

NATIVE POLICY: THE REITZ— SHEPSTONE CORRESPONDENCE OF 1891—1892

THE NATIVE QUESTION

BY PRESIDENT REITZ, BLOEMFONTEIN

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WHEN OUR ANCESTORS — Dutch and English — first settled at the Cape, they found a land stretching northwards to the mystic regions of Monomotapa, a land in which John the Baptist would have felt himself at home, for there was no lack of locusts and wild honey — especially the former. But they found in it besides, the Native.

From the very first days of Jan Van Riebeeck South Africa had to deal with this 'question', and it has been doing so ever since in a manner more or less unsatisfactory.

The subject is one of those which many honest men deem it safer to leave alone.

'Leave well alone,' they say.

But how if it be not well?

There is such a thing as being overcautious, and surely a matter of such vast importance to the future of the country should not be left to 'drift'. Let us rather look at and discuss it in a just and forbearing spirit, from all points of view, so that perchance we may arrive at some *consensus* of opinion on the main points at least, and thus avoid the risk of leaving our descendants exposed to the possibility of having some day, unexpectedly, to face a problem of vital importance which they may be unable to solve.

The objects which civilized South Africa should bear in view are mainly the following:—

1st. To get rid of the Tribal System, as being an *imperium in imperio* of a most pernicious kind.

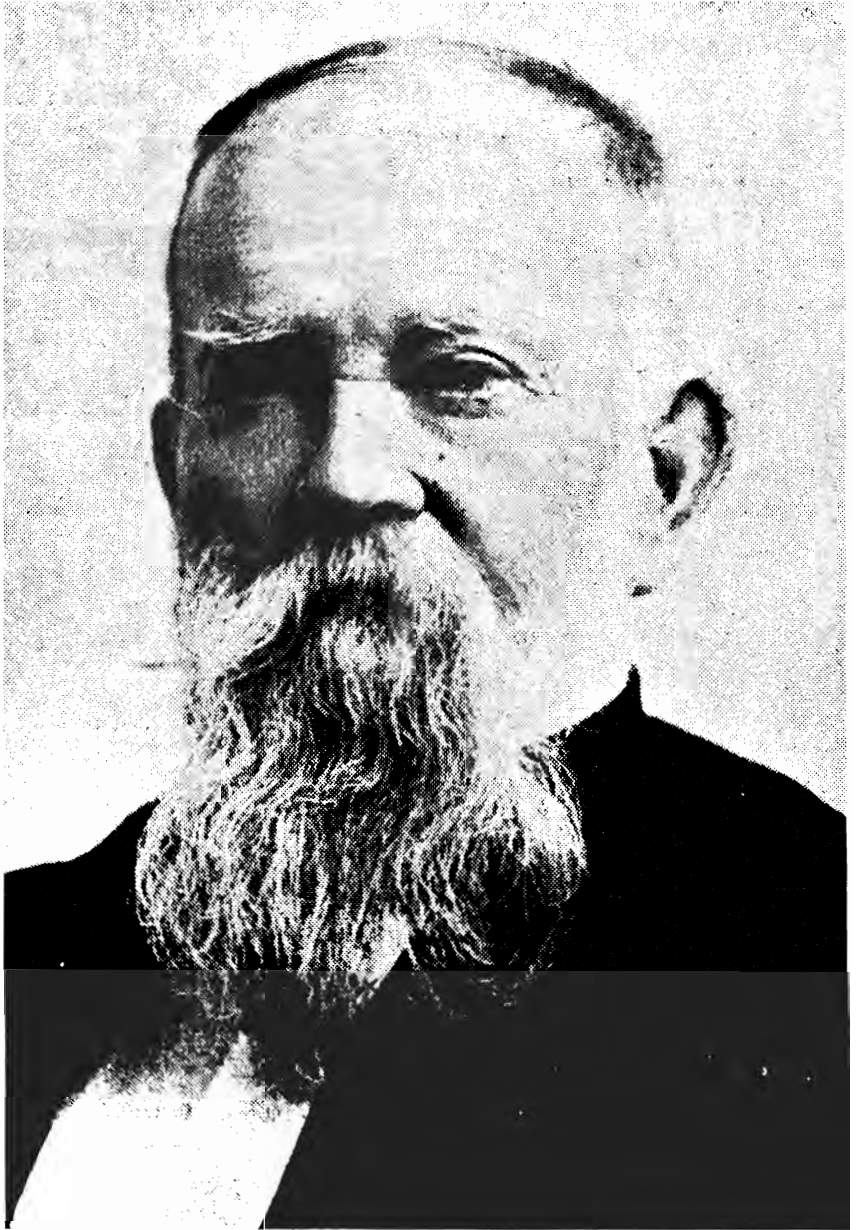
2ndly. To abolish chieftainships.

