

THE  
CONSERVATIVE REVIEW.

MAY, 1899.

No. 2.

VOL. I.

A QUESTION OF NATIONAL HONOR. ✓

By Hon. William Henry Fleming.

**E**VERY American citizen who values the honor of his country ought to acquaint himself with the facts regarding our war with the Spaniards, recently ended, and our war with the Filipinos that is still in progress. We need not concern ourselves with all the details. A few salient points will serve to guide us, if we really wish to find the truth and are willing to face it when we find it.

Strictly speaking, there was but one declaration of war by Congress, and yet, for all practical purposes, we have had two wars. The Spanish-American war, which began April 21, 1898, practically closed with the signing of the peace protocol, August 12, 1898. The American-Filipino war began on February 4, 1899, two days before the peace treaty of Paris was to come up for amendment and ratification in the United States Senate—for there was never any intention to reject the treaty as a whole. The only amendment desired was one disclaiming permanent sovereignty by us over the Philippine Islands and promising ultimate independence to their inhabitants.

In entering upon the war with Spain our country rose to a height of moral grandeur not surpassed in all history. The tender pain of sympathy for Cuba, joined to our righteous indignation at the murder of our sailors aboard the *Maine*, begat in the American heart a stern determination to break once and forever the chains of Spanish oppression in the

## THE CAPE TO CAIRO RAILWAY. ✓

By Samuel Phillips Verner.

“THE steamer is the white man’s power,” said my friend Dombi to me last year, fifteen hundred miles in the interior of Africa. Dombi deserves to rank with Khama in the category of African chieftains. We were talking about the future of the white man and the black in Africa. He was wiser than he knew. When I was asked by the Government in Brussels as to the best method of quelling the periodic revolts in the Congo State, I said, “Build railways; one locomotive in Central Africa is worth more than a million armed men.” To the native African a steamboat is a most wonderful affair; but then, it is, after all, only a development of their canoes; but where in all the world was ever seen anything like the “steamboat on land,” as they call the trains?

There are two men of colossal proportions mentally and imperially, now looming up on the horizon of the world. They are Nicholas of Asia and Rhodes of Africa. These men are antipodal in all things, save in the love of power and the knowledge of how to use it. Each is building a railway; each is conquering a continent. An eminent German specialist has classified Europe according to the scale of degeneracy. It would be unfair for an American to say who stand lowest; but at the highest stand the English and the Russians; and these are the railway-builders of the Oriental world.

Mr. Rhodes has said that the dream of the Dutch section of South Africa appears to be that of a nebulous republic on an Afrikaner basis. If so, it may be said of him that the dream of Rhodes in Africa is a Continental Empire on an English basis. In Africa, in building houses, the first consideration is the roof; and of the roof the first element is the ridge-pole. The Cape to Cairo Railway may be described as the ridge-pole in the African structure of the greatest Eastern section of the Anglo-Saxon Empire. This it is, and nothing more or less. Mr. Rhodes may please the Germans to-day, even as he pleased the Afrikaner-Bond of

old; but, poor deluded people, they seem to have forgotten "Timao Danaos et dona ferentes!" Those over-anxious Englishmen who tremble at French or German schemes in Africa need not unduly harass themselves. Two hundred years ago America was mostly French and Spanish.

Clearly to grasp the situation with respect to this great Continental railway, let us consider it from four points of view: geographically, politically, commercially and with reference to the general future of Africa.

*Column*

The series of mountains, which extend from near Suakim on the Red Sea, to Table Mountain at the Cape, form what may be called the Western Rampart of the Continent. To the east of these ranges the country falls away rapidly toward the coast, ending in the malarial belts, as unhealthy as any regions in the world, the Limpopo River being their southern boundary, and the Juba their northern. To the west, however, the country has a very gradual slope toward the great plateau lands of Central Africa, which are generally as salubrious as the malarial belts are deadly. In general, the course of the "Cape to Cairo" Railway may be said to run along the crest of this plateau, from south to north, falling naturally into four great sections. The first extends from Cape Town to Buluwayo, about 1,360 miles; the second from Buluwayo to Abercorn at the extreme southern point of Lake Tanganyika, about 959 miles; the third from near Mukambe, at the northern end of Tanganyika, to Khartoum, about 1,500 miles; the fourth from Khartoum to Cairo, about 1,050 miles, making a sum total of about 4,860 miles. It may be confidently called a five thousand mile railway.

