock went down with the *Minerva*. Ill luck continued to haunt him, for marauding elephants destroyed his brickyard under the Berea.

Industrial Durban lay in the future. Wagon-building, furniture-making and boat-building employed mainly native labour. There were occasional jobs for millwrights, John Anderson from county Kirkcudbright building Henning's windmill, the sails of which first revolved to the coastal breezes in October 1852.

Wage rates in 1849 were 7s. a day for bricklayers and joiners, 6s. 6d. for masons, and 4s. 6d. for the unskilled labourer. Wood was used to burn the bricks and lime for the mortar procured from sea shells. There was little demand for better-class work, though George Willson, skilled carver and gilder, gradually established himself as a cabinet-maker, constructing the large frame of colonial woods that was sent home for the London Exhibition of 1862. By the year 1851 there was a superabundance of mechanics in both towns. Wages had fallen and men without capital were obliged to go from one kind of work to another. Edward Kermodé, the Manxman, emigrant on Byrne's ship *Edward*, whose son was to write a readable book on Natal,¹ had to take a job discharging cargo at the Point before he could begin more congenial work as a baker. Those who possessed stock or capital were more fortunate. Richard Harwin, landing from the *Dreadnought*, opened a business, taking as his assistants two young men who were to rise to considerable eminence in the commercial world, Tom Harvey, West-country man on *British Tar*, and, later, Benjamin Greenacre. Settlers with wives and children able to contribute to the family income soon obtained a self-sufficiency,

¹ W. Kermodé: *Natal*, 1882.

homes in Natal made some attempt at tillage. J. and W. H. Boshoff grew wheat (*klein koring*) at Riet vlei in the late 'forties. But the farming of the majority was almost entirely pastoral. Fruit and vegetables would be grown for consumption, but few 6000-acre farms would have more than a couple of acres under the plough. When the British settlers began to arrive in 1849, any number of farms were available on hire. But homesteads had fallen into dilapidation. In regard to agricultural undertakings, suitable crop rotations, manuring of the soil and irrigation, no estimates could be made, for no data were available.

Settlers who had farmed land in a progressive county thoroughly understood the advantages of mixed husbandry. They would be prepared to restore the fertility of soil exhausted by corn by a combination of cattle and fallow. Where the grass was poor, the manure might not be sufficient for both corn and grass, and the land would be allowed to lie fallow for a period. The agricultural improvements of the eighteenth century had largely consisted in adding to the traditional rotation root crops, artificial grasses and clover.

In Natal fundamental preconceptions might have to be revised. If land were allowed to lie fallow, a large crop of weeds would result, and much labour and expense would be involved in clearing the ground for another crop. Under the influence of the sub-tropical sun and of torrential rain the soil tended to cake. Settlers, when breaking up the ground, had to discover from experience to what depth it was desirable to plough under these circumstances.

Byrne's rivals had wisely permitted their agents considerable discretion in the purchase of land likely to suit the emigrants. Moreland, on the other hand, with no funds from his principal, was obliged to use his land orders to acquire Crown land; and, since many had been promised suburban allotments, to lay out on paper villages, such as Thornville and New Glasgow, which have never become populated centres.

Richmond and Byrne, on the other hand, were well selected.

Here emigrants from the *Edward*, *Lady Bruce*, *Conquering Hero*, *Minerva* and *Henrietta* were located. Both were on the Illovo River, Byrne some eight miles upstream from Richmond. Robert Ralfe, William Jefferies, Henry Tarboton and others spent a few years at Byrne before abandoning their allotments. Its land adjoined S. Rudolph's farm 'Enon' in a fertile but isolated valley without road communications.

Richmond, or Beaulieu, as it had been named by John Moreland out of compliment to the Duke of Buccleuch, had been surveyed in half-acre lots. Owing to the forethought of the Duke's agent, the Beaulieu tenants were placed on their land, in comfortable circumstances, in what Moreland described as a 'sheltered position with abundant supply of water and great depth and superiority of the soil'. Survey proceeded at a slow rate, delaying the commencement of cultivation. But a start was made, under the supervision of John Baseley, with a furrow to lead water to the village.

Baseley, railway engineer and surveyor, emigrated with his family on the *Edward*. A native of the small Northamptonshire village of Badby, with its cottages, characteristic of the stone belt, straggling up the steep green towards the church, he early became associated with George Stephenson and his son, Robert. In the 'forties he was engaged on construction of lines in Yorkshire and the Midland counties. The railway slump brought disastrous losses. His patron, George Stephenson, who had tried to check the mania of over-speculation, died in 1848, and Baseley resolved to emigrate. Bringing with him a cart, wheelwright's tools and British cattle, he was the first man to pitch his tent on the site close to the Illovo which Moreland had selected. In less than two years he had built a substantial stone house, added a smith's forge and joinery shop, complete with lathe, and planted vegetables and fruit trees. In 1852 he was busy constructing a mill. His wagons and span of oxen were available to transport settlers' produce to either of the two towns. Almost a lord of the manor, since he alone possessed the skill and capital to take the initiative,

Baseley supplied a plough team and implements to the Duke's tenants, having his own land ploughed by them in return, in true manorial fashion.¹

Richmond certainly came nearest to fulfilling the confident expectations of emigration promoters. The soil was excellent for pasturage and for maize. In the middle 'fifties the village presented a neat spectacle of small homesteads, built, for the most part, of locally quarried stone and prettily thatched. A small church, also of local stone, was consecrated in 1856. A village hostelry was lacking, but there existed a single store at which the necessities of life could be procured. Small-scale farming was answering well. Even cotton was planted. Bishop Colenso, when he arrived in 1854, endorsed Moreland's view that the settlers were prosperous and contented. Some were employed by Baseley as wagoners. Whilst he remained at Richmond (in 1860 he moved to Ifafa and planted cane), the ex-railway engineer was always ready to supply stores to the villagers on credit and to give occasional employment to those in difficulty. Several of the allotments were on hilly ground, incapable of irrigation. But the strength of the dew, causing the veld to sparkle with the brilliant mantle of early morning moisture, made irrigation largely dispensable. Raspberries grew wild on the down-like slopes above the river. There was a ready market in Pietermaritzburg for Richmond's potatoes, beans and dairy produce.

Many occupations were represented in the small community. James Weir had served in the Artillery in India. Anthony Pigg, joiner and wheelwright from a London suburb, was responsible for the planting of the village's oak trees. Robert Logan, stone-mason, erected the mill and built some of the early cottages. The single shop, substantially built in stone, was the commercial venture of Charles Dacomb, from Walthamstow in Essex. James Shires had been a civil engineer in Cheshire, John Miles a Herefordshire butcher, James McKenzie a farmer

¹ Moreland's *Journal*, in the *Natal Independent*, 29 April 1852; the *Natal Witness*, 20 Feb. 1852.

in remote Caitliness. Though preferring to reside on the coast, young Leyland Feilden, from Livesey Old Hall in the midst of the cotton-weaving area of Lancashire, took his 210 acres in land at Richmond, where he experimented hopefully with cotton. The majority were men accustomed to work in the fields. The story is not indeed one of consistent success. Wheat brought from home farms was not inured to the climate. Cattle suffered severely from lung sickness in the middle 'fifties. No fortunes were amassed. Neither cotton nor tobacco, grown in luxuriant patches here and there on the outskirts, was to prove a commercial success. When Moreland enquired what property the settlers possessed, John Miles was prompt to reply: 'An African parrot and a cat.' But nearly all were satisfied with their new start in life. The Richmond which they created, with its cottages of soft-coloured stone and thatched roof, its mill and smithy, and the neat, garden enclosures, planted with fig, apple and peach tree, approached in charm and in qualities of solid worth the pleasant villages of old England.

Verulam in the coastal region had been laid out on the south bank of the Umhloti in April 1850, in readiness for Irons's Wesleyans. Among them, as elsewhere, there were tradespeople and mechanics who preferred to receive 'town' allotments. John David Shuter, son of a Westminster attorney and destined to legal practice in the colony, became secretary to the first committee of residents. He reported in May 1851 that the European inhabitants numbered 156, composed of fifty-six families of which about one-half had farming allotments. The remainder lived on town *erven* one acre in extent. There were twenty-three houses, and a dozen or more temporary huts, built in the native fashion. Though a little cotton had been planted, the majority made a living from market produce.¹

All but two of the Verulam settlers, interviewed by John Moreland within a year of their settlement, expressed satis-

¹ See J. D. Shuter's letter in the *Natal Witness*, 30 May 1851.

faction with their new circumstances. William Irons's brother, Theophilus, found only one to voice regret that he had emigrated to Natal. In the succeeding years, locusts were to be a sore trial, whilst lung sickness in the cattle extinguished the hopes of those who had contemplated pastoral farming. Some of the land had been cleared and ploughed for the defunct cotton company, but not all was easily adaptable to cultivation. The allotments at Victoria, three miles farther down the Umhloti, were badly situated for water. Even with the additional twenty-five acres promised by Pine, emigrants from *Ina* and *Sovereign* were poorly off at the inland extremity of the cotton lands, where Moreland had laid out still another village, called, in honour of the men from the *Ina*, 'New Glasgow'. But Irons had collected a body of industrious and self-reliant colonists. There were among them men of character and resource, notably perhaps Tom Garland, a Colchester man, who became postmaster and clerk to the magistrate and, in the 'seventies, represented Victoria county in the legislative council. With Thomas Groom, who accompanied his brother Richard on the *Edward*, and J. T. Polkinghorne, from Penzance, Garland made up the formidable trio of men who guided the local destinies of Verulam.

The first Wesleyan chapel to be built outside the two towns was opened for worship at Verulam in June 1851.

Though the small township of Dalton was to bear the name of the East Riding village where Henry and Mary Boast had lived, another site had been selected for location of the *Haidee* folk. York, as it was called, as a nucleus of agricultural settlement has not been a success. But the site was well selected. There was timber in the vicinity, two strongly flowing streams named, for nostalgic reasons, 'Ouse' and 'Derwent' bounded the village lands, whilst wheat and oats had been successfully grown on neighbouring farms. William Lund, the prosperous Yorkshire farmer who, with James Tutin, had chosen the site, afterwards justified his choice by producing on his return to England a testimonial, signed by several of the

Haidee emigrants, approving the locality as in every respect eligible.¹

According to George Potter, the Bridlington saddler, some twenty houses, each with enclosed two-acre gardens, had been erected, doubtless of wattle and thatch, in the first twelve months. Beans, peas, potatoes, oats and maize had been put in the ground and a first hay crop reaped. With superior soil and thick grass for the 400 head of cattle owned by the settlers, the venture seemed to promise well. The Comins brothers from Helmsley, who had brought out wheat and barley seed as well as wagon, cart and ploughs, were in possession of twenty-eight acres of good tillable land, whilst undulating veld, difficult to irrigate, was available as commonage.² Beams and window-frames for houses were obtained from yellow-wood bounding the estate. Not all the *Haidee* folk took up their allotments. Several stayed at the seaport, among them George Potter, who became a commission agent, and Peter Humble, who opened a butcher's shop. At York there were Dr Charles Boast, Mary Boast until she became John Moreland's second wife, the Comins family, William Smith, James Merryweather from Doncaster, until he moved to Pietermaritzburg to start wagon-building, Alexander Bell and the Helmsley sportsman, George Bentley. Nearly all were practical Yorkshire farmers. All were anxious to maintain, as far as possible, the farming routine and Yorkshire way of life to which they were accustomed. In the neighbourhood was another Yorkshireman, who had sailed from Liverpool in the *Devonian* a few weeks after the *Haidee* left the Humber. This was Richard Baynes from Settle, with his eight-year-old son, Joseph Baynes, destined to be the most successful of Natal's farmers. A little to the north, at Riet vlei, were William Proudfoot and the Boyd-Varty brothers, notable pioneers of the sheep industry.

¹ The *York Herald*, 25 March 1852. Lund hoped to secure more settlers for Natal.

² G. Potter to J. Henwood, 23 July 1851 in the *Hull Advertiser*, 31 Oct. 1851. Letters of R. Comins are to be found in the issue for 2 May 1851, and in the *Eastern Counties Herald*, 14 Aug. 1851.

York is to-day a place of melancholy. The village was never completed. W. C. Holden, the Wesleyan missionary, paid regular visits in the early days, before the chapel was built. The *Haidee* men drifted away to other parts, and their cottages fell from disuse into hopeless disrepair. As early as 1863, Dobie described it in his journal as 'a town consisting of a blacksmith's shop'¹. It lay in quiet undulating country that was presently to be given over to cultivation of the wattle tree.

Lidgetton, selected by James Erasmus Methley for John Lidgett's emigrants, had a happier future. Though many refused their allotments, several settlers from the *Nile* populated the district, adding acres as opportunity occurred until they could farm on a remunerative basis. About Lidgetton and northwards in the direction of the Karkloof were Peter Girault, John Brittain, George Franklin from Carmarthen and, at Caversham, the Hodsons, all from the *Nile*; whilst Methley's relatives and friends congregated in the Karkloof valley leading to Woodside, where George Trotter, landing from the *Edward*, had taken his family. Nearly all remained for many years on their land. Franklin indeed sailed for Melbourne in 1852, only to return seven years later.

Between Lidgetton and Pietermaritzburg lay Howick, originally called 'Alleman's Drift', close to a point where it was possible to cross the Umgeni with wagons. Lots at what was described as 'the new village at the Umgeni waterfall' were put up for sale by government on 23 November 1850, fetching prices which ranged from £10 to £20. In 1851 water was led from the Umgeni to supply the village, now unhesitatingly referred to as 'Howick'. Since private land here was not available for purchase in 1849-50, no emigrant allotments were laid out, but Byrne settlers and others were soon

¹ *S.A. Journal*, p. 93. The blacksmith was William Bell, a young man of twenty-four when the *Haidee* left Hull. In the 'eighties he was still working his smithy, whilst John Bell, George and William Bentley, 'Buffalo' John Clark, George Plummer and John Comins of the *Haidee* folk were still in the neighbourhood.

attracted by the position of the village at the point where the road to Riet vlei and the Tugela joined the main wagon road of the colony.

Pinetown owed its early growth to A. K. Murray, the Glasgow publisher. He was not without capital and, attracted by the fertility of the beautiful valley, purchased several thousand acres, dividing them into small allotments on which several Byrne emigrants elected to settle. They numbered 133 in January 1851, when a Zulu alarm led to the tentative enumeration of persons able in an emergency to bear arms.¹

Ladysmith was the centre of a district which had been farmed by the Cape Voortrekkers. The town itself, however, does not antedate the arrival of the British settlers. Stanger had selected and surveyed the site and the township was proclaimed on 20 June 1850. Charles Barter's inability to find the village on his original journey up-country to the Orange River Sovereignty is not surprising; for George Winder, writing on 25 September 1850 to report his arrival at Ladysmith with licence to open a general store, remarked that 'as there are at present no inhabitants, it is not likely that I shall have any business until the water is brought into the town and the road formed'.² Winder came to Natal, with Patrick Maxwell and Sydney Platt, in the barque *Gwalior*. He was soon followed to Ladysmith by other settlers. William Allerston, arriving by the *Henry Tanner*, was almost at once appointed constable. When he reached the village, he found there four cottages of wattle-and-daub. The majesty of the law was represented by a resident magistrate, Allerston as constable and twenty-five members of the native police. Though no emigrant allotments were laid out on the Klip River, settlers made their way up-country in the early 'fifties, among them J. C. Walton, from the *Minerva*, Humphrey Evans Knight, the ex-railway surveyor, and John Sutcliffe Robson, emigrant on the *Edward*, who was to command the Fort Pine laager in the Zulu war.

¹ A. K. Murray to B. Pine, 29 Jan. 1851. C.S.O. 14.

² C.S.O. 15. Letter from George Winder.

Wherever they settled, British farmers encountered some difficulty with native labour. Many had deliberately selected Natal because Byrne and other emigration promoters had advertised agricultural servants at 10s. a month or less. In British North America the emigrant must work with his own hands. New Zealand farmers found that they must pay their harvesters at rates exceeding those current in the rural counties of England. Trekkers had utilised the services of Zulus captured in war and apprenticed to them for a period of years. Refugees from the Zulu kingdom occupied kraals on European farms, paying for shelter and the use of a small patch of ground by working when required. A prize was offered at the Pietermaritzburg agricultural show for the best male farm servant.¹ But with marking out of locations the position was different. The native would work for the farmer if the wages earned would procure what he felt to be his needs. But these needs were few and his natural environment was tribal society engaged in stock-breeding. Unable to appreciate the obligations of a contract, he might accept an agreement, afterwards found to be irksome, and then do his best to evade service. Settlers who had invested their savings in the purchase of colonial land naturally looked to the authorities to assist them to make a profitable use of it. This could only be done with adequate supplies of native labour.

British farmers, especially men from the North Riding of Yorkshire with its heavy clays, on which wheat thrives, hoped to be able to make wheat their principal crop. Much of the upland soil in Natal is heavy, and some of it will hold the water which wheat needs; but the rain comes at the wrong time of the year. Moreover, wheat requires nitrogen, in which the South African soil is markedly deficient. The growing of lucerne or sainfoin, as winter feed for stock, helped later in the century to restore a measure of nitrogen to the soil. In 1850 farmers had not solved the problem of how to treat heavy

¹ *Proceedings of Commission to enquire into Past and Present Condition of the Kaffirs in Natal, 1852. Evidence of P. A. R. Otto.*

soils where drainage is bad. Undrained land could not bear the introduction of root crops. In wet seasons moisture-loving plants would overwhelm the more nutritive herbage. Peruvian guano was as yet little used. The new machinery, worked by steam, would increase the productiveness of the soil, but many small farmers were obliged to continue with the old-fashioned wooden plough, drawn by teams of oxen. Steam was not in general use until much later. Without the capital to buy winter fodder or drain his heavy soils, the farmer could not keep his stock in good condition. His animal manure would be insufficient, and he would accordingly be unable to introduce clover or grow turnips and swedes.

These limitations applied in some respects to Natal. Most settlers had exhausted their capital in the expenses of removal to a remote home. They had little beyond their skill and the labour of their families. The dry winter months presented a novel problem. It was obvious that, in many localities, it would be useless to attempt to grow wheat without irrigation. On the other hand, prices were a stimulant. In 1849 wheaten flour fetched from 50s. to 60s. a fourteen-stone barrel, bakers charging 6d. for the pound loaf. A fall in prices quickly followed the arrival of farmers prepared to cultivate the land. In March 1851 the barrel of imported Cape flour, Boer meal of a brown colour, sold at no more than 50s. Imports for the year 1850 had exceeded in value £13,000. They were down to £6585 in 1853, with a similar decline in importations of dairy produce.¹ The fall in local prices was offset for the farmer by the considerable exportation to Mauritius of his butter, beans and other produce.

Experienced agriculturists accordingly approached the problems of cultivating virgin soil in a sub-tropical colony with some optimism. The most enterprising among them were the East Riding men in Boast's party and the Scottish group from Perthshire and the Lowlands. John King and James Ellis

¹ *Report on Past and Present State of District of Natal.* C.O. 179/34.

from the straths north of Callander, lost no time in setting up their light Scottish plough, drawn by two oxen only, and preparing the soil for the seed. The South African plan of laying a wooden bar across the necks of the oxen seemed to them comical, 'making it almost impossible for the ploughman to do his work well'.¹ The yield of wheat was expected to be less than in the United Kingdom, where on good soil it averaged twenty-eight bushels an acre. A Natal farmer soon came to regard twenty bushels as a bumper crop.

All would be prepared for the appearance of rust and smut in the wheat. Rust was expected on virgin soil with hot sunshine and frequent showers inducing its growth. In Victorian times there was no certain knowledge of the predisposing causes and rust was regarded as virtually uncontrollable. It was especially feared on rich virgin soil after a period of unusually humid weather. East Riding farmers usually steeped their seed in lime, after taking it from crops grown on poor soil which rust did not attack. They also avoided over-manuring of the land. In Natal, settlers endeavoured to restrain the ravages of rust by applying potash to the soil, and avoiding hill sides where heavy mist might induce mildew. But the general attitude was one of passivity. The rust would cease when the land had been broken up and used for a period of years. Some hoped to avoid it altogether by sowing early in March, when the dry weather was approaching.²

Rust certainly destroyed crops in Natal, the black-stem variety showing when the straw was beginning to ripen. But particular localities were fortunate. At Andries Pretorius's farm 'Riet vallei', some twelve miles north-west of Pietermaritzburg, wheat was grown before 1850 without rust appearing. In the early 'sixties a farmer on the Tugela, ten miles above Colenso, avoided the rust by burning the straw

¹ J. Ellis to Mr Sidey, 29 Nov. 1849. *Byrne's Emigrants' Journal*, no. 5 (June 1850).

² Robert Clarkson considered it unnecessary to steep the wheat in a chemical preparation. *The Natal Independent*, 27 May 1852.

and the stubble, and spreading the ashes over the soil to form silica, a practice perhaps derived from South Australia.¹

Other diseases such as smut and bunt were not so prevalent in Natal, or were more easily controlled, the copper sulphate treatment of bunt being known to British farmers long before Byrne's emigrants left for Natal.²

During his tour, 1851-2, of the emigrant allotments, John Moreland found some attempts to follow traditional British rotations. In the Illovo valley wheat, barley and oats were growing on five acres allotted to the *Minerva* settler, Robert Ralfe. When he moved to 'Bergvleit' on the Bushman River, Ralfe made a more considerable success with wheat than perhaps any other Natal farmer. From the point of view of resistance to rust, this Bushman River area, together with the Riet vlei district about the Mooi River, proved most adaptable to wheat. Near the Mooi River, Lotter, first field-cornet in this part of Natal, was particularly successful in the early 'fifties. The Boyd Varty brothers at Riet vlei also grew wheat that rust did not attack. The best years were 1853 and 1854 with fine crops reaped at the Karkloof by Edwin Parkinson, before he turned to sheep, Lotter, Leuchars and the Boshoffs at the Mooi River and Fannin at the Dargle; and farmers competing with their sample *nuids* at the Pietermaritzburg agricultural show. Paul Anstie had completed the Belvidere mill, largest in the district, on the banks of the Umsinduzi, and the flour there produced was more to the liking of Natalians than the brownish meal which had been imported from Table Bay.

Machinery on most farms had been in use for several years in the home land. A wheel-less plough, manufactured by Deane, Dray and Deane and brought to Natal by the *Haidee* farmer, William Parnaby, proved to be best suited to the

¹ See the statement of Captain Hamilton in *The Times of Natal*, 10 Jan. 1866. But his wheat, grown over a period of five years, was produced on only twenty acres.

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lighter soils. The ploughing matches regularly held each summer, until the middle 'sixties, on the town-lands of the capital served both to display the merits of farm machinery and to maintain standards. Ground was laid off originally along the river bank, opposite Anstie's mill, and the ploughs started at the firing of the nine o'clock gun. *Haidee* men won all three prizes at the competition on 22 December 1852, Thomas Botterill leading. Ten years later, the site was north of the city, beside the York road, competitors ploughing half-an-acre, and the championship once more going to a *Haidee* settler, John Boyes.

