

Jameson was back at Kimberley before Rhodes returned from London, as we gather from the first of a long series of letters fortunately preserved to us by his brother, Sam, to whom they were written. Sam, it should be explained, had gone out to the Cape to assist his other brother, Julius Jameson—the beloved ‘Julie’ of the letters—then partner of a Scot called Irvine, a prosperous storekeeper of King William’s Town. From there Sam had hived off to Johannesburg to become accountant, Director of Companies, and, like everybody else, speculator. To his brother Sam, then, Jameson writes from Kimberley on May 14, 1889, which we may suppose was shortly after his return. But the letter is disappointing, since it deals chiefly with the collapse in gold-mining shares that has overtaken Johannesburg. ‘I rather admire myself,’ says Jameson, ‘for not having entered into the gamble, as I should certainly be one of those left.’ There is a reference to his practice: ‘Kimberley is better for me from a professional point of view than the Randt, at present at all events, and as I think it is likely to be for a long time, I think you had better sell the building site.’ More remarks on the slump follow, more references to fraternal investments and speculations, and then, at the end of a long letter, the only mention of the great adventure—a postscript scrawled across the page: ‘Matabeleland was a little rough; but I am glad I went, though I don’t think financially I shall be any the better.’ Merely that and nothing more! A second letter dated May 31, 1889, again from Kimberley, gives us even less. It is all about business, and nothing else, as, for example: ‘. . . Do be careful about your dealings with Barnato. I know him better than you do. He is a very good

fellow, but all the uninitiated he has helped are left with the paper and he has the money.'

But not another word of Matabeleland, not a word of that strange journey about which Sam must have been dying to hear, not a word of those negotiations about which Johannesburg and South Africa were already full of wild guesses and floating speculations.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHARTER

'We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines
within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers!'

WHILE these things were happening in Matabeleland Rhodes had gone to London. His object was to put the concession on a solid footing by consolidating the rival interests in one strong Company. If the Company were to have a fair chance of success in so great a venture he saw that it should be a national Company with the influence and power of the City of London and the British Government behind it. Rhodes's conception of the British South Africa Company's work was no less great than the British Empire in India. It was to make a British Empire in Africa, not only to the Zambesi but to the Nile; and to fill the great gap between the frontiers of Cape Colony and the frontiers of Egypt.

We must remember Rhodes was not alone in this idea of settling Africa by joint-stock enterprise. The Niger Company, the Imperial East Africa Company, and the African Lakes Company were all at that time in existence. Even in the matter in hand there was already the Bechuanaland Concessions Company.

Moreover, the Germans were at work upon the same lines. German South-West Africa had been won partly by the firm of F. A. C. Luderitz of Bremen and partly by a syndicate of which the Disconto Bank of Berlin was the principal member. The German Colonial Company for South-West Africa had been formed for the development of those regions. Again, the agents of the 'Association for German Colonisation' had secured some 2500 to 3000 square miles which the German East Africa Company was created to develop. At the beginning of 1886, both in an Imperial Memorandum and in a speech in the Reichstag, Bismarck had opened out the idea of creating a German Commercial Empire in Africa by trading companies protected by the Imperial Government.

Let us glance at the position of tropical Africa as it must have appeared to Rhodes when he went to England in the spring of 1889. The interior was a great plateau stretching northwards to the lakes and the desert, and broken by several river basins of which the Limpopo, the Zambesi, the Congo, and the Niger were the chief. The low coast-lands on both sides of what was to become Rhodesia were held by Portugal, who laid claim to a large part of the interior as well. England had for centuries possessed islands and coast-lands in Western Africa, and France had an historical interest both in North-Western Africa and in Madagascar.

As to the unclaimed balance, that versatile genius, the late King of the Belgians, organised an International Conference on the subject of Tropical Africa, which was held in Brussels in September 1876. King Leopold's idea was to form a Central African Empire which would not need to be de-

fended. In 1883 the International African Association was established on a firm footing with a recognition of its rights by the Powers concerned. In November 1884 a conference of Western European Powers was convened in Berlin to consider among other things freedom of commerce in the Congo and the Niger Rivers and 'the establishment of regulations for the future acquisition of territory in Africa.' The first result of the conference was an *Acte générale* declaring freedom of commerce in the immense basin of the Congo and a maritime belt of 360 miles along the Atlantic coast. The Act declared the navigation of the Congo open to the ships of all nations even in war, and even although under an enemy's flag. In August 1885 the King of the Belgians crowned his careful and patient labours by formally assuming the sovereignty of the territories of the International African Association, 1,090,000 square miles in extent. Another result of the Berlin conference was that France was allotted 257,000 square miles in West Africa while England retained her Protectorate of the Lower Niger. Thus if Rhodes looked at Africa from the South African point of view, he saw its interior being rapidly appropriated by arrangements in which South Africa had no voice—save in the neglectful ear of Whitehall. And again, if he regarded the situation from the point of view of a possible British Empire in Africa, he saw the North being rapidly cut off from the South by an East and West movement in which Belgium, Germany, and France had a main hand. There still remained a broad and possible channel through the interior of Africa unclaimed by any Power. But even that was narrowing ominously. Were it once blocked,

the Northern and Southern possessions of the British Empire in Africa could never be united.

Now, as we can see from Rhodes's speeches at this time, these two points of view were, in his mind, one. The expansion of the Cape Colony was the expansion of the British Empire. For example, speaking to his constituents of Barkly West on September 28, 1888, six months before he went to England, he said :—

'I am tired of this mapping out of Africa at Berlin : without occupation, without development, without any claim to the position the various countries demand. My belief is that the development of South Africa should fall to that country or countries which by their progress shall show that they are best entitled to it ; and I have faith that, remote as our starting-point is, the development of Africa will occur through the Cape Colony ; that, exempt from the risks of the unhealthiness of the East and West coasts, we shall be able to obtain the dominant position throughout the interior, starting from the Cape Colony, passing through Bechuanaland, adopting the Matabele arrangement, and so on to the Zambesi ; and I have confidence that the people of the Cape Colony have the will, and the pluck, and the energy to adopt this as their inheritance.'¹

At the Zambesi, or north of it, Rhodes hoped that his movement from the Cape might meet the outposts of our Empire in the North and so form one whole, united, if not in government, then in flag and by the ties of railways, telegraphs, and commerce. Such, in broad outline, was Rhodes's view when he went to England in the spring of 1889.

Now Rhodes had active opponents in England as in South Africa. Lobengula's envoys, skilfully handled by Mr. Maund, had made a great impres-

¹ *Speeches*, p. 225.

sion upon the British public in general and upon the Aborigines Protection Society in particular. The Radical Party could be trusted to agitate against any extension of the British Empire in any direction. And the Rev. John Mackenzie, always an enemy of Rhodes since Bechuanaland days, did his best to mobilise both commercial and missionary opinion against the concession.

But Rhodes had also powerful allies. In particular he had the support of Sir Hercules Robinson, now returned to London after his term of office at the Cape. Sir Hercules understood the situation and trusted Rhodes. His opinion, which had great weight in the Colonial Office, was all on the side of the concession.

And Rhodes had another ally—or should we call it servant?—capital. Capital is greatly contemned nowadays by those who do not possess it; but, rightly considered, it is one of the greatest inventions of man, the invention indeed that chiefly divides civilisation from savagery. For it enables man both to hoard the fruits of labour and to apply them where he will. From a hole in Griqualand West, by this leverage of capital, Rhodes could settle Central Africa.

‘Of course,’ he said a little later, ‘if the English public and people will help in the undertaking, all the better, because there is not only the money question, but the feeling of having the people at one’s back: but even if they do not support me I shall do it myself. A good many terms are often levelled at one’s acts and one’s nature. For instance one is called an adventurer; but I noticed when I was at the Bank of England the other day that the charter for that institution was granted to adventurers. Again, sometimes one is called a speculator. I do not deny the charge. I

remember meeting General Gordon and discussing with him why he had not taken the roomful of gold from the Emperor of China. . . . General Gordon asked me if I would have taken it, and my reply was, "Certainly, and three more roomful if I could have got them," because if one has ideas, one cannot carry them out without having wealth at one's back.'¹

Rhodes arrived in London just as Maund's indunas were leaving. He set himself to form a Company which he called the British South Africa Company, the principal members of which were De Beers, which found £200,000, the Gold-fields of South Africa, and his friend Alfred Beit of Wernher, Beit and Company; and one of his first acts was to absorb in this concern all the interests and concessions of his rivals. Of these the Exploring Company had amalgamated with the Bechuanaland Exploration Company, and as part of Rhodes's arrangement two of the Directors of the latter Company, Lord Gifford and George Cawston, were given seats on his Board.