3rdly. To apply to all men alike irrespective of colour and race the rule — 'By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt earn thy bread,' and with a view to this end to break up all locations great and small.

4thly. To suppress by law all such heathen rites as are undoubtedly and flagrantly immoral and degrading.

5thly. To discourage polygamy, and the selling and buying of women which it involves, and 6thly. To adopt the principle and maintain it steadfastly, that there shall be no 'equality' between the aborigines of South Africa and the people of European descent who have made this land their home.

As a fact, the whole of South Africa (excepting Natal) has since the very beginning been striving to attain these objects, but it has not been done on principle but under subterfuges. Where is Dinizulu? Where are Waterboer and



President F. W. Reitz

(photograph by courtesy of Miss B. Levy)



Sir Theophilus Shepstone in his Pietermaritzburg garden during his retirement
(photograph by courtesy of Dr. Ruth Gordon)

Mankoroane? What is the condition of Letsea, the son, and of Paulus Moperi the brother of Moshesh? And what will most likely be the fate of that fine old murderer, Lo Bengula? Some have gone, some are going, and the rest will have to go, all upon some pretext or other; whereas the true reason why they have had to 'take a back seat' is that they were or are stumbling blocks in the way of progress and civilisation.

And, firstly, as regards the tribal system under which term are included the relation of the natives to their chiefs and to the land. It took many centuries to break down the system of 'clans' amongst the highlanders, but no one in Scotland to-day would wish to see the rule of small tyrants of the stamp of Roderick Dhu restored in the 'land o' cakes'.

'Tribal tenure' is supposed to mean that the land belongs to the whole of the tribe in common, the chief with his counsellors holding it in trust for them. This looks very well on the surface, and might at first sight be regarded as a very pretty sort of socialism, but, as a rule, the chief apportions the land as he pleases, without any regard to the necessities and circumstances of his people — and in many cases this irresponsible potentate has quietly given the ground away or sold it to outsiders without even consulting his subjects. The numerous 'concessions' which have become so prominent a feature of South African speculation afford sufficient evidence of the truth of this assertion.

This 'tribal system' is in full operation in Basutoland to-day, and if there is anyone who knows what a nuisance it is, that one must be the Resident Commissioner, Sir Marshall Clarke. He has done, and is doing all that is possible to carry on a civilized government, and has moreover succeeded beyond expectation, yet there can be no doubt that he would be a happier Resident Commissioner, if Messieurs Masupa, Lerothodi, Jonathan, Joel, and the rest could be sent to join Dinizulu or Arabi Pacha, to enjoy an *otium cum dignitate* in St. Helena or Ceylon.

The Kaffir, as an individual, may be 'a man' and (under due reservations) 'a brother', but as a member of a tribe, and the subject of a fat and arrogant chieftain, he can never be such. He is divided by an impassable barrier from the laws and customs of civilized humanity, and there is no room for him in his tribal condition in our European system of political economy.

2ndly. To reduce the Chiefs to the ranks is — it must be admitted — a thing easier said than done. To banish them to Robben Island, the Cape Flats, or even so distinguished a place of exile as St. Helena does not seem the most suitable way of dealing with them. It is not just for one thing, and besides the banished one always leaves behind him a numerous progeny to mourn his loss and to continue the dynasty.

