bearing much grain and fruit; its name, meaning the “island of sheep,” is still appropriate, as great flocks are bred. On the west are the port of Queenborough and the naval station of Sheer­ness. From here the Sheppey light railway runs east through the island, serving Minster and Leysdown, which are in some favour as seaside resorts. The London clay, of which the island is composed, abounds in fossils.

SHEPSTONE, SIR THEOPHILUS (1817-1893), British South African statesman, was born at Westbury near Bristol, England, on the 8th of January 1817. When he was three years old his father, the Rev. William Shepstone, emigrated to Cape Colony. Young Shepstone was educated at the native mission stations at which his father worked, and the lad acquired great pro­ficiency in the Kaffir languages, a circumstance which determined his career. In the Kaffir War of 1835 he served as headquarters ■interpreter on the staff of the governor, Sir Benjamin D’Urban, and at the end of the campaign remained on the frontier as clerk to the agent for the native tribes. In 1838 he was one of the party sent from Cape Colony to occupy Port Natal on behalf of Great Britain. This force was recalled in 1839, when Shepstone was appointed British resident among the Fingo and other tribes in Kaffraria. Here he remained until the definite establishment of British rule in Natal and its organization as an administrative entity, when Shepstone was made (1845) agent for the native tribes. In 1848 he became captain-general of the native levies; in 1855 judicial assessor in native causes; and, in 1856, on the remodelling of the Natal government, secretary for native affairs and a memher of the executive and legislative councils. This position he held until 1877. Thus for over thirty years he was the director of native policy in Natal. A man of strong will and pronounced views he gained a great influence over the natives, by whom he was called “ father,” and, in acknowledgment of his hunting exploits, “ Somsteu.” The main line of his policy was to maintain tribal customs as far as consistent with principles of humanity, and not to attempt to force civilization. The result of his policy is still traceable in the condition and status of the Natal natives. While he remained in charge there was but one serious revolt of the natives—that of Langalibalele in 1873— against white control.

Shepstone’s influence with the Zulus was made use of by the Natal government; in 1861 he visited Zululand and obtained from Panda a public recognition of Cetywayo as his successor. Twelve years later Shepstone attended the proclamation of Cetywayo as king, the Zulu chief promising Shepstone to live at peace with his neighbours. In 1874 and again in 1876 Shep- stone was in London on South African affairs, and to his absence from Natal Cetywayo’s failure to keep his promises is, in part, attributed. When in London in 1876 Shepstone was entrusted by the 4th earl of Carnarvon, then secretary of state for the colonies, with a special commission to confer with the Transvaal executive on the question of the federation of the South African states, and given power, should he deem it necessary, to annex the country, subject to the confirmation of the British govern­ment. Shepstone went to Pretoria in January 1877, and on the 12th of April issued a proclamation announcing the establishment of British authority over the Transvaal. Shepstone’s force consisted of twenty-five mounted policemen only, hut no overt opposition was made to the annexation; the republic at the time was in a condition bordering on anarchy. “ Nothing but annexation,” wrote Sir Theophilus to the Colonial Office, “ will or can save the state, and nothing else can save South Africa from the direst consequences. All the thinking and intelligent people know this, and will be thankful to he delivered from the thraldom of petty factions by which they are perpetually kept in a state of excitement and unrest because the govern­ment and everything connected with it is a thorough sham ” (Martineau’s *Life of Sir Barde Frere,* ch. 18). Shepstone’s action has been condemned as premature. He had, however, reason to believe that if Great Britain remained inactive, Germany would he induced to undertake the protection of the Transvaal.@@1

Moreover, had the policy of self-government for the Boers which he outlined in his annexation proclamation been carried out, the revolt of 1880-81 might not have occurred. The annexation also, probably, saved the Transvaal from an attack by the Zulus under Cetywayo. Shepstone remained in Pretoria as administrator of the Transvaal until January 1879; his rule was marked, according to Sir Bartle Frere, who described him as “ a singular type of an Africander Talleyrand,” by an “ apparent absence of all effort to devise or substitute a better system ” than that which had characterized the previous régime. Shepstone had been summoned home to advise the Colonial Office on South African affairs and he reached England in May 1879; on his return to Natal he retired (1880) from the public service. In 1883, however, he was commissioned to replace Cetywayo as king in Zululand. He was active in church matters in Natal, and a friend of Bishop Colenso. He opposed the grant of self-government to Natal. He died at Pieter- maritzburg on the 23rd of June 1893. Shepstone married in 1833 Maria, daughter of Charles Palmer, commissary-general at Cape Town, and had six sons and three daughters. One of his sons was killed at Isandhlwana; of the other sons H. C. Shepstone (b. 1840) was secretary for native affairs in Natal from 1884 to 1893; Theophilus was adviser to the Swazis (1887-1891); and A. J. Shepstone (b. 1852) served in various native expeditions, as assistant-commissioner in Zululand, in the South African War, 1899-1902, and became in 1909 secretary for native affairs (Natal) and secretary of the Natal native trust. A younger brother of Sir Theophilus, John Wesley Shepstone (b. 1827), filled between 1846 and 1896 various offices in Natal in connexion with the administration of native affairs.

SHEPTON MALLET, a market town in the eastern parlia­mentary division of Somersetshire, England, 22 m. S.W. of Bath, on the Somerset & Dorset and the Great Western railways. Pop. of urban district (1901), 5238. The old town extends in a narrow line along the river Sheppey, while the newer town has for its main street a viaduct across the river valley. The church of St Peter and St Paul is especially noteworthy. Con- sisting of a chancel, clerestoried nave, and aisles, it is Early English and Perpendicular in style, and contains a beautiful 13th-century oak roof of 350 panels, each with a different design; a 15th-century pulpit of carved stone; and some interesting old monuments of the Strode, Mallet and Gournay families. The market cross, over 50 ft. high, and one of the finest in Somerset, was erected by Walter and Agnes Buckland in 1500. Shepton possesses a grammar school of the 17th century, and a science and art school. The once flourishing cloth and woollen trades have declined, but there are large breweries, roperies, potteries, and, in the neighbourhood, marble, granite, asphalt and lime works.

Shepton, before the conquest called Sepeton, was in the possession of the abbots of Glastonbury for four hundred years, and then passed to a Norman, Roger de Courcelle. Afterwards it carte into the possession of the Norman barons Malet or Mallet, one of whom was fined for rebellion in the reign of King John. From the Mallets it went to the Gournays, but in 1536 it reverted to the crown, and it is now included in the duchy of Cornwall. The town received the grant of a market from Edward II. Monmouth and the rebel army passed through Shepton twice in 1685, and twelve of the rebels were hanged here by Judge Jeffreys.

SHERANI, or Shirant, a Pathan tribe on the Dera Ismail Khan border of the North-west Frontier Province of India. The Sherani Agency occupies an area of 1500 sq. m. and had a population in 1901 of 12,371. The Sheranis occupy the principal portion of the mountain known as the Takht-i-Suliman and the country thence eastward down to the border of Dera Ismail Khan district. They are bounded on the north by the Gomal Pass, and beyond that by the Mahsud Waziris; on the south by the Ustaranas and Zmarais; and on the west by the Haripals, Kakars and Mandu Khels. Between the Sherani country and the British border lie several small mountain ridges, across which the three chief passes arc the Zarakni or Sheikh Haidar,

@@@1 Frere to J. M. Maclean, 22nd of April 1881 (*Life of Sir Bartle Frere,* vol. ii. p. 183).