The two sections, from the northern and southern ends respectively, are now completed, and in practical operation, though the section from Cairo to Khartoum has been chiefly a military line, under the Egyptian and British Governments. This will, however, ultimately, of course, become a part of the "system," leaving only the two middle sections to be completed, a distance of about 2,500 miles.

The country, on the whole, is admirably adapted to purposes of construction. The section from Buluwayo to the Zambesi will doubtless follow one of the tributaries of the latter, and then will proceed up the beautiful and fertile valley of the Loangwa River to its source among the foothills, south of Tanganyika, and crossing these by a comparatively low series of grades, the lake itself will be reached at Abercorn, on its southern extremity.

Crossing the low range immediately at the northern end of Tanganyika, the line will probably then take down the course of the Nile source, the Kagera River to its junction with Lake Victoria, near Uganda's capital; thence skirting snow-crowned Ruwenzori, it will proceed to where the Nile issues from Albert Nyanza and thence down the Nile to Khartoum. Three great bridges must probably be built, at the Zambesi, and twice across the Nile. It is proposed to use the length of Tanganyika to shorten the transit at first, using steamers for its 450 miles; but ultimately the lake will be paralleled with a line through the Congo Free State, along the western border of the lake.

The valley of the Kagera lies for the main part in German territory; hence the necessity of Mr. Rhodes' recent visit to Berlin. But it is worthy of note that out of the whole five thousand miles of the line, only about two hundred must be built through territory other than British. British dominion—including the Saxon-guarded Egypt, of course—thus extends almost five thousand miles along the rampart of Africa.

It is interesting to study the collateral branches—eastern and western “feeders”—of this Titanic road. On the east are chiefly four—the Transvaal road, from Delagoa Bay to Johannesburg, and Palapye, Khama's capital; the Portuguese, from Beira to Buluwayo; the German, from Zanzibar to Ujiji, where Stanley found Livingstone; and the British, from Mombasa to Uganda. On the west, two will ultimately be built, and two are in construction; the first two being on the northern and southern extremities respectively, from Lake Tchad to Fashoda, and from Walfisch Bay to Buluwayo. The two now building are the Portuguese, from St. Paul de Loanda toward Tanganyika; and the Belgian, from Matadi toward Uganda, utilizing the vast Congo along its course. These last two are very interesting. The Loanda Railway aims at piercing the great Zambesi-Congo watershed, the last great stronghold of the slave trade—the black man's last retreat—“because there the steamers cannot come;” and the Congo systems by passing around the comparatively short cataracts of the Congo at Livingstone Falls and Stanley Falls, respectively. The section around Livingstone Falls, near the west coast, was completed in 1898, thus throwing entirely open the 10,000 navigable miles of the Congo, and those around Stanley Falls will be completed probably before the main Cape to Cairo Railway is finished.

These lines, together, furnish the most wonderful system in the world.

On the whole, this railway will pass, along its whole course, through the healthiest parts of Africa. The mountain summits in Uganda rise to nearly twenty thousand feet; and the whole route is along an elevated crest, except in the lower Nile valley. Moreover, the rapidity with which travel may then be conducted will enable the traveler to pass in safety through the unhealthy regions swiftly on to the better parts.

As to the scenery, it need hardly be said that it will long remain the most varied and interesting in the world. Over the wide, grassy plains of the south and center; across mighty rivers; past snow-crowned mountains; through tremendous tropical forests; where large game will bound away from the speeding locomotive. Nor will travel ever be incommoded by snow-storms, or bound by ice and flood. The temperature will be modified by the motion, and at no point will be as bad as along the Southern States of America in mid-summer. Ice factories can be built along the whole course. Mr. Tripler's liquid air can be made on the train and constantly released to cool and cleanse the atmosphere.