Meanwhile, Botterill had demonstrated the advantages of the Hussey reaping-machine. This had been manufactured since the 1851 Exhibition by the Beverley man, William Crosskill, and would be well-known to many of Boast's farmers. The Hussey reaper however was less successful when, owing to heavy dew, the straw was damp, and McCormick's machine was preferred on this account. Steam-ploughs were only introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Natal government importing two in 1907, made by the Leeds firm of J. Fowler and Son. The machines were let out to farmers on hire. With their help a man could plough eleven-and-a-half acres between sunrise and sunset, with intervals only for meals.¹

Land was usually ready for wheat and barley at the end of February, wheat being steeped in salt and dried by rolling in lime. Barley grew well on light soils, but there was little or no demand. Oats, on the other hand, was in great request as forage. Cape oats would not grow well in summer and was planted, under irrigation, at the end of March. The varieties brought out by settlers from Britain gave a summer crop, being sown in late September or early October and cut green in February. From the middle of May it would be required for feeding to sheep, and it was sold in straw at from 6s. to 7s. per 600 lb.² Owing to its great value as fodder, it was

¹ *The Times of Natal*, 22 Nov. 1907.

² Nurse to Smiles, 9 May 1850; the *Eastern Counties Herald*, 24 Oct. 1850.

much cultivated by early settlers, even on town *erven* in the centre of Pietermaritzburg. In 1852, Matthew Parnaby obtained from ten to eleven quarters of oats from an acre of ground facing the government schoolroom. Like wheat, oats was subject to rust, but later in the century T. H. Hindle, at 'Willow Grange', found a species (Hawkstone) which was immune. But, with the advance of the railroad and increasing mechanisation, the market for oat forage became poor and little was grown.

The expense of carriage to market, in the days of wagon transport, reduced the profits of cultivating the soil. In the case of wheat, however, irrigation remained the major problem. The level of flow of nearly all rivers was too low to admit of the water being readily used to irrigate crops. Where this was not so, as in the case of 'Carthorpe' immediately to the east of New Hanover, wheat was grown with success in the present century. 'Carthorpe' is traversed with many windings by the Sterk *spruit*, and Edward Newmarch's dam enabled him to irrigate several hundred acres. George and John Newmarch had come to Natal in the *Henry Tanner*, and the success of Edward Newmarch's progressive farming showed what could be done by sustained effort and intelligent anticipation.¹

The advent of lucerne gave new hopes to farmers. With its length of root it can draw moisture from greater depths of the soil than most plants. It is resistant to drought and it converts the nitrogen present in the atmosphere into plant food. It is tolerant of thin soils and locusts will not touch it. In some of the northern districts wheat could be grown in a crop rotation, with maize and lucerne.

Nevertheless, wheat was doomed to disappear from the production economy of Natal. Fine white flour imported from Australia and America ruined the small market for local wheat. Farmers turned to stock-breeding or transport-riding.

In addition to Mauritius, the Cape afforded a market for foodstuffs grown in Natal. Early in 1851 the schooner *Douglas*

¹ The *Natal Witness*, 23 June 1908.

arrived at Table Bay with a cargo of potatoes, beans and butter, and it was hoped that this sailing would inaugurate a regular export trade with the old colony. Potatoes, however, often rotted during the voyage and had to be thrown overboard before arrival at Cape Town or Port Louis. Beans proved a most reliable crop, as the market was steady. Thomas Botterill obtained sixty bushels from an acre in Pietermaritzburg. Most of the early Richmond settlers concentrated on potatoes, beans and maize, finding that, in consequence of the small capital expenditure involved in preparation of the land and erecting essential buildings and fences, these crops might pay better than in Britain, where farmers had to reckon with rent, rates and higher wages for labour. The biggest item of expenditure in the colony was that for transport. In 1851 potatoes realised from 7s. 6d. to £1 a *muid* (a little less than three bushels); but high prices led to a glut and farmers could not count on their crops selling at more than 5s. At this price, it was calculated that the profit per acre might be a little short of £6.¹

It was possible to obtain two crops of potatoes in a year, and early in 1853 one settler, James Stanton from the *Minerva*, obtained 120 *muids* per acre.

As settlers occupied good grazing land north-westwards from Nottingham, butter, well-salted and packed in casks, was increasingly exported to Mauritius and the Cape. At Ladysmith the ex-railway surveyors, Knight and King, found their first substantial profits in sending away casks of butter to Port Louis. Butter exported from Natal in the year 1853 reached in value £5805, almost rivalling ivory. Some of the best quality was produced at York, notably by the East Riding farmer, Robert Smith. For local consumption, supplies of cheese, butter and raspberry jam were sent down to the Pietermaritzburg market by John King, now at 'Lynedoch', his produce almost invariably winning prizes at the annual show.

¹ See the detailed calculations of 'A Farmer' in the *Natal Witness*, 2 April 1852.

With potatoes plentiful, some of the Duke of Buccleuch's tenants resolved to keep pigs. William Nicholson, a Hampshire man by birth but the son of an East Riding farmer who had come to Natal in the *Sandwich*, made the first experiments in breeding, importing for the purpose Yorkshire White, Tamworth and Berkshire pigs. Despite the difficulty of curing in a hot climate, bacon was exported to the Cape in the 'fifties, especially in years when mealie fodder was cheap. Pigs ceased to be remunerative when the price of this essential foodstuff exceeded 8s. a *muid*. Pig-breeding was somewhat neglected in the 'seventies, only 7786 pigs being owned by European farmers in 1873 and the price of locally produced ham and bacon advancing to 1s. 3d. per lb. But the introduction of lucerne largely removed the difficulty of green fodder. A canning factory set up at Richmond in 1897 was not a commercial success, but in the early years of the twentieth century bacon production became a prosperous industry.

Settlers with no previous knowledge of the properties of the veld found that it was impossible to keep the grass short by grazing. In the autumn up-country farms were covered with coarse grass unpalatable to stock. Since the mowing of huge areas was impracticable, they fell back on veld-burning to secure succulent young grass in the spring. An economical method of feeding stock in winter was another problem of some difficulty, for much of the soil is not favourable to root crops. In the long run paspalum grass proved to be the ideal solution, since it kept the cattle in good condition and increased the supply of milk. Moreover, much less land is required for grazing when paspalum is grown.

Cattle brought out by the settlers mostly succumbed to the lung sickness which reached the Cape from Holland in 1854. Strenuous efforts were made to keep out the infection, Captain J. M. Struben, resident magistrate at Klip River, placing native police as pickets at the Drakensberg passes. It spread through all parts of Natal during 1855, attacking from eighty to ninety per cent of the cattle. Inoculation of a crude sort was

attempted, part of a diseased lung being inserted in the animal's tail and tied firmly in position. But it was not a success: and, with farms unfenced, nothing could avert the heaviest losses.

Stock-farming made a partial recovery in the 'sixties. Cattle of Ayrshire, Devon and Aberdeen Angus breeds were imported from the United Kingdom. Fencing of farms, at first on a voluntary basis, did not stop East Coast fever or check the ravages of rinderpest and red-water which made the 'nineties a gloomy period for the stock-farmer. Through the enterprise of Joseph Baynes, backed by the research work of Dr Watkins-Pitchford, success in eradicating the tick followed the widespread adoption of dipping of cattle. Methods of immunization were, moreover, quickly discovered, though inoculation seemed to leave herds for a period with lower resistance to other diseases. In the twentieth century the quality of Natal's herds was progressively improved by the importation of pedigree stock, especially of Devon and Friesland breeds, and the benefits derived from dipping and from the compulsory fencing of farms rendered cattle-breeding a less risky undertaking.

The Voortrekker Koekemoer, according to the attorney Arthur Walker, was the first to introduce woolled sheep into Natal, about the year 1844.¹ When, towards the close of the following year, British officials reached Pietermaritzburg, they found flocks belonging to P. A. R. Otto and P. H. Zietsman grazing on the outskirts of the town lands. Farther afield, Hendrick Boshoff, Frans Nel and S. Lotter had merino sheep in the Riet vlei area. Nevertheless, it was for several years an open question whether sheep could be profitably raised in Natal. The vast expanse of rank herbage, believed by many to contain plants poisonous to stock, dismayed settlers from the United Kingdom. Until the first rank grass had somehow been removed, it was certain that sheep could not thrive.

¹ Byrnc's *Emigrants' Journal*, vi. July 1850. It is possible that Carl Behrens, who reached Natal in 1840, brought with him some merino sheep, originally procured at Hamburg.

Whether veld-burning would sweeten the herbage remained to be seen. In the Krantskop area the grass was reported to be too rich in summer and too poor in winter for merino flocks. Everywhere scarcity of grazing before the first spring rains was a cause of losses. To avoid this danger and at the same time to get away from the humid heat of the lowlands, farmers began to move sheep at the close of the winter on to the high veld, and even over the berg. Many considered Natal altogether unsuitable for woolled sheep.

Restoration of confidence was largely the work of two settlers, Tom Boyd-Varty, who had left London because the doctors had pronounced sentence on his lungs, and Edwin Parkinson, who had married a cousin of James E. Methley and emigrated from the West Riding on the *Emily*. Varty was the first Natal settler to seek sheep in the Orange Free State, paying for them with loads of yellow-wood timber. This was first done on a large scale, other farmers on the Mooi River sharing in the enterprise, in the year 1853.¹ Parkinson was one of those who turned to sheep after the dreadful losses of the lung-sickness year, 1855.² In October he made his initial purchase of forty-five woolled ewes at 14s. each. The following year he rode to Ladysmith and there secured sheep which had been depastured for the winter in Natal before their owners moved back with their flocks to the republics. Within two years he had realised a profit, and acquired a flock of 160 sheep. Losses of animals over the first three years averaged no more than eight per cent per annum, and he was able to prove that woolled sheep could live in Natal all the year round. Studying his animals, he concluded that, with better grass and a more equable climate than the republics could offer, his flocks would produce wool more even in quality and without the weak place in the fibre which, in overberg wool, he was inclined to attribute to extremes of temperature and

¹ *Grahamstown Journal*, 3 Sept. 1853.

² Methley wrote to his father, 22 June 1855, reporting that Parkinson and himself had resolved to embark on merino sheep farming.

insufficiency of food. His clip fetched in December 1860 1s. 9d. per lb.

The example of Parkinson and Boyd-Varty led to regular journeys of Natal farmers, at first to the Free State and, in the 'sixties, to the neighbourhood of Queenstown and Cradock, for the purchase of merino sheep. With the support of Joseph Henderson, a 'Natal association for the introduction of woolled sheep' was launched. Disturbances on the Free State-Basuto border increased the readiness of breeders in the republic to part with their sheep at reasonable prices. In January 1858, Parkinson and Otto had been the only exhibitors at the first Wool Fair held in Pietermaritzburg. But four years later there were 122,425 sheep in the colony. The colonial government, prompted by G. H. Wathen and Henry Pinson, who had recently come to Natal from the Australian colonies, began to collect from magistrates such information as was available in regard to the suitability of pastures, the diseases to which sheep were found to be subject, and the annual average increase in flocks.¹ More important than numerical increase was the importation of pedigree stock. Methley and Parkinson had put their faith in Southdowns as the best breed for the midland districts. Long-wool rams from Witney in Oxfordshire were imported by W. G. Baker and sold in Pietermaritzburg during April 1862. Nine months later six Cotswold rams from the flock of Edward Handy were landed at the Point. French merinos from the celebrated Rambouillet stock were imported by Frederick W. Moor, son of Colonel Moor of the Bombay Artillery. Born at Surat, Moor at the age of twenty emigrated on the *Minerva*, settling close to Robert Ralfe, whose daughter, Annabella, he married in 1852. Their son was to become the last prime minister of self-governing Natal.

Henry Pinson reached Natal from Melbourne in 1861. The early 'sixties were a time of prosperity for Natal with much expansion on coastal sugar estates; whereas in the Australian

¹ The first such enquiry was addressed by David Erskine to magistrates on 18 Aug. 1858. C.S.O. 2300, no. 974.

colonies renewal of squatting licences was being refused on the ground that the land was needed for cultivation. Pinson, followed by the diarist J. S. Dobie, Henry Bucknall and others, accordingly sought new fields for enterprise in a colony reported to be well endowed with unoccupied land suitable for sheep.¹ It was not difficult to find fault with the practice of pastoral farmers in Natal. Instead of depasturing their sheep on the warm and dry slopes, they kept their flocks round their homesteads in the valleys, subject as they were to damp and mist. There was no scab legislation. Pinson found that diseased sheep sweltered in sheds or stone kraals at night, whilst anyone was free to drive them over a land innocent of fences. Nevertheless, he was convinced that Natal was suitable for the industry, provided sheep were protected from scab, prevented from feeding near streams and swamps, and securely folded at night in warm places out of reach of frost.²

In the 'sixties, however, it was found that the kraaling of sheep at night had serious drawbacks. It led to the trampling of herbage and lengthened the journey to the feeding-ground. But something had to be done to check jackals and even wild dogs, whom Methley reported as attacking his flocks when severe winters drove them down from the berg. Free grazing, as Dobie insisted, kept sheep in better condition and improved the wool. The best solution was found to be fenced paddocks provided with water, in which the sheep could be secured at night.

Natal wool fetched low prices in England because it was carelessly cleaned and baled. It was classed in London with the Cape wools, which in the middle 'sixties had no very good reputation for cleanliness. Confronted with the scab, farmers sheared twice a year. In 1870, Joseph Henderson and D. B. Scott erected a wool-washing machine and henceforth the bales could be despatched free from burr and the seeds of

¹ J. S. Dobie: *S. A. Journal*, pp. xvi-xix.

² *The Natal Witness*, 28 Feb. 1862; the *Natal Mercury*, 26 Sept. 1862.

grass. Dobie reckoned that he made thirty per cent profit on the capital which he invested in the purchase of Cape merinos. But the onset in 1865 of blue tongue, just when farmers were beginning to be more hopeful about scab, discouraged even Dobie. A partial cure for scab by dressing the sheep in newly burned lime at intervals of about a fortnight had been discovered in New South Wales in 1853. The Natal scab law (no. 32 of 1865), the outcome of much agitation by Pinson and G. H. Wathen, compelled owners to mark or brand their sheep, and required field-cornets to act within their wards as inspectors to guard against spread of scab. It was largely ineffective, because no scab control whatever existed in the Free State, to which sheep were regularly driven in the summer months.¹ Blue tongue, on the other hand, was controlled with some success by treating animals with raw linseed oil, followed by a dose of quinine.

Settlers found that sheep which retained their long wool in summer were less liable to contract blue tongue. They accordingly sheared in March. The earlier practice had been to remove the clip in October or November, when the wool was lighter and the sheep probably not in the best condition. In warmer parts this continued to be the practice. Lambing, under cover in sheds, as early as April or May became normal towards the close of the century, making the farmer independent of spring grazing. Dobie had insisted on the paramount importance of suitable shelter and fodder, flocks in the early days having been much reduced by deaths due to lack of grazing at the end of the winter.

Umvoti county, rather than the more southerly districts which Dobie and Wathen had favoured, became by 1873 the land of wool *par excellence*, with a return of 115,000 sheep out of a total for the colony of 289,164. The total had been increased to over 800,000 in 1896, ignoring flocks in native possession. During the next decade it fell away considerably. Once only did the weight of Natal wool exported exceed the

¹ Bulwer to Secretary of State, 20 April 1876. G.H. 280.

two million mark in pounds (1902).¹ The decline at the turn of the century was partly due to the greater profits to be derived from cattle, once dipping and inoculation had overcome the major risks. Sheep were still subject to blue tongue and gall-sickness, whilst they tended to lose condition in winter when confined to fenced paddocks. Large numbers were sent to re-stock the republics after the close of the South African war.

For settlers with no capital means the indigenous timber of Natal presented the likeliest prospect of advancement. Along the coast the red milkwood tree was plentiful in the early 'fifties, and much in demand for wagon building. Mangrove wood, less hard and durable, was nevertheless suitable as timber-framing for houses and fencing-poles. For furniture the sneeze-wood, and still more the stink-wood, of the midlands was incomparable material, whilst yellow-wood, resembling when planed yellow pine, was very largely utilised for floors and window-frames. It was, however, less durable than pine, and decayed when exposed to the weather. The compact and close-grained sneeze-wood was preferred for such purposes as the flooring of bridges.

Over the whole of Natal timber was not plentiful, and it was conspicuously absent on the bare plains of the Free State. Even where relatively abundant, as in the kloofs of the midlands, it was subject to rapid diminution through ill-considered veld-burning. These factors made all the more profitable the industry of the sawyer. On some farms the timber alone would be immensely valuable. Loads of cut planks were regularly sent down to Pietermaritzburg from the saw-mills in the Karkloof and Dargle valleys. A load of forty one-inch boards, cut in lengths of twenty feet, cost in 1851 150s.² More

¹ Figures of wool exported from Natal include large quantities produced in the republics, making in all 25,537,963 lb. in 1896, and 13,712,542 lb. in 1905.

² Statement of Richard Comins, the *Hull Advertiser*, 2 May 1851. In December 1849, according to L. Wright, planks and joists fetched £8 to £10 a load.

than one settler brought out with him water-wheel and saw-mill. The Shaw brothers, West Riding men from Wakefield, who emigrated with their mother on the *Unicorn*, erected a mill at 'Clarendon' in the Karkloof. But the largest timber dealer was the Manchester man, Edward Few, who had hoped to grow cotton. When that did not pay, he bought the Boston saw-mills. Timber Street in the capital town is so named from his timber yard on one of the Longmarket Street *erven*.

The saw-mills provided the material urgently needed for improving the backward communications of Natal. Apart from a timber erection, carried across the Umsinduzi River on piers roughly constructed of local stone, the main road was in 1850 entirely unbridged. At the deeper crossings the government presently established ferry services, several settlers receiving at one time or another appointments as ferrymen. The early bridges were all constructed of yellow-wood or sneeze-wood timber, on the basis of government paying half the cost. The Alleman's Drift (Howick) bridge was the first to be built under settler superintendence. Two carpenters contracted to erect it, James Ellis, King's brother-in-law from Perthshire, and William Strapp, a *Conquering Hero* emigrant. The timber carriage-way rested on trusses, morticed by Ellis, the whole being supported on piers of solid free-stone. The first really substantial structures were the 'iron tension' bridge, erected at the entrance to Pietermaritzburg in 1858, and the 'Queen's' bridge over the Umgeni, built in 1864, at a cost of £19,000, to serve the needs of planters north of Durban. The bridge lasted four years, being swept away in the floods of the spring of 1868. Its destruction meant relying once more on pontoons to bring to Durban for shipment the increasing quantities of sugar and other produce of Victoria county. The Pietermaritzburg 'tension' bridge succumbed in 1866 to vibration caused by driving a herd of oxen over its timber flooring.

In the 'forties the main road, itself no more than a wagon track across the veld, led from Durban to Pietermaritzburg, thence via Alleman's Drift and the Bushman River to the

Drakensberg passes. J. M. Howell, originally a Port Elizabeth clerk with much experience of frontier fighting, who became a practitioner in the recorder's court until he was struck off the roll by Cloete for contumacy, reckoned that the whole journey from the Port to Colesberg could be accomplished on horseback in nine or ten days. A ride of four-and-a-half hours from Durban brought the traveller to the tavern on the Sterk *spruit* then conducted by Arthur Walker, the notorious prosecuting attorney of the 'sixties. A stage of similar length ended in Pietermaritzburg, the river being crossed at the camp drift, if the town bridge was not in order. When Byrne's settlers began to arrive, there were two more 'accommodation houses' on the road, one at Camperdown, taken over in 1850 by a *Minerva* emigrant, James Rolfe, and Luscombe's at Uys Doorns, eight miles from the city. With the assistance of the military, the surveyor-general, Dr Stanger was already planning new sections of road, in response to the angry complaints of officers of the garrison, as well as civilian colonists, that it was 'barely practicable for a spring carriage to run without accident between the capital town and the sea port'.¹ Wagons bringing stores for the commissariat reached Fort Napier damaged, having been overturned several times during the journey. The general line of the road was unaltered, but steep and stony ascents were avoided by deviation, particularly at the farm of Johannes Potgieter, where the celebrated 'Half-way House' was situated. Construction was put out to contract: and here, as well as north of Pietermaritzburg, much of the work was undertaken by new settlers. Duncan McKenzie, the farmer from Loch Aweside, before he settled down at Nottingham, was in charge of road parties. These parties, in the years of depression which followed termination of emigration from the United Kingdom, were frequently composed of white labourers, the new Field's hill

¹ J. Bird to acting Secretary to Government, 2 Dec. 1851. C.S.O. 31. For J. M. Howell's career, see C.O. 179/19 (P.R.O.). His 'Itinerary of a Journey from Colesberg to Pietermaritzburg' appeared in the *Grahamstown Journal* for 23 Jan. 1845.

cutting being constructed in this way by men who were glad to earn 2s. 6d. a day.

William Leathern's new (1851) Commercial Road, connecting with the town bridge over the Umsinduzi, settled once and for all where the main road from the Port would enter Pietermaritzburg. The exit north-westward up the 'Old Dutch' road was inconvenient, the vlei at its foot being at times impassable for wagons. In 1851 private subscriptions to construct a new highway to join the main road to the Drakensberg amounted to £100 or more; and eventually the road over Kertelfontein furnished a gentler ascent. Travellers in the 'forties were henceforth dependent on the hospitality of farmers. Howell recommended John Archbell's homestead near the Umgeni as the first stop beyond Pietermaritzburg; and it was well that persons unacquainted with the route should have guidance on this point, since so much of the country was totally uninhabited. William Hartley, the energetic young Leeds draper's assistant who was destined to be mayor of Durban, reported that, even on the stretch of road between port and capital 'I only passed three houses, and never more than two acres of land in cultivation'.¹ Between Archbell's farm and the Drakensberg the horseman might well lose himself, but he was likely to be directed by wagon tracks to the more eligible crossings of the Mooi, Bushman and Tugela rivers; and here, but only in the 'fifties, he would find pontoons and perhaps a disreputable 'accommodation house'. Like Charles Barter, he would probably fail to notice the handful of houses that Pine had already christened 'Ladysmith'. For the remainder of the journey to the berg frontier, he would follow what recent wagon tracks were still discernible across the veld.