Just as in the Kimberley amalgamation, so here, Rhodes bought up interest after interest. For example, he took a hand in the African Lakes Corporation—a Company formed by Scottish business men in support of the Scottish missionaries of Nyasaland—which had done a great pioneering work in the highlands of equatorial Africa. In this Company Rhodes arranged an exchange of shares, undertaking to meet the expenses of administering its territories.

When he had formed his Company and squared or absorbed his principal competitors, Rhodes petitioned the Crown for a Royal Charter. In the letter which he addressed to Her Majesty's Government on April 30, 1889, he gave some very cogent reasons

¹ *Speeches*, pp. 319-20.

why his Company should be allowed to develop the Interior of Africa. And in recommending the scheme to the Foreign Office the Colonial Secretary gave two excellent reasons why the Charter should be granted—first, because the promoters could go forward without the Charter—‘under the Joint Stock Companies Act as they are entitled to do’; and secondly, because ‘such a body may . . . relieve Her Majesty’s Government from diplomatic difficulties and heavy expenditure.’

Her Majesty’s Government, in fact, could not fail to realise that a scramble for Africa was afoot. If they did not move themselves, somebody else would. If it were Germany or the Transvaal the result would be inconvenient and embarrassing. On the other hand, they themselves did not in the least desire to move, and as for the Cape Government, it had twice refused even to take over the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The thing had to be done sooner or later, and there was no one else except Rhodes who could do it.

These reasons were reinforced by a forcible despatch from the High Commissioner of March 18, 1889. The rivalries and intrigues of concession-hunters had reached such lengths it was impossible to keep the peace in Matabeleland as long as the question remained unsettled. Therefore the best thing to do was to confirm the Rudd concession.

Rhodes’s letter to the Imperial Government was written on April 30, 1889, a month after he arrived; a formal petition was presented by the Directors of the new Company on July 13 following; and a Royal Charter incorporating the Company was granted on October 29 of the same year.

The Charter was granted in form to the Duke of

Abercorn, the Duke of Fife, Lord Gifford, Cecil John Rhodes, Alfred Beit, Albert Henry George Grey, and George Cawston, Barrister-at-Law.

And the substance of the document was contained in one of its opening clauses :—

‘That the existence of a powerful British Company, controlled by those of Our subjects in whom We have confidence, and having its principal field of operation in that region of South Africa lying to the North of Bechuanaland and to the West of Portuguese East Africa, would be advantageous to the commercial and other interests of Our subjects in the United Kingdom and in Our Colonies.’¹

Here it may be noted that while the southern and eastern boundaries of the territories are defined, its northern and western boundaries are nowhere mentioned. The omission is eloquent. It says to us plainly that Rhodes was then looking to the West for communication with the sea, and to the North for communication with Egypt.

As to the rest the Charter is benevolent in its terms ; but in its substance takes more than it gives. It imposes obligations but offers no protection. The Company is bound to submit itself in its acts and policy to ‘Our Secretary of State,’ but the Crown assumes no liability and offers no help. The Company is permitted to administer territory which in fact does not belong to Her Majesty on principles set down or to be approved by our Secretary of State, and Her Majesty reserves certain rights and powers of resumption or repeal.

But chiefly, ‘the right and power by writing under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom at the end of

¹ We are reminded of the annexation of the Cape by two English sailors, Shilling and Fitzherbert, in the reign of James I.—to ‘the boundary of the nearest Christian kingdom.’

twenty-five years from the date of this Our Charter, and at the end of every succeeding period of ten years, to add or alter or repeal any of the provisions of this Our Charter or to enact other provisions in substitution for or in addition to any of its existing provisions. Provided that the right and power thus reserved shall be exercised only in relation to so much of this Our Charter as relates to administrative and public matters.'

In other words, the Company is to settle and administer a territory which may some day or other become a part of the Empire, and can be annexed; but the Company is also a commercial company, and We do not claim any right over its commercial assets.

For the rest, the Charter is well calculated to disarm the latent hostility of the Aborigines Protection Society. Among the duties of the Petitioners is 'the regulation of liquor traffic with the natives' and the discouragement, and, 'as far as may be practicable,' the abolition, 'by degrees,' of the slave trade. The Company may support a body of police to maintain order, but 'shall not in any way interfere with the religion of any class or tribe of the people of the territories aforesaid . . . except so far as may be necessary in the interest of humanity.'

Taking Company and Charter together, we see the practical statesmanship of Rhodes. In the first place he provided the means to his end—the capital of the Company being a million sterling. He provided also the means whereby he amalgamated the various opposing interests—a concessionaire faced by the alternative of fighting a national Company with a million of capital or combining with it on fair terms was hardly likely to hesitate over the choice; in the third place he secured at least the benevolence

of the Imperial Government ; and in the fourth place a Directorate which included an Abercorn on the one side and a Grey on the other was fairly safe from attack by either of the great parties in the State. As to the Irish Party, whose hostility might have been expected, Rhodes was their friend and mentor. A year before he had given Parnell a contribution of £10,000 upon certain conditions. These conditions did not concern the settlement of Central Africa. They were concerned rather with Rhodes's ideas of the government of the Empire. Still, £10,000 is £10,000 ; the Irish Party had no reason to quarrel with Cecil Rhodes.

The only elements in British politics left un-placated were certain Radicals like Mr. Labouchere, then editor of *Truth* and Member for Northampton. With him and his friends we shall have to deal more particularly later on. In the meantime, with a Conservative Government in power, they did not greatly matter. Rhodes could boast when he returned to South Africa that the British Government and the British public were behind him in his enterprise.

CHAPTER IX

PREPARATIONS

' Nature, that hateth emptiness,
Allows of penetration less,
And therefore must make room
Where greater spirits come.'

MARVELL.

JAMESON, as we already know, left the presence of the King on April 12, 1889. After Jameson came Johann Frederick Dreyer, the transport-rider, with the balance of the rifles and ammunition in twenty wagons. Dreyer delivered the rifles to Thompson, and Thompson delivered them to the King, and then Dreyer also left, driving before him 750 head of cattle for the Transvaal. Yet despite this fulfilment of the contract, the enemies of the concession began to gain ground, with their propaganda of 'Matabeleland for the Matabele.' The indunas and the young regiments now freely accused the King of selling the country to the white man, and these accusations grew bolder day by day until even the King himself began to be alarmed. He looked for a scapegoat, and found one in Leshie, the old induna who had chiefly supported Rudd. Lobengula had an ancient grudge against Leshie, for Leshie had taken sides against him long before when his right to the throne was in dispute; and Leshie was unpopular with the army, for he had led a regiment

to defeat near Lake Ngami at the hands of the Bechuanas. Leshie, then, was put upon his trial, one of the chief counts against him being that he had advised the King to sign the concession. The old councillor was found guilty and was put to death.

Thompson had been visiting Hope Fountain Mission Station, and was driving back to the King's kraal when the news reached him. Remembering the fate which had befallen his father, Thompson drew up at Dawson's store, which lay just outside the royal kraal, borrowed a saddle, cut out the swiftest horse of his span of four, and rode until it came to a stand some 18 miles out of Tati. These remaining 18 miles he walked.

At Tati Thompson heard that Dreyer was still at the Crocodile River, waiting for the drought to break before he went on with his cattle. He drove out to Dreyer with a horse and six mules which he had picked up at Tati and begged the transport driver to go with him to Mafeking.