Politically, the railway is intended to make Africa finally and predominantly British. If the Strait of Gibraltar were ever closed an enormous British Colonial Army could be thrown in seven days into Egypt from the South. Troops from Southampton can now be landed over fifteen hundred miles into the heart of Africa in twenty-one days. By the Cairo route the Cape could be reached in fourteen days, and all points along the line proportionately less. England will then have the three corner-points of the African triangle—the Niger, the Zambesi, the Nile. Military posts, manned by white soldiers, will spring up along the whole course of the line. The domestic slave-trade will cease. The native population will see the utter futility of resistance.

As to the other European powers, their attitude will be perforce one of co-operation. The Englishman is entirely satisfied as long as he is allowed to lead. Enlightened public opinion in England will finally settle down upon the policy of digesting and assimilating the vast regions thus brought under sway, and allow the other nationalities to do the same with their smaller portions. The predominant English influence, however, will gradually pervade the

whole, and practically, if not formally, the Continent will be more Anglo-Saxon than America.

What form this mighty empire will assume depends largely upon England's attitude. A benevolent system of easy sovereignty, allowing and encouraging the largest possible amount of local self-government will retain the imperial connection to the point where unwieldiness necessitates subdivision. Until that time the African Colonies will maintain their general connection with the mother country. Beyond that point, the whole land may confederate into a republic, overshadowing all previous conceptions of government. The commercial success of the railway will be slow, but sure. It will be well to consider this with reference to (a) labor, (b) competition, (c) initial cost, (d) proximity of material, or the cost of its importation. As to its source of income we have freight and passenger traffic.

The mass of labor will be native. General superintendence will be by European labor, but generally at prices subject to the European scale of competitive labor-wages, and, consequently, comparatively, from the American standpoint, low. The native labor is and always will be comparatively ridiculously cheap, owing to the extremely low cost of living. The railway runs mainly through a fertile and productive country. Moreover, the native labor is almost indefinitely capable. In the Congo Railway and steamboat service you will find natives who five years ago were eating each other in the bush, now driving locomotives and running steamboats. The line of the road runs almost exclusively through the superior Bantu people, of whom the Zulus, Matebele and Baganda are typical representatives. As the line is to be guaranteed by the Government, little competition will be allowed. The "feeders" will serve mainly to develop their own local territory and will interfere comparatively little with the main line. The whole general system being controlled by a few syndicated men, it will own and operate its own local branches built along strategic points, and these will all swell the general profits. At the same time the necessity of developing trade along its route will prevent unduly exorbitant charges, as its own success will depend upon the commercial development of the country. Moreover, the same men at the head of the railway are practically at the head of the exploitation companies, and the interests of one are the interests of all.

The initial cost will be high, but the Government guarantee will offset this. The average cost per mile of the re-

maining 2,500 miles of the railway should not be more than \$30,000 per mile, a maximum estimate, which will make the cost less than the estimated cost of the proposed bridge across the Hudson. Spanning a continent and spanning a river, for comparison.

The line of the railway will pass the great coal-beds of the Zambesi, near Tete, and the enormous iron deposits of the Tanganyika region. Here furnaces will, no doubt, in time spring up and huge ironworks be established, supplying nearly all Africa. Magnificent forests of available timber for coaches exist from the Zambesi to the Nile. Water-power can be obtained everywhere. Undoubtedly, Africa has the finest water-power system on earth. What Niagara is to America, Livingstone Falls, Stanley Falls, Murchison Falls, and Victoria Falls are to Africa, and these are not all.

Of freight there will be chiefly three classes: Food produce, special tropical products, mineral and forest products.

Sir William Crookes warned Europe last year that the present sources of food-supply were rapidly being used up. Witness the bread riots of last year in Italy. The world needs the tropics for food. Asia, China, Japan, India, periodically starve for food. America will soon eat all she produces. Australia can hardly feed England. Africa is capable of production from Tunis to Cape Town, from Gardafui to Cape Verde. The very Sahara is turned into a garden by artesian wells. The African is the best agricultural laborer in the world. Africa is to be the garden of a hungry earth.