By-roads were almost unknown. If, as in the case of the district of York, agricultural enterprise brought a large number of wagons into use to convey produce to the Pietermaritzburg market, an eligible track would be marked out, but repair of

¹ *The Leeds Times*, 7 Dec. 1850.

such 'roads' would be left to private enterprise. So financially embarrassed was the colonial government in these early days that Donald Moodie was informed by his official superiors at Cape Town that they could not sanction so large an outlay as £273, 'nor indeed any expenditure upon a new line of road'.¹ Government servants in the performance of their duties might be compelled 'to undertake long journeys on horse, with nights on the ground, separated from medical aid by bridgeless and boatless torrents'.²

Such were the conditions which early settlers had to endure. When improvement came, it was accompanied by all the unwelcome apparatus of toll bars which settlers thought they had left behind with the coming of the railway age. The new Berea road, at last conquering the sand, had been constructed at the then enormous outlay of £29,000, mostly borrowed, and, to recoup the town council for its expenditure, authority was given, for a period of seven years, to erect bars and collect charges varying from 6*d.* in the case of a saddled horse to 10*s.* for a steam-engine, should one make an unexpected appearance. Equestrians could obtain tickets for a year for a single payment of £1. The Berea gate was erected in December 1866, and the same kind of evasion was adopted as in the case of the British turnpike trusts. Over the first year the net profits amounted to one per cent of the total cost of the road. Other toll gates were in existence, especially after the disastrous floods of 1868, occurring at a time when the public accounts did not admit of gratuitous repair or replacement.

Settlers who intended to farm might bring with them carts and wagons that had done service on British roads. A few Cape carts belonged to older colonists, whilst officers of the garrison introduced occasional vehicles of a more fashionable

¹ Montagu to Moodie, 15 Sept. 1848. Letter Book: Natal, 1845-50, C.A.

² Petition of J. P. Steele, assistant resident magistrate. C.O. 179/38 (P.R.O.).

type, including a Stanhope fitted with elliptic springs. A solitary Irish jaunting-car, driven by William Chapman, manager of the Colonial Bank, made a brief appearance in the Pietermaritzburg streets in the 'sixties; but the most popular vehicle of this decade was the American buggy, or 'spider', built of hickory. A patent hansom-cab was sold by the auctioneer, Philip Ferreira, two months after the visit of Queen Victoria's second son, Prince Alfred, when its services had doubtless been much in demand.

Among the 1849-51 settlers were men who had been ostlers, postilions, grooms and coachmen on the bustling mail coach routes of the pre-railway age. A mail coachman by long training, John W. Welch, emigrant on the *Hebrides*, had been better able than most to stave off disaster, since road traffic in the western midlands was scarcely affected, prior to the 'fifties, by railroad competition. Welch had driven the 'Paul Pry' coach between London and Worcester; and, as the tentacles of the railway closed in upon him, he moved farther west, driving coaches between Cheltenham, Hereford and Carmarthen. Since the Worcester-Hereford rail link was only constructed in 1860, he might have continued the struggle a little longer; but he wisely decided to take his skill to a colony where animals were still appreciated and 'livery and bait stables' likely to do brisk business. In 1851 he was at Umbilo. His first tender to convey the mails between Durban and Pietermaritzburg at 1s. a mile, if government supplied coach and horses, and 1s. 4d. if the contractor, was not accepted, the service being performed by native runners.¹ With Hugh McDonald, Richard Boulbee and Charles Florey, he made up the group of men who were recognised as able, at short notice, to supply distinguished visitors and humble colonists alike with the finest bays, well groomed and cared for in the livery stables of the two towns. But it was John Dare who, in 1860, actually inaugurated the first bus service, modelling his 'Perseverance' vehicle on the Crimean wagon, tent-covered

¹ 26 Sept. 1851. C.S.O. 47. Tenders.

and with seats facing one another lengthwise, a solitary lantern slung from the middle, which J. D. Holliday had used to convey parties to balls in the towns. Dare's stock was bought by Welch, whose regular coaching services began in 1862. When diamonds were discovered in Griqualand West, he advertised 'royal mail buses' weekly from Durban to the fields (1872), making it possible for passengers to avoid hire of a private conveyance between Pietermaritzburg and Harrismith, together with the liability to detention at Bloemfontein on the tedious post cart service through the Free State.¹

Improvement of communications should have helped the farmer. But by the 'seventies it was already clear that Natal could not produce foodstuffs sufficient even for its domestic consumption. Redwater drove many farmers to transport-riding, where they could earn on a single three-months' trip sufficient to keep their families for the rest of the year. The later 'seventies were a time of prolonged drought, with crop failures everywhere, except on the Klip River. Drought killed the grass on which transport oxen were dependent, and trebled the cost of imported goods on the high veld. To the mortality from lung-sickness and redwater had now to be added the losses from starvation. Agricultural production never recovered from these dismal years. In 1884 Natal was importing for its white population of less than 35,000 flour to the value of £66,000, and butter, cheese and lard amounting to over £17,000. In the northern districts, which the drought had not seriously affected, letting to natives of farms belonging to the Natal Land and Colonisation Company lowered the output of this region.

The profits of the transport industry had always been relatively considerable. Settlers had been charged 70s. for a wagon to take their belongings to Pietermaritzburg. The professional transport-rider operated at a later date, and his charges depended upon the condition of the grass. He had

¹ For the coach services, see A. F. Hattersley: *Portrait of a Colony*, chap. vi.

nothing to pay for the privilege of outspanning his oxen on private farms, though after 1870 he could be compelled to select a spot indicated by the owner. Much damage might be caused by the spread of fires to neighbouring land. Nevertheless, until legislation was introduced in 1865, it might be impossible to bring home responsibility to the driver whose carelessness had been the origin of the mishap. In the early days almost all had been landowners, and a man using his wagon to come to market or church only took what he was giving to others. Transport-riders might give nothing in return, and their overloaded wagons created havoc when the veld was in poor condition. Scarcity of transport, especially during the Langalibalele and Zulu campaigns, attracted many into a potentially very profitable occupation.

The more enterprising men, of whom William Gillitts may be taken as representative, soon replaced oxen with mules. Though subject to horse sickness, mules did not contract it so readily. Farmers bound by outspan servitudes benefited because fodder had to be carried on the trip. But compensation for this outlay was provided by the extra speed of mule carriage. In the 'sixties, using ox-wagons, Gillitts was conveying goods between the two towns, taking an average of sixty hours for the journey, at a rate of 1s. 6d. a hundredweight. In 1874 the rate had risen to 7s. though a load in the downward direction would not cost more than 3s. In this year rates for transport to the diamond fields worked out at 38s. The northerly route to the gold-fields was developed a little later, but Henderson and Leathern's 'goldfields mail carts' were running in 1875, an enterprise which was stimulated two years later by Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal. In the middle 'seventies transport-riders could count on obtaining from £80 to £100 for a load either to Pretoria or Winburg, and one-half that amount for the journey down.¹

Agricultural decline must be interpreted in terms of the opportunities for individual advancement. But climate and

¹ *The Times of Natal*, 23 May 1874.

suitability of the soil naturally exercised a dominating influence. The most experienced and indomitable of Natal's early farmers were the East Riding men, many of whom had taken up land at York and in the neighbourhood north of the capital. In the long run, these men found that deficiency of the soil in phosphates made it impossible to raise crops on a remunerative basis. On the light clay soils even maize did not flourish. On the other hand, the country was ideally suited to wattle. Rainfall is abundant, and, away from the low-lying land, frost is not present. Even on unimproved soil wattles grew well.

John Vanderplank brought from Australia the first seed, planting the black wattle on his Camperdown farm in 1864. His example was quickly followed by Joseph Henderson at Hilton. But not until the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 was the value of wattle properly appreciated. The first colonist to demonstrate that the bark could be profitably used in tanning was G. M. (later Sir George) Sutton, prime minister of Natal 1903-5. Bark was first shipped to London in 1887. The value of exported bark rose in the next twenty years with encouraging steadiness. 1907 was a particularly good year, the amount shipped during the first eleven months exceeding in value £130,000. Credit for this rapid expansion is due largely to William Angus, manager of the Clan Syndicate, which operated around Cramond and Ravensworth.¹

It is now possible to estimate the economic consequences of the 1849-51 emigration. The underlying principle of all the schemes was the settlement of emigrants on twenty-acre allotments, the projectors making their profits from the sale of adjoining land to which they would become entitled. Applied to some of the richer soils of New Zealand where there is much alluvial plain, it might have been possible to discover sufficient land capable of subdivision in this way. Almost

¹ For Angus's achievement, see the *Natal Witness*, 12 Dec. 1904. Much information on wattle is to be found in S. Y. Ford: *Talks with Natal Farmers*, 1909.

the whole surface of Natal is strongly undulated. The Crown land available was, for the most part, broken ground, incapable of irrigation and decidedly deficient in phosphates. Emigrants thus settled on allotments of even 200 acres would have had no more than a fair opportunity to earn a bare subsistence. As a scheme of colonisation, to put British settlers on colonial land as producers, it was impossible of fulfilment.

But it must not be forgotten that a considerable number of the emigrants were townfolk to whom a passage to a distant colony and the opportunity to start life afresh were a valuable investment for £10, without the twenty-acre bonus, which they could afford to disregard. Many belonged to the propertied classes. Their decision to emigrate had been due to health reasons or unfortunate speculation in railway shares. Conditions in the United Kingdom looked bleak indeed in the months when cholera was taking a heavy toll of life in the towns and seaports, and no one could feel confidence in the face of unrestricted foreign competition with British farming and British shipping. Those who came to Natal had calculated that they could bring up families with better hopes of advancement in a new colony where resources were waiting to be developed and the climate was genial.

The economic history of the succeeding years is largely a record of a prolonged search for exportable products. John Moreland, Edmund Morewood and others, who spoke with some authority, had claimed that Natal was unsurpassed for the variety of its products. Conscientious enquirers visiting the various exhibitions held during the 'sixties in London and Paris might come away much impressed by the multiplicity of the samples which originated in Queen Victoria's new African colony. Apart from sugar, cotton, indigo, arrowroot and coffee, there were all kinds of fibre, including jute, aloe and China grass. But there remained for many years almost insuperable obstacles to their profitable cultivation. The most considerable was doubtless the condition of the harbour. But

inland communications were as much a deterrent, with the chaos produced during heavy rains by unbridged torrents and impassable roads, whilst the only too frequent months of sustained drought brought disaster to ox-wagon transport on the parched veld.

Settlers proved that, given facilities for transportation and access to a market overseas, it was possible to exploit the abundant natural resources of Natal. They failed indeed in certain directions, but the experiments were in themselves fruitful. In regard to wheat, their first energetic measures halted the importation of grain. The 1854 Year Book showed 3315 acres under cultivation and some 12,800 bushels of wheat produced. Roughly twice that amount was harvested in 1867. But dearness of transport and the smallness of the population discouraged enterprise. The danger of an overstocked market is clearly revealed in the returns from the various districts. In 1865 Pietermaritzburg county alone was producing turnips, Umvoti county alone onions. What paid farmers one year might prove a grievous disappointment the next. The total of cultivated land in Natal (109,415 acres in 1867)¹ compared not unfavourably, in relation to population, with New South Wales. But in the late 'sixties much of the cultivation was Indian and Kaffir corn, on native land, and returning no more than fifteen to twenty bushels to the acre. Whereas in the 'fifties Natal was exporting butter to the Cape and Mauritius, twenty years later she was importing for home consumption. It was not that the sons of men like John King and Thomas Botterill were any the less industrious than their fathers. Natal suffered from developments in neighbouring territories. The needs of the republics and the discovery of mineral wealth in the interior inevitably diverted the energies of young Natalians from

¹ Natal Statistical Year Book for 1867. The 1864 book gave the acreage actually occupied for cultivation as 38,000: and this figure has been much quoted, e.g. by T. W. Murdoch in his report to T. F. Elliot, 12 July 1866, on the situation in Natal. The totals were compiled from rather casual estimates made in the magisterial divisions.

cultivation of the soil to mercantile pursuits and the profits of transportation.

Nor were the results of toil on the land altogether thrown away. Even in the midst of the depression of the late 'sixties, when private land was fast reverting to the Crown, acres were being reclaimed by drainage and others made fruitful by irrigation. This was especially true of Umvoti county. At Riet vlei and on the Mooi River, undismayed by fortune's wheel, the spirit of enterprise and the air of solid prosperity had not deserted such properties as William Proudfoot's 'Craigieburn', with its substantial stone walls guarding the fruit trees, its corn mill and cultivated acres, or Lotter's 'Berg Vliet', with its Trekker laager, its magnificent herds of cattle and fertile orchard.¹

The mercantile community in the two towns were not, however, the sole sufferers in the depression of 1865-70. Applications for confiscated land in Langalibalele's location, made in 1874 after suppression of the Hlubi rising, record losses to several who had come to Natal in Boast's party or taken up land under the Byrne scheme.² But they also show that the sons of settlers were still, in a large number of cases, cultivating the soil or managing grazing farms. A few had become carriers. Robert Anderson, from the *Ina*, had gone to Ladysmith, his capital, mostly in wagons and oxen, being estimated at £1000. With him on the Klip River was William Adams, from the *Emily*, now a blacksmith and wagon-maker. Scotsmen from *Conquering Hero*, the Comries, the Joyners and George Aitken, were still on their land and prospering. With the depression surmounted, it seemed not unlikely that Benjamin Pine's prediction of 1850 would be fulfilled, that 'at no distant period, the face of the district will be entirely changed, and, instead of presenting, as it does now,

¹ See the *Report of his Tour*, June 1868, by James Wilson, secretary to Natal Farmers' Club, in the *Natal Mercury*, 3 Dec. 1868.

² C.S.O. Misc. Papers, 1853-76. Applicants were asked to state what capital and stock they possessed. These arrangements were cancelled by the Secretary of State.

BRITISH FARMERS AND GRASS VELD OF NATAL

a sad succession of desolate hills and valleys covered with a rank and useless vegetation, it will exhibit the more cheering scenes of comfortable homesteads, the abodes of a happy and contented people, and of fields improved and adorned by the labour of the husbandman'.¹

¹ Pine to Sir H. G. Smith, 1 Nov. 1850. *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1851, xxxvii (1417), p. 50.

CHAPTER XI

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SETTLERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTITU- TIONAL GOVERNMENT

Natal in 1849 was a district of the Cape Colony, administered by a lieutenant-governor under responsibility to the authorities at Cape Town as well as to the Secretary of State. Owing to tardy communications which, in practice, made Pietermaritzburg as inaccessible to peremptory instructions as the remotest China station, much discretionary authority had to be exercised by officials on the spot. Particularly in the department of native affairs, and in regard to the independent Zulu kingdom, was it essential for Theophilus Shepstone to take from time to time prompt measures for the safety of both white and black. In the legislative sphere it had already been found impracticable to rely on distant Cape Town, and subordinate powers of legislation had been conferred in 1847 on the tiny group of senior officials.

The Liberal administration of Lord John Russell was by no means opposed to the participation of colonists in public affairs. It had already approved for Canada the system of responsible self-government, and it believed that the Canadian constitution would have been further improved had the upper house also been made elective.¹ In the case of the smaller colonies, it was anxious to prepare the way for similar developments. Colonial Office officials believed that the great obstacle was the absence of a leisured class, tending to place political power in the hands of lawyers who could return to their profession when rejected at the polls. Emigration in a time of distress was unlikely to provide a small colony with any considerable number of men able to give undivided attention

¹ See T. W. Murdoch's memorandum on colonial government, 23 Jan. 1850, in C.O. 384, 116 (P.R.O.).

to the business of government. But it would certainly facilitate the working of municipal institutions, which Earl Grey regarded as a necessary preliminary to wider freedom. Pietermaritzburg indeed already enjoyed the privileges conferred by a municipal ordinance of the Cape; but this measure failed to prepare the public for the representative principle, since it vested the power of assessment for rates, not in elected commissioners, but in a public meeting of householders. And Walter Harding, who, as resident magistrate, was responsible for convening such meetings, declared that never more than twenty persons attended.¹

Settlers from the busier urban areas of the United Kingdom were inclined to resent the partial exclusion of 'the public voice' from colonial government. It was difficult to create an opinion favourable to local elective bodies, whether municipal or, as Pine desired, county. Colonists expected roads and bridges to be provided for them without payment of rates, and they looked upon local councils as a device to delay more substantial concessions. Byrne had said bluntly that the colonies swarmed with half-pay or retired officers of the army and navy, and that 'it would be hard to find a class of men less fitted to fill legislative and executive departments of a new and rising colony'.² The personnel of the administration at Pietermaritzburg gave some point to this shaft; and a short experience of public life in the small capital left few in ignorance of the spirit of intrigue and bitter rivalry which often threatened altogether to paralyse official action.³

Among emigrants to Australia in early Victorian times there had been many inspired with Chartist views. Mechanics institutes in several of the larger towns were centres of radicalism.

¹ See C.O. 179/29 for Pine's criticisms of ordinance no. 5 of 1847.

² J. C. Byrne: *Twelve Years' Wanderings in British Colonies*, p. 4.

³ H. Merivale referred to 'the vice of party intrigue against the government' in Natal; and apropos of the suspension of one officer remarked 'I can conceive nothing worse than the license assumed by government officers of communicating scandal against the government in the newspapers'. C.O. 179/21 (1852).

Even in villages and country towns there might be a tradition of protest against the domination of squire and parson in matters of religion, politics and education. Several of Byrne's settlers were middle-class folk and shopkeepers who had enjoyed the franchise, even perhaps before 1832, if they had chanced to pay scot and lot in one of the ancient boroughs. Parish vestries furnished additional arenas for political conflict.

Extreme radical ideas are conspicuously uncommon in the public life of the colony of Natal. But among the early settlers were several with more than a little knowledge of the give and take of parliamentary institutions.

Joshua Walmsley, though the son of a Member of Parliament of very advanced radical views, showed no interest in colonial politics, and chose rather to devote himself to the affairs of the Zulu border.

Agitation for political reform received its first impetus from the activities of the Natal Political Association. Attorneys were prominent on this body, which, according to official comment, consisted of only seven persons. The leading spirits were David Dale Buchanan, a former member of George Greig's printing establishment at Table Bay, who derived his mildly radical philosophy from traditions of the Cape struggle for a free press, and the clever but somewhat unscrupulous attorney, Arthur Walker. John Russom, the ex-Methodist preacher from Bristol, now a market auctioneer, another attorney, A. B. Roberts, and Buchanan's brother, Ebenezer, who had turned his back on both Pacific missions and Lancastrian schools and was employed in a clerical capacity, represented the dissenting challenge to established principles in Church and State. The two remaining original members were James Holmes, clerk in the Fire Assurance office, who, describing himself as a farmer, was nevertheless an 'unapproved emigrant' on the *Minerva*, and Paul Anstie, the Devizes tobacco manufacturer.

Anstie, the secretary, was far from occupying an inconspicuous position. His father had been active in the North

Wiltshire parliamentary campaign of 1844, following the retirement of the veteran Sir Francis Burdett. Young Paul, set up in Pietermaritzburg as a manufacturer of snuff and a miller of corn, soon came into contact with older colonists sharply critical of the native policy of the local government. With D. D. Buchanan's help, he drew up an 'address to the English, Dutch and German inhabitants of Natal' which the association had placarded, in the style of 1848, about the small colonial capital. The address was framed in language suggestive of the oratory of Lord Macaulay.¹ The next step was taken in the temporary absence of Benjamin Pine from the seat of government. A detailed memorandum was submitted, for transmission to the Secretary of State, detailing the 'systematic misrule' which had involved the district in economic stagnation, and charging the executive council with unconstitutional assumption of quasi-judicial powers in the notorious case of H. J. Meller. Its authors pointed to elective self-government as the remedy to be applied.²

Associated with David Buchanan and employed by him as proof-reader for the *Witness* was Thomas Phipson, who had revealed mild radical sympathies during the excitements of the Reform campaign in Birmingham. His contributions to the infant colonial press were those of a well-read man and they helped to make the small population politically self-conscious. Others kept studiously in the background. Daniel B. Scott, who had come to Natal on the *Nile* from a family mansion at Caister Castle, sent reports on the political situation in Natal to Charles B. Adderley, Member for Staffordshire and a man keenly interested in colonial questions. When Henry Cloete, much to the dismay of colonists at Pietermaritzburg, was suspended from his office as recorder by the action of the executive council, Adderley promised to watch investigation of

¹ C.O. 179/21. The address, printed by Buchanan, was evidently intended to form the first of a series.

² E. F. Boys to Secretary of State, 21 Jan. 1853. C.O. 179/28. Cloete had declared Meller guilty of perjury, and the reference is to his examination before the executive council.

the case at London. His letters were subsequently printed on the *Witness* press and placarded in the streets of the two towns.¹

Meanwhile (1852) Pine had appointed a commission to make recommendations on native policy. Scott's friend and business colleague, Joseph Henderson, G. C. Cato, Henry Milner, J. N. Boshoff, Piet Otto and two former field-commandants, F. Scheepers and S. Maritz, were selected from the older colonial population, the settlers recently arrived from the United Kingdom being represented by Dr Addison, Dr C. B. Boast and the barrister, Robert Ryley, a cabin passenger on the *Minerva*. Though the commission's report laid perhaps undue emphasis on the needs of the colonists ('an abundant supply of Kaffir labour for wages'), the whole problem of the contact of advanced and extremely primitive peoples in a single community was comprehensively surveyed. It is unfair to suggest that the colonists were concerned to reduce the native population to the status of squatters and servants. The report recommended industrial and agricultural education on a compulsory basis, and the introduction of individual land tenure in the locations.²

The thirst for political information was in early Victorian times as characteristic of the colonies as it was of Britain. It was the duty and the privilege of newspaper editors to see that knowledge did not remain the privilege of the few. Hampered as they were by official mistrust and by the iniquitous newspaper duty, they found it a difficult task to make information available to the average reader who could not afford to purchase a copy for himself.

In Natal a weekly newspaper had circulated in the capital as early as 1844. And when, two years later, David Buchanan brought his small hand-press with him from the Cape on the

¹ C. B. Adderley to D. B. Scott, 13 Aug. 1853. C.O. 179/30.

² The government was represented by Shepstone, Harding and Bird. Others were added from time to time, Walter Macfarlane making a valuable contribution to the report in its final form.