The flight threatened to ruin the whole scheme. As long as it remained unretrieved the name of Rhodes would be dirt in the King's kraal. And it left at Buluwayo the dreaded 'vacuum.'¹

Rhodes had returned from London about the end of August 1889, and to fill this vacuum with all possible speed and in the best possible way was now his only thought. Thompson telegraphed from Tati, and his message, as may be supposed, was black: the situation looked desperate. Rhodes in his distress thought of his friend Jameson. The Doctor had gone once; he might go again.

¹ Not quite a vacuum, however, for by that time one or two of the concession-hunters who had previously been working at the kraal for themselves or other syndicates were attached to the Rhodes-Rudd interest.

A letter—unfortunately mutilated—from Jameson to his brother Julie shows that the Doctor at this time did not particularly want to go.

‘KIMBERLEY, August 14, 1889.

‘DEAR JULIE, . . . Rhodes and Maguire are on the water and will be here on Saturday fortnight, Rhodes according to present arrangement to go up country at once. I don’t want to go again and don’t see that there will be any ne. . . but if anything is to . . . by it I should go. An interest in the . . . I believe I shall hav. . . ultimately, though . . . all in the “clouds” . . . have been going w. . . at home and I believe . . . going to be a big suc. . . there is a lot of settle. . . done in Matabelel. . . Boom ahead . . . and I hear still more so . . . As to the silvers I think you are quite right to get rid of them as you are able. De Pass and Barney had a talk about running them . . . but then we should be left with the scrip and they with the money,’ etc.¹

A second letter to Julie from Kimberley is dated September 19, 1889, which must have been just before Rhodes appealed to him:—

‘. . . In *re* the election I have already promised to do what I can for Longe ; but will not make it at all obtrusive, and shall not quarrel with the Barnato crowd . . . one of the family is quite enough for us at present. . . Things going all right *re* Matabeleland, but I am not going up at present. . . .’

These letters show that Jameson had no great wish to go to Buluwayo again when Rhodes approached him. But according to Mr. Seymour Fort when Rhodes read the telegram from Thompson Jameson said upon the instant, ‘I will go.’ ‘When

¹ A strip of this letter has been torn off, possibly for the signature, leaving a hiatus at the end of every line on one page ; but the missing words are easily supplied.

will you start?' Rhodes asked, and Jameson replied, 'To-morrow morning.'¹

In these few words Destiny wrote great decrees.

Jameson volunteered to go in order to save the project from certain disaster. It appears from chance references in the letters that he already had an interest in the Company and to that extent was financially concerned in its success; but he went without any agreement or promise of reward. Rhodes gave him full power in writing to act for the Company with the King in any way he thought fit, and also sent with him two men with experience of natives, although they did not know the Matabele — Denis Doyle and Major Maxwell.² With these companions Jameson went posthaste to Mafeking. There he met Thompson and Dreyer.

Jameson's first act was to send Dreyer to Tati with a letter for Sam Edwards, asking that veteran to ask Lobengula—in Matabele language—to give him the road. Dreyer set out with the cart and six mules, and when they broke down at the Crocodile River he pushed on with a single horse to Tati, which he reached in four days. There he delivered his message to Edwards, who sent runners to the King. Then Jameson arrived with Doyle, Maxwell, and Thompson, whom he had persuaded to return; they received the King's leave to go on, and

¹ Fort's *Dr. Jameson*, p. 84.

² 'The position then was that if Thompson's flight was to be a confirmed flight the reign of the Chartered Company in Matabeleland had come to an untimely end. Rhodes did not know what to do. Lanner volunteered to go up with Doyle and Maxwell. Doyle and Maxwell it had been arranged before to send up; but Rhodes was certain that they would now back out, and Lanner came forward and went to these men, and his persuasion and example gave them heart. Doyle is a skilled interpreter and Maxwell a good-natured Guffy but knows the natives a little. So the trio went off.'—Sam Jameson to Lizzie Jameson (Johannesburg, April 12, 1890).

Jameson asked Dreyer to take charge of the wagons. 'Don't break my neck,' he said gaily, 'going over the sluits and the mountains.'

On October 17, 1889, they arrived at the King's kraal, and Edwards, who had come with them, presented Jameson to the King as Rhodes's representative. The King was in a bad temper.

'What good,' he said, 'is it telling me any more lies? I will not be satisfied unless I can see Rhodes himself.'

Edwards, however, whom Lobengula trusted, assured the King that Rhodes could not come then, but would come later. At this moment Thompson walked up and the King burst out again, 'I don't want to see that man. He has told me too many lies. I don't want to have anything to do with him.' Nor would he ever again see Thompson. 'A man does, no doubt, what his heart tells him to do,' he said, 'but he ran away without cause, and I do not want to see him more.'

So Thompson went.

Part at least of Lobengula's ill-nature at this time was due to that familiar of monarchs, the gout. For Lobengula ate a great deal of beef, drank a great deal of native beer, and took very little exercise. Dr. Jameson by injections of morphia gave the King immediate ease, and by a course of treatment reduced the malady to such a degree that the patient was sensibly relieved.¹

Moreover, Jameson's buoyancy, his charm, his never-failing chaff and good-humour, fairly won

¹ 'It has been the custom for some years, since the King had the gout first, at each attack to consult the Witch Doctor and smell out a few individuals who have convenient property in cattle. This year Lanner impressed the King that his gout came from up above and it was specially sent to the great Kings in Europe and was the result of over brain work

Lobengula's heart, and the Doctor and the Monarch soon became fast friends. As the favourite physicians of European potentates are sometimes made knights and baronets, so Lobengula made Dr. Jameson an induna and arrayed him in the ostrich-feather cloak and the ox-tail garters of a Matabele notable. Then the tremendous monarch, with the slight figure of the Doctor beside him, received the Matabele army—the paraded impis beating their ox-hide shields with their heavy assegais, chanting their war songs, and dancing their war dances.

From October 17 to December 10 Jameson remained at Lobengula's kraal. By then he had gained great influence not only over Lobengula but over a large number of his people. We have the testimony of eye-witnesses on this point. 'A man was here the other day,' his brother Sam writes to Lizzie, 'who has just come down from there—Mr. Mandy. He speaks most enthusiastically of Lanner's influence and work up there. He says, "Your brother is an entirely different class of man from any of the rest of us who have been with Lobengula, and I am very sorry he came down. We won't get into the country properly until he goes up again."'

Jameson's policy was to get the King's assent to one main object of the concession, to dig for gold; next to get men actually at work. Then Rhodes could say that the concession was operating. This permission Jameson secured on December 10, and twelve hours after he had a large party digging on

and too little exercise. The King took to the idea and gave a hint to the Witch Doctor that when the indunas asked him which was to blame this year for the gout he had better blame Providence, which he accordingly did, and for the first time for some years a severe attack of gout has taken place and not a single life sacrificed.'—Sam Jameson to Lizzie Jameson (April 12, 1890).

the Tati gold-fields, 90 miles away. When he returned to Buluwayo—on December 15—he opened his second objective, to obtain the King's permission for the great trek into Mashonaland. This also the King granted, and Jameson even got leave to bring a prospector, one Tom Maddox, into Matabeleland forthwith. Either for this purpose or to get a second party going at Tati, Jameson left for that place on December 23, but was back again at the royal kraal on January 4, 1890. He wrote from Incogone on January 8 to his favourite brother, 'Midge':—

'DEAR MIDGE, — Your letter forwarded to me by last post. I am up here among the savages, as you say, and am likely to be for another couple of months. I came up on emergency business intending to stay a week, but one thing after another crops up to keep me. So far have been very successful with the King in getting a peaceable settlement, though there is a great probability of ructions in the future ; but by that time I shall be out of the country.

'Rhodes had behaved very generously to me in getting me a decent share ; so I was very glad of the opportunity of being of some use in return. The danger is very much exaggerated. At present all very friendly, though of course at any time they may turn the other way ; but even then I don't believe any danger to life of white men—sometimes annoying in threatening, etc., but that is all. A funny life, living in a wagon in the bush with the pure unadulterated savage—which they are. Very healthy, but not very luxurious. Am going to try a little hunting on the way out, if business does not necessitate a hurried journey down.' Then follows a passage on the death of Julius Jameson—'a very sad business'—and the letter continues :

'*Re* money matters, my finances are still complicated, so have not sent any lately but trusted to my former request to you that you would always give me due notice when you wanted cash. I instructed my partner Hillier to open all

letters from France, and if the slightest indication of hard-up-ness to send you a hundred.