From the Upper Nile the railway will ship wheat, rice and cotton to Alexandria. From the Mid-Continent will go corn, tobacco, rice and cotton to the gold, diamond, coal and iron fields. Besides these, the natives must be fed, and where they gather at centers of industry will be shipped manioc, peanuts, plantains, bananas, potatoes and every other form of native food produce.

The more immediate returns will come from the transportation of special tropical products. At present these are chiefly ivory, rubber, guncopal, coffee, cocoa, kola, palm oil and kernels. The chief two products among these of much importance at present are rubber and palm oil.

From data in my possession I estimate that the basins of the Zambesi, Congo and Upper Nile, with adjacent territories, should be producing for export annually, by the time of the completion of the Cape to Cairo line, at least ten thousand tons of rubber, at a gross value of about \$15,000,-

000, and this will be constantly increasing. The palm oil trade will be about the same for the same regions.

The point about the transportation of such material as this is that its value is very great in proportion to its bulk. The railways are thus enabled to charge high rates and reap large returns with a small installation of rolling stock. This observation, of course, applies also to the minerals transported.

Africa is probably the richest mineral continent of them all. Besides the Kimberly and Johannesburg diamond and gold fields, other similar deposits are being constantly found, and copper and iron smelting operations have been carried on for centuries by the natives, in the very country which this railway proposes to open up. The whole Congo-Zambesi divide is probably one enormous coal field. The passenger traffic will, of course, not be very great. But the natives will use the road as soon as its charges are sufficiently low, and there will be a considerable transportation of tourists, colonists and troops.

The possibilities of the road may be gauged by the fact that the ticket for a first-class passage from England to Buluwayo is now less than \$300, and that Buluwayo has grown in five years from nothing to a population of over 5,000 whites, this being nearly 1,500 miles north of Cape Town.

A fine illustration of the English conception of the prospective value of this line may be seen in the case of the British limited company, the "Tanganyika Concessions." This company, capitalized at \$500,000, proposes to sell lots of land at Abercorn, on the south end of Lake Tanganyika, under a concession obtained by them, and lots are being offered and taken, although this point is a thousand miles above the present terminus of the road. The question of the time for the completion of the road is, of course, invested with the usual difficulties; but, under ordinary conditions, the road should be completed in five years. The latest information is to the effect that the Government guarantees the first section of the road, from Buluwayo to the Zambesi, which ought to be amply satisfactory, and is, no doubt, all Mr. Rhodes really wanted, as the road must, of course, be built in sections, and the Egyptian and British Governments will take good care of the progress from Khar-toum southward.

The origin of this fever of railway construction may be said to be due to the desire, about 1890, on the part of Mr.



Rhodes and his associates to open up and hold for the British Empire the vast regions north of Cape Colony, against the designs of Germany and the Transvaal. Begun thus, the plan has gradually evolved into a sort of semi-romantic vision of spanning Africa, a dream at last realized under the necessities of political competition and financial depletion. Of course, it will ultimately be carried out, for behind it are three great forces—a great man, a great nation, and the force of the inevitable event.

The telegraph is being constructed ahead of the railway, and by this time the line should already be at Lake Tanganyika. An American, Mr. Mohun, is in charge of another telegraph construction company under the Belgians, erecting a line from the west to join Mr. Rhodes' Trans-Continental Telegraph Company in the north and south line.

The general future of Africa may be briefly summed up thus: A vast tropical mining and agricultural concession, directed by the whites living in the healthy mountainous districts, and operated by the natives in the rest. Organized capital will play the predominating part. All undertakings will be carried on in a large and co-operative way, to an extent unknown in other lands. White colonists will settle the higher and healthier parts, but the greater part of the manual labor will be carried on by the Africans; and the whites will occupy Africa largely, if not entirely, in the capacity of labor-overseers. Institutions for training the natives will be planted at these healthier parts, and from thence a constant supply will be sent out to the rest of the Continent. Already the Gordon College at Khartoum is one such institution, and the long-established and splendid Lovedale School in South Africa is another.