Louisa, he was able to print and issue the *Natal Witness*, which has survived until the present day. But though there was an eager demand for news, costs were relatively high and materials scarce. The revenue from advertisements was small, and the problem of distribution had originally to be solved by using native runners between the two towns. With recollections of the history of illicit reports of parliamentary debates in England, the authorities required publishers and printers to enter into a recognisance before the court with two or three sureties in a sum of £300 to pay any fine that might be imposed for contravention of the press laws. The names, abodes and places of business of editors, printers and publishers had to be notified to government—a singular 'badge of servitude'.¹

The first press in Natal, one suitable only for printing cards and handbills, had been brought to Natal in February 1844 by Charles Etienne Boniface. His father had been governor of the Temple prison in Paris when Sydney (later Admiral Sir W. S.) Smith, by means of a forged order, made his escape. Suspected of collusion, the elder Boniface had been dismissed and was in some danger of having to face a capital charge. The family fled from France and settled at Seychelles. Shortly after the second British occupation, Charles came to the Cape, in due course obtaining employment on the staff of the *Zuid Afrikaan*. He was a man of real intellectual gifts, playwright, musician of talent, lover of the classical languages and reasonably proficient in seven modern tongues. But, generous as was his nature, he was at times violent and dogmatic, and, involved in a succession of lawsuits, he resolved to come to Natal. With him on the *Rosebud* was his friend Cornelius Moll, successively butcher, Wynberg wagon-maker and journeyman printer on the *Cape Town Mail*. Moll and Boniface together produced the *Natalier* in Pietermaritzburg. But the alliance was inharmonious. Boniface made

¹ Ordinance 26 of 1846, 'for preventing mischiefs arising from the printing and publishing of newspapers by persons not known'. It was repealed as unnecessarily restrictive in the year 1858.

many enemies by his outspoken articles, and in December 1844 the paper was edited by the moderate, J. N. Boshoff.¹ Moll indeed was scarcely more temperate than Boniface in his views; and in 1846 he was sentenced to pay a fine of £10 with costs in an action for libel brought against him by his colleague. This sealed the fate of the small four-page weekly which last appeared on 29 September 1846. Boniface tried to make a living as a tutor, publishing in monthly parts *Dutch Made Easy to an Englishman, or the Art of Correctly Speaking and Writing that Language Taught in Twenty-Five Lessons Methodically Given in the Form of Familiar and Amusing Dialogues*.² The following year he put an end to his life.

David Dale Buchanan had left his home in Scotland at the age of ten, accompanying his elder brother to the Cape. Evening classes, and some assistance in Latin from the great Dr John Philip, equipped him for his career as journalist and attorney perhaps less than his innate energy and his great devotion to the cause of liberty of thought and expression. Still a young man when he brought his wife and family to Natal, he already possessed both the knowledge and the professional equipment needed for the career of a colonial journalist. Able, if necessary, to set up copy with his own hands, he could turn out editorial paragraphs with some of the oratorical vigour of a Macaulay. Warm-hearted and generous by nature, he could be dogmatic and aggressive, ready to trail his coat and face personal hardship in order to draw public attention to the iniquities of an intolerant government. He saw himself as a crusader in the cause of social justice and political freedom, a second David Dale with all the philanthropic zeal of the Clydeside philanthropist. He named his newspaper after the Edinburgh *Witness*. No doubt he was too ready to consider himself as battling against the forces of obscurantism,

¹ Major Smith to Montagu, 17 Dec. 1844. Inward Despatches, Natal, 1843-5. C.A.

² Pietermaritzburg, 1852. The title-page is reproduced in A. F. Hattersley: *Pietermaritzburg Panorama*, opp. p. 26.

and his more conspicuous acts of defiance of the colonial authorities did not always win, nor did they deserve, popular approbation.¹ His chief interest was always politics, including municipal affairs; but, with Thomas Phipson's help, he organised an Independent congregation, preaching himself sometimes twice on Sundays, in Dutch as well as in English. In the social sphere he promoted the more strenuous pursuits of the Victorian era, assisting the 'Pietermaritzburg discussion society' which held meetings in the early 'fifties.

In 1852 the proprietorship of the *Witness* passed to two of the new settlers, John May, who at the age of twenty-six had emigrated with his wife on the *Dreadnought*, and Peter Davis, a compositor previously on the staff of the London *Atlas*. Buchanan, who had been glad enough to hand over the actual printing to Davis in 1850, was equally ready two years later to part with the business, devoting himself to his editorials and to his practice as attorney and advocate. When, in 1860, May died, Davis became sole proprietor, being eventually succeeded by his two sons, Alfred and Peter, who as young boys had accompanied their father on the sailing-ship *Lara*.

Yorkshiremen among the settlers played a conspicuous part in the cradle days of the Natal press. The services of Samuel Lumb, the Leeds printer, were secured by James Archbell for the *Natal Independent*, which he was projecting in opposition to Buchanan's organ. Lumb promptly ordered a press from Leeds. Buchanan's original machine, hand-turned and capable of printing the four small pages at a speed of 200 copies an hour, was from George Greig's office and had been used for early numbers of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*. Lumb imported a small Albion press which was used for printing the *Independent* and its successors, until in 1863 a new Belle Sauvage machine was procured for the *Natal*

¹ See the article by 'Junius Natal' in the *Witness* of 27 Jan. 1854: 'Tell Her Majesty's advisers and the British public that we will no longer submit to the misrule of a designing mountebank.' Buchanan shared his friend Moodie's intense dislike of Benjamin Pine.

Courier. Suitable paper for this press was not readily available. When early in 1864 this difficulty was overcome, the *Courier* led the way in publishing twice a week. Subscription was at the rate of 26s. a year. No postage was now charged on the inland carriage of newspapers, whilst the Friday issue of the *Courier* was left gratis at every house in Pietermaritzburg.

Jeremiah Cullingworth, who shares with George Robinson the credit for foundation of the *Natal Mercury*, was also a Leeds man. Printer and stationer in Ship Inn Yard, off Brig-gate, he emigrated with his fourteen-year-old son Thomas on the *King William*, carrying with him a small Britannia press made by B. Porter of Leeds. In August 1851 he printed and published from his West Street residence Durban's first newspaper, the *Natal Times*. Financial support had been forthcoming from a group of merchants, among whom the Milner brothers were prominent. The paper was edited by Frederick Kinloch; and with the Glasgow journalist, John Sanderson, contributing articles, its issues were not without literary merit. It survived for a period of some eighteen months.

A short-lived weekly, the *D'Urban Advocate*, was produced in 1852 by Edward Scott, an emigrant on *John Bright*. The *Advocate*, of which Scott was publisher, printer and editor, continued the tradition of strong criticism of the local government that had been a feature of the *Times*. Scott attacked the new county councils ordinance, and the fact that resident magistrates, who were to be their chairmen, already combined judicial and administrative functions to a dangerously unconstitutional extent. Whilst the *Advocate* upheld the recorder, Cloete, against Pine's friend, H. J. Meller, its predecessor, the *D'Urban Observer*, had given general support to Pine's administration. Both were printed by Scott, the earlier paper's friendliness to the government being attributable to the bias of its editor, L. Wray, who, whilst disdaining the 'promptings of party feeling', was none the less attached to the group that took the lieutenant-governor's part in the bitter quarrels with the Moodie-Cloete 'family compact'.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SETTLERS

When Scott disposed of his press, type and business in February 1854, the *Natal Mercury* was left alone in the field. Launched on 25 November 1852 by Jeremiah Cullingworth, as original proprietor and printer, it was edited by George Robinson.¹ Neither in the *Mercury* nor in the *Witness* did original matter bulk large. The contents were gathered from many sources, and the arrival of a mail would mean busy evenings in editorial offices with scissors and paste. Local intelligence was set out in more detail in the *Mercury*, George Robinson being less overwhelmingly political in his outlook. He was also more cautious. Both resented what they considered to be the overbearing pretensions of the Established Church. But whilst Buchanan was ready to face prosecution for seditious libel when he attacked the exercise of the royal prerogative in bestowing ecclesiastical dignities in a colony, Robinson was more cautious, preferring to criticise 'an arrogant and innovating episcopacy'. When, on his father's death in 1861, John Robinson succeeded to the editorial chair, he set a standard in reporting proceedings in legislative council and in his temperate editorial comments which was not always followed by his competitors. Moreover, the paper began to open its columns to original matter in both prose and verse.

In Natal, as elsewhere, constitutional freedom was strongly promoted by men of the law. Legal practitioners were prominent among the newly arrived settlers. In the late 'forties in the United Kingdom each of the superior courts maintained a list of members from amongst whom a client must select his agent. The Law Society had begun to keep an official register of solicitors. Attorneys still practised in the courts of common law and solicitors in chancery, though the distinction was ceasing to have much practical significance. It was difficult to obtain salaried employment at the bar. Bills for costing could be sent to be taxed. Many young men who had taken to the law as a means of subsistence, finding themselves excluded

¹ The affidavit, 24 Nov. 1852, makes it clear that Cullingworth was proprietor and Robinson editor. C.S.O. 16.

from more congenial careers by the prejudices of their families, now discovered that changes in the law and reforms in the profession itself had reduced the income derivable from practice.

Henry Cope admitted frankly that he came to Natal, travelling on the *John Line*, in consequence of reduced prospects. Solicitor and attorney in the courts at Westminster, he had practised from lodgings near St George's, Southwark, realising in the more prosperous years from £700 to £800 in professional fees. It had fallen largely to him, as solicitor to the Metropolitan Bridge Toll Association, to promote improved thoroughfares in some of the outskirts of London; and he carried with him to Natal a letter of introduction, in the stereotyped form, from Earl Grey and a somewhat warmer testimonial from Sir Thomas Platt, baron of the exchequer. On his arrival he was admitted as both attorney and advocate, though he had never been called to the bar; and from time to time he acted as attorney-general and even as puisne judge, bringing to the rather shabby precincts of the law in Natal something of the sedate air of the Inns of Court. Socially his geniality as a host and his excellent dinners made him widely popular, even with prisoners in the gaol, to whom he was wont to give a Christmas dinner of roast beef and pudding. He was a widower and lived alone in a cottage close to the ordnance reserve, his drawing-room crowded with lacquerware, statuettes and fancy chessmen. Here he contrived to dine all the elite of Pietermaritzburg, treating them to 'great heavy dinners, with such loads of open tarts'. He was even accepted as a leader of fashion, books of plates being displayed on his open bookcases. Among the balls of the season 'Mr Advocate Cope's parties' ranked high in society, with the regimental band in attendance and always 'displays of viands of the most recherche character'.¹

George Augustus Cope and Thomas Spencer Cope were also among the settlers of these years. Spencer Cope had

¹ E. W. Uildens: *My African Home*, p. 124.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SETTLERS

been called to the bar in 1845, and had served as special pleader on the Somerset and Bristol sessions. A man of considerable intellectual vigour, he left Natal in 1853 on the *Wee Tottie*, for Melbourne.

John David Shuter, and his brother William, have been mentioned in a previous chapter. The sons of David Shuter, an attorney of the King's Bench, their decision to emigrate was probably due to family misfortune in the age of railway speculation. For a third son emigrated to Australia, apparently at the same time, whilst the remaining child, with her husband, J. A. Stirton from Kent, accompanied John David on the *Devonian*. In April 1854, Henry Cope found J. D. Shuter qualified to practise in the recorder's court as an advocate, and it seems that, before leaving England, he must have passed the written examination in the common law that entitled him to admission as an attorney. On arrival in Natal it was necessary to acquire also a knowledge of the Roman-Dutch law. Cloete himself was singularly well qualified professionally to preside over the court. A barrister of Lincoln's Inn, he had previously graduated at Leyden, after a period of intensive study of Roman-Dutch law at Utrecht. He strove to raise standards in his court by insisting on both written and oral examination before admission as an advocate. His successor, Walter Harding, had never been called to the bar, though, since he had been appointed Crown prosecutor, it had been necessary to admit him to practise as an advocate in Natal. It was said, after his appointment in 1857 as chief justice, that Harding endeavoured to make up for very moderate attainments at the law by taking his seat arrayed in flowing robes of pink and blue, on the principle that 'justice so superbly arrayed must have a very imposing effect on the native mind'.¹

Among the magistrates, Henry John Meller was the only man who belonged to the legal profession in the strict sense. The son of John Samuel Meller, collector of customs at the Port of London, he had been born in France in 1808. With

¹ *The Natal Mercury*, 26 May 1859.

excellent legal qualifications as a barrister of the Middle Temple, he yet found that his income was small, and he came to Natal on the *Ballengeich*, 'a little man of fierce aspect and a powdered wig'.¹ Pine, after his appointment as governor of the Gold Coast, warned the Secretary of State that the Natal bar only had two 'regular' attorneys and no barristers among its members. The arduous duty of drafting ordinances and proclamations, which should have fallen to Harding as Crown prosecutor, or, in his absence, to Cope, had necessarily, in Pine's day, been performed by the lieutenant-governor himself, since it was work that could only be done by a barrister.² Nor did the business of the law proceed without friction within the sacred precincts of the court itself. Pine himself felt that the inevitable expansion of commerce and business in a British colony was bringing up for decision in the courts new types of question which the Roman-Dutch law was not sufficiently elastic to cover. Moreover, British settlers, until the law was changed to bring it more into conformity with English law, found that their powers of testamentary disposition were fettered by the necessity of leaving to each child its 'legitimate portion'.³ Gradually conventions accumulated, admitting for instance English rules of evidence before, in 1859, they were actually given legal force in Natal.⁴ All this was very distasteful to the recorder; and when in 1852 the Durban resident magistrate had been empowered to try in his court civil cases of every description, where the sum involved did not exceed £100, Cloete was seriously aggrieved. He came to believe that Pine and his advisers were acting in opposition to the Roman-Dutch law, and in his remarks in reference to Henry Cope employed words 'calculated to turn a court into a bear garden'.⁵

¹ G.H. 4. Inward Despatches, pp. 183-205.

² Pine to Carnarvon, 4 Aug. 1858. C.O. 179/50.

³ Sir G. Grey to Lord J. Russell, 16 Nov. 1855.

⁴ Law no. 17 of 1859. G.H. 858. Reports on Laws. N.A.

⁵ H. Merivale's words. C.O. 179/38. Sir George Barrow's comment was that Cloete's failing was want of discretion and good temper.

In later years, particularly after the arrival as first puisne judge of the admirably restrained and deeply learned Henry Connor, administration of the law proceeded with greater smoothness. Connor was an acknowledged authority on the Roman-Dutch law, whilst an expositor of no small merit was discovered in W. Lyons, librarian of the legislative council. Nevertheless, the admission of persons to practise as attorneys continued to be governed by considerations that would nowadays be regarded as fantastic. Reporters who had attended a specified number of sittings of the supreme court were accepted as possessing qualification. Arthur Walker, who certainly displayed some acumen in his speeches at the bar, only claimed to have once been employed, and not in an articulated capacity, in the Angel Street office of the Dublin solicitor, Abraham Hill.

A few other men of the law should be mentioned. J. R. Goodricke, passenger on *Lalla Rookh*, had served an apprenticeship to a Plymouth attorney before practising in London. A prominent critic of 'high church' tendencies, he became one of the best known of Durban's legal men. Robert Ralph Ryley, an English barrister, never practised in the colony, preferring a farmer's life in the Riet vlei neighbourhood. With him on the *Minerva* was George Gain, who has already been mentioned.

In the years which followed arrival of the settlers, interest in public affairs and a genuine concern over the trend of native policy became manifest. The idea of a political association to bring pressure on the local government was probably derived from the neighbouring colony of Mauritius, where an attempt had been made formally to elect such a body. The Pietermaritzburg association emerged from a public meeting convened to consider the question of native labour. It was lauded by Buchanan as a safety-valve of popular feeling; and, guided by John Moreland and others who were subsequently to be elected to the legislature, it certainly brought to light some undesirable features in the management of public affairs. It made a strong point of the fact that the surveyor-general and

collector of customs were so frequently absent from the capital that the small executive council, which was virtually identical with the legislature, contained acting officials who were 'mere nominees' of the lieutenant-governor, thus accentuating the personal character of the government. 'The power of the Crown in Natal, in the hands of a lieutenant-governor, far surpasses that wielded by our truly constitutional and beloved Queen.'¹ The rising clamour for representative institutions was naturally stimulated when it became known that William Porter's original sketch of a new constitution for the Cape Colony had assigned two elected members to Natal.

At the Cape the readiness of the European population for the parliamentary franchise had been judged to some extent from its spontaneous reaction to the introduction of convicts. This issue was also present in Natal. Mr Gladstone in 1846 had suggested the employment of convicts to clear the bush. Moreover, Cloete in a letter to the Secretary of State had expressed the opinion that a limited number of convicts employed on the harbour and other public works that 'admit of no delay' would be beneficial. As late as 1855 there was a group of persons in Durban styled the 'pro-convict committee', including such prominent men as Alfred Evans, a passenger on the *Devonian*, and J. R. Goodricke, who based their advocacy of the proposal on the acute labour shortage which had caused one of the sugar mills to close down. This 'convict plot', as it was termed in the Press, served to rally public opinion very decidedly against transportation to Natal as a measure likely to retard the progress of the district towards constitutional freedom.² It was known that parliamentary circles in England were coming to be increasingly favourable to the principle where no slavery or convict labour existed; and settlers had taken comfort from the foundation of societies such as that for the reform of colonial government, established in 1850 with

¹ The *Natal Witness*, 2 Jan. 1852.

² See *Convict and Reformatory Labour in Natal*, by R. D. Reynolds, an unpublished thesis in the library of the University of Natal.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SETTLERS

Francis Baring, Richard Cobden, Sir William Molesworth and C. B. Adderley on its council.

The advent of politically conscious settlers from so many social strata in the United Kingdom had radically altered the situation. 'A European population thus composed', wrote Sir George Grey, 'ought, I think, to have a voice in the government of their country.'¹ Though the aboriginal element far outnumbered the white, their interests could be safeguarded by official votes and by the annual reservation of £5000 to supply their pressing needs. The European population was not large, but it was no longer migratory, for the new settlers had come to make their homes in Natal. Benjamin Pine concurred in these views, praising the 'reasonableness and moderation' of the opinions expressed by colonists and pointing to the recently enacted municipal and county council ordinances as having laid the foundations for political self-government.

So far as the imperial authorities expressed any reluctance to proceed to the establishment of a representative system, they did so from the wish that the general principles on which the native inhabitants were to be governed should first be ascertained and placed upon a secure footing. On this fundamental question, it is far from being true that the colonists and the executive government were aligned on opposite sides. With many of the objectives, as set out by Pine and his advisers, the settlers were in entire agreement. Both Pine and his acting predecessor, Colonel Boys, had insisted that it was undesirable to have two separate sets of officials and systems of law, the one for the colonial population and the other, under the *de facto* sovereignty of Theophilus Shepstone, for the Bantu. European settlers agreed that such an arrangement was calculated to perpetuate native laws and customs, and to confirm the recalcitrance of tribal chiefs. Ordinances of the purely official legislative council were no less 'colonial' in their accepted premisses than those which elected members promoted at a

¹ Grey to Lord John Russell, 24 Nov. 1855.

later period. In the early fifties it was left to Shepstone and to Cloete to protest that such ordinances as that which empowered any white man to ask natives driving cattle along the highway for their passes was likely to be a fruitful source of resentment.¹ Shepstone was indeed the sole champion of a system of insulation. He preferred that the natives should be concentrated in large locations, subject to missionary instruction and the 'gentle exercise of central superintendence'. But he was opposed by Pine and, in so far as he wished to remove the Bantu from contact with European colonists, by Earl Grey also, whilst the settlers disliked the probable consequences of such a policy on the supply of native labour. With so much agreement on fundamental issues, the imperial government decided to embark on the experiment of representative institutions.

The charter establishing Natal as a colony separate from the Cape entrusted powers of legislation to a 'blended' chamber, consisting of four nominated officials and twelve members elected for four years by the novel expedient of the ballot, hitherto regarded, perhaps because of its Chartist origin, as unconstitutional and even un-English. It followed precedents in New South Wales and was to be the normal practice for some years in the smaller Crown colonies. Like Vancouver Island, where instructions to call into existence a representative body were issued in the same year (1856), Natal was to enjoy, from its first severance from the parent colony, some of the blessings of popular freedom. But it was not to have complete control of its domestic affairs. The reserved civil list was on a modest scale, but it was accompanied by a provision assigning £5000 annually for the benefit of the Bantu. Though the council was to have power to amend the constitution, all measures altering its structure, diminishing official salaries or encroaching upon the prerogative of the Crown were to be reserved for ministerial approval. The franchise was fairly low, with no mention of colour.

¹ Cloete's comments on the cattle-theft ordinance. C.O. 179/38 (1855).

These provisions were not altogether satisfactory to the more politically minded of the settlers. They received a good press, partly because the new lieutenant-governor from Labuan, John Scott, got on very well with Buchanan. The charter's liberality was praised on all sides, and the implications of the reserved sum were not at first perceived. Several of the newly arrived settlers, notably John Moreland, Walter Macfarlane and James Arbuthnot, were returned at the polls. When, in 1857, the new council met, it elected Donald Moodie as speaker, safeguarded freedom of speech and debate, and proceeded to adopt standing orders modelled on those in force at Cape Town. Despite the fact that its sessions were short, the £1 paid to members living at a distance of six miles or more from Pietermaritzburg for daily attendance being restricted to a maximum of sixty days in the year, it was never in a hurry.¹ There were no parties and no whips.

Conflict with the executive inevitably arose on the reservation clause. It created a constitutional issue—the placing of the entire revenue under the control of the representative legislature—which was the subject of acrimonious dispute in many Crown colonies. The elected members did not object to the civil list to provide on a permanent basis for the salaries of the higher officials, but they lost no time in demanding that the revenue should otherwise be subject to legislative sanction. The reservation for the natives was obnoxious on still another ground. It was regarded as an ecclesiastical grant in a particularly objectionable form, enabling the local government to make grants of public money to particular denominations without accountability to the elective organ. From the £5000 annually provided Lieutenant-Governor Scott certainly made grants to the Bishop of Natal and to various missionary societies for the educational and industrial training of natives, the cost of lighting native churches used as evening schools, the encourage-

¹ Law no. 10 of 1858. In the 'sixties tenders were invited for supply of firewood and candles for a session, the estimated quantity being 5000 lb. of the former and 1000 lb. of the latter.

ment of cotton-planting and the erection of a sugar mill.⁴ Early in 1858 the council passed a bill to suspend this clause in the charter, and to make unlawful expenditure on native objects until a detailed statement had been submitted and approved by the legislature. It was reserved and ultimately disallowed.

Colonial Office minutes make it clear that ministers were not prepared to continue military protection of Natal by imperial troops unless the colonists accepted the reservation for native purposes. In principle, the challenge to imperial conceptions was the same as that which had occurred in New Zealand. Executive control of native policy in that colony was maintained with extreme difficulty. In Natal the elective members steadily made their influence felt, gradually widening the scope of their activities through select committees, which insisted on full information being supplied. In the long run, a compromise was reached. The right of the council to control the entire expenditure was not conceded. But the lieutenant-governor agreed to table a statement showing each year the objects to which the various amounts expended had been applied.