Probably the most effective means of bringing the big Chiefs and the little Chiefs to their proper level is the introduction of the Roman Dutch Civil Law and the English Criminal Procedure. Under these influences the Chief soon recognizes the fact that the days of his despotism are ended, and that there is a jurisdiction in the land which makes no distinction between one Kaffir and another. As long as we hear of the appointment of Commissions to codify Native Law, so long there must be 'something rotten in the State of Denmark'. Native Law (save the mark! *a lucus a non lucendo*) conflicts in every detail and particular with that sense of right and justice which is embodied in the law of the

civilized white man. But even if this so-called 'native law' had here and there a glimmering of what might be considered just, why have two sets of laws for people who are to live together under the same government?

3rdly. The days of slavery are gone, and let us be thankful that it is so. No one is compelled to labour upon pain of anything more tyrannical than hunger, and even that sort of compulsion is some day to be replaced by the 8 hours system, that is to say, in enlightened Europe, but when shall we get this 8 hours system applied to South Africa? Not till the locations scattered over all the length and breadth of the land are broken up; not till Zululand, Pondoland, the Transkei, Swaziland, Basutoland, Amatongaland, and Matabeleland, and all similar squatting places both without and within our borders have ceased to exist, not until there shall be no city of refuge left for the man who is too lazy to work, but by no means 'oo proud to steal.

Then, and not till then will the millions of sturdy men who now lie idle be constrained to handle the pickaxe, and the plough, or, in default thereof, to starve.

4thly. Very closely connected with the location nuisance is that of the practice of heathen rites and ceremonies, which should not be tolerated within the borders of any civilized country. When, during the last session of the Free State Volksraad, a draft ordinance was laid before the Legislature providing for the infliction of fines and penalties on those taking part in such practices, the majority rejected the bill on the ground that, Basutoland being so near our borders, their servants would, if restricted in their amusement, walk away and leave the farmer to herd his sheep, and reap his crops himself!

5thly. As to polygamy, as practised amongst the Bantu tribes, seeing that the law under which we live does not make concubinage a punishable offence, perhaps there is no other way of dealing with it than for the law to refuse to recognize this kind of connubial relationship.

The matter will, — we may hope — in time right itself, and especially if the locations are broken up, and the kaffirs get scattered and settled down amongst the farmers, and as domestic servants in the towns and villages. They will then by force of example learn to adopt the white man's system of having only one wife instead of half a dozen concubines.

The Malays of the Cape peninsula are permitted by the law of the Koran, and not forbidden by the law of the Colony, to have more than one wife. Yet we find very few instances, if any, of the Mahomedans of Cape Town, making use of this privilege, if such it may be called. This is due to several causes, all of which are traceable to their coming under the more immediate influence of European civilization.

In the meanwhile it does seem somewhat disgraceful that in a Colony like Natal polygamy should not only be tolerated, but even recognised by the law, and that white men of respectable position in society should be appointed by a government, claiming to be a civilized one, to sit in a so-called native Court, and to decide with all due gravity whether some Kaffir gentlemen of- say- eighty summers has paid the due price for the 10th or 12th young woman whom he has purchased for his harem.

The gentlemen of England who sit at home at ease, and amuse themselves

occasionally by libelling the Republics, and accusing the governments of those States of permitting slavery should on the principle that 'Charity begins at home', look into this matter a little, and enquire whether a system which permits the servitude of the weaker sex only is not even more mean and unmanly than that which included men and women and children in the same category, and made them all alike 'Chattels' of their fellow men.

6thly. There is a large section of people in England, and some even in the Cape Colony (though they are fortunately very few indeed) who hold that the black man should have equal rights in every respect with the white. They must have the same right to hold land, to vote, to be educated and to be raised generally to the legal, social and political level of their fellow men of European origin; — and not only, say these philanthropists, is this to be treated as a mere abstract right, but it is also the duty of the Government and of the white man to bring this ideal condition of affairs about.