For the whites to exterminate the African is to kill the hen that lays the golden egg. The African alone can work successfully in the fields, mines, railways and shops of seventenths of Africa. He makes, when well-fed and justly treated, a docile, laborious and capable workman. The Bantu people are also quite superior to our conceptions of the Negro, and may develop into an ingenious and progressive race. There is no ground for entertaining any extravagant or sentimental hopes upon the question of the future of the African race. They are not endowed with the qualities of the Anglo-Saxon and may never reach the height of his attainment; but it does seem that there is a place for them in the economy of the future, and our people will do well to fit them best for it.

It is not generally recognized in America to what extent Africa has progressed in late years. Here are some words of one of our consuls in South Africa with reference to his experience in traveling over a South African railway:

"I rode over one of the finest road-beds I ever saw, and well-fenced, too, with the most substantially-built telegraph connection I ever saw. I saw millions of fertile acres that require only a hoe and a little water. I saw a river that at its full runs between high banks that ought to be dammed at intervals, making a series of reservoirs."

He goes on at length describing the extraordinary progress of affairs which he witnessed.

The great advantage which Africa presents to the world to-day arises from the opportunity of applying at once to her conditions the sum total of our present progress and achievement. A few examples:

When Boston was built the sciences of hygienic sanitation, municipal engineering, ornamental decoration, were unknown. The city was laid off on narrow, crooked lines, and in many respects, has ever since, to use the language of one of her own poets, been "following in the footsteps of the calf."

Now, however, the world has reached such a stage in the progress of science and art, that the opportunity afforded in Africa of building magnificent foundations for the superstructure of the future has been unparalleled in history.

This principle applies to every phase of life. Colleges, like the Gordon College at Khartoum, spring up, and apply to existent conditions all the results of modern educational progress. The organization of government can reap the fruits of the experiences of all nations, and sow the seeds of a yet higher attainment. Religion, shorn of mediaeval folly, takes root in virgin soil at the very time of a great incipient spiritual renaissance. In science, electricity, compressed air, all the latest inventions and most progressive methods can be installed from the beginning. No old buildings of wood must be torn down to make way for granite. No gasworks need suffer bankruptcy from the adoption of electricity. There is no rubbish of an effete civilization to sweep away. The new bottle awaits the new wine.

It remains to sum up briefly several desiderata to the future progress and welfare of the vast regions which these railways are to open up:

1. Let agriculture be everywhere encouraged. A garden is as necessary to the new arrival as a house. This fact is

not always as highly appreciated as it should be. Goldminers not infrequently almost starve over their gold-bags because of neglecting this precaution. Let a hundred acres of food-stuff be brought into cultivation for every additional settler in a new land.

2. Let the large land companies, necessary as they are, encourage in every way individual enterprise. The individual is the unit of society. Repress or oppress him and society suffers. In new countries everything ultimately depends upon the individual colonist or laborer.

3. Let the smaller nations or governments be fairly and justly treated by the larger. The rule for guidance should be that of industry, and honest effort. Mere conquest for gain of a more powerful over a less powerful nation is robbery, a crime against God and man. If a small nation is really doing its honest duty let it be encouraged and supported by the larger.

4. Let the native populations be justly and humanely treated, every reasonable consideration being accorded their superstitions and ignorance, and government being adapted to their conditions, fully recognizing the inevitably slow character of social evolution.

5. Let every undertaking be fully and adequately supported by means entirely capable of accomplishing the end desired. Let not Africa become dotted with the ruins of abandoned enterprises.

6. Let it be remembered that commerce, railways, steamers, telegraphs, schools, do more for conquest than any amount of guns and powder. Let force be only a dernier resort; but when war becomes really necessary let it be terrible, short, decisive.

7. Let every influence be exerted to secure the adoption at the outset of the most improved methods and ideas, the result of the highest progress of to-day, in all the departments of activity in Africa. Send the best men, the best machines, the best methods, the best brains, thither; and a civilization will surely arise there, eclipsing all the achievements of modern times, fitly ending, as it seems to have begun, under the shadow of the Pyramids, upon the banks of the Nile.