Native policy as a whole supplied only too frequent grounds for conflict. Settlers found already in existence in Natal a system of native management, the product of the ideas of Earl Grey modified by the experience and the shrewd knowledge of the Bantu mind possessed by Theophilus Shepstone, in which they had never acquiesced. Successive Secretaries of State expressed the view that the welfare of the natives could not safely be entrusted to the protection of the colonists, but must be retained under the control of the executive government. Over the years the executive in Natal had set apart locations for the occupation of the Bantu, issued land titles in trust as a guarantee against encroachment, and begun to train natives in industry and in profitable occupations within the locations. It was by no means the negative, *laissez-faire* policy so commonly denounced in the debates of the legislative council. Scott and Shepstone were indefatigable in providing cotton seed and

⁴ See Scott's statement of the appropriation (1859) in C.O. 179/51.

ploughs to mission stations within the locations. They could not provide compulsory education without massing the native population in urban settlements, but they paid out annual sums in support both of mission schools and mission hospitals. Polygamy Shepstone did not touch, believing that it was too deeply ingrained in the mode of life of the Bantu people. After a close study both of innumerable memoranda compiled by Shepstone himself and of detailed criticisms submitted by colonial administrators as well as by colonists, the Colonial Office came to a decidedly favourable judgment. 'I think the Natal system of dealing with the natives a wise one, perhaps one might say *the* wise one, that of leaving the natives as between themselves to be governed in a great degree by their own laws, humanised by the white man's law and administered, in conjunction more or less with the chiefs, by European magistrates: that also of treating the natives in law and fact as a separate dependent community under the tutelage of a government which is not, in native affairs, altogether in the hands of a majority of the colonists.'

Inevitably it was this last point that was most irksome to the elected legislators—that in all matters of native welfare the Crown stood interposed between the natives and the colonial population. Among the emigrants were men of strongly independent and individualist types, necessarily so since it required a spirit of courage and enterprise to move a man to transfer himself and his family to a domicile in a new colony, largely uninhabited by uncivilised tribesmen. These men desired greater freedom of legislative action; and the measures which they promoted took little account of the fact that a vast body of natives could not be expected, quietly at the dictation of a small European population, to give up habits endeared to them by the practice of their forefathers. The religious susceptibilities of the settlers were outraged by the toleration of polygamy and lobola. It was insufferable to many that a Christian government should be associated with the practices of a heathen

¹ *Minute on the Shepstone system.* C.O. 179/70.

community. Dr Charles Johnston, the Birmingham medico, who had been returned for Durban, expressed the wish that native law would soon be abolished. With the arrival of commercial depression, colonists clamoured more loudly for reduction of expenditure on purely native projects, and for administrative measures of a restrictive nature that might ensure a plentiful supply of labour. Had it not been for men of foresight among the recently arrived settlers, the colonial point of view might have been expressed purely in terms of security: security from want, which must come if the natives were to play no part in production, and security from the danger of a Bantu rising, which was interpreted to require the removal of the Bantu from great locations situated in inaccessible fastnesses. Informed and guided by men like Charles Johnston, Walter Macfarlane, John Akerman and John Robinson, the representative legislature turned rather to constitutional objectives, studying British parliamentary precedents in order to coerce the lieutenant-governor to take account of colonial opinion. The early issues were fought out on the question of control of revenue. It was good constitutional ground from which to challenge the executive's sole control of native policy.

The charter undoubtedly increased public interest in politics. Colonists entered with great zest upon the conflict with the executive government, taking up a 'hostile and defiant opposition to the policy of the British government' and manifesting 'a rude and uncourteous deportment to the official members who advocate it'.¹ When the second puisne judge, Lushington Phillips, won his case against the executive which had suspended him for intemperate remarks from the bench concerning the exercise of the prerogative of pardon, the city was 'alive with crackers and those other gunpowder noises by which the public expressed their exuberant joy'.²

¹ Complaint of the attorney-general (M. H. Gallwey), 5 April 1859. C.O. 179/51.

² The *Natal Courier*, 6 June 1860. On the Phillips case, see A. F. Hattersley: *Later Annals of Natal*, pp. 181-2 and C.O. 179/53.

Something like a party of opposition emerged as early as 1858, with Walter Macfarlane as leader until his election as speaker to replace Donald Moodie.

Severe depression in the late 'sixties brought about a more sustained conflict in which the elective members further exploited their 'constitutional' privileges. Confronted with a grim struggle for existence, merchants and planters considered that it was unfair that members of the executive government should continue to enjoy the augmented emoluments secured to them in a time of prosperity. Robert W. Keate, lieutenant-governor 1867-72, on the other hand, was debarred by his instructions from consenting to a lowering of official salaries; and to some extent it could be said that the honour of the colony was pledged to existing office-holders. The elected members met this situation not unreasonably by pressing for a reduction in the establishment through amalgamation of certain offices and the suppression of others. When Keate, a pedantic and obstinate man without the gift of distinguishing trifles from important matters, refused to meet the council half-way, the latter made no financial provision for certain departments of the administration, threatening to bring public business to a standstill in what Keate was pleased to call 'a reign of terror'. The lieutenant-governor could not finance public works by the sale of Crown land because, in the full severity of the slump, land was quite unsaleable. But he did utilise loan funds which had been earmarked for other purposes, and he claimed, on the authority of the Crown, to continue to pay official salaries at the old rate. He had to be somewhat coldly informed by the Secretary of State that the Crown claimed no legal power to spend any money except in virtue of some colonial law; and that, except through reservation of a bill, the lieutenant-governor possessed no authority to prevent the views of the legislature from taking effect.¹

On the whole, it must be admitted that the representatives

¹ Kimberley to Keate, 22 April and 22 June 1871. G.H. 19. Inward Despatches. N.A.

of the public showed the greater measure of wisdom and forbearance. This was largely the consequence of the talent evinced by a handful of leaders. At first these leaders proceeded empirically without much thought for constitutional principle. As settlers in an undeveloped country, they required more, rather than less, freedom to shape their lives; and they demanded the management of their local affairs as part of their natural rights as Englishmen. From their point of view, the executive officials, from the lieutenant-governor downwards, were irresponsible; and at the same time they were temporary sojourners in a land which they themselves had selected for their future home. Until Hudson Janisch was appointed in the 'seventies to administer the government of St Helena, there was no known example of a colonial-born man rising to the highest executive position in a colony. Tenacious of their rights and proud of the dignity of election by the suffrages of the people, the elective members were energetic in protest against the view that the direction of policy must be left to the determination of a clique of officials.

Headed by Walter Macfarlane, 'Her Majesty's Opposition' aimed at abolition of the office of secretary for native affairs, placing the Bantu under European magistrates directly responsible to the colonial secretary. It proposed to effect this object through the weapon of supply, making no appropriation until the entire revenue had been placed under its supervision. When this position had to be abandoned, supplies were voted in detail, sums being appropriated to particular items. The weakness of these tactics lay in the executive control over the channels of communication with the Secretary of State, to whom, under Crown colony government, the ultimate decision belonged. In the 'sixties colonial politicians began to use visits to the United Kingdom to seek audiences at Downing Street. John Robinson, now a member of the legislative council as well as editor of the *Mercury*, won the confidence of Sir George Barrow at the Colonial Office and began with him a correspondence on the affairs of Natal. His independent north-

country outlook and the transparent integrity of his motives made an impression on the permanent officials, and was to stand him in good stead in the long political campaign that lay ahead. The ideal of constitutional freedom drove him on and his strength and faith never wavered. In 1870 he wrote to Barrow explaining that the authorities at Downing Street were 'wholly at the mercy of information which may be supplied by the lieutenant-governor'. The policy of sending home private letters 'round the flank of the government' was continued by John Akerman, who at the same time contrived to ascertain the attitude of the Colonial Office towards Keate's point of view. Jubilant references in the popular press to 'captured copies of the despatches' which came somehow into the hands of Akerman and his two principal colleagues, Charles Barter and R. E. Ridley, lift the veil from the tactics pursued by the elected members.¹

In 1870 Ridley had made the first proposal to establish responsible government. The admission in 1868 of two elected members to the executive council had proved a disappointment to both sides. John Akerman, one of the first to be admitted, found that he was expected to limit his advice to actions within the power of the lieutenant-governor to adopt, which meant in practice within the four corners of the unamended charter. To Keate the measure was a means of indirectly strengthening the influence of the executive over the legislature. Relations improved during the second period in office of Sir Benjamin Pine, whilst the outbreak of the Zulu war distracted the attention of colonists from the political arena. Sir Garnet Wolseley's mission of 1875, when he persuaded the legislature to add to their number eight additional nominees, was a sore disappointment to the progressive party, whilst in 1882 the electorate rejected an offer of responsible government accompanied by withdrawal of the imperial garrison.²

¹ Robinson's letters of 22 Aug. and 19 Sept. 1870 are to be found in C.O. 179/99. For the actions of the 'triumvirate', see Keate's despatch of 24 Oct. 1870, the *Natal Witness*, 5 Jan. 1872.

² These developments are described in A. F. Hattersley: *Later Annals of Natal*, section v.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SETTLERS

The cause of self-government owed much to Jolin Robinson. The political rebuff of 1882 was soon forgotten, and he took a prominent part in the final campaign that saw responsible government triumph by a small majority. Some of those who had fought with him against the 'clique' of officials, notably John Akerman, who did not believe that Natal could stand alone, were now among his opponents. Persevering and shrewd, a man of great tact and evenness of temper, Robinson was the inevitable premier when, in 1893, the first responsible administration came to be formed. Despite his attachment to British parliamentary forms, he was an opponent of party, and he liked to feel that his colleagues stood firm in attachment to his personal leadership. He understood that parliamentary traditions and the unwritten understandings of the two-party system could not be created overnight, and would be hard to establish in so small a European community. Moreover, problems were too big and too urgent to admit of the colony being split by party differences into political fragments, Harry Escombe, his attorney-general and successor, was, in point of political idealism and genius, ahead of him. Brilliant, impetuous and dogmatic, Escombe dreamed of a dominion of South Africa, touching the future of progressive politics as Robinson touched mainly the past. Both strove to heal racial divisions; but in Escombe the imaginative and poetic faculty were at times uppermost. He had a gift of picturesque speech, and could quote Tennyson or the Australian poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon, with singular felicity.

Parliamentary government could not have come without a measure of financial stability and adequate machinery for financing trade. With the arrival of the 1849-51 settlers the need for capital became obvious. Planters depended upon advances from purchasers in England, whilst remittance to creditors was largely by Treasury drafts, issued by the army commissariat department upon the military chest. At an earlier date, when imports came from wholesale houses in the Cape, funds to pay for them were sent by sea in the form of gold.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SETTLERS

Merchants were obliged to give long credit terms, both to Natal settlers and still more to customers in the republics, and they lacked the capital resources to hold surplus stocks until the market could absorb them.

The private banker was often a flourishing draper or merchant who, without professional training, undertook the task of transmitting funds and of negotiating local bills. The next step was to attract deposits and issue notes. A fire assurance and trust company, established in 1849, undertook short-term accommodation by discounting bills, but its trust deed did not admit of the issue of notes. James Archbell and Richard Lawton, a passenger on the *Globe*, began in 1852 to issue a quantity of £1 notes in their own names. English silver circulated freely, but gold was scarce owing to the drain of specie to the Cape, and the fire assurance company was unable to accumulate sufficient funds to provide the required monetary facilities. Proposals were accordingly made for the establishment of banking corporations. Colonial Office regulations of the year 1846 laid down that the liability of shareholders in a bank could be limited to twice the amount of their own holdings in shares. At the same time, they limited the issue of notes, which were not to be of smaller denomination than £1, to a maximum not exceeding the paid-up capital.

Apart from the financial conveniences which they brought, the small colonial banks offered scope for the exercise of talents which were to find further outlet as representative machinery was introduced. The spirit of commercial rivalry and the deep rift caused by the bitter feuds of Benjamin Pine's first governorship led to the appearance of various projects, some of them conceived with the intention of bringing influence to bear in government circles. Whilst Philip Allen, newly arrived from Ireland to hold the post of colonial treasurer, accepted the chairmanship of the Natal Bank and even deposited public money with the Bank before its charter of incorporation had been granted, another official, J. P. Hathorn, the colonial auditor, sat on the board of a rival institution. Shareholders

had their first experience of electoral conflicts when the time came to elect directors.

In the absence of banks, J. C. Byrne had accepted money from many of his emigrants, drawing bills on his agent, Moreland.¹ With unhappy recollections of these transactions, Byrne settlers were foremost in clamouring for adequate banking facilities. John Russom in an address at Pietermaritzburg in 1852 surveyed the whole field from the bankers of Athens to Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

The banks could not begin business until capital had been subscribed. The initial prospectuses of both the Natal Bank and the Bank of Natal were issued early in 1854. In the former case, the promoters were chiefly men like Philip Ferreira and D. B. Scott who had been on the directorate of the fire assurance company, but there were some recent settlers such as the Yorkshireman, Thomas Puckering, who had come out on the *Henry Tanner*. In origin it was a joint-stock company formed by deed of trust of 21 April 1854, with a capital stock of £20,000. When the whole had been paid up, the bank was incorporated (1859). Its notes, distinguished by their elegant engraving, were printed in Natal.

James Archbell was at the head of the rival association which had an original capital of £10,000. The bank did not long survive; but, with the apparent prosperity of the early 'sixties, a number of new institutions made their appearance. In 1863 the colony possessed five banks: the Natal Bank, its nominal capital increased to £100,000, the Commercial and Agricultural Bank, the unincorporated Colonial Bank of Natal, the London and South African Bank and William Hartley's private bank in Durban. At the height of the speculation mania, with the discount rate at twelve per cent, notes were in circulation to the value of £5818.² Promissory notes were purchased from

¹ Moreland, in his *Memorandum* to the Colonial Office, stated that more than £1000 had been deposited with Byrne. C.O. 179/42. For an individual case (G. B. Highfield), see C.O. 179/18.

² *Report*, 2 Aug. 1870, on the Coinage of Natal. G.H. 341. Correspondence, 1870-1.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SETTLERS

hand to hand, and bills renewed almost as a matter of common courtesy. The depression caused most of these banks to be wound up. The Natal Bank, which survived, became bankers to the colonial government. It had to face bad times in 1890 when the Cape of Good Hope Bank failed. A run on the bank ensued, and it might have been compelled to close its doors, had not the government expressed confidence in its stability by depositing a large sum of money to its credit.

In 1914 the Natal Bank was amalgamated with the National Bank of South Africa.

CHAPTER XII

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

In the 'forties, burgesses of Pietermaritzburg and Durban were occupied in cultivating their *erven*, replacing the original wattle-and-daub huts by more permanent structures in brick or stone, and attending to the urgent needs of the community. The arrival of the military brought wider interests. Major Smith placed his library of standard works at the disposal of all who read, whilst Captain W. D. Kyle organised the first turf club meeting in December 1844. A collection of plays was brought from the Cape by F. S. Berning. With Moll's printing office, an open-air theatre cut on the slopes of Fort Napier, horse-racing and subscription balls, there was some variety of social entertainment in Pietermaritzburg. In a more serious vein, there were occasional lectures in both towns. Boniface was still writing brilliantly, his satirical *Bluettes*, published monthly, casting ridicule on his unfortunate critics.

The 1849-51 settlers helped to create a well-balanced colonial society. For they were drawn from the various social strata of Victorian Britain. Several of Byrne's passengers were pronounced by the emigration commissioners to be 'above the class considered eligible'.¹ A doctor's verdict, or the impact of commercial depression, induced what had been a non-emigrating class to sail for Natal. In the United Kingdom society still sorted itself out carefully, with members of the landed aristocracy and of privileged professions inside a select enclosure. The social pattern might be intricate, but there were well-understood categories. Those engaged in trade were definitely outside the fence. The gentry, with public school education largely reserved for their sons, were distinguished

¹ George and Robert Mason, sons of the headmaster of the Perse School, Cambridge, were originally rejected on this ground. C.O. 179/27.

from the middle classes whose concern was commerce, not land-owning or sport.

Military and naval officers, especially those on half-pay, belonged to a class to whom removal to a remote colony would involve little that was unfamiliar or irksome. Those whose families were admitted to polite society would have no difficulty in obtaining letters of introduction to the lieutenant-governor, which might lead to appointments in the magistracy or the administrative services. This section included Arthur Caesar Hawkins, seventh son of a Somersetshire baronet and brother of the physician who attended Sir Robert Peel after his fatal fall from a horse on Constitution Hill. Another successful aspirant for magisterial honours was George Peppercorn, who reached Natal in 1849, intending to grow cotton, with testimonials from Sir Stratford Canning and Sir Richard Church, the liberator of Greece. Others, after military or naval service, would at least be entitled to grants of Crown land. This consideration, or the reputation of Natal as a healthy country for weak chests, brought to the colony Alexander Gordon (*Ina*), a captain in the 1st Royal Scots, George Bishop (*Herald*), who had been placed on half-pay after distinguished service in the American war of 1812-14, Robert Henry Ratsey (*Minerva*), second son of Admiral Ratsey, and Francis Severn Maxwell (*Wilhelmina*), of whose naval career something has already been mentioned.

Younger sons of Army officers might decline to follow elder brothers into the church or the law and elect, like Edward Devey, to emigrate under Byrne. From Platt's hotel in 1850, young Devey appealed to the lieutenant-governor to enable him to 'retain a respectable standing in society'. His father, an officer in the 7th Royal Fusiliers, had been wounded at the siege of Badajoz. George Lamond, born at Gibraltar, where his father had been stationed as surgeon to the 60th Royal Rifles, after a brief schooling at George Watson's College in Edinburgh, took passage on the *Unicorn* at the age of seventeen. Some had served in the East. Frederick William Moor,

son of an officer in the Bombay artillery, had been born at Surat.

Byrne's ships, with their accommodation for cabin passengers, carried men travelling with their servants, and even with their race-horses and grand pianos. In all there were 322 cabin passengers travelling to Natal under schemes approved by the emigration board during the three years 1849-51. Mid-Victorian snobbery classed these people as 'colonists' as distinguished from humble 'emigrants' travelling in the steerage. Doubtless some belonged to circles to which the pursuit of pleasure was the main occupation in life. Working-class emigrants were surprised to find 'gentlemen in Bond Street attire' idly riding their horses, as if they were still enjoying equestrian exercise in the Row. One man's outfit for Natal included as an indispensable item six dozen pairs of white kid gloves.¹ In the colony, however, it was impossible to maintain the same standards of exclusiveness. Social cliques indeed were persistent throughout the nineteenth century, but wealth, however made, was soon recognised as a passport to good circles. Barriers were not so rigid and the retail trader was by no means beyond the pale. The distinction in early colonial almanacs between a 'mister' and an 'esquire' faded out of later editions. Nevertheless, society in the two towns objected to fustian jackets in the better seats of the tiny colonial theatres.

Whilst Yorkshire farmers commented severely on 'the great want of energy' among some of the younger settlers, there were several of the type of Michael Jeffels and Rhoda Willan. Jeffels, brought up for the church by a clerical father with a living worth £50, preferred the hard life of a colonial pioneer. Rhoda Willan, the daughter of another clergyman, decided after the death of her parents to take passage on the *Emily* rather than become dependent on relatives.

Some of the settlers defy classification in social categories. James Leigh, a passenger with his wife and two children on the

¹ *The British Banner*, 8 May 1850.

Unicorn, lived in circumstances of extreme poverty in a sod hut near Richmond. His father had spent a fortune in litigation to make good a claim to Stoneleigh Abbey; and in 1850 he could no longer support the style of a country squire at Renacres Hall, near Manchester. He claimed to be the rightful Lord Leigh. In 1862 his primitive cottage was burned down and he perished in the flames.

The emigration was at its height in the year 1850. In the twelve months of that year 2760 persons embarked for Natal at United Kingdom ports, according to the lists available in the emigration commissioners' office. The colonial list, compiled by Donald Moodie, shows that 3185 persons actually landed in Natal. This list was based on customs house documents handed to masters of ships on departure from the United Kingdom, and there are several cases of emigrants not entered on these lists.¹ Figures compiled in Natal at a later date estimate the total number of immigrants to the colony from 1 January 1849 until 28 June 1852 as 4806.² Not much reliance can be placed on these figures. Byrne claimed to have sent 2066 emigrants to Natal in the first twelve of his ships. The later vessels carried mainly 'unapproved' emigrants, his deposits having been exhausted. Abstracts sent to the Cape showed a total of 970 'unapproved' persons on Byrne's ships.

Medical men emigrating to Natal were mostly of the general practitioner class, in other words apothecaries who had obtained an additional qualification from the college of surgeons. With the dual qualification, they were entitled to practise in every department of medicine, though socially they would be regarded as inferior to physicians. The British Medical Association had not yet been formed, and until 1858 there was no register of qualified practitioners. Since 1815 the society of apothecaries had possessed authority to license

¹ C.O. 179/34. See George Macleroy's observations on the passenger lists, 9 July 1850, in C.S.O. 47. N.A.

² D. Moodie's list of emigrants arriving in 1850 is printed in *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1853, lxii (1697), p. 17. Compare the list in C.O. 179/34 and in the 10th to 12th *Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners*.

those who had served a five-year apprenticeship, and this was done without written examination until 1839. Ships' doctors, some of whom settled in Natal, often belonged to inferior grades of apothecaries and druggists; others had been admitted as surgeons after a period of apprenticeship. The highest rank was that of the gentleman-physician who kept his brougham and was regarded as a scholar. These men seldom experienced difficulty in earning good incomes.

In Natal, Dr W. H. Addison, who had come to the colony with the Macleans in the *Lalla Rookh*, advised the lieutenant-governor in regard to the issue of licences to practise. He recommended that Dr Benjamin Brooking should be authorised to practise as a surgeon, but not as an apothecary, since he had not attended the lectures which would have permitted him to present himself before the court of examiners of the London apothecary company. On the other hand, Dr James Mack, a Goswell Road apothecary licensed by the society in 1838, who had been medical visitor for St Luke's parish, Middlesex, during the cholera visitation, could produce no evidence of knowledge of surgery, though the law had permitted him to practise as a surgeon on an apothecary's licence alone. It is clear that Addison was anxious to establish high standards of knowledge and training; and he was to give devoted service for many years in the capacity of district surgeon for Durban. In the 'sixties a medical board operated for the colony under the chairmanship of Dr P. C. Sutherland, with R. J. Mann and Samuel Gower as additional members. The qualifications of chemists were at first scrutinised by Addison in conjunction with the Pietermaritzburg druggist, Nicholas van Zweel. Among the emigrants were Robert Raw, from Richmond, Yorkshire, and E. J. Challinor. These men were Durban's first qualified druggists.

Medical practitioners did not find it easy to make a living in Natal. The Scarborough medico, Dr John Hulme, found no professional employment in Durban, and returned to the United Kingdom after an attempt to cultivate a few acres on

the Berea. George Dimock, from Uckfield, Sussex, a surgeon-apothecary who travelled as ship's doctor on the *King William*, obtained a licence to practise in Natal, but left for Australia in the *Sarah Bell* in 1852. J. S. Christopher's brother, William, who had served a five-years' apprenticeship at the London hospital under Sir Astley Cooper, only stayed a few years in the district. In 1859 the colonial secretary, Major Erskine, frankly admitted that 'there were several medical men in the colony who had very little practice', and that the fees for attendance at hospitals and gaols were very small.¹

One of those who remained to devote the rest of his life to Natal was Samuel Gower, who originally received £20 per annum for attending to official duties. In 1853 his salary as district surgeon for Pietermaritzburg was £100. Licensed by the society of apothecaries in 1823, he obtained the additional qualification as surgeon in 1846, practising in Hampstead until the outbreak of cholera in Wales impelled him to offer his services there. He was in charge of the settlers on Lidgett's ship, *Nile*.