'I have a good share in this business which ought to be worth a lot of money. Of course one could sell now, but that would be idiotic when things are going on so well, and I consider the thing assured with this Royal Charter granted and everything going well here. Since I have been here I have already started two parties at work with the King's permission, and by the middle of the year we ought to be in full swing; and by the end of the year the shares at any price. Then I hope to put things square for you too, as I always intended. In the meantime my cash is required for first payments in; but I hope by this time you have applied and Hillier will have remitted. You will be sorry to hear that Bovie is dead. I still keep some De Beers as my Consols—am determined never to be on my bottom again.—Yrs.,

L. S. JAMESON.'

From this letter one might suppose that Jameson's motive in working for Rhodes's plans was simply finance and gratitude to Rhodes for getting in—as financiers say—upon the ground floor. But it is fair to warn the reader that Jameson's habit was to take as much pains to conceal all lofty and generous motives as most men commonly take to display them.¹

To resume the chain of events at the King's kraal in those eventful months of the end of 1889 and the beginning of 1890.

Queen Victoria, after the visit of Lobengula's indunas to London in the previous year, had sent a mission of her own Guards to the King. These—Major Meladew, Major Gascoyne, Captain Ferguson,

¹ 'I have ascertained that the Doctor received in 1890 an allotment of 4500 shares in the Chartered Company and that he sold these between May 1891 and January 1892. The average price of the shares between these two dates was between £2 and £3.'—Letter to the Author from Mr. D. O. Malcolm, a Director of the Chartered Company. As Jameson paid for the shares at the price on allotment, his 'good share in the business' was in fact a mere trifle.

and Corporal-Major Short created a great sensation in Buluwayo when they appeared in full uniform—red coats, breast-plates, shining helmets, top-boots, and all. Unfortunately the letter which they carried had been written by some rather dull official and was in fact ‘unintelligible rubbish.’ Jameson, who never stood upon any official punctilio, persuaded the mission to give him the letter, rewrote it in a style calculated to please a savage monarch, and had it translated. It was then read to the King with excellent effect. By these and other attentions the situation was now so improved that Jameson felt himself able to leave Doyle and Maxwell in charge, and left for Kimberley on February 14.

Meantime Rhodes was busying himself with considerations of how to occupy Mashonaland. In London he had talked the matter over with Selous ; but negotiations had not then gone far enough for any definite engagement, and when Rhodes returned to South Africa Selous had gone to Mashonaland. Rhodes then consulted Colonel Carrington, in command of the Bechuanaland Police. Carrington offered to undertake the job if he were given 2500 men and the rank of Major General. Rhodes had no wish to see the money required for the development of the country wasted in military display, and with painful recollections of the Warren Expedition—he never forgot Warren—had a suspicion that Carrington might make a war in order to make a reputation.

Perplexed by these anxieties, he was sitting moodily over his breakfast in the Kimberley Club when his eye lighted on a face he knew. It was Frank Johnson.

Frank Johnson, the son of a doctor in Norfolk,

was born in the year 1866, and ran away to sea when a boy. At seventeen he found himself in Table Bay and engaged himself as a clerk in the Table Bay Harbour Board. He became an enthusiastic volunteer in that famous Cape Town regiment, the Duke of Edinburgh's Rifles, and when the Rev. John Mackenzie was agitating in Cape Town on the wickedness of the Transvaal Boers, young Johnson determined to go up and make an end of them. Accordingly he joined Carrington's Horse as a sergeant, and became Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant in the Second Mounted Rifles. In August 1885 he was transferred to the Bechuanaland Border Police, and took part in a small expedition which was sent up to bring Montsioa back from Khama's country where he had taken refuge from the Boers.

At Shoshong Johnson saw gold dust in vulture quills which had come from the natives of the interior, and was fired by the desire to discover its source. He therefore wrote to his old chief of the Harbour Board, John Saunders, and proposed an arrangement by which Saunders should provide him with £500 and they should go half shares in what he discovered. Saunders, in his turn, formed the Northern Gold-fields Exploration Syndicate by inducing twenty-two of the leading citizens of Cape Town to put down £25 each, and sent the money up to Johnson. Johnson thereupon bought a wagon and a team of donkeys and took with him four of his particular friends of the Police—Sergeant Heany, Lance-Corporal Spreckley, Corporal Borrow, and Ted Burnett.¹

¹ Of Heany we shall hear more later. Spreckley became Colonel Spreckley; Corporal Borrow fell with Wilson; and Burnett—then Captain—also fell in the First Matabele War.

Johnson's first move was to visit Khama, the famous Chief of the Bamangwato. This remarkable man had come to the conclusion that if he did not bend before the advance of the white man he must break, and followed a policy of letting the white man into his country under careful regulations, one of which was that no liquor was to be sold to his people. From Khama Johnson obtained a concession of mineral rights, and this concession was in the end sold to the Bechuanaland Exploration Company, of which Johnson became local Managing Director.

Leaving Heany and Borrow behind him to look after Bechuanaland, Johnson struck north in search of the country whence came the quills of gold. From Lobengula he obtained a concession—against the wishes of his indunas—to seek for gold in Mashonaland, where the gold dust, as he discovered, was washed out of the beds of the Mazoe and other swift-running tributaries of the Zambesi.

The hostility of the indunas was, however, too much for Johnson. He was tried on a charge of murdering the Matabele with 'white poison,' and was forced to return to Bechuanaland. There he worked for the Bechuanaland Exploration Company as their Managing Director until that Company threw him over when it came to an arrangement with Rhodes. The Company had no further need of him, but Rhodes realised he was just the man he wanted.

And so it came about that Rhodes opened his heart to Johnson, there in the Kimberley Club, dwelling particularly upon Carrington's demand for 2500 men.

'Pooh!' said Johnson, more to comfort Rhodes than with any serious intention, 'give me 250 men and I'll walk through the country!'

‘ You will ? ’ said Rhodes.

‘ Of course I will, ’ said Johnson.

‘ And what will it cost ? ’

Johnson now saw his boast was being taken more seriously than he intended. But, ashamed to go back on it, he replied, ‘ Give me till tiffin-time, and I ’ll work it out. ’

Rhodes forthwith gave him an office and a sheet of paper, and Johnson worked out details of equipment and supply on lines with which he had become familiar as Quartermaster-Sergeant of the Mounted Rifles. By lunch his calculations were complete, and he laid before Rhodes’s eyes sheets of detailed expenditure totalling £97,400.

Rhodes was delighted. ‘ Right, ’ he said. ‘ You go, Johnson, you command the force ! You go ! ’ And he kept on repeating ‘ You go ! ’ in the manner he had when excited.

But Johnson had one objection which he thought insuperable. He believed that he had been served very badly by the London Board of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company and as Lord Gifford and Cawston were now on the Board of the British South Africa Company he refused to serve under them. From this resolution Rhodes could not shake him.

Johnson went to Cape Town, and a week or so afterwards had a telegram from Rhodes asking him to meet him at the Cape Town railway station. The train from Kimberley in those days arrived early in the morning. Rhodes jumped out and together they went to Government Avenue. There, under the oaks between the gardens planted by old Van Riebeeck, they walked up and down from 7.30 until 9.30, Rhodes using every conceivable argument to shake the other’s resolution.

At last, worn down by the other's pertinacity, Johnson exclaimed, 'Give me a cheque for £97,400 and I'll hand you over the country fit for civil government. I shall then be a contractor and not a servant of the British South Africa Company.'

Rhodes walked on for about two hundred yards as though he had not heard the remark, and then said suddenly:—

'I'll give you that cheque.'

To which Johnson, nigh famished, replied, 'All right then, let's go and have breakfast.'

They went to Poole's Hotel, and Rhodes behaved like a schoolboy.