Let us assume that the view of these good people is correct, and that having said 'A' we likewise say 'B', and so forth to the end of the alphabet.

What should be the eventual logical result? Well, for one thing, our intelligent friends Abdol Burns, and Tembu Jabava should be elected to represent their fellow-citizens in Parliament. And not only they, but (if we are to be strictly fair and logical) the majority of the legislators of South Africa should, in due time, be of the same or similar complexion.

Moreover, we cannot stop there. This would only be recognising the *political* rights of our fellow-man. How about their *social* rights? Are we to ostracise a man who is a gentleman and a senator, merely because the colour of his skin is such as we may in our narrow-mindedness not approve of? No! my friends, if there is to be equality, it should be complete, and you must not be so unreasonable as to refuse your daughters in marriage to a man who in every respect but that of colour is your 'equal'. That is what philanthropy and fair play, and the rights of man, should lead to; and is that what you are contemplating? If not, why not? In the United States of America, the land of Liberty, not to say of Licence, this result is being arrived at more rapidly than the men who fought and died for the abolition of negro slavery could ever have anticipated.

There the descendants of the African race are in the minority, and yet the educated and ambitious amongst them to-day are looking forward to the time when the 'gentlemen of colour' shall have established their claim to be regarded both physically and mentally as the dominant race and 'the Caucasian shall indeed be played out'. It is the opinion of many people in America that the next civil war in that country will be a 'war of colour', and such fears do not seem to be unreasonable, when we consider that the only alternatives are that there must be amalgamation of the two races or 'miscegenation', as it is called, or else that the rivalry, which certainly does exist, must lead to a rupture. There can be no doubt that, when matters do come to a crisis, the Caucasian will prove himself—as he has so often done before—not 'played out'. But who can contemplate without a shudder the horrors of such a struggle?

Here in our part of the world the proportion between black and white is in an inverse ratio to what it is in America, and we are told that the aborigines are increasing more rapidly than those of European race, and probably this is the case in those parts where the institution of polygamy flourishes, and where one man may have as many 'wives' as he thinks proper. The history of the

Israelites in Egypt and of the Mormons at Salt Lake proves that the 'Caucasian' race will increase in a similarly prolific manner under similar matrimonial conditions. The only chance for the survival of the fittest will be the breaking up of locations, as already suggested above. Should this not be done, and the Kaffir increases both in numbers and in 'civilization' in a sort of geometric progression, the sooner we who cannot claim to be of the same race as Tshaka or Lo Bengula, return to the countries from which our ancestors were foolish enough to emigrate, the better. It is upon this point that South Africans are most strongly at issue with the Aborigines Protection Society, or, as these well-meaning, but ill-informed people are generally styled 'the Exeter Hall Party'. We claim to have as little animosity towards the black man, as any theoretical philanthropist amongst them all, but 'self-preservation is the first law of nature,' and if the 'Caucasian' must either remain the dominant race or perish, then of the two evils let us choose the least.

THE NATIVE QUESTION

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Sir, — President Reitz, the ruler of the Orange Free State, has contributed a paper on the 'Native Question' to the last November number of the *Cape Magazine*.

He expresses his views with remarkable frankness, but with less gravity, perhaps, than might have been expected on so important a subject from the actual ruler of an independent state. He recognises, however, the 'vast importance of the subject, and invites its discussion in a just and forbearing spirit from all points of view'. He sets forth the main objects, which he says 'civilised South Africa should bear in view'. They are: '(1) to get rid of the tribal system as being an *imperium in imperio* of a most pernicious kind; (2) to abolish chieftainships; (3) to apply to all men alike, irrespective of colour and race, the rule "By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt earn thy bread," and with a view to this end to break up all locations, great and small; (4) to suppress by law all such heathen rites as are undoubtedly and flagrantly immoral and degrading; (5) to discourage polygamy and the selling and buying of women which it involves; and (6) to adopt the principle and maintain it steadfastly, that there shall be no "equality" between the aborigines of South Africa and the people of European descent who have made this land their home'.