The first surgeon-dentist in Natal was Byron Munro, emigrant on the *Emily*, whilst James W. Winter, a *Henry Tanner* passenger, began to practise as a veterinary surgeon in Pietermaritzburg in 1850.

Several competent engineers and surveyors sailed for Natal in these years, influenced by the stoppage of construction on United Kingdom railways. The Irishman, Hughbert Baker, had been trained on the ordnance survey. He measured some 60,000 acres of land in Cornwall for the tithe commutation commissioners. An acquaintance of Thomas Telford, he was also well known to Isambard Brunel, the Great Western Railway engineer who was to design the *Great Eastern*. Brunel's sister had married Benjamin Hawes, under-secretary for the colonies; and, since in 1849 Natal was prominently before the attention of the Colonial Office as a field for colonisation, it is possible that Baker's choice of a destination was

¹ Erskine to Dr F. Pearse (Cardiff), 31 March 1859. C.S.O. 2300, no. 106.

influenced by the advice of his friends. He emigrated on the *Washington*, and for some years kept up correspondence with Isambard Brunel. Impressed by the absence of good communications, he offered to make a survey of a Durban-Pietermaritzburg road, placing milestones along the road, if 100 colonists would join him in subscribing one guinea. He left Natal in 1853.

James B. West, also a surveyor by profession, assisted John Milne with advice on the harbour works. Before emigrating, he had supervised the construction of works to improve navigation of the River Teign. John Steele, an Edinburgh man, had been apprenticed as surveyor and engineer. He appears to have taken passage on the *Sovereign*.

Two sons of Charles Heathcote Tatham, the architect who designed the decorations for Drury Lane Theatre, were among the settlers. Edmund had held an appointment in the excise office in Broad Street, and he was only twenty-seven when he sailed with his wife and young children on the *Sovereign*. His father had instructed him in use of the theodolite; and, though not then a qualified surveyor, he was at once employed to assist John Moreland in the original survey of Verulam. Later he built the small Durban-Point railroad. He had inherited some of his father's gifts in architecture, and presently designed the masonic hall in Durban and the second Dutch Reformed Church in Pietermaritzburg, both buildings of some dignity, though the church might have been better still without the somewhat overpowering weathercock. Robert Bristow Tatham, educated at St Paul's School, left for Natal on the *Justina*. Qualifying as a government surveyor, he held for some years the post of manager of the Point railway, later turning his attention to sugar.

In early Victorian times a professional man might practise simultaneously at architecture and surveying. Robert Sellers Upton, an emigrant with his wife and family on Murdoch's ship *Ballengeich*, had acted in both capacities in Chelsea. After three years on allotments on the lower Umgeni, he took up his

profession of architect and designed St Paul's Church in Durban.

With the exception of the Trekker church in Pietermaritzburg, the earliest churches were of wattle-and-daub construction. On the Umhlangi the settlers built, for Anglican services, an oval-shaped structure of coarse local grass, plastered inside with red mud. Here Archdeacon Mackenzie ministered prior to his appointment as the first bishop of Central Africa. Archbell's original Wesleyan church in Durban was of similar construction. But material of a more durable nature was not lacking, whilst the emigration provided skilled masons and carpenters. Sandstone on the hills above Pietermaritzburg shaped well under the chisel. Nor was the local shale without its charm, as it weathered to a pleasant shade of blue-grey. John Whipp, the *Minerva* emigrant, who had farmed at Etton near Beverley, made good bricks on what was to become the Greyville racecourse. In 1854 stone churches were in course of erection for the Anglican community in Richmond and Pietermaritzburg, the settler church at Richmond being completed and consecrated before Colenso's cathedral of St Peter, though not before the opening of the small church of St Andrew in the capital.

Mrs Gray, wife of the metropolitan bishop of Cape Town, probably designed St Peter's, a building of admirable simplicity and good taste, with a steeply pitched roof of grey slates and an east window, the glass of which had been presented to Colenso by William Sewell, the founder of Radley. Sewell wished his boys to take up colonial careers and nothing gave him more pleasure than to bring colonial bishops to his school. The glass, which shows three of the apostles, apparently came from some church or family mansion undergoing early-Victorian restoration, when much old furniture, panelling and glass was discarded. The free-stone for the building was quarried by the Yorkshireman, David Garbutt, from the *Haidee*, whilst work on the site was supervised by Gabriel Eaglestone and William Watson, a Scot who had come to Natal on the *Ina*. Eaglestone,

the best stone-cutter and for many years the only sculptor in Natal, had emigrated on the *Unicorn*. His was the stone work of the suspension bridge erected across the Umsinduzi. He also built the offices of the fire assurance and trust company which became the 'Town house' and, in the 'eighties, received an additional storey with elegant balustraded roof. St Peter's, the foundation stone of which had been laid by Benjamin Pine on 20 November 1851, was completed by Eaglestone six years later at a cost of £4500.¹ The south porch was added in 1907.

Byrne settlers, among whom were many Wesleyans, found that, through the exertions of W. C. Holden, a place of worship had been completed in the centre of Durban and the seats already let.² In Pietermaritzburg a thatched chapel had been opened for service on New Year's Eve, 1848. James Erasmus Methley's correspondence with his father refers with much pride to a small place of worship at Shafton in the Victorian gothic style, 'without the tower and bell which is to be added when our green hills are covered with the white fleeces of our sheep'. Colonial chapels were built and managed by the congregations. At Verulam the first sermon was preached by William Todd, a Northumberland lay preacher who had emigrated at the age of twenty-eight on the *King William*. In 1900 he was again to preach, at the jubilee service of the Wesleyan church in Natal. Friends in England were generous in their contributions. A scraphine was thus procured for the little Shafton chapel, which was opened in 1860.

Presbyterians built their church in Pietermaritzburg of rubble masonry on a free-stone plinth. In order to support the 'Town clock', its rather squat tower was rebuilt in 1875 and the whole building plastered with Portland cement.

Clergymen and nonconformist ministers were not numerous among the 1849-51 settlers. The established church was not

¹ It is possible that the drawings were obtained by Bishop Gray in England. The foundation stone is the centre one of the lowest course of the plinth at the east end. The *Natal Independent*, 29 April 1852; the *Natal Journal*, Jan. 1857; the *Natal Witness*, 25 April 1908.

² George Macleroy's letter in the *North British Mail*, 31 Oct. 1850.

easy to acclimatise in the colonial environment. Colonial churches were regarded as independent associations, and such grants as were made from the local revenue were not restricted to particular denominations. Colonial chaplains were maintained in Natal, chiefly for the military establishment; but colonists as a whole were attached to the voluntary principle. It was impossible for clergymen to find time to cultivate the land, and in a community of pioneers voluntary support might be inadequate. The first Pietermaritzburg census (1852) showed, out of a total white population of 1524, 401 adherents of the Anglican church, 269 Wesleyans, 240 Dutch Reformed church members and 114 Presbyterians.¹ The two colonial chaplains were James Green, a Middlesex man by birth, and W. H. C. Lloyd, formerly rector of Norbury and chaplain to the Earl of Lichfield. When the settlers began to arrive, they found Lloyd 'in the midst of large indigenous trees, partly in tents and partly in reed and mud structures' on the Berea.² Green, a scholar who had gone from Christ's Hospital to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, had married Charlotte, third daughter of Donald Moodie, and was conducting services in the government schoolroom at Pietermaritzburg.

Conflicts in regard to ceremonial and vestments soon made their appearance within the colonial community. 'Puseyism', or 'tractarianism', signified to many choral services and preaching in surplices. Settlers who took passages by the later ships would recall the bitter public controversy which had followed publication of Cardinal Wiseman's pastoral letter welcoming restoration of England to communion with the Roman church. It had fanned the popular resentment at the 'advanced' ritual practised in Anglican churches. In the West of England, during the months when Byrne's ships were calling at Plymouth, clergymen who defied the popular prejudices were being mobbed at their church doors. At Cambridge in 1849, when a gardener was sentenced to undergo the ecclesiastical punishment of

¹ *The Natal Independent*, 7 July 1853.

² A. F. Hattersley: *More Annals of Natal*, p. 35.

a public penance in a white sheet, the garment had been demolished, 'pews broken, hassocks rent asunder and dogs set fighting in and around the church'.¹ Such scenes would not be readily forgotten; and unhappily they were to some extent paralleled by unruly happenings in Natal. When James Green insisted on the soldiers repeating responses, and commented on the failure of their officer to set the lead, Major Preston declined to allow the troops to attend at the government schoolroom. Charges were made in Durban against Archdeacon Mackenzie that at a service in St Paul's 'he had taken his surplice concealed under his gown into the pulpit, and, at the conclusion of the sermon... he threw off with indecent haste his gown (and) donned his surplice before the eyes of the congregation'.²

Actually the trouble was rooted not so much in 'Puseyite' ritual as in the unwillingness of some of the clergy to admit the laity to a share in church government. When Bishop Colenso summoned the first diocesan council in July 1858, laymen were allowed to state their views on the limits of parochial districts and other subjects, and this brought about the withdrawal from the assembly of some of the 'tractarian', clergy. At Durban parishioners had been refused the right to vote at vestry meetings; and, on application to the court, J. R. Goodricke and others were informed that the law could not be invoked to protect the rights of vestrymen or to check the absolute jurisdiction assumed by the clergy over the temporal affairs of the church.³ In the 'sixties the tables were turned on Colenso, whose 'high church' tendencies had originally attracted the resentment of Durban laymen. A new arrival in the colony, the Rev. J. L. Crompton, who sat for Durban county in the legislative council, an attentive legislator but 'brimful of Puseyism', preached in vestments which shocked

¹ *The Cambridge Advertiser*, 9 May 1849.

² *The Natal Mercury*, 6 Nov. 1856.

³ See the Petition, May 1857, of J. R. Goodricke and others in C.O. 179/45.

the bishop. Colenso refused to issue a licence, and was denounced by Crompton for 'low church practices and patronising the Wesleyans'.

Among laymen suspected of 'Romanising' tendencies was Charles Barter, son of an Oxfordshire parson. The Rev. C. Barter, a familiar figure at Oxford and Winchester, was elected to a fellowship at Balliol, whilst his elder son, Robert, became warden of Winchester and a friend of the Kebles and the Moberleys. Charles had few of his father's intellectual gifts. His New College fellowship came to him automatically, under the old statutes, as a Winchester scholar, and his class in 'schools' was a third. Emigrating to New Brunswick, he traversed Canada from east to west. But a lumberman's life had few attractions and he returned to England. Restlessness, or the attractions of an open-air life, brought him to Natal on the *Globe*; and he eventually settled down as farmer, horse-breeder, legislator and finally magistrate. His *Dorp and Veld* revealed powers of literary artistry.

The Natal settlers were by no means devoid of talent in the realm of literature and art. If no men of established literary reputation were included among their number, there were nevertheless writers in prose and verse who were to record their impressions of Natal in work of no little felicity and charm.

Samuel Gower, born at Taunton in 1798, was a son of the Rev. Richard Gower, Wesleyan minister. Educated at King's School, Canterbury, he was articled to a surgeon in Finsbury Square in the City of London. In 1823 he obtained his certificate from the apothecaries' society, and began to practise in Hampstead, Cambridge, and, about the time of Queen Victoria's accession, at Holmfirth in the West Riding. He made friends readily, particularly among men of literary tastes. Probably through the 3rd Earl Fitzwilliam, he received an invitation to visit Holland House. It was a recognition of Gower as a man of literary gifts. The young surgeon might not be conspicuous as a writer, but he had produced poetry

which made him acceptable to the brilliant circle that assembled in Lady Holland's salon. There was a tradition in the family that they could trace descent from the fourteenth-century poet, John Gower. Samuel had contributed stanzas, and later an article (*A Slight Reminiscence of Cambridge*), to *Hood's Magazine*. His epic poem, *Napoleon*, in a style which Scott and Southey had made fashionable, with other collected pieces, was privately published in 1821.¹ But his best pieces were collected in a volume under the curious title *A Monopolygraph*, published by private subscription in 1841. It includes some essays of no great profundity, but the verse is no longer immature, and many of the lines express original thought in a form which is academically correct. His later verse, published in the colonial press, has facility but falls short of elegance. There is ease of movement without much inventive wit. His interests were by no means exclusively literary. The Holland House circle had, of course, been essentially political, and talk ranged easily over a vast variety of subjects. It usually came back to contemporary politics; and to this may perhaps be attributed Gower's interest in the constitution-making of the republics of the high veld. For one of his first acts, after arrival at Port Natal on the *Nile*, was to offer to draft a constitution for the consideration of A. W. Pretorius and other Trekker leaders.² In addition to his original verse, Gower made translations from the Greek poets. He died in Natal on 8 October 1876.

P. McCrystal, who wrote under the pseudonym 'P. Rufus', published some pleasant verse in the early 'fifties, his principal work being *The Rustic Lyre*, which appeared in monthly parts from May and Davis's press. He gives the impression of the friendliest contact with the changing seasons in the colony. Charles Barter attempted in *Stray Memories of Natal and Zululand* a series of historical scenes, in a sort of continuation in

¹ S. Gower: *Napoleon and Other Poems*, 156 pp., London, 1821; *Hood's Magazine*, 1846, pp. 337-41.

² *The Natal Independent*, 1 April 1852.

verse of the early annals of the colony. But the lines lack freshness and ingenuity.

The settlers were not as a class articulate in a literary sense, and published volumes of reminiscences are rare. One of the most entertaining is G. H. Mason's *Life with the Zulus of Natal*, published during the interval that divided the two periods of his sojourn in Natal. The second son of the master of the Perse School, George Holditch Mason was born at Portsea in 1828. His father, the Rev. Peter Mason, a John's man who was third wrangler in the year in which Sir George Airy, astronomer-royal, was senior, had received the appointment to the Perse in April 1837, when the old room in Free School Lane with its fine Jacobean roof was still in use. The school was renowned for its mathematical tuition, but there were no organised games and little attention to the classics. The master's eldest boy, Peter Hamnett Mason, graduated from St John's in 1849 and was to become president of his college. George had entered Sidney Sussex, but he lacked his brother's absorption in academic studies, and, with Robert, a younger son of the master, he resolved to emigrate in Byrne's ship *Henrietta*. His book describes with much delightful detail the fortunes of the emigrants after their arrival in Natal. Returning to England, he completed the requirements of the bachelor's degree in 1856. His subsequent career was partly in Natal and Zululand, in the field of Anglican missions, and after 1878 in rural parishes in the United Kingdom. He died in 1893 in a Yorkshire rectory.

The scholastic profession was represented in the emigration to Natal by men and women in every branch of educational endeavour. It was still largely left to religious societies to provide schooling for the humbler classes even in the large towns of Britain. John Wade, entered on the *Minerva* list as a carpenter, had been headmaster of a large Wesleyan school in Radnor Street, off the City Road. Ill-health decided him to take advantage of Byrne's prospectus. In Pietermaritzburg he opened a commercial academy in Chapel Street, the first course

of which included, besides the usual elementary subjects, 'the natural and scientific properties of objects' and 'sacred and general geography in connection with the history of nations and the progress of commerce'. Alexander McDonald, emigrant on the *Unicorn*, had been master of the Abbotsford Place Academy, Glasgow; and in 1851 a widely signed petition requested his appointment as schoolmaster to the village children at Pinetown. Private schools, of course, were very numerous in all parts of Britain, and there were men and women who came to Natal with the purpose of establishing 'genteel academies' for the middle classes. Later in the 'fifties Thomas Greathead and his wife opened a girls' school at Pinetown which was known as 'Cheltenham House'. Though no very gifted teacher, Greathead had been well taught as a boy by one of John Wesley's original preachers, Dr Hulett, a graduate of Aberdeen, who, at the period of the Napoleonic wars, kept a school at Greenwich. Here young Greathead learned to converse in French with prisoners of war confined in the hulks at Sheerness and Chatham. With the help of his daughters, he opened schools at Reading, Huddersfield and other towns, before emigrating to the Cape and later to Natal. Dr Hulett's own son, James Liege Hulett, was also a schoolmaster, conducting his own school at Gillingham House, Kent. He reached Durban in 1858 on the American ship *Phantom*.

Schoolmastering was a relatively profitable profession in the early days of Natal. Whereas British schools for the poor and even private schools catering for more fortunate children might pay starvation wages to their teachers, whilst advertisements offered £2 a month to a 'governess of ladylike manners for three or four young female pupils, capable of imparting a sound English education, with French, music and singing, dancing and drawing, unassisted by masters',¹ in the colony a teacher could get a government grant of £50 a year, and, if he were lucky, a house, in addition to the school building, where he could take boarders. If he preferred to

¹ C. L. Graves: *Mr Punch's History of Modern England*, i, p. 33.

restrict his responsibilities to a few children, he could aspire to a post as farm tutor, earning £3 a month with board and lodging. At this salary, George Payne, who had earned his passage to Natal as schoolmaster to the emigrants on the *Henrietta*, taught the children of a well-to-do farmer on the Bushman River, whilst John Akerman obtained similar employment with the Nels on the Mooi River. Neil McKechnie, emigrant on the *Emily*, a graduate of King's College, Aberdeen, was prepared to give tuition in classics and mathematics to the sons of settlers.

It was some years before the local government could make adequate provision for education. In 1847 no provision whatever had been made. Two years later, public elementary schools were opened in the two towns, the Pietermaritzburg school offering algebra, geometry and even the classics, whereas the education in Durban was described by Pine as 'of the plainest kind'. Monthly payments, varying with the circumstances of the parents, were required, which might be as low as 6*d.* and did not exceed 2*s.* 6*d.* per child. Estimates of expenditure on education for the year 1851 came to £882. In 1856 establishment charges amounted to £368, made up of salaries (£150 to each of two teachers and £24 to each caretaker) and £20 for 'books, slates, maps and school furniture'. The additional cost of subsidising seven private and rural schools was estimated at £530.¹ In the early 'sixties eighty per cent of the 1076 children attending the two government schools were under twelve years of age, and fifty-five per cent were boys. Parents who could afford it preferred to send their girls to such schools as those kept in Pietermaritzburg by Mrs Edward London and Mrs Visick. London, a Manchester man, landing from the *Edward*, had undertaken to teach at the Indaleni native school, being remunerated by the permission to use the Wesleyan society's wagon and oxen four times in the year to convey to Durban the produce of his Richmond

¹ C.O. 179.40. For the 1851 estimates, see *Brit. Parl. Pap.* 1851, xxxvii (1417), p. 78.

allotment. He soon went to Pietermaritzburg, where he became a stationer and bookseller, whilst his wife opened a private seminary, announcing that schoolbooks would be carefully selected with a view to 'inspiring noble sentiments and purity of style'. Emily London was the daughter of an admiral, a fact of which she was understandably proud, giving to her daughter, who subsequently married F. W. Caldecott, the Christian names 'Emily Benbow'. Precise ceremonious manners, including an elaborate curtsy every time a girl entered or left the schoolroom, were rigidly enforced. Mrs Visick's 'establishment for young ladies' was even more ambitious, her programme embracing 'all the useful and ornamental branches of education'.

Settlers in the two towns were thus well provided for in the matter of schooling, especially after the arrival of Bishop Colenso and his colleagues, among whom were Archdeacon Mackenzie and W. O. Newnham.¹ Whilst there was little demand for the secondary subjects, and still less for a 'classical education', the sons of settlers were by no means devoid of intellectual interests. Robert Finnemore studied algebra, conic sections and analytical trigonometry under Mackenzie. Apart from what may be described as the 'genteel academies', grammar schools existed from the year 1855 as precursors to government high schools, attaining very fair standards of scholarship, though their pupils in the mass might create an unfavourable impression as 'noisy troops of lads and urchins, wearing the square scholastic cap of collegiate institutions, in some cases incongruously placed above a dirty blouse or dilapidated unmentionables'.² But the average settler, especially in the country, had much need of the services of his sons, and boys attended school only as long as there was no urgent job for them to perform in the home. As late as the Zulu war there was no provision to secure the attendance of children at schools within their reach. In the rural areas the government grant

¹ A. F. Hattersley: *Hilton Portrait*, 1945, chap. i.

² *The Natal Mercury*, 28 April 1859.

normally went directly to the teacher, not through a board of managers, and, should voluntary effort fail to provide educational facilities, there was no recognised obligation on the government to supply the deficiency. For qualified teachers Natal remained entirely dependent on the United Kingdom, and many employed in the schools, down to Union, were without academic qualifications.

The arrival of the settlers did much to promote an interest in music and the drama. They found no buildings reserved for theatrical purposes, and little outside the taverns in the way of musical entertainment. Those who came from London, Glasgow and the industrial towns would be accustomed to variety programmes, with songs, clowning and acrobatic feats interspersed between melodrama and farce, to avoid infringement of the rights of the 'legitimate' theatre. Though advance in mechanical contrivance had provided stages with trap-doors and other devices assisting melodrama and making possible spectacular effects with the humble panorama, buildings even in London were largely comfortless and illumination provided by wax candles. Emigrants accustomed to backless benches at the Lyceum would be unlikely to complain of discomfort at the theatrical shows given in colonial assembly rooms and hotel annexes.

When the rough pioneering work lay behind, settlers, with their Bantu servants, could enjoy more hours of leisure than artisans in British towns; and with this leisure came a distaste for amusements that had sufficed in the days before emigration. The peep-shows and marionettes of the occasional circus, and the quoits and skittles of the taverns, gave place in Natal to social entertaining in the home and to amateur drama in the larger communities. Hard as the struggle might be to cultivate the sun-baked soil, settlers felt that they had left behind the dark days of depression characteristic of the hungry 'forties, and could enter with gusto upon the penny readings, spelling bees and scientific lectures of the local mechanics institute. Growth in wealth and population encouraged touring artists

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When the rough pioneering work lay behind, settlers, with their Bantu servants, could enjoy more hours of leisure than artisans in British towns; and with this leisure came a distaste for amusements that had sufficed in the days before emigration. The peep-shows and marionettes of the occasional circus, and the quoits and skittles of the taverns, gave place in Natal to social entertaining in the home and to amateur drama in the larger communities. Hard as the struggle might be to cultivate the sun-baked soil, settlers felt that they had left behind the dark days of depression characteristic of the hungry 'forties, and could enter with gusto upon the penny readings, spelling bees and scientific lectures of the local mechanics institute. Growth in wealth and population encouraged touring artists

and companies to visit Natal; and with these visits came a taste for the drama and for Italian opera. The first professional company to tour the colony was that of Sefton Parry. Born in 1822, Parry was to be responsible for building three London theatres: the Holborn in 1866 (burned down in 1880), the Globe, two years later on the site previously occupied by Lyon's Inn, and in 1882 the Avenue Theatre. He was also something of a playwright, producing two of his own plays, *The Odds* and *A Bright Future*. His success as an actor-manager was perhaps due to his nice appreciation of the popular taste rather than any considerable talent; and it is typical that he dismissed as rubbish Tom Robertson's *Society*.