In the two hundred yards which Rhodes walked before he gave Johnson an answer he must have thought over a good many considerations. A contract was something he liked and understood much better than an army. If his show were to be run by a general and a staff—or so he argued—all drawing full pay, everybody would try to make the business as long and as important and as costly as possible. They might even try to develop it from an expedition into a war as the unforgettable Warren had tried to do in 1885. But if Johnson had a contract to deliver—so to speak—the Pioneers at Mount Hampden, he would naturally try to get the thing done as expeditiously and with as little fighting as possible. A fight with the Matabele on the way was what Rhodes most dreaded, and Johnson might be trusted not to dissipate any of his profits in avoidable fighting.

Rhodes, then, signed his first cheque for £20,000 with a light heart, confident that he had done a good deal, and set to work to get the Pioneer force together. To Johnson and others who were charged

with recruiting the force he gave two general directions. One was that the men should be recruited from every district in South Africa, including the two Republics. Rhodes calculated that if every dorp and district had one or two young men in the Pioneer force the sentiment of the whole country would be naturally engaged in the success of the adventure. That this was in his mind is shown by the fact that he made exceptions both for Kimberley and Cape Town, for he knew that he had these two communities behind him already.

His second general direction was that the young men should be not only picked men and first-class shots and horsemen, but should make up a self-contained community—including members of every trade and profession—so that when it should come to disperse in a country a thousand miles away from civilisation it might be able to fend for itself. In fact, it was with a nation in miniature that Rhodes was preparing to occupy the North.

CHAPTER X

AT THE KING'S KRAAL

'We must march, my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!'

THE force of circumstances was pressing Jameson more and more into the service of this great adventure. He had entered into it as a friend in whom Rhodes trusted and confided; but in the two embassies he had proved himself the one man of the courage, skill, and judgment necessary to such an enterprise. There is evidence that Rhodes tried to get along without Jameson, probably because Rhodes deemed it unfair to engage his friend further unless necessity demanded. Jameson, after all, was still a physician, and to withdraw him altogether from his practice was a responsibility which even Rhodes—who never shirked responsibility—would go some way to avoid. The Doctor, in fact, was held in reserve, as a last resource.

Probably Rhodes hoped to find a substitute in the big-game hunter, Frederick Courtney Selous, whom he consulted in London in the spring of 1889. Here was a gentleman, a man to be trusted, and besides a man who knew both Matabeleland and Mashonaland. Selous had gone first to Matabeleland in 1872, the year after Rhodes had gone to Kimberley, and had asked leave of Lobengula to shoot great game in his country. He was then a

stripling of nineteen, and the King answered him with good-natured contempt, 'Go where you will; you are only a boy!' And Selous, going where grown men feared to go, had shot elephant and lion, buffalo and rhinoceros, eland and hartebeest in what was then the best of all great-game countries—Mashonaland.

He was daring, wary, hard, and keen, this hunter, who made his living by selling the tusks of the elephants and the skin and horns of the rarer antelopes he shot. So he went on year by year, living on the veld, collecting for museums, shooting for the ivory market, risking his life among wild beasts and hardly less savage tribes, measuring his wits against the unknown, until he had become best and most famous of the big-game hunters of that great Zambesi country.

After his talk with Rhodes in London, Selous left with a prospecting party for his favourite hunting-ground, the headwaters of the Mazoe Valley in North-Eastern Mashonaland. On his return to Cape Town, he went, as he had promised, to see Rhodes, then at Kimberley, and laid before him his plan for the occupation of Mashonaland by a new road striking eastward from the Bechuanaland border to Tuli and leaving the Matabele well to the north and west. Rhodes, who had never considered any other than the hunter's road through Buluwayo, recognised at once that Selous's route enormously lessened the risk of war with the Matabele. It was therefore adopted, and Selous himself appointed guide to the expedition. For destination, Selous suggested the hill he had named Mount Hampden, as it was the centre of a great grassy plain which had appeared to him, when he saw it, fertile and full of promise.

Now Jameson, after settling things to his mind with the King, had come down from Buluwayo for the second time on February 14, 1890, leaving Denis Doyle and Major Maxwell with the King. But his settlement was upset by an unwise interference. Part of the arrangement, it should be explained, was that Colenbrander, another of Rhodes's agents, was to meet Selous at Palapye with 100 Matabele labourers to help in making the road. Selous was at Palapye by March 1890, but the labourers did not arrive, and Selous, growing impatient, 'resolved with his customary courage,' as Michell says, 'to beard the Matabele monarch at his capital.' He found the King 'like a fractious child.'

'His denial,' so Michell continues, 'that he had granted Dr. Jameson a right-of-way was not shaken by the reminder of a reliable witness, Mr. Denis Doyle, who had been present on the occasion. He absolutely refused to allow a road to be made,' and asked that Selous should 'go back and take Rhodes by the hand and bring him here.'¹ Selous's impatient intervention had done more harm than good. Lobengula was no man to be hustled.

With this disconcerting news Selous returned to Kimberley. Rhodes was willing enough to go, but was overruled by his friends, who reminded him that he was indispensable at the base of operations. The only alternative was—for the third time—Jameson.

Two letters to his brother Sam, written just before he left, show Jameson's attitude of mind. He had made an arrangement with the King; the incompetence of Rhodes's agents and Selous's impatient intervention had upset it. Rhodes and Selous had both besought him to set matters straight. He was

¹ Michell's *Life of Rhodes*, vol. i. pp. 297-8.

nettled, but nevertheless, 'as a favour,' consented. In the first letter, written from Kimberley on April 9, 1890, he explains his situation. He writes:—

'Rhodes has been away in the veld for a week and only returned late last night.' And he continues: 'Selous is here, and in conjunction with some incompetence up above seems to have got my previous arrangements into a bit of a mess. So very probably I may go back with him at the beginning of the week; but as I told you it will be as a favour and distinctly requested. Otherwise I go on calmly with my practice here. I don't care which way it is much, and it is rather amusing the perfectly friendly finessing in the meantime. S. very anxious that I should go and R. afraid to ask and not quite sure that it is necessary. Keep all this to yourself.'

The next letter, dated April 10, 1890, was written from the Kimberley Club after the decision had been made:—

'I leave for Buluwayo on Sunday morning, having carried out to the letter what I told you in Johannesburg. R. was very nice in every way when screwed up to the point, and I had my say out thoroughly and an acknowledgment that I had been right from the word "Go." I am going to try and get things back to the point that I left them and then leave at once; probably to come back here or possibly to go into Mashonaland. . . . Selous goes back with me, but probably only as far as Palapye—as he is not a *persona grata* with Loben, and I am sure I could do better alone. It will be a beastly cold journey; but I am very glad to go, as I feel very uncomfortable at my swagger arrangements being upset, and am sufficiently interested in it to wish to see a success.'

And Jameson wrote also to 'Midge,' the artist:—

'I leave for Buluwayo again in a couple of days, for a short trip I hope this time. Old Lobengula is a shifty

customer, and as I have got on pretty well with him before, the powers that be consider I will be best able to finish up arrangements with him. I hate the beastly cold journey, but am interested financially and otherwise sufficiently to wish to see a success as soon as possible. This ought to be my last trip to the old savage ; but should it turn out well I shall probably after my return to report go on to Mashonaland. That will be interesting, and then I hope my long-delayed shooting trip will come off. . . . Practice, as you may suppose, I have pretty well given up with these repeated interior journeys, and if things turn out well I don't suppose I shall take to it again. However, it is a good stand-by for bread and butter if things go wrong,' etc.

Jameson and Selous started from Kimberley on April 11 and went together as far as Tati. There Jameson persuaded Selous to turn back on the plea that his work was to guide the expedition, and went on alone. He reached the royal kraal on April 27 upon the last and most critical of his diplomatic visits.

It is not to be supposed that all this time Rhodes had ever left a vacuum at Buluwayo. Not only was Moffat, the Imperial Resident, constantly going to and fro, but, as we have seen, Major Maxwell and Mr. Doyle had remained with the King. 'Matabele' Wilson and his partner Chadwick, who had been for several years in Buluwayo both trading and in pursuit of a concession, were now working in the interest of the Chartered Company, and with them was Dawson, the trader, who, however, had gone South, sick of fever, before Jameson arrived. Colenbrander was also in Buluwayo in the same interest. But, skilful and experienced as some of these men were, none of them stood with the King on the same footing as the man who had come to be known in Matabeleland as Rhodes's Mouth. By all accounts Dr.