'As a fact,' President Reitz goes on to say, 'the whole of South Africa (excepting Natal) has since the very beginning been striving to attain these objects; but it has not been done on principle, but under subterfuges'. Well may Natal feel gratified at being acquitted by such an authority from participation in so wicked and disreputable a strife!

The President has rendered a service by the frank terms in which he has formulated his outspoken and clearly intelligible creed.

Let us examine its different articles, and the grounds upon which their acceptance is enforced, not in the light of any moral standard, for no such standard would apply, but in that of their practicability alone, irrespective of any moral consideration.

The first two propose (1) 'to get rid of the tribal system', and (2) 'to abolish chieftainships'. These will not admit of being discussed separately. They must stand or fall together. There can be no 'chief' in the sense in which the President uses the word, without a tribe; similarly, there can be no tribe without a chief.

If there is one truth more necessary to be known than another by a South African statesman, it is the impossibility of effectually abolishing hereditary chieftainship.

Hereditary chiefs may be officially deposed by the paramount power; may be refused recognition; may be sent into exile, or placed under personal disabilities. These are the means which civilized governments generally use, and which have been used in South Africa; but they have succeeded only in making martyrs; in augmenting the power of the chiefs concerned for mischief, and in clothing with greater reverence their persons and their utterances. The effect is to inflame the tribal sentiment and to strengthen attachment to its representative member.

The history of the contact of civilisation with South African tribes furnishes, and is at this moment furnishing, evidence of this; but the most remarkable proof of the strength of the tribal sentiment is to be gathered from events among the natives themselves, that occurred towards the end of the last century, and the beginning of this. The Zulu Chief Chaka founded the greatest native power that is known ever to have existed south of the Zambesi River; his military conquests extended over a large portion of the Portuguese, Transvaal, and Orange Free State territories; they included the whole of Natal and some of the present districts of the Cape Colony as far as the Umtata River; the only tribe between Natal and the Umtata that he did not subdue, and which repulsed one of his regiments, was the Pondo tribe, under Faku. For this temporary repulse the whole of the survivors of that regiment were executed on their return to Zululand. Chaka was not a man to be trifled with; his object in all his conquests was to destroy the chief of a tribe and his family, and to incorporate the people with his own, or annihilate them by periodical harassing expeditions. He succeeded in most cases in compelling incorporation, but rarely exterminating the reigning family of any considerable tribe. Chaka's orders were stringent enough; his generals were sufficiently zealous; but the loyalty of the conquered people to their chief and family was invincible, no instance of betrayal was ever known to have taken place; in some cases the people selected from among themselves vicarious substitutes who were represented as being their chiefs; in others, it is told, and told with pride, that men presented themselves a voluntary sacrifice to save the lives of the real heads of their tribes. Loyal devotion such as this burns with too ardent a flame to be quenched by a mere proclamation. Chaka with all his resources, his idolising regiments, his inflexible will, his disregard of human life, his contempt for every opinion save his own, failed in his attempt to accomplish what President Reitz so airily recommends as main objects to be kept in view by civilised South Africa! So strong did this tribal sentiment prove, that at the end of the Zulu war, 60 years afterwards, it was found that most of the incorporated tribes that made up the bulk of the Zulu nation, had kept themselves so distinct, that on the removal of the Zulu King they were found ready to re-enter upon their separate existence. The British Government took advantage of that remarkable fact, without perhaps fully recognising the lesson that it taught.

It is quite true that the military chiefs, kings, as they are called, who possess

large organised and well disciplined armies, are not only, as President Reitz says, stumbling blocks in the 'way of progress and civilisation', but absolute hindrances. They dislike civilisation; its effect is to destroy their power; they see this, and naturally, and inevitably they oppose it in one way or another; and as inevitably will their power be eventually shattered by the slow but sure advance of civilisation. Their organisation is a pure military despotism, in which, in the first instance, public opinion, or tribal councils or councillors, have very little to say. This necessarily constitutes a daily danger to a neighbour.

