

## CHAPTER I.

# THE OUTLOOK FOR INDUSTRIALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA.\*

THE importance of South Africa is to be measured dynamically rather than statically. Hitherto, its growth has been slow compared with that of several other countries of the New World. Nevertheless, it has been sufficiently rapid to make South Africa a problem in looking into the future, so that no one would now care to assert categorically that South Africa would not one day carry a population as large as that of one of the chief states of Europe, and those who think it certain that this cannot be for many generations are fewer than they were. South Africans believe that their country is a great wheel going up hill, and that those who attach themselves to it will be carried up far and fast. The attempt will here be made to state the main facts which have to be considered in estimating the industrial future of the country.

South Africa is kept back by the smallness of its population, which makes manufacture difficult in an age of large scale production and cheap transport. We have not yet half the white population which the United States had at the time of the Declaration of Independence, and the first settlement of a white race in South Africa was made not more than half a century after that in North America. Moreover, our small population is scattered over the whole country, whereas, at the time of the American Revolution, the American colonies were comparatively compact. Taking the size of the population, the extent of the territory occupied, the lowering of costs by mass production, and the great cheapening of transport in the last century and a half, it will be seen that we are very far indeed from the position attained by the American colonies even under the old régime. Nor must it be forgotten that it was not till well on in

the nineteenth century that the United States became a considerable manufacturing country. Still, there is much to be remembered on the other side. If it is true that the United States did not become a great manufacturing country till late in the nineteenth century, it is also true that the iron industry of the American colonies most seriously threatened that of Great Britain in the middle of the eighteenth century, and that both New South Wales and Victoria developed considerable industrial activity under different fiscal systems with populations considerably smaller than that of South Africa to-day. Above all, an examination of the facts in regard to our population will instil doubt into the confidence of pessimism.

### Our Population.

The white population of the Cape Province was 182,000 in 1865, when the first census was taken. By 1921 it had increased to 652,000. That of Natal grew from 47,000 in 1891 to 138,000 in 1921; that of the Transvaal from 119,000 in 1890 to 544,000 in 1921; and that of the Orange Free State from 61,000 in 1880 to 189,000 in 1921. As between the provinces, the comparative rate of increase as stated in these figures is affected by the annexation of two Transvaal districts by Natal in 1903, and there have been other annexations, which, however, would not greatly affect the figures quoted. They show a rate of increase throughout the whole country which augurs well for the future. In 1806, when the Cape was finally occupied by the British, the white population was estimated at about 26,000. In 1904, when the first simultaneous census was held in the four colonies which now comprise the Union, the white population was 1,117,000, and in 1921 it was 1,522,000.

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