Jameson fascinated Lobengula, as he fascinated most men with whom he came in contact. He had with his magical hypodermic needle conjured away those horrid twinges of gout. But there was something more. Here was a Little Man who had no fear, who laughed as no man had ever laughed before in the King's presence, a man of unprecedented frankness of speech and eye. Lobengula liked Jameson.

The King was at this time in a very difficult and delicate situation. He had, like his neighbour Khama, long realised that the march of the white man was inevitable, and that he must either bend or break. His two indunas recently returned from England had brought with them awed impressions of the white man's numbers, cleverness, and power; and the magnificent mission of Life-guardsmen impressively reinforced these reports. He knew, then, that it was in vain to oppose his impis to the power which had destroyed Cetewayo and driven Mosilikatsi into the wilderness. But his untravelled army was by no means of the same way of thinking. As rumours of Rhodes's preparations came up from the South, they grew ever more turbulent and threatening. Was not the army invincible? Was it not fifteen thousand strong? Let it bathe its assegais in the blood of the white man.

When Jameson arrived upon his last visit, he found the King in an enigmatic mood. But he obtained from him nevertheless some sort of promise that the Pioneers would be allowed to make their way to Mashonaland.¹

¹ Mr. Seymour Fort has a picturesque account of the last meeting:—

'After two days spent in vain, he arranged to leave the next morning at daybreak, but before starting, as a final effort, went to Lobengula to say good-bye.

'The door of the Chief's hut was in two portions, an upper and a lower,

On May 2 Jameson left the royal kraal, and the following letter to Sam gives an account of his visit :—

‘PALAPYE, *May 29, '90.*

‘DEAR SAM,—I have been to Buluwayo and many other places—fairly satisfactory interviews with Loben—days of it, and mutual threats, but ending in an admission of all he had promised me before. For last few weeks knocking about with Selous arranging route to be followed, etc., etc., and intend to go in with party. Don't think there will be fighting ; but you never know. In any case we will be in this winter. . . . I am going nap on the Charter, and that means for finances at present nap on the success of this expedition. Pennefather is a capital fellow with plenty of dash and I think will carry it through successfully. Will let you know how things go on as opportunity occurs.’

Now when Jameson went away, besides the white men already mentioned there were certain traders, Petersen, Tainton, and Johnny Helyott, and Reilly who represented the Rennie Tailyour Concession, and a prospector, called Tom Maddox, for whom Jameson had obtained permission to search for gold, all in Matabeleland. Before Jameson left, he warned these white men to leave the country, and,

and leaning over the lower half he had his last and final interview. The old King was stark naked, somewhat agitated—an unwieldy mass of dark copper-coloured flesh moving restlessly up and down within the dim, uncertain light of the hut.

“ Well, King,” said Jameson, “ as you will not confirm your promise and grant me the road, I shall bring my white impi and if necessary we shall fight.”

‘Lobengula replied, “ I never refused the road to you and to your mpi.”

“ Very well,” said Jameson, ‘ then you acknowledge that you have promised to grant me the road ; and unless you refuse it now, your promise holds good.’ Then, as the King remained diplomatically silent, Jameson said, “ Good-bye, Chief, you have given your promise about the road, and on the strength of that promise I shall bring in my impi to Mashonaland,” and he left.

‘This was the last time those two saw each other.’—*Dr. Jameson, pp. 94-95*

in particular, he asked Matabele Wilson to go with him and join the Pioneers.

After Jameson's departure, Doyle and Wilson and Chadwick, who saw the wisdom of leaving, went to the King to 'ask for the road,' telling him tactfully that Kimberley was the place of their desire.

Then the King in a burst of passion replied, 'You lie. You want to go with the white impi that is going into my country. You must stay here. Do you hear?'

Wilson answered, 'No, I do not hear.'

And the King said in a voice charged with menace, 'Well, go.'

Chadwick inspanned his wagon, and attempted to leave; but was met by thirty Matabele warriors, who stopped his oxen with raised assegais, whereupon Wilson said, 'Now we know where we are. We are prisoners here.'

In this situation the white men received a letter from Jameson, advising them to go as the Pioneers were on the march and there might be trouble. If they stayed, they did so at their own risk.

Wilson and Chadwick then busied themselves to get the missionaries and their wives out of the country; but the missionaries replied, 'We are men of peace.' And the King said, 'There will be no trouble for the white men in this country as long as the missionaries remain.'

So the white men remained, but in fear of their lives. For the great kraal was seething with excitement, and every day the young *mjakas* threatened Wilson and his friends, shaking their assegais and telling them that their day was at hand.

In the midst of this turmoil the faithful Dreyer

arrived with two wagons in which were two magnificent white young shorthorn bulls specially picked by the Duke of Abercorn as a present for the King. The King was known to have a kingly love of cattle. He had said to Jameson, 'Can a man be happy without cows and bulls?' And there was besides a symbolical value in the gift at this critical moment, for by Matabele custom white cattle meant peace.

These bulls had been sent from England to Kimberley by steamer and rail, and had been taken on from Kimberley to Buluwayo by wagon without once putting their feet on the ground. Dreyer had been threatened on the way; he had been surrounded by a great force of Matabele warriors who had chased his boys under the wagons and had threatened to kill him. In this critical position he was saved by an old witch-doctor, who came and threw his knuckle-bones in the dust and said to the impi, 'Do you mean to kill this white man?' They said, 'We do.' Then the witch-doctor pointed to the white bulls in the wagon, and said, 'Could any man among you lift these bulls?' They said, 'No.' Then said the witch-doctor, 'Here is a white man, a youngster, who lifted these bulls on to the wagon. He is strong. If you kill him you will be *loya* and scattered as the wind scatters the dust.' So the transport-rider had been allowed to go on, and now he presented the oxen to the King. The King—beneath a white umbrella held over him by a slave—came out of his kraal and inspected the bulls with the eye of a connoisseur.

'Why,' he demanded presently, 'did you not bring me a white bull and a red bull?'

When Dreyer asked him to explain, he said, 'A red bull stands for an enemy and a white bull for

a friend,' his meaning being that peace and war were still in the balance.

At this moment the young bulls, released after their long journey on wagon-board, began to fight, and the King became greatly excited. Then said he, ' You have given me the bulls, now I want the wagon,' so Dreyer gave him the wagon and the oxen and the trek gear, and everything that belonged to the bulls.

The King—as monarchs will—soon grew tired of his new toys; the bulls were turned out upon the veld, and, being unused to those sparse pastures, within three months they were dead.

As for Dreyer, he went back to Palapye and told Jameson that the King had accepted the bulls. ' That's all right,' said Jameson, looking very pleased. ' That will save us a lot of trouble.'

CHAPTER XI

THE PIONEERS

Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!

IN the meantime Rhodes had been going steadily forward with the preparations for the great advance. These preparations were both political and practical. On the political side his aim was to have a united Cape Colony behind him. The key to this support was Jan Hofmeyr, the wary and astute leader of the Cape Dutch party organised in the Afrikander Bond. Jan Hofmeyr's first idea was to use Rhodes's schemes to bring Kruger to terms upon quite another subject. It had been part of the President's policy to exclude Cape Colonial produce from the Transvaal by means of high Customs duties, and Hofmeyr, alert in the interest of his farmers, now saw a chance of getting this tariff removed. In June and July 1889 we find him warning Kruger of Rhodes's plans to push a railway from Kimberley north through Bechuanaland along the Transvaal border. Hofmeyr was prepared to use his influence in the Cape Parliament to obstruct the scheme if Kruger upon his side would grant Free Trade to the Colony and would allow the Cape Railway system to be pushed through the Orange Free State to Johannesburg, Pretoria, the Limpopo, and the Western Transvaal.

President Kruger rejected this proposal. By the end of October 1889, the first sod of the Delagoa

Bay railway in Transvaal territory was turned: the Transvaal Volksraad hardened its heart against the Cape, and Hofmeyr was thereby 'compelled,' as his biographer points out, 'to give his support to Mr. Rhodes's projects.'¹ His support was the support of the Cape Dutch. 'If,' said the President of the Bond (at that time a Mr. Botha), 'Mr. Rhodes and his people are in charge, it is all right.'