Fortunately there are, however, only four of these in South Africa, the Zulu, the Swazi, Gungunyana and Lobengule. These are all collections of conquered tribes, and each of these organisations will have to be treated as its special conditions may require. The Zulus must still be included in this list, because although broken by conflict with a civilised power, the policy that followed has tended to support the hopes of the ruling family; to disappoint the aspirations of the incorporated tribes, who had hoped to become free, and more unfortunately still, to suspend the idea of finality; so that the end of this political chapter, whatever it may be, has still to be looked for. The remarks that follow are not intended to apply, nor could they apply, to the military organisations above referred to; but to the hundreds of other hereditary chiefs and tribes whose constitution is more patriarchal than military, with whom civilised South Africa is in more direct contact, whose treatment is most concerned by the President's theories.

The first question that suggests itself is — what is to be substituted for the tribal or patriarchal organisation under the rule and guidance of the chief? President Reitz answers 'The Roman-Dutch Civil Law, and the English criminal procedure'! The President wrote this not seriously most probably, but to elicit the discussion that he invites; it seems impossible that even a chief justice could cherish such astounding faith in codes of law. The 'big chiefs' and the 'little chiefs' who are to be brought to their 'proper level' by the introduction of these two codes include, at least, all in Natal, British Basutoland, Kaffraria, Zululand, and the Orange Free State. These countries contain hundreds of chiefs, and hundreds of thousands of natives. All have been accustomed to, are now living under, tribal laws and tribal administration which have existed for untold generations. Each individual of this vast population has his special responsibility, and assists in the government of his tribe to the extent of his responsibility. He must report everything of importance that becomes known to him to his superior until the Chief is reached, who decides what course should be taken. By this means the head of a tribe, or as is the case in Natal, the head of many tribes, is kept informed of what is going on. The foundation of all effective government is a knowledge of what its subjects are doing and thinking. Do away with all this, bring the 'big chiefs' and 'little chiefs' to what President Reitz considers their 'proper level' of 'no distinction between one kafir and another'. Substitute your magistrates and your codes, and your own police, for their chiefs and their ancient system of tribal responsibility, that turns every member of the tribe into an active policeman, and what have you? Flocks of sheep without shepherds; alien rulers of an estranged people; the cessation of all sympathy and frank intercourse. How, in such a case, are you to get your information except through prejudiced and naturally misleading sources? Dislike and distrust inevitably beget misunderstanding, to end sooner or later

in a death struggle for existence. Is this what the President wishes to bring about?

It may be reasonably asked, if it be possible to effectually abolish hereditary chieftainship, what is to be done with hereditary chiefs?

The answer is, use them as they have been used during the last 45 years in Natal; use their influence, their system of tribal management, their principle of mutual responsibility; make room for these in your own system. Let the chiefs understand that they rule as your lieutenants; that they carry out your behests, subject to your general supervision, even in tribal matters. Pay them fairly. They will prove loyal and zealous, inclined, perhaps, to severity rather than otherwise; correct this by giving their people the privilege of appeal to a white magistrate, and ultimately to a still higher tribunal. Forbid, except by special leave, the performance of any function devised to keep up the idea of tribal independence. Prohibit absolutely accusations of witchcraft. 'Witch dances' as they are called, such accusations being their purpose, are the great political engine of the hereditary chief; they take public opinion by storm, they make it easy to strike down, without trial or defence, the most formidable rival; they are what a standing army is to the military chief. Take away this engine, and nothing will be left to lean upon but the power of the Government.

President Reitz's third proposition is, 'To apply to all men, irrespective of colour and race, the rule "By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt earn thy bread," and with a view to this end to break up all locations great and small'.