In Natal, Parry presented Bulwer Lytton's *The Lady of Lyons* and a two-act drama, *The Post Boy*. He was severely handicapped by the inadequate accommodation at the government schoolroom in Pietermaritzburg and still more by the dimensions of the hall in Durban; but he did something to set the fashion against the vogue of exaggerated farces, such as Maddison Morton's *Slasher and Crasher*, and crude melodrama. What colonial audiences continued, however, to prefer was the short domestic drama, followed by the farce, in which uncontrollable merriment would not be out of place even for sedate occupants of the more expensive seats. Pieces went down best that were full of jocular periphrasis. The sprightly dancing in burlesque was also much appreciated. But this was an improvement upon the grotesque performances of 'musical apes' or the nonsense of 'electro-biology', characteristic of popular entertainment in the 'forties. And the Dane Hansen who, in the 'sixties, proceeded to treat South African audiences to this type of mesmeric show, which Dr Darling of Glasgow had expounded to fashionable circles at Willis's rooms, was less well received than the travelling lecturer with his dioramic scenery depicting 'Vesuvius in Eruption', or scenes from the American civil war. Banyard's panorama of the Mississippi and other American rivers, so much enjoyed by Victorian audiences, was at least the largest painting ever executed on

canvas, though, in colonial assembly rooms, it must have lost some of its more sensational appeal with the lighting dependent on wax candles, or at best on oil lanterns.

A liking for Italian opera was the outcome of the visit in 1870 of the Miranda-Harper company, which gave entertainments of the promenade concert order in the dramatic hall in Pietermaritzburg. The company, led by the tenor, David Miranda, contained vocalists who had been engaged in opera at Covent Garden, but the chorus was locally engaged. Verdi's *Il Trovatore* was played to packed houses. In succeeding years the reliance of visiting companies on amateur co-operation in opera led to much local interest in music, sedulously cultivated by men like Charles Lascelles.¹ The first operatic company to dispense with local talent was the Luscombe-Searelle combination of 1888, in which Amy Fenton was chief vocalist.

The standard of church music was much improved by R. B. Moorby, a pupil of the glee composer, G. W. Martin, who had established the national choral society. Moorby, who had occasionally conducted the musical services at St Paul's Cathedral, became choirmaster at St Peter's. He was also interested in the drama, erecting in the 'seventies the Bijou Theatre, for which Thomas Baines painted the drop-scene.

When Byrne's first ship left St Katharine's dock, sport was still comparatively unorganised. The sporting gentleman liked to back himself against the professional. The Prince Regent had set an example when he drove a coach from the British coffee-house in Cockspur Street to a house in King Street. In Natal, G. C. Cato would take the reins and drive the bus which Welch had placed on the highway between port and capital. Lord Jocelyn, whose son was to accompany Prince Alfred on his visit to Natal, once rode his horse up the staircase of the White Hart inn at Aylesbury. Similar feats were essayed by officers of the garrison in the colony.

Horsemanship with its accomplishments, including riding to hounds, provided the principal outdoor amusement for

¹ A. F. Hattersley: *Portrait of a Colony*, pp. 142-50.

'gentlemen of leisure' in Natal. With P. A. R. Otto, Charles Barter undertook to improve the equine stock of the district, importing in 1857 the famous thoroughbred 'Mortimer'. From that date there were creditable performances on local courses. The Downside stud at the time of the Zulu war, included 'Glastonbury' and other well-known prize-winners of the 'seventies. Organisation of the turf owed much to William Marshall, who came to Natal on the *Edward* at the age of thirty-seven. As a small boy he had been employed in the Newmarket stables under the trainer Robinson. Emigrating as a youth to Australia, he spent some twenty years of his life in the antipodes. In Natal he was largely instrumental in drawing up, in 1859, rules for the course. The first steeplechase was run under his guidance in that year.

James Pitcher, an emigrant in Dr Gower's party on the *Nile*, assisted Marshall to organise the race meetings of the early 'fifties. His 'British' hotel, later re-named the 'Plough' by J. W. Welch, was the headquarters of the racing community in the colony.

Not many settlers were in a position to hunt with their own hounds. In some respects, Natal, with its open unfenced veld and its innumerable varieties of small antelope, was excellently adapted to the hunt. Officers of the garrison were frequently men of means, and, despite the high cost of forage, a regimental pack was maintained for many years at Fort Napier. But the climate was against the hounds, and once the morning sun had taken up the dew the scent was gone. W. E. Blackburn and others imported hounds from Dunster Castle, in Somerset, and from Ireland, maintaining a town pack and preserving duiker in the plantations to the east of Pietermaritzburg. But acclimatised hounds from the Cape, introduced by the regimental officers, did better. Large numbers of natives were originally used in the late 'forties, when it was necessary to drive the buck, or occasionally the jackal, from haunts in the Zwartkop mountain.

Originally a paradise for the big-game hunter, Natal was

soon abandoned by the elephant and the lion. On his first visit (1853) to the Zulu border, Charles Barter found that it was possible to use, northwards of Verulam, a regular bush track made by elephants. Such tracks were also found in the thorn country about the Umvoti. A buffalo was chased by Barter from a Church Street *erf* in 1851 to be killed in the Slang *spruit* valley immediately to the west of Pietermaritzburg. Lions were seen at Dargle and Riet vlei as late as 1856. By 1870 the larger buck including the koodoo, the eland, the hartebeest and the gemsbok had vanished to the high veld. The red buck and the tiny peatie were henceforth the game of Natal sportsmen, the law of 1866 not allowing them to be killed between 15 August and 30 November. The English pheasant had been introduced in 1861 and, together with the paauw, the partridge, and the guinea-fowl, was protected between 15 September and 15 April.¹

Emigrants of humbler rank in the hierarchy of Victorian snobbery maintained target clubs for ball practice, and were interested in pedestrianism. In April 1852 'England's original little wonder' issued a challenge to run fifty miles, giving competitors one mile start, and announcing the intention to 'repeat his herculean feat of walking 72 miles a day for sixteen successive days on the sands of Africa'.²

Cricket was the common pastime of humble villagers in the South and Midlands of England at the time of Queen Victoria's accession, with great local rivalry. A match in Pietermaritzburg between 'west end' and 'east end' on New Year's Day of 1852 provided a fillip to the organisation of club matches. The Olympic club and the Pietermaritzburg tradesmen's cricket club had their origin in this year. The emigration had brought to Natal doughty cricketers who had been heroes of engagements on village greens. Prominent among them was William Ling, a passenger on the *Bernard*, to whom a silver tea set was

¹ In 1890 the close season for game birds and all kinds of antelope was extended from 16 August to 30 April.

² The *Natal Standard*, 6 April 1852.

presented in 1866 as a token of his work for the promotion of cricket in Natal. Ling went to Richmond; and when inter-town matches were arranged, his deadly underhand bowling was a source of dismay to opposing sides. In the first cricket match to be played in Alexandra Park, in 1863, a Pietermaritzburg eleven succumbed to his attack, Richmond winning by forty runs. There were other cricketers among the emigrants— young Tom Maxwell, William and Stephen Starr, from the *King William*, George Hall (*Minerva*) and William F. Ellis (*Henrietta*).

The colonial environment dictated new habits, the settlers being gradually moulded by their surroundings to a novel pattern of community life. The presence of the Bantu, undertaking the unskilled labour and filling menial positions, gave both leisure and responsibility, whilst the absence of a hereditary class opened seats on public bodies to persons unlikely in the United Kingdom to share in governmental decisions. Yet settlers did their utmost to transplant to Natal the social customs and prejudices of the mother country. Divisions in society were upheld with no less tenacity. Buchanan, in his editorial office, might react against the maintenance of snobbish distinctions between 'government folk' and tradesmen, but official position and social rank counted for much in the little colony. Generally speaking, the patronage of the lieutenant-governor and of the officers of the garrison made a social gathering respectable; but this might not be so when, as under Benjamin Pine, the official class was itself deeply riven by bitter quarrels. Settlers carried their notions of social propriety with them to Natal, and to many the democratic atmosphere of a colony was unacceptable. One Birmingham man, within a few months of his arrival in the colony, wrote to explain the non-acceptance by his wife of an invitation to a race ball: 'Having had the honour of being a guest at the gorgeous terpsichorean entertainments of the nobility and aristocracy of England (she) was not very eager... to join the present select company or to explore the splendours of Platt's public

house, nor does she remember ever having gone to such an assembly otherwise than in a carriage."¹

The warm, and at times humid, climate of a sub-tropical colony made surprisingly little difference to Victorian canons of dress. When settlers were embarking, the short jacket with shawl and bonnet were beginning to be replaced by mantles, hoops leading to the elaborate crinoline, and feather-trimmed hats. The crinoline tended to accumulate more and more flounces and fringes, and it threatened to make its wearer useless in the small rooms of colonial cottages. It was dangerous in proximity to lighted candles and oil lamps; and the manœuvring which it necessitated before a carriage could be entered, or a plank bridge crossed, seems incredible to later generations. Yet Natal women persisted in wearing the larger types, even after fashion in England had restricted their vogue. Nor were the more elegant fabrics easily adapted to pioneering conditions where the only form of quick transport was the horse. Mrs Feilden records the achievement of a young woman who, resolved not to miss the wedding of a friend, 'dressed in a fashionable deep blue and white stamped gauze, white lace mantilla and elegant bonnet, rode six miles with her habit on top of all, and no crushing of dress was visible'. Elizabeth Wright on her arrival in Natal was astonished to find so meticulous an attention to fashions in a small colonial community.

There was not quite the same rigidity in men's clothes. Government clerks were indeed compelled to wear dress-coats rather than short jackets. In the 'forties blue frock-coats with white drill trousers had been fashionable; and in the northern counties, where bright colours were more in favour, long green swallow-tailed coats, with gold fob and seals, knee-breeches and brass-buttoned gaiters might indicate the prosperous manufacturer or professional man. In Natal short jackets quickly superseded the frock-coat, but a touch of distinction might be lent by a plaid or velvet waistcoat. Byrne carried a silver-

¹ *The Natal Witness*, 15 Feb. 1850.

mounted whip. On the veld, flannel shirts, with Bedfordcord breeches and wide-brimmed hats with puggaree of spotted silk, came to be the attire for the well-to-do farmer or transport-rider.

Organised entertainment for children was considered unnecessary or out-of-place even on weekdays. For the wickedness of Sunday chuck-fartling Gainsborough boys were put in the stocks in 1850. Indoor parties in Natal were infrequent. J. Fleetwood Churchill, passenger on the *Devonian*, took some pains to organise 'penny readings' in Durban; but children were expected to be satisfied with simple programmes of recitations and guessing games. In Pietermaritzburg, the churches and, during sessions, the 'parliament house' in the government schoolroom were the social rendezvous. Balls were looked at askance in strict evangelical and Wesleyan circles. The propriety of the polka was in question, whilst the waltz was definitely not respectable. Wives of 'gentlemen-colonists' were at first inclined to refuse to join in dances with tradesmen's daughters; and, on most occasions of celebration, a tradesmen's ball would follow the fashionable function. But the polka, and still more the barn dance and the romping lancers, were great levellers, and social distinctions were far less evident in later years. Teachers of dancing naturally encouraged this tendency. Pupils brought their friends, and in this way 'outsiders' were admitted. Quasi-public entertainment was provided as early as 1850. After signor Dalle Case's exhibition in Platt's hotel of rope-dancing and equestrian feats, his wife announced that she would 'be happy to give instruction in dancing including the fashionable polka'. At the other end of the social ladder were the select balls given in Durban by John Millar and his wife, who had come to Natal in the *John Line*, and by the magistrate, H. J. Meller. Before Hertford House was built on Bayside, the Millars entertained at their wine store, which made a commodious ballroom lighted by wooden chandeliers. Mrs Meller would arrange three rooms for dancing, chiefly the stately quadrille, with the

musicians centrally disposed. For some days after the event, she would be 'seated in state to receive callers' (expecting cards) 'with her eye-glass fixed on the door at each new entrance'.¹

Emigration from the United Kingdom virtually came to an end in the year 1852. It was resumed in 1858 on quite another basis, that of nomination by persons already in the colony of friends and relatives to receive an assisted passage. These later arrivals therefore can scarcely be reckoned among the original pioneers, however much they may have ultimately contributed to the development of the resources of Natal. By 1858 the picture of rural Natal is one of settled homesteads in the midst of a developed countryside. Great areas of veld indeed remained without cultivation; but it was no longer possible to follow the main track north-westward from Pietermaritzburg and encounter no other sign of habitation than perhaps a solitary peach-tree planted by a departed Voortrekker. The life of the pioneer farmer was to remain for many years one of isolation. His home, now probably of stone or brick, would be named after that corner of Britain from which his forebears had come, unless indeed, like Thomas Fannin, there had been something in his new surroundings to remind him nostalgically of favourite scenes oversea.² Some of these new homesteads, with their cattle sheds, stabling, saw mill in the yellow-wood forest, and even forge, would make comparison with country estates in the homeland. With their milling, baking, churning and poultry-raising, they had achieved a measure of self-containedness. Such was J. E. Methley's 'Shafton house', its raised garden terrace surveying smiling acres of cultivation and grazing. On the out-houses were lofts for the pigeons. The streams would be full of water-cress. At different seasons there was shearing and pig-killing. Wool and butter sent down to Pietermaritzburg would earn

¹ E. W. Feilden: *My African Home*, p. 72.

² The land on which Fannin built his homestead reminded him of the valley of the Dargle stream near Dublin.

the groceries, crockery and draperies which the homestead could not produce. The slaughter of a cow would mean tallow for the candle moulds. It was a full and a satisfying life. By the time cattle were folded and pigs fed, the darkness would have fallen. Supper might be of mutton or beef or perhaps venison, since game was plentiful, served with rice boiled with some of the native fruits and eaten, if bread and potatoes were scarce, with manioc, grown in the garden. Tea was on the table at all meals, and between meals would be left cold in the pot on a side table. Callers would be regaled with cheese-cakes and home-made peach wine. In the evenings the accounts and the diary of farm occurrences would be written up, a pipe and sometimes a little Hollands indulged in, then family prayers and to bed. If amusements were desired, the young people would ride several miles to a dance with party frock slung from the saddle. Tom Fannin's youngest son once rode on horseback from Dargle to Durban and back the same night, to attend a ball.

Some of the features belong almost as naturally to early Victorian Britain. Spread over the years, the changes produced a new colonial type which was to prove its worth in difficult and dangerous times that lay ahead, a robust mixture of the British yeoman farmer and the adventurous backwoodsman of an earlier colonial background. A corner of Victorian Britain under an alien sky, Natal compelled its new colonists to modify their outlook to suit novel circumstances. Hardships were met in an unquenchable spirit. Clinging, as many of them did, to old habits and traditions, the settlers attained in due course an understanding and a mastery of the colonial environment.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ABBREVIATIONS USED

- C.A. Cape Archives, Cape Town.
N.A. Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.
P.R.O. Public Record Office, London.

OFFICIAL RECORDS. The original despatches from the lieutenant-governor, with enclosures, are to be found in the C.O. 179 series in the P.R.O. Letter book copies of outward correspondence are also to be found in the G.H. series (vols. 270-) in the Natal archives, but without, of course, the minutes written on the originals by members of the Colonial Office staff. Among the C.O. 179 volumes are several labelled 'Public Offices and Miscellaneous' which contain letters written by individual emigrants or their relatives to the Secretary of State. Other important sources in the P.R.O. are the volumes of correspondence and reports of the colonial land and emigration commissioners (C.O. 384 and 386).

Inward despatches to Natal are to be found in the G.H. series (I-) at Pietermaritzburg, with despatches from the Cape governor (G.H. 324-). There are also volumes of miscellaneous correspondence (G.H. 334-), mostly annexures to outward despatches.

The C.S.O. series at Pietermaritzburg contain several volumes which should be consulted in regard to the emigration, especially volumes 12-16 (private individuals, 1849-52), 17 (Byrne, Lamport, Chiappini), 17a (Moreland), 43 (Inward letters), 47 (Tenders, etc.) and 52 (Resident Agent, etc.). Outward letters are copied in letter books, C.S.O. 2296-8 for the period 1849-52.

Other departmental series which should be consulted are the S.G.O. volumes (e.g. vol. 101. Letters to surveyors). Statistical year books exist from the year 1850, but there are no reliable population figures in the early volumes.

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The archives at Cape Town should be consulted since correspondence between Natal and the Secretary of State over this period had to pass through official channels there. There are volumes of inward despatches from Natal, originally arranged in a C.O. series but now transferred to the G.H. volumes. Some passenger lists will be found annexed.

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Durban:

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The *Natal Times*, first number 29 Aug. 1851. To Jan. 1853.

The *D'Urban Advocate*, Sept. 1852 to Jan. 1854.

The *Natal Mercury*, first number 25 Nov. 1852.

Pietermaritzburg:

The *Natal Witness*, 1846- .

The *Natal Independent*, 1850-Feb. 1855.

The *Natal Standard*, March to June 1852.

The newspapers are invaluable for reports of public meetings, whilst the local intelligence and advertisement columns are rich sources of information on aspects of social life.

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INDEX

- Abambo, 7
 Ablett, W. H., 164
 Acutt, R. and W. H., 172, 238
 Adams, William, 282
 Adderley, C. B., 287, 299
 Addison, Dr W. H., 102, 288, 316
 Adelaide, 102
 Adendorff brothers, 80
 Agriculture, depression of in 'forties,
 149-54; in Scottish Lowlands,
 184-5; in Natal, 243-4, *chap. x*
 Aitken, R., 185
 Akerman, Sir J. W., 172-3, 304,
 307-8, 327
 Alfred, Prince, Duke of Edinburgh,
 276, 331
Alival, emigrant ship, 163, 182
 Allen, P., 309
 Allerston, W., 158-9, 257
 Allison, James, 89-90
 Alt, Rev. J. H., 168
 America, North, as a field for emigra-
 tion, 95-6, 98
 American mission to Zulus, 18, 88
 Anderdon, J. L., 105
 Anderson, John, 188
 Anderson, Robert, 282
 Anglican church, position of in
 colony, 321-2
 Angus, William, 279
 Anstie, Paul, 158, 168-9, 261, 286-
 7
 Arbuckle, W., 187
 Arbuthnot, James, 191, 301
 Archbell, James, 89, 140-1, 206, 274,
 309
 Architecture in Natal, 318-20
 Arrowroot, cultivation of, 232
 Australia, as a field for emigration,
 95-6; extent of emigration to from
 Natal, 220-1; sheep farmers from,
 268-9
 Babbs, R., 238
 Bacon industry in Natal, 265
 Bailie, J., 86-7
 Baines, Edward of Leeds, 140
 Baines, Thomas, painter, 331
 Baker, Hughbert, 109, 317-18
 Baker, W. G., 81, 268
 Bale, W. E., 131, 171
Ballengeich, emigrant ship, 115, 183,
 195
 Banking in Natal, 309-11
 Bannister, Saxe, 91-2
 Bantu, migration of, 7-8
 Barr, M., 243
 Barrett, H. J., 148
 Barter, Charles, 101, 173, 257, 307,
 323-4
 Bascley, John, engineer, 227, 251-2
 Baynes, Richard and Joseph, 163-4,
 255, 266
 Bazley, Sir Thomas, 85, 133, 136, 183
 Beaulieu, Hants, 149, 169-70
 Behrens, Carl, 75-6
 Beningfield, S., 83, 233
 Bennett, R., 124
 Bentley, George, 163, 255
 Bergtheil, Jonas, 85-7, 93, 111, 135
Bernard, emigrant ship, 109, 198
 Berning, F. S., 59
 Beverley, 154
 Biggar, A., 14, 20-1, 35, 38
 Bird, John, 72-3
 Birmingham, 129-31
 Blackburn, W. E., 234, 332
 Blaine, Dr B., 81, 85, 112, 135
 Blamey, J. C., 243
 Blood River, battle (1838), 38-9
 Boast, Dr Bird, 155, 255
 Boast, Henry, 153-7, 254
 Bond, T., 114, 143-4, 248
 Boniface, C. E., 58, 289-90, 312
 Boshoff, J. N., 35, 43, 53, 61, 80, 290

INDEX

- Boshoff, W. H., 80, 250
 Boskop man, 4
 Botterill, T., 157, 218, 262, 264
 Boulton, R. J., 209, 276
 Bowen, Mrs M., 120, 233
 Boyes, John, 262
 Boys, Colonel E. F., 65, 92, 299
 Bradford, 129, 138
 Brazil, 116, 120
 Breede, X. R., 240
 Brickhill, J., 226
 Bridlington, 158
 British Empire (1840), 66-7; colonial policy of, 284-5, 300-2
British Tar, emigrant ship, 128, 160, 172, 200
 Brooking, Dr B., 316
 Brown, John, 186
 Brunton, Walter, 187
 Buccleuch, 5th Duke of, 101, 169
 Buchanan, D. D., 91, 131, 286-8, 290-1
 Bucknall, Henry, 269
 Burger, J. J., 43
 Bushmen in Natal, 5-6, 9, 45, 65, 187
 Butterworth, 81
 Byrne, J. C., career of, 102-3, 110-11; his emigration scheme, 106-12, 135, 146, 175, 210, 279-80; effect of bankruptcy of, 110, 126, 221-2
 Byrne village, 170, 250-1

 Caird, James, 150, 162, 165
 Caldecott, A. T., 81
 California, gold discoveries in, 95
 Campbell, Marshall, 243
 Campbell, William, 181, 243, 246
 Campbell, Rev. William, 191
 Cape Colony, history of, 22-7; trade of, 308; exports to, 84, 263-4; constitution of, 298
 Carbineers, Natal, 172, 187
 Cato, G. C., 48, 82-3, 204, 331
 Cattle farming, unsuited to coast, 243; advent of lung sickness, 244, 265-6
 Chadwick, J. M., 173
 Challinor, E. J., 316
 Chaplin, W., 157
 Chapman, W., 276
 Charters, Major, 36-7, 39-40
 Chatterton, H., 165, 215
 Chemists, qualification of in Natal, 316
 Chiappini, E., 78, 85, 202
Choice, emigrant ship, 159, 195
 Cholera, in England, 122-3, 132, 139, 146
 Christian Colonisation Society, 127-8
 Christopher, J. S., 112-14
 Christopher, Dr W., 112, 317
 Church building in Natal, 319-20
 Churchhill, J. F., 336
 Cilliers, S., 28, 31, 38, 41
 Clarence, Arthur, 82
 Clarence, Ralph, 82, 90-1, 227, 229, 239
 Clark, C., 248
 Clark, John, 163
 Cloete, Judge H., 47, 60-5, 70-1, 287, 295-6
 Cloete, Colonel J., 53-4, 56, 58
 Cloete, L., 69
 Coal, value of in Natal, 68
 Coffee, production of in Natal, 233-5
 Colenbrander, J., 232, 234
 Colenso, Bishop, 170, 206, 231, 322-3
 Coll, island of, 187-8
 Collier, Edward, 138
 Collins, W. M., 178
 Collis, James, 14, 17
 Collision, Francis, 77, 104, 106, 130; buys land, 77-8; organises emigration, 78, 105
 Colonial Land and Emigration Commission, 96-7, 108
 Colonisation, interest in, 66-7, 94
 Comins, Robert, 163, 255
 Compensation estate, 116, 118, 235-8
 Connor, Sir H., 193, 297
Conquering Hero, emigrant ship, 162, 179, 182
 Convicts, introduction of, 298
 Conyngham, J. D., 231
 Coode, Sir J., 246