Rhodes, the new High Commissioner (Sir Henry Loch) and the Cape Government now entered upon a three-cornered negotiation for the extension of the railway from Kimberley to the northern border of British Bechuanaland by way of Vryburg and Mafeking. Hofmeyr, hoping against hope that the Transvaal might relent, delayed the business for a time; but by January 23, 1890, the necessary agreements were signed. On consideration of building the railway, the Imperial Government made a grant to the Company of land in Bechuanaland; on the security of the land, the Cape Government advanced the money to build the railway, an ingenious arrangement in which we recognise the master-hand of Rhodes.

There was still the Transvaal to reckon with, and the burghers of the Northern Transvaal were now busily preparing for their great trek into Matabeleland. Rhodes met this movement by inviting the burghers of the Transvaal to join his Pioneers. But there is evidence also that he tried to meet Kruger in a broad general settlement. The Transvaal was to be allowed to annex Swaziland, which lies between that State and the sea, and also to obtain a harbour at Kosi Bay, undertaking on her

¹ See *Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr* by J. H. Hofmeyr, chapters xx and xxii.

side not to interfere with the British South Africa Company on the North. The Transvaal, moreover, was to grant Free Trade in Colonial products, and to meet the Colony in the development of the Cape railway system. We may see that Rhodes had a hand in these proposals from the fact that when Sir Henry Loch, the new High Commissioner, met Paul Kruger to discuss this settlement, Cecil Rhodes was a member of the conference.¹

Unfortunately, the previous conduct of the Transvaal in Zululand and elsewhere not only towards the natives but also towards British traders had exasperated public opinion in England, and when news of this settlement got about there was a great agitation against it. It went so far that the British Government modified its proposals to an impossible sort of joint government for Swaziland instead of simple annexation by the Transvaal. These and other changes were embodied in a convention which Sir Henry Loch and Jan Hofmeyr pressed Paul Kruger to accept.

The President objected that if he agreed to such terms his burghers would certainly repudiate them and him. In the end a partial settlement was reached, neither full enough nor free enough for the permanent peace of South Africa. But it had at least this good effect, that it bound the Transvaal Government not to interfere in the North.

Things being thus settled, as far as could be, both in rear and in front, for the next great step, the way was clear. The force which was to occupy the promised land could now be set in motion. It consisted of two main bodies, Pioneers and the Police.

¹ The meeting took place at Bignaut's Pont on the Vaal River on March 12 and 13, 1890. This was the third meeting of Rhodes and Kruger.

As for the Pioneer Corps, the settlers had been selected on the plan already described. By the beginning of May 140 young settlers were concentrated at Kimberley with Captain Johnson in command. They were such men as Rhodes loved, of British blood in the main, of all classes, artisans and working miners rubbing shoulders with cadets of good families—some famous English cricketers among them—with a sprinkling of likely young Dutchmen—in the springtime of youth, and fired by the great adventure.

At daybreak on May 6, 1890, the Pioneer Corps left Kenilworth, a suburb of Kimberley, on the first stage of the trek to the North. Their immediate destination was the camp which Selous had prepared near Macloutsi on the bare, barren, thorn-sprinkled frontier of British Bechuanaland. Jameson arrived at Palapye on May 27 with Selous, who had ridden out to meet him on the road, and all things were got ready for the venture.

The expedition consisted altogether of some 200 Pioneers and 500 Mounted Police with a few Volunteers and a large contingent of coloured boys and native labourers—in all, as Michell estimates, perhaps 1000 souls. The Imperial Government had insisted that the force should be under an Army officer, and should be passed by the Cape Command as equal to the undertaking. Accordingly, Colonel Pennefather, an excellent old soldier, was put in command, and second in command was a keen young Guardsman, Sir John Willoughby, by his intimate friends called Johnny, who was thenceforth to become Jameson's close, devoted, and life-long friend.

The expedition was inspected at Macloutsi by

Lord Methuen, then Deputy Acting Adjutant-General of the Cape Command.

Lord Methuen, in his pleasant and courtly way, addressed the assembled officers in the following terms :—

‘ Lord Methuen : Gentlemen, have you got maps ?

‘ The Officers : Yes, sir.

‘ Lord Methuen : And pencils ?

‘ The Officers : Yes, sir.

‘ Lord Methuen : Well, gentlemen, your destination is Mount Hampden. You go to a place called Siboutsi. I do not know whether Siboutsi is a man or a mountain. Mr. Selous, I understand, is of the opinion that it is a man ; but we will pass that by. Then you get to Mount Hampden. Mr. Selous is of opinion that Mount Hampden is placed ten miles too far to the west. You had better correct that ; but perhaps, on second thoughts, better not. Because you might possibly be placing it ten miles too far to the east. Now good-morning, gentlemen.’

This stirring exhortation over, the expedition was thought ready to start. In the meantime Selous, assisted by a contingent of Khama’s men, had cut the road as far as Tuli, and the expedition reached that place, 50 miles or so over the border, on July 1.

Now Lobengula had asked Colenbrander and Chadwick to go to Tuli with certain indunas and give a message to Dr. Jameson. The message was that he was to go back with his impi, otherwise blood would be shed. To this Jameson replied, ‘ I am an induna sent to take the white men through. I cannot turn back.’ Pennefather and Selous gave similar answers.

The twenty Matabele seemed to wish to debate the point, and the mere sight of them had a terrify-

ing effect on the native labourers. But at this moment Radi Kladi, a brother of King Khama's, rode into camp with a mounted force of 200 of the Bamangwato, all armed with rifles, and at the sight of their enemies the Matabele departed. Colenbrander and Chadwick, however, did not return, and Matabele Wilson and Major Maxwell were now almost alone at Buluwayo. The whole Matabele nation was in an uproar, threatening the King and clamouring to attack the column. The King replied nothing but that he had sent a message to stop the white men. Matabele Wilson and Major Maxwell, who stayed on at the King's kraal, afterwards told of the commotion round the King, the threats of war, and the taunts and menaces thrown at the white men. But the old King stood firm as a rock against the angry sea of his people, and as the column went eastward the storm insensibly died away to an angry muttering.

The Pioneer force built a fort and left a small garrison at Tuli, and proceeded on its journey. The High Commissioner upon his side moved the Bechuanaland Border Police to Elebi, a point on the north-eastern border of Bechuanaland which would have threatened the flank of any attack on the Pioneers.

The column was now well on its great trek of 400 miles. Selous went first to cut the road with a squad of Khama's men and other native labourers, assisted and guarded by B. Troop of Pioneers under Captain Hoste, an ex-skipper who had left his berth on a Union mail-boat for this voyage on land. Mr. Ellerton Fry, an expert from the Cape Observatory, corrected the route by observations of the sun and stars, and Skipper Hoste would sometimes help him

—as though he were at sea—with sextant and compass.

With this forward party Dr. Jameson went as guest, as appears from a letter to his brother 'Midge' written from Tuli Camp on July 6, 1890:—

'Am off in half an hour,' he writes, 'with the forward party to Mashonaland, forty mounted men with Selous and myself—no impedimenta. Don't expect any trouble, but could always clear away from it if there was. Main body follow behind. Should things go all right I shall probably come out by the East Coast towards the end of the year—having seen the country, and had some more shooting with Selous. Bob is one of the forty—in capital spirits and health—and I hope he will do something for himself this time, as he will have very good chances. *Re* money, as I think I told you, I left instructions with Hillier to open French letters and if any indication of want of supplies to forward some at once. Sorry to hear from Sam the Academy showed bad taste again; but that does not matter—the Salon on the line is good enough. Love to all the relatives when you are writing. Hope my affairs will turn up trumps this time, and that I shall have the common sense to be satisfied.'

On July 18 the expedition reached the Umshabetsi River, and thence onwards the Pioneers cut not one road but two, running parallel with each other through the Bush. The force, split into two columns, marched abreast, so that the length of the column was halved, and in event of attack the head and tail of each column could be turned inwards at right angles, so as to form laager, in a movement almost instantaneous, like a gigantic porcupine curling up to present its unbroken front of quills to the enemy.

