
THE PROVINCE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1913.

REAPING THE HARVEST.

Yesterday, South Africa seemed in another world. We heard no echo of its domesticity or prosperity. We knew that gold came from Johannesburg, diamonds from Kimberley and that Cecil Rhodes built an Empire somewhere in that region. But "The Empire" might be a music hall, and Johannesburg in the Antarctic, for all the interest or connection that lay between Western Canada and South Africa. In Eastern Canada there is a large trade between Montreal and Cape Town, which provides a channel of mutual interest, but with the exception of a few cargoes of lumber sent from British Columbia to East Africa a wide and almost un-bridged gulf exists between us.

Today South Africa is suddenly thrust under our noses. The wires thrill with news of vital interest to British Columbians. It comes almost as a shock to find the seed of Hindu immigration, which is being sown on this coast grown to its full bloom and being harvested in the Province of Natal, South Africa. Ever since, the Boer war South Africa has rather faded from our imaginations. The problems of federation, the quarrels between Herzog and Botha were in some degree merely a repetition of the problems we had already successfully solved. They hardly held much interest, except for those who study the evolution of race and Empire. But when Natal suddenly finds itself in the throes of a gigantic struggle caused by the strike of all the East Indian population, not only is interest awakened, but our imagination fired. Is this the sort of problem we shall have to face in British Columbia if we allow the East Indians to immigrate here? There can only be one answer. And because of that answer we prefer to bang, bolt and bar our doors against them.

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Some months ago, in discussing the quarrels of Herzog and Botha. The Province of stated that the real problem in South Africa today was not between British and Boer, but between white and black. It was suggested that the colored races, the East Indians and the natives, would be a dangerous combination, whose pressure would inevitably weld the white races into homogeneity. The present strike of the East Indians is a sign of the coming storm. Those who know South Africa realize the danger instinctively. That realization was at the back of the outcry against Lord Gladstone for his interpretation of justice and mercy in a Kaffir assault case. Today the strike of the East Indians in Natal, on account of the discrimination practised against them by the white man is but a proof of what The Province said then.

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For all we can tell this discrimination may be most galling. It may be unjust. It may even have its brutal side, as the strike seems to have been caused by the flogging to death of a native in one of the coal mines of Natal. We who live on the edge of western civilization can not(Sic) judge the moral issues of this problem. Those who live on the edge of eastern civilization, of which the Hindu in Natal is an excellent example, or are suspended over the abyss of "nigger" barbarism, as is represented by the Kaffir races in South Africa, probably do not worry about the moral issues. The problem is not moral, but psychological. Justice may easily be misunderstood. The justice meted out by such a man as Lord Kitchener always has been understood by native races all the world over. But the justice of the courts, the slow-footed justice which recognizes the rights of both parties and is ready to believe witnesses placed on oath, is usually misunderstood. The slow upward trend of civilization, the dawn of understanding education and the ability to read and write, are all of themselves excellent things. But they are dangerous. How dangerous no one can tell. The dangers have long been recognized, but no man shrinks from a necessary danger just because he recognizes it.

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Today in Natal there are close upon 150,000 Asiatics and 1,000,000 natives or Kaffirs. The last named have increased 500,000 in 20 years. The East Indians who make up the main portion of the Asiatic populace have increased by 100,000 in 20 years. They are almost all immigrants. On the other hand the European population has only risen from 46,000 to about 100,000 in the same period. To a certain extent it is apparently the problem of the cradle over again. The white races can not(Sic) compete against the colored. It is also the problem of labor. All manual labor, all domestic work is done by the colored races in Natal. The white man can not(Sic) compete even if he would with that labor. Thus in Natal there are practically three races living under one law. The white or ruling race, the Asiatic or parasitic race, the black or native race.

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It is, of course, possible to discuss at great length the moral issues involved. It is easy to develop beautiful theories about the Christianising and education of the poor benighted heathen. It is nice to look forward to the time when all will have the franchise, when the whole community will live side by side and mix on terms of perfect equality. But logically all these theories are shattered by the laws of human nature. Directly, by means of these various agencies, the poor benighted heathen receives the sacrament of western civilization he finds himself unable to live on terms of equality. The bar sinister formed not only by color, but by centuries of history, or basically by evolution, becomes an insuperable barrier between him and those who have brought him these blessing. He believes that through these agencies he can rule, can legislate to suit his own conditions better than any one(Sic) else. He comes into conflict with those who have raised him from the state of civilization to which he was accustomed. Once that point is reached it must become merely a survival of the fittest. If the colored races can advance their civilization to such an extent that they in their turn become more powerful than the white they will be able to impose their will on the white. First the outposts of the white races, India and Africa will fall before the new conditions. The colored publicists of that day may be as ardent supports or

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pacifism as their white contemporaries today, but unless the white draw back without a struggle for supremacy it must inevitably come to bloodshed. It will be a question of race domination. And that question will have arisen through the highly moral inception that we must give to our colored brethren the same advantages of civilization as we ourselves enjoy.

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There is no other way out. We have to do our duty as we see it. We can not(Sic) rule by mere brute force. The only possible method is to prove to those over whom we have domination that our civilization brings freedom, health, prosperity and happiness. In each of these things there lies great danger. But because they are dangerous we can not(Sic) withdraw. The law of progress is inexorable. To fall behind in the race or retire from it, to give up, is impossible and fatal. We can only go steadily onward striving to be just and guarding against deterioration. If our conception of civilization saps our strength, if it has become too costly, if the standard we have set is so high that we can not(Sic) live up to it, inevitably the struggle will exhaust us. And over the wreck of that civilization will come another, and yet another. The world will not stop because we fall by the wayside.