The President is outspoken enough; he takes no pains to disguise the way in which he would apply this sacred rule. 'To break up all locations, great and small,' is the essence of his plan. All the 'kafirs' occupying these locations, both 'within and without our borders,' must 'get scattered and settled down amongst the farmers' of European descent, 'and as domestic servants in the towns and villages' 'of the same favoured people. The millions of sturdy men who now 'lie idle' in 'Zululand, Pondoland, the Transkei, Swaziland, Basutoland, Amatongaland, and Matabeleland' must be 'constrained' to 'handle the pickaxe, and the plough, or starve'. They are not to be permitted to earn, they are to be deprived of the means, which they at present possess, of earning 'their bread', except as farm labourers or domestic servants to the people of European descent who have chosen to make this land their home!

President Reitz leaves unnoticed the important fact, that the millions of sturdy men he alludes to, and the many more millions of their women and children, who must also be taken into account, are the aboriginal inhabitants and owners of the land, that they have inherited it from their ancestors from remote ages, that they are at this moment living on it by cultivation, and the rearing of stock, as they have done from time immemorial. Surely the President betrays some respect for 'colour and race' in this!

President Reitz resents the libelling of the republics in South Africa by the 'gentlemen of England who sit at home at ease,' when they accuse the governments of those states of permitting slavery.

What is the essence of slavery but the power of one human being to so control the life of another as to deprive him of the right of exercising free will, even in the manner of earning his living? Wherein do the recommendations of the President fall short of this?

It is not, as has already been said, the object of this paper to measure the

President's plans by any recognised moral standard; any such attempt would be as unprofitable as to adjudicate upon what is called the 'land grabbing' processes of any nation on the basis of moral right or wrong.

One precept only is applicable — that he should take who has the power, and he should keep who can; but measured even by this simple gauge, and it is the only one that it is desired to apply, can these plans be said to be practicable? The answer must be in the negative, because they involve physical impossibilities. If not practicable, why propound and recommend them? It is no small matter for the actual President of an independent state in these parts to proclaim to the millions of natives concerned that it should be the settled policy and avowed object of the 'people of European descent who have made this land their home' to crush them into the condition of slaves or serfs. Such utterances, by so exalted a personage, must produce a profound impression, not lessened by the fact that they are published without comment in a high-class periodical at the seat of the Government of the senior South African state, and, as far as the writer has yet seen, without a word of dissent from its Press. What could be more compromising to neighbouring governments? What better calculated to excite resentment and all its possibilities, when the native races learn from so high a source the true value and object of all our philanthropy and Christian solicitude? 'Wolves in sheeps clothing'!

President Reitz's 4th and 5th propositions are:— 'To suppress by law all such heathen rites as are undoubtedly and flagrantly immoral and degrading'; and 'to discourage polygamy and the selling and buying of women which it involves'.

These are both objects which commend themselves to the moral sense; although the President's mode of enforcing the last is made to depend upon the carrying out of the 'objects' which it has been found necessary to remark upon.

The subject of polygamy does not admit of adequate discussion in public prints; it involves considerations which are not likely to have presented themselves to the investigation of most of those who sit in judgment upon it; considerations which, if they had presented themselves, would most probably have been thought absurd or trivial, but which to the natives themselves are serious enough, as, in their belief, affecting their social conditions and well being.

To these must be added the special prejudices and beliefs of the women, who rule in their sphere as potently as civilised women do in theirs. These are like so many peculiarities which the potter has to take into account in the treatment of his clay. The custom, as the President recommends, may and should be discouraged, but it cannot be done away with at a stroke without causing perhaps greater evil.

President Reitz's 6th proposition is: 'To adopt the principle and maintain it steadfastly, that there shall be no "equality" between the aborigines of South Africa and the people of European descent who have made this land their home'.

Later on in his paper he suggests that the 'most effective means of bringing the big chiefs and the little chiefs to their proper level would be to introduce the Roman-Dutch Civil Law and the English criminal procedure'. But these are understood to govern the people of 'European descent', and both these codes

demand equality; if they are applied to the aborigines they will still demand equality; and equality between the races will have been established by law. How then can the panacea be reconciled with the proposition?