Scouts rode both ahead and on either flank of the

party, and every night the wagons were laagered with the cattle and horses inside and four Maxim guns mounted one at each corner. The expedition was equipped with a powerful searchlight, borrowed from Her Majesty's naval station at Simon's Town, and had also a supply of dynamite charges and electric wires. When the force formed camp charges were laid well outside it and exploded at intervals throughout the night, and it is certain that awe-inspiring reports both of the flashing light and the mysterious explosions reached the Matabele, whose unseen scouts watched the expedition throughout its course.

The country was in the first stages of the type known to the Boers as the Bushveld—an endless monotonous tract of low forest or high scrub, every tree or bush well apart from its neighbour. As the journey went on this bush country gave way to ranges of granite mountains rising by terraces to the high, bare uplands above. Selous had never before gone over the line of route, and as the mountains grew nearer he feared lest there should be no way through them to the open country beyond. To set this doubt at rest, on August 2 he and a small party rode ahead, and on the morning of the 3rd he climbed one of the great granite rocks or hills which rise in those parts in bosses and bubbles out of the plain. Thence his anxious eyes descried an opening to the northward in the long line of hills. For that opening he made and found that it was a broad, open pass, winding as if it were a carriage drive up to the high plateau beyond. Selous returned in great glee to his Pioneers.

Most of the time Jameson had been with this forward party. He knew the strength of the Mata-

bele, and he knew also the truculence of the army; but he was as usual—cheerful, laconic, bantering. Only once did he show a sign of what must always have been in his mind. It was at night, and Jameson, Selous, Hoste, and the officers of B. Troop were sitting together inside a zariba of thorns. The column had been warned that the Matabele when they attacked at night imitated the cry of a hyena. Suddenly, out of the darkness and close at hand came a blood-curdling howl.

‘By Jove,’ said Jameson, ‘that’s a good imitation!’

For a moment no one spoke, and then Selous said reassuringly:—

‘Don’t worry, Doctor, no human throat could make that b——y row.’

On August 3, 1890, just about the time when Selous was looking for his pass through the mountains, Jameson wrote an account of the march to his artist brother:—

‘Here we are, half-way to our destination, and with every prospect of getting there without any trouble from the Matabele. So far we have done 200 miles. No easy matter for a column of 500 men with 50 ox-wagons and about another hundred niggers as servants—through an entirely untravelled country mostly consisting of pretty dense bush and small forest trees. Here we are in the midst of the grandest scenery I have ever seen, a mass of granite and larger forest—the dense underwood almost entirely disappearing. This is likely to continue for another 60 miles, after which we will come out in the high Mashonaland plateau. This of course only from native information, which is always unreliable. The end of September ought to see us at the objective point (Mt. Hampden). After that I shall probably have a month’s shooting with Selous, and then, if I can, come

out by the Zambesi to the East Coast. In any case, I ought to get down to Kimberley before the end of the year, and will then write you my further proceedings—very probably to come home, but there will need to be a big settling up of my finances at that period, the result of which will depend a great deal on our success and how the financial public take it. I have pretty well gone nap in this affair, and hope to make a good thing out of it—at all events I don't think it likely I shall do any more practising in Kimberley, and have every intention of coming home at the end of the year unless there is some great advantage in connection with this affair to be gained by remaining out here. . . .'

Jameson, it is clear, had set doubts and hesitations behind him; he had ventured his all upon the enterprise; he had 'gone nap' on its success, yet—such was his habit—even to his favourite Midge he could not altogether relinquish the old mask of indifference, the old fiction of the shooting expedition.

Through the pass which Selous discovered—Provisional Pass as it was called—the Pioneers now marched, and by August 13 emerged upon the open plains beyond and looked with wonder over the great unknown of their inheritance. Vast tawny savannahs, swimming in the sun, unknown hitherto, and empty save for herds of antelope, lay stretched at their feet, and changed in the distance to the blue of a mountainous horizon. There we may imagine Jameson and his young adventurers:—

'like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.'

The column halted in the midst of a fine plain 3500 feet above the sea, and surrounded by granite

mountains a thousand feet higher, after their march of 205 miles from Tuli. There upon the plain they built the fort of Victoria.

In this open country the Matabele could no longer attack with any hope of a surprise. It seemed to be locked in a profound sleep hitherto untroubled by man. Only on a few sequestered granite rocks were there one or two wretched little villages of Makalangas whose inhabitants fled at their approach. The prospectors who had pressed up with the column scattered among the surrounding hills, and almost at once found rich deposits of alluvial gold.

But the main body pushed on, heading straight for where they supposed Mount Hampden to be. It was a hot and toilsome journey, the grass parched and brown after the dry season now drawing to an end. When the oxen flagged, the Pioneers put their shoulders to the wheel or hauled upon the trek-touw, pushing and pulling the wagons through sandy sluits and over rocky kopjes. At a point on the road 123 miles farther on, and 4750 feet above the sea, they built Fort Charter; but still pressed on. At last they descried upon the horizon a lonely little hill which they took to be Mount Hampden. The true Mount Hampden—as Lord Methuen foreboded—was not really there, but 12 miles farther on. But the mistake did not greatly matter. They were now close upon 400 miles from Tuli and 1661 miles from Cape Town. They had reached their far destination without firing a shot or losing a life. They were close upon the 18th Degree of Latitude South—well inside the tropics, but so high above the sea that the climate was temperate and pleasant. Moreover the great plain on which they stood was far from Buluwayo—beyond the reach of any sur-

prise attack. And it was near the headwaters of those tributaries of the Zambesi which were thought to run over sands of gold.

Here, then, on September 11, 1890, the Pioneers hoisted their flag, and thereafter built their fort and called it Salisbury, after the Prime Minister of England, and so brought their prosperous journey to an end.

CHAPTER XII

FROM SALISBURY TO THE SEA

‘I shall open up a path to the interior or perish.’

DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

WHEN Lieutenant Tyndale Biscoe broke the Company's jack on a mopani flag-pole over the Salisbury outspan one great enterprise was at an end; but another had begun. On October 1, 1890, the Pioneer Corps paraded for the last time, and at the word ‘Dismiss’ ceased to be a military force and became a civil population, whose work was to create a civilised state in the wilderness—to cut forests, make roads, lay out farms, mine for gold, and build towns. It was a difficult and, at that time, an almost impossible task. By the only existing road Mashonaland was close upon two thousand miles from the sea, and that road crossed by many tributaries of the Limpopo, which in the rainy season became torrents unfordable to wagons for months at a time. For example, one Boer transport-rider with his wagons had to wait from December until May ere he could cross the Lundi. And the Pioneers had behind them not only the Lundi, but the Umsingwani, the Umshabetsi, the Takwi, and many another uncontrolled water.

Now the East Coast could only be, as the Pioneers reckoned, between 300 and 400 miles from Mount Hampden, and the rivers there might be expected to lie not across but parallel with a line of route in

that direction. Two men at least of the Expedition had seen the need for such a road from the first. One was Jameson, who wrote to his brother before starting from Tuli that he would probably come out by the East Coast, and the other was Johnson.

‘I remember,’ says Johnson, ‘that it was whilst we were building Fort Victoria, close to the Zimbabwe ruins, in about July [he meant August], that the idea of the East Coast route first forced itself upon me. . . . I realised that we had come through at the very best time of the year when the whole country was dry and the rivers at their lowest. . . . Then I drew a mental picture of what the route would be like for four months during the rains . . . and for four months after the rains—first impassable torrents and then a water-logged country.’

Supplies and agricultural and mining machinery could not be brought up at any reasonable cost—for a great part of the year could not be brought up at all—by the road they had come. The new country must find a new way or perish.

Jameson and Johnson were of one mind; but there was another, Archibald Colquhoun, who had some title to a say in the matter. Rhodes sometimes made mistakes in men, and Colquhoun was one of his mistakes. He had been a public works official in Burmah; became a journalist and wrote articles, able and weighty, on Colonial administration and policy dear to the heart of Rhodes; but there are many instances of men who write well on affairs without talent for dealing with them. Colquhoun was one of these. Rhodes, on the strength of his interest in the articles, had engaged Colquhoun to act temporarily as administrator; but Jameson, as everybody knew, was the real repre-