INDEX

- Cope, Henry, 294
 Cope, T. Spencer, 124-5, 220, 294-5
 Corn laws, repeal of, 121, 149
 Cornwall, 170
 Costume, fashions of, 335-6
 Cotton, importance of, 67-8, 132, 180; cultivation in Natal, 84-8, 112; sales in Manchester, 85, 133; experience of settlers with, 134-5, 226-31; grown in reserves, 230
 Cowie, William, 35
 Craig, John, 186
 Cricket in Natal, 333-4
 Crompton, Rev. J. L., 322-3
 Crosskill, William, 154, 157
 Crowder, Thomas, 220
 Crown lands, sale of to support emigration, 96; in Natal, 76
 Cullingworth, Jeremiah, 147, 184, 292-3
 Currie, H. W., 124-5
- Dacomb, Charles, 164, 252
 Daddy, John, 247
 Dalton, 254
 Dare, John, 276
 Dargle, 192
 Darter, G. B. S., 124
 Davis, Peter, 291
 De Pass, Daniel, 242
 Devey, E., 313
 Devizes, 165-8
Devonian, emigrant ship, 143, 163
 Devonshire, 170-1
 Dimock, Dr G., 220, 317
 Dingaan, 14-18, 20-1, 29-33, 39-42
 Dingiswayo, 9-11
 Dixon, E. R., 175
 Dobie, J. S., 117, 185, 219, 256, 269-70
 Dolne, Rev. J., 120
 Drama in Natal, 329-31
Dreadnought, emigrant ship, 142, 171
 Dumat, Alfred, 243
 D'Urban, Sir B., 15, 18
 Durban, foundation of, 13-14, 17, 59; appearance in 1849, 204-7; cost of living in, 207-8; employment in, 208, 246-8; municipality, 208-9
 Dutch East India Company, 22-4
 Dyer, James, 129
- Eaglestone, Gabriel, sculptor, 319-20
 Ecroyd, J., 227-8
 Edendale, 90
 Education, public in Natal, 327-8
Edward, emigrant ship, 136, 164
 Elliott, T. F., 67, 96, 113
 Ellis, James, 214, 259-60, 272
 Ellis, W. F., 221, 334
Emily, emigrant ship, 317, 327
 Entertainments in home, 329, 336
 Erskine, David, 74, 317
 Escombe, Rt. Hon. Harry, 308
 Evans, A., 298
- Faku, Pondo chief, 40, 46-7
 Falkland Islands, 100, 104
 Fannin, George Fox, 192-3
 Fannin, Thomas, 192, 261, 337
 Farewell, F. G., 4, 7-8, 13-14
 Farming in Natal, chap. x, *passim*.
 Feilden, J. L., 136, 227-9, 253
 Feilden, Sir W., 136
 Ferreira, P., 83, 276, 310
 Ferrier, A., 179
 Few, E. and J., 109, 138, 216, 272
 Field, W., 69, 73
 Finnermore, Isaac, 176
 Finnermore, Robert, 172, 328
 Flax, cultivation of, 232-3
 Florey, C., 125, 276
 Forbes, John, 190, 213
 Francis, H., 85
 Franklin, George, 221, 256
 Fraser, W. A., 211
 Fry, Elizabeth, 90, 115
 Fynn, H. F., 4, 14, 16, 91
 Fynn, W. M. D., 81
 Fynney, H. F., 243
- Galloway, John, 134-5, 228
 Gallwey, Sir M. H., 193

INDEX

- Garbutt, R., 163
 Gardiner, A. F., 14, 16-18, 20-1, 34, 36
 Garland, T., 164, 254
 Garner, R., 177
 Garrod, W., 130
 George, Alfred, 207
 Gibson, A. and J., 80, 101
 Gibson, R. T., 162
 Gillitts, W., 278
 Girault, P., 256
 Gladstone, W. E., 298
 Glasgow, in 1849, 180-1; emigrants from, 183-4
 Glenelg, Lord, 36, 70
Globe, emigrant ship, 160
 Godden, Richard, 246
 Good, C. and F., 142-3, 157
 Goodricke, J. R., 102, 297-8
 Goodwill, T., 232
 Gordon, Captain A., 179
 Gower, Dr S., 197, 316-17; poetry of, 323-4
 Granger, W., 216
 Gray, David, 182, 193
 Great Trek, 25-30
 Greathead, Thomas, 326
 Green, C., 138
 Green, Dean James, 321-2
 Greenacre, B., 247
 Grey, Earl, and Natal, 68, 113, 300
 Grey, Sir George, 299
 Greyling, P., 35-6, 40
 Groom, T., 254
 Grout, A. and L., 84, 229
 Gurney, S., 115
Gwalior, barque, 101-2
- Hackett, R., 114-15, 143, 211
Haidee, emigrant ship, 155-7, 163, 256
 Hampshire, emigrants from, 101, 169-70
 Handley, Thomas, 145
 Harding, Walter, 72-3, 191, 295
 Hartley, William, 144-5, 147, 274, 310
 Harvey, John, 172
- Harvey, Tom, 247
 Harwin, R., 247
 Hathorn, J. P., 137, 309
 Hawkins, A. C., 313
Hobrides, emigrant ship, 114
 Henderson, Joseph, 84, 268-9, 279
Henrietta, emigrant ship, 136, 144, 163, 194
Henry Tanner, emigrant ship, 142, 144, 157
 Henwood, Paul, 171
Herald, emigrant ship, 117, 178
 Herbert, S., 98
 Hicks, George, 220
 Highlands, Scottish and emigration, 187-92
 Hodson, R. G., 256
 Holden, Rev. W. C., 89, 206, 256, 320
 Holgate, George, 212
 Holliday, J. D., 119, 277
 Horse racing in Natal, 332
 Housing, materials in Natal, 215-16, 219, 319; types of cottage, 204, 216
 Howell, J. M., 273-4
 Howick, 256-7, 272
 Hudson, George, 'Railway King', 122, 146
 Hulett, J. L., 226, 243
 Hull, emigration from, 146-8; sailings from, 148; Boast plan, 154-6
 Hulme, Dr J., 159-60, 197, 316
 Humble, Peter, 163, 255
 Hunting in Natal, 332-3
- Ina*, emigrant ship, 178-9, 182-3, 197
 Indian labour for estates, 178-9, 236, 241-2
 Indigo, cultivation of, 231-2
 Ireland, emigrants from, 192-3
 Irons, Theophilus, 126-8, 254
 Irons, W. J., 90, 126-8, 204, 222
 Isaacs, N., 13, 15, 235, 242
 Isipingo, sugar estates, 238-9
- Jackson, J. O., 81
 Janisch, Hudson, 306
 Jargal, H., 83, 86, 205

INDEX

- Jee, Joseph, 243
 Jeffels, M., 228, 236, 239, 242, 314
 Jelferies, William, 168
 Jervis, Henry, 40-2, 72
John Bright, barque, 117
John Line, emigrant ship, 111, 128, 161
 Johnston, Dr C., 124, 130-1, 174, 208, 304
 Joyner, William, 238
 Jung, P., 83, 85
Justina, emigrant ship, 91, 173, 196

 Karkloof, 114, 215, 256
 Keate, Lieutenant-Governor R. W., 184, 305-7
 Kermode, Edward, 247
 King, Charles, 169
 King, George, 179
 King, Lieutenant J., 3, 13-14
 King, John, 178, 190, 259, 264
 King, Richard, 14, 52, 82-3, 202
King William, emigrant ship, 128, 198-9
 Kinghurst, James, 232
 Kinloch, F., 292
 Knight, H. E., 179, 257, 264
 Kyle, Captain, W. D., 312

Lady Bruce, emigrant ship, 149, 163, 169
 Ladysmith, 257, 282
Lalla Rookh, sailing ship, 102, 168, 195
 Lamond, G., 313
 Lampport, E. P., 110, 136-7
 Lancashire, interest in Natal, 132-5; emigrants from, 135-8
 Land problem in Natal, 46-7, 62, 75-7
 Landman, C. P., 34-5, 38-9, 56
 Lang, Dr J. D., 103
 Langalibalele, 278, 282
 Lawrance, F., 164
 Lawton, R., 309
 Leathern, W., 274
 Leeds, in 1849, 138-40; emigrants from, 141-5; grammar school, 144
 Legal profession in Natal, 293-7
 Legislative Council, 300-4
 Leigh, James, 314-15
 Lewis, T., 118, 235
 Lidgett, John, 115, 117-18, 154, 174
 Lidgerton, 256
 Lindley, Rev. D., 41
 Lindsay, W. S., 106
 Ling, William, 334
 Lister, William, 131, 137, 234
 Liverpool, 129, 132
 Lloyd, Rev. H. W. C., 83, 321
 Lloyd, James, artist, 176
 Logan, R., 252
 London in 1849, 123-4; emigrants from, 124-9
 London, Edward, 327-8
 Lotter, S., 261, 266, 282
 Ludlam, T., 127
 Lumb, Samuel, 142, 291
 Lund, William, 154, 156, 254-5
 Luscombe-Seacelle company, 331
 Lyons, W., 297

 Macdonald, Alexander, 174, 326
 Macfarlane, John, 178, 186
 Macfarlane, Walter, 173, 178, 186, 301, 304, 306
 Mack, Dr James, 316
 Mack, R. G., 163, 238
 Mackenzie, Bishop of Central Africa, 319, 322
 Mackenzie, W., 185
 Maclean, Alexander, 102, 188, 238
 Maclean, Hugh, 101, 187-8
 Macleroy, George, 87, 183-4, 204, 211, 225
 Madagascar, 120
 Mail services, 276
 Maitland, Sir P., 64
 Maize, cultivation of, 229, 255
 Manchester, and Natal cotton, 133-6
 Mann, Dr R. J., 316
 Marcus, G., 118, 233, 236
 Maritz, G., 28, 30, 34-5, 36, 43
 Marshall, William, 332
 Marshall and Edridge, shipowners, 104-6, 221

INDEX

- Mason, G. H., 216, 325
 Mason, Richard, 159
 Matterson, J. K., 144
 Mauritius, exodus to Natal, 82, 88, 119, 236; trade with, 84, 88, 135, 225, 259
 Maxwell, F. S., 137
 Maxwell, P. J., 101
 May, John, 291
 McArthur, Alexander, 190
 McArthur, Donald, 190
 McCorkindale, A., 116, 183
 McCrystal, P., 324
 McDonald, Hugh, 188, 204, 276
 McKechnie, Neil, 327
 McKen, Mark, 118, 124, 232-3, 237
 McKenzie, Duncan, 189, 273
 McKenzie, James, 192, 252
 McPherson, John, 191-2
 Medical profession in Natal, 315-17
 Meller, H. J., 115, 173, 287, 295, 336
 Merryweather, J., 155, 255
 Mesham, L. E., 83, 206
 Methley, J. E., 117, 140-5, 198, 203, 215, 320, 337
 Methley, Rev. James, 137, 140-1
 Middleton, William, 204, 233
 Miles, J., 252-3
 Millan, J., 181
 Millar, John, 115, 208, 336
 Miller, J. B., 188, 238
 Milne, John, 245-6
 Milner, Henry and Tom, 83, 114, 205, 220, 236
Minerva, ship, 80, 125, 194-5; loss of, 199-200
 Moll, C., 58, 289-90
 Moodie, Donald, 71, 73, 199, 301
 Moor, F. W., 268, 313-14
 Moorby, R. B., 331
 Moreland, John, 103-4, 155; difficulties in locating settlers, 203-4, 209-15
 Morewood, E., 86, 115-16, 236-7
 Moselikatze, 3, 12
 Moss, T., 203
 Mpande, 39-43, 53
 Muirhead, A., 92
 Munro, Byron, 317
 Murdoch, G. P., 115-16, 147
 Murray, A. K., 183, 257
 Music in Natal, 331
 Napier, Sir G., 36-7, 39, 42-4, 48-9, 60
 Natal, as a field for emigration, 100; physical features, 2; prehistoric, 4-6; annexation, 60, 68; system of native policy, 302-3; prospects of in 1849, 100; regions of, 224-5; agricultural prospects, 93, 249-50; government of, 284, 298; constitution, 300-4
Natalier, De, 58, 64, 289
 Native labour, 228, 240-1, 244, 248, 258
 Native policy in Natal, 73-5, 288, 302-4
 Navigation Acts, repeal of, 125-6
 Ncapai, 46
 Neate, S., 167
 Nel, F., 40, 266
 New Germany, 87
 New Glasgow, 250, 254
 New South Wales, 97, 281
 New Zealand, 99, 302
 Newmarch, E., 263
 Newnham, Rev. W. O., 190, 328
 Newspapers in Natal, 288-93
 Nicholson, William and J. D., 158, 265
 Nickson, A., 193
Nile, emigrant ship, 117, 197
 Nourse, H., 3
 Oats, cultivation of, 244, 262-3
 Ogle, H., 14, 17
 Opera, popularity of, 331
 Orange River Sovereignty, 74, 225
 Otto, P. A. R., 185, 266, 332
 Owen, Rev. F., 20, 31-3
 Owen, William, 3
 Owen Smith, John, 82, 159

INDEX

- Palmer, John, 169
 Panorama, in Natal, 330-1
 Parisi, H. B., 92
 Parkinson, E., 118, 214, 261, 267
 Parnaby, W., 261
 Passenger Acts, 97, 194-6
 Pawpaw, introduction of, 120, 233
 Payne, George, 327
 Peel, Sydney, 87
 Peppercorn, G. R., 313
 Philip, Dr J., 290
 Philipps, E., 233-4
 Phillips, Judge H. L., 304
 Phipson, T., 131, 175, 287, 291
 Piers, C., 69
 Pietermaritzburg, foundation of, 35-6,
 40-1, 58; occupations of burgesses,
 177, 217, 312; aspect in 1850,
 217-18; cost of living in, 218-
 19
 Pigg, A., 252
 Pine, Lieutenant-Governor B. C. C.,
 46, 74, 79, 111, 209, 296, 299, 307,
 334
 Pinetown, 184, 232, 257
 Pinson, Henry, 268-9
 Pistorius, C., 58, 215
 Pitcher, James, 332
 Plant, R. W., 124, 225-6
 Platt, L. and S., 145, 227, 243
 Ploughing in Natal, 250, 260, 262
 Plymouth, sailings from, 171
 Polkinghorne, J. T., 172-3, 254
 Port Natal, 202-4; harbour dangers
 at, 200; baggage unloading, 201;
 problem of bar, 200, 244-5;
 harbour works, 245-6
 Porgieter, H., 27-9, 34, 55
 Potter, George, 159, 199, 255
 Presbyterian Church in Natal, 191,
 320
 Preston, Major W. R., 92, 322
 Pretorius, A. W. J., 30, 34, 38-40,
 42-3, 46, 50-7, 90, 260
 Proudfoot, James, 186, 205
 Proudfoot, William, 186-7, 255, 282
 Puckering, T., 157, 208, 310
 Railways, crisis of 1848-9, 121-2,
 153; effect on roads, 151, 166
 Railways, origin of in Natal, 184,
 246
 Ralfe, Robert, 125, 261
 Rathbone, E. F., 119, 232, 235-6
 Ratsey, R., 313
 Raw, R., 316
 Retief, Piet, 21, 28-32, 34, 54
 Reynolds, L., 238
 Rhodes, Cecil, in Natal, 162, 231
 Richmond, Natal, 158, 213, 251-3,
 265
 Ridley, R. E., 173, 307
 Riet Vlei, 250, 255, 266, 282
 Roads, in England, 151-2; in Natal,
 244, 274-5; main road to interior,
 272-4; toll bars, 275
 Robinson, George, 147, 293
 Robinson, Sir John, 293, 304, 306-8
 Robson, J. S., 257
 Roman-Dutch law in Natal, 296-7
 Rudolph, G., 62, 76
 Rural trades in England, 152
 Russell, George, 125, 246
 Russom, J., 128, 172, 286, 310
 Rylands, J., shipowner, 148, 154-6
 Ryley, R. R., 125, 288, 297
 St Paul's Church, Durban, 206, 319
 Sanderson, J., 183-4, 292
 Scarborough, 159-60
 Scheepers, C., 79
 Scholastic profession in Natal, 325-8
 Schonberg, V. A., 206
 Schwikkard, B., 220
 Scotland, in 1849, 178-89
 Scott, Rev. C., 190-1
 Scott, D. B., 164, 287, 310
 Scott, Lieutenant-Governor John,
 179, 246, 301
 Selby, P., 219-20
 Shaw, Walter, 272
 Shaw, Rev. William, 89, 91, 126-7,
 141
 Sheep breeding in Natal, 255, 266-71
 Sheffield, 129, 131

INDEX

- Shepstone, Sir T., 8, 36, 40, 68, 71-5,
299-303
Shipley, J., 211
Shire, Henry, 119
Shires, J., 252
Shuter, J. D. and W., 160, 253, 295
Skipper, Rev. J. B., 167-8
Slavery, abolition of, 26, 37
Smarfit, James, 165, 215
Smellekamp, supercargo, 50-1, 53, 64
Smerdon, Henry, 243
Smit, Erasmus, 31, 41
Smith, Dr A., 15
Smith, Sir Harry, 74, 76-7
Smith, John, 178, 233
Smith, Major T., 46-52, 54, 61, 64-5
South Australia, 97
Southam, A., 134, 226-7, 230
Sovereign, emigrant ship, 129, 145, 198
Sparks, D., 238
Spearman, George, 145
Speirs, Robert, 193
Spies, A., 119
Sport in Natal, 59, 331-3
Spring, F., 220
Springfield sugar estate, 238, 240
Stabler, John, 157
Stanger, Dr W., 1, 65, 69, 73, 273
Stanley, Lord, 53, 60, 63
Steele, John, 212, 318
Stephen, James, 19, 36, 44, 60, 67
Stonell, W. H., 124
Strapp, S., 179, 181
Strapp, W., 181, 272
Struben, Captain J. M., 100, 265
Sturge, J. and S., 90-1, 127
Sugar cultivation in Natal, 235-43
Sutherland, Dr P. C., 69-70, 158, 316
Sutton, Sir G. M., 164, 279
Swindon, Wilts, 167

Tarboton, H., 215
Tatham, E., 318
Tatham, R. B., 318
Taylor, William, 178
Tea, production of in Natal, 225-6
Teeson, David, 176

Terrason, A. de, 235
Theatrical entertainments, 329-30
Thompson, W. R., 79, 81, 89, 112
Timber, in Natal, 216, 271
Tobacco, cultivation in Natal, 168,
232, 253
Todd, William, 320
Tomlinson, E., 138, 164
Toohey, D. C., 84
Transport riding, 277-8
Trekking in Natal, chap. II *passim*;
republic of Klip River, 78-9
Tristan da Cunha, 198
Trotter, George, 185, 256
Troy, J. B., 193
Tshaka, 8-13, 22
Tutin, James, 154, 156, 254
Tyrrell, E., 173
Tyzaeck, R. W., 164

Umlhali River, 232, 238, 319
Umsilikazi, *see* Moselikatze
Umzinto sugar company, 240-1
Unicorn, emigrant ship, 109, 136, 191,
198
Upton, R. S., 115, 318-19
Uys, Piet, 27, 33-4, 119

Vancouver Island, 300
Vanderplank, John, 83-4, 279
Van Preehn, W., 226, 232, 234
Varty, W. Boyd, 124, 255
Vehicles on Natal roads, 275-7
Verse, in Natal, 323-4
Verulam, 127-8, 212, 253-4, 320
Victoria, gold fields discovered, 99,
220
Vinnicombe, George, 171
Volksraad, 'Trekker', 28-9, 35, 41,
45-65, 75
Voyage to Natal, 196-200

Wade, John, 128, 325
Wage rates, in Durban, 247-8
Wakefield, E. Gibbon, 96
Walcott, S., 96, 108, 174
Walker, Arthur, 273, 286, 297

INDEX

- Waller, J., 164
 Walmsley, J., 136, 286
 Walsh, T., 137
 Walton, J. C., 80, 257
Wanderer, emigrant ship, 88, 108, 201
Washington, emigrant ship, 109, 147, 200
 Wathen, G. H., 268, 270
 Watkins, Thomas, 161-2
 Watkins-Pitchford, Dr, 266
 Watson, James, 164
 Watson, J. R. M., 176-7
 Wattle growing in Natal, 279
 Weenen, 41, 79
 Weir, James, 252
 Welch, J. W., 161, 276-7, 332
 Wesleyan Church in Natal, 89, 206, 254, 310
 West, J. E., 147
 West, Martin, 65, 70, 75, 77-9, 134
 West Indies emigration to Natal from, 118
 Wheat, cultivation of, in Natal, 244, 258-62, 281
 Wheeler, Napoleon, 83, 204
 Whipp, John, 247, 319
 Whitby, 160-1
 Whittaker, D., 137
 Wilder, Rev. H. A., 230
 Willey, R. B., 109, 244
 Williams, Sam, 171-2
 Willson, G., 247
 Wilson, W. R. S., 85-6, 133, 232
 Wiltshire, distress in, 165-6; emigration from, 98, 166-9
 Winder, George, 257
 Winter, J. W., 120, 317
 Withers, W. B., 169, 214
 Wolseley, Sir G., 307
 Wood, J. R., 137
 Woods, Samuel, 69
 Wray, James, 214
 Wray, L., 233, 292
 Wright, L., 157, 199, 202, 208, 211, 214
 Wyld, James, 1
 Xosa tribes, 7
 York (Natal), 157, 213, 254-6, 264
 Yorkshire, emigrants from, 142-7, 163; E. Riding conditions, 152-3; N. Riding distress, 162-3
 Zeederberg, J. C., 78
 Zietsman, J. P., 214
 Zohrab, Peter, 220, 237
 Zulu kingdom, to 1845, 10-13
 Zulu war, 278, 307
 Zunckel, Rev. C., 120
 Zwide, 11