The President shows a great deal of anxiety, and expends some rhetoric on this subject of equality; but the truth is that from the days of Jan van Riebeeck until now, no sign of a struggle or demand for equality has occurred. The coloured races have accepted the superior position of the European as a race, and accept it now. Wars have taken place at different times; each war has had its special object or its special cause; but in no case has political or social equality been the aim.

It must be remembered also that the human intellect cannot be fettered; when aided by education it will rise to the level that is due to it, whether covered by a coloured skin or a white. To prevent the growth of that formidable thing intellectual equality, the President, to be consistent, should 'adopt the principle, and maintain it steadfastly', that there shall be no educational establishments for natives, no mission or industrial teaching among them, beyond what may be needed to teach them to 'handle the pickaxe and the plough', or to become 'domestic servants in towns and villages'.

President Reitz instances the dangers that are said to be now threatening the United States of America from the coloured population that were once slaves; he cites this state of things as the one to be avoided in South Africa; he addresses this example for want of a better, presumably, to enforce his advice to break up all locations, to abolish chieftainships, and the tribal system, which he looks upon as the root of all mischief. Unfortunately for his argument, the danger in the United States which he cites as a warning to us, has grown somehow out of the very condition that he wishes to establish as an antidote to it in South Africa.

The descendants of the African race in the United States had no locations, no chieftainships, no tribal system; they had for generations been 'scattered and settled down amongst the farmers, and as domestic servants in the towns and villages' of the dominant race, exactly in the way that President Reitz wishes our immense native population to be 'scattered and settled down' among us. Yet out of this, his ideal state of things, in which no equality was permitted or thought of, a danger has arisen serious enough to cause anxiety to sixty millions of people of European descent!

President Reitz speaks sneeringly of the appointment of commissions to codify native law; he declares that native law 'conflicts in every detail and particular with that sense of right and justice which is embodied in the law of the civilised white man!'

The President being a trained lawyer, late chief justice of the state over which he now rules, must be accepted as an authority on the law of the 'civilised white man'. That same training would have led one to expect that he would not have ventured to pronounce a judgment on any question until he had examined both sides of it. It is surprising, therefore, that neither his judicial sense nor his prudence prevented him from publishing to the world so unqualified a condemnation of native law before he knew what it was.

Those who have administered it all their lives and know it best would have told him, and independent enquiry would have satisfied him, that 'every sense of right and justice which is embodied in the law of the civilised white man' is recognised, respected, and enforced by native law intelligently and fairly

administered. It is in the forms of procedure and the mode of administration that the difference exists; difference is rendered necessary by the variation of social and political conditions; that it is great cannot be denied; but it does not necessarily contradict moral principles; it is commensurate with the contrast between civilised and savage man; the one has his chop grilled on silver, the other throws it on the ashes.

President Reitz makes more than one contemptuous reference to Natal. The position of ruler of an independent adjoining friendly state, which President Reitz occupies, did not suggest to him the indelicacy of criticising in a public print in disparaging and offensive language the internal arrangements of a neighbouring government. There would be little difficulty in vindicating the native policy of Natal, and such vindication will be forthcoming should President Reitz call for it.

Meanwhile the history of Natal may be left to speak for itself. Forty-six years of existence, and forty-six years of peace, as far as its own internal management is concerned, is a record that no other South African state can show. A few domestic disturbances, such as must be expected in every household, have occurred, only to be repressed by the great majority of its loyal members. An annual direct contribution by the natives to the treasury, regularly and unflinchingly paid for forty-three years, and which now amounts to more than a million and a half pounds sterling, in the aggregate, is a significant fact; and to these must be added the confidence which, to the credit of both, the white and the coloured population feel towards each other; these are not results which justify the contumelious allusions that President Reitz has thought it becoming to make. — I am, &c.,

T. SHEPSTONE