

THE LIFE OF JAMESON

CHAPTER XXII

THE WITWATERSRAND

'She builds in gold, and to the stars,
As if she threatened heaven with wars.'

BEN JONSON.

I

IN leisurely fashion the party trekked over the great plains of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, examining the rock formations, visiting the gold-mines, chatting with prospectors, and marvelling over the old workings of a vanished race of miners whose hopes, once as high as theirs, were now reduced to indistinguishable dust. In all the little settlements Rhodes and Jameson were besieged with welcomes and petitions, and Rhodes's cheque-book or a scrap of an old envelope in place of a cheque, or Jameson's unfailing banter, stilled the clamour of many a discontented pioneer. Making north-east from Salisbury, the travellers reached the high Inyanga plateau which hung over the coastlands beneath, and was cool with the sea breezes of the Southern Seas. On this eastern escarpment in a land of grassy downs where bracken and brambles grew in the hollows, Rhodes laid out a farm, with the delight of a countryman who satisfies at last a long-deferred desire, the instinct of his race.

Then they went down the Pungwe River, and so

VOL. II.

A

by Beira to Delagoa Bay, where they found the Portuguese practically besieged in their town by the Gazas.

Jameson must have enjoyed the situation enormously.

‘ We offered—Dr. Jameson and I—to assist them,’ Rhodes afterwards told the Chartered Company, ‘ because the natives in rebellion were a portion of the tribe of Gungunhana, to whom we pay tribute ; but the Portuguese declined our assistance, and one cannot help respecting their national pride.’

We might add that the refusal suggests circumspection as well as self-respect. For Rhodes had been for years and was still doing everything in his power to get hold of Delagoa Bay as part of his plan to bring about a union of South Africa by the peaceful encirclement of the two Republics.

Michell gives an account of these negotiations.¹ They began as far back at least as the beginning of 1892, and were conducted at first by Mr. Merriman, and then by Sivewright and other agents. In 1893 Rhodes had a representative in Lisbon, and arranged to offer £700,000 for the territory. Portugal’s price went up as her credit went down. Rhodes was by this time negotiating as Prime Minister of the Cape, but paying for options and other expenses out of his own pocket. In April 1894 the Secretary of State for the Colonies telegraphed that Portugal refused to sell, but might lease Delagoa for one hundred years for a globular sum of £1,250,000 and £400,000 for the lease. During June and July the negotiations continued, but the Imperial Government was lukewarm and Portugal was shy. In the end the negotiation fell through. It is said that the Portuguese Government, then in a state almost of bankruptcy, con-

¹ *Life of Rhodes*, chapter xxvii.

sented, but that Queen Victoria intervened, fearing that popular indignation in Portugal might bring about the fall of the Royal House of Braganza.

It is in vain for the historian to speculate on might-have-beens; but it is as near certainty as we can get in our human affairs that if Rhodes had been properly supported in these negotiations by the Imperial Government the war which he feared and desired to avoid might never have taken place.

However that may be, Rhodes and Jameson went from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria, where Rhodes had another interview with the President; but could come to no accommodation.

From Pretoria they went to Johannesburg, the central town of the Witwatersrand, of which we must now say something, since it enters into the very pith and marrow of our history.

British diggers had been busy since the days when the two brothers trekked up to Marabastad in William Scully's wagon. They fossicked and prospected north and north-east, and found traces and pockets of gold in the broken valleys of Zoutpansberg and Lydenburg. The quartz of De Kaap Valley made a stir in 1883, and in 1884 the more famous quartz of Barberton was discovered. The Barberton correspondent of the *Volkstem*, writing on December 22, 1885, gives a glowing account of 'Bray's Golden Quarry' (now the Sheba Mine), which 'continues to astonish all who visit it.' 'They have now,' he continues, 'thirty yards of reef exposed, and all carrying visible gold, and are not yet across the lode.'

These and other discoveries were chiefly made by British prospectors from Natal and Kimberley; as for the Transvaal Boers, they looked on, some with hostility, some with indifference, but some with interest and hope. The diggers were not to their

liking—hustling, rough, noisy, irreverent fellows for the most part, who played cards of a Sunday and sometimes paid as little respect to property as to religion. But the gold-fields provided a market for their produce, raised the price of land, and might provide also for the financing of their Government.

At first the finds were flaws and pockets of gold-bearing quartz, dazzlingly rich but tantalisingly brief—no sound foundation for the fortunes of a state. The little band of diggers rushed from one deposit to another, and there was roaring luck while it lasted. These quartz formations were like the diamonds of the river—an adventure for the adventurous, a gamble, a speculation; but not a permanent organised industry. Yet just as the river-diggings preceded the diamond mines, so the quartz of Pilgrim's Rest and Barberton heralded the great discovery of the gold reefs of the Witwatersrand.

East and west for about 45 miles through the centre of the Transvaal, about 30 miles to the south of Pretoria, runs a range of cold, bare uplands, some 6500 feet above the sea, but not very much higher above the surrounding plateau than the Downs above the rest of Sussex or the Cotswolds or Chilterns above the valley of the Thames.

These Downs, treeless and grassy, and steeper upon the north than upon the south, were known as the Witwatersrand, the Ridge of the White Waters. They were parcelled out in great farms or ranches by Boers who grazed their flocks upon them in the hot summer months and left them for the lower and warmer pastures of the Bushveld in the winter.

It happened, in the year 1884, that a prospector from Natal, H. W. Struben by name, bought two farms in this region, Jacoby's farm of Sterkfontein

and Geldenhuis's farm of Wilgespruit. At Wilgespruit, Struben's brother Fred discovered the Confidence Reef, a small but rich quartz vein on the northern edge of the Rand. For the crushing of this quartz he set up a five-stamp battery, and kept one or two prospectors at work exploring for more.

A rumour of this discovery reached the perplexed Government of the Transvaal in the middle of the year 1885. Paul Kruger and his advisers were, as it happened, at that very time racking their brains over the chronic problem of how to raise the wind. The Volksraad had voted for an issue of Treasury notes; but the Council feared that the issue would not be taken up—and if the thing were to fail, it might strengthen the party which was still working for union with the Cape Colony under the British flag. Here, then, was a chance, a chance to save the Transvaal from bankruptcy, confusion, and ridicule. If there was gold, why not a gold currency?

On June 1, 1885, Dr. Jorissen on behalf of the Transvaal Government invited Mr. Struben to a conference at Pretoria. Struben went and showed the assembled Boers some rich specimens of his gold-bearing quartz. The Boers were duly impressed, and Struben upon his side took advantage of the opportunity to read a little lecture to the Government on the advantages it might reap from encouraging the mining industry. And the President, upon his side, 'promised the assistance and protection of the Government to those who endeavoured to develop the mining wealth of the State.'¹

When we come to consider what followed between

¹ These negotiations were reported in the Transvaal newspapers of the time, and are also described in Mr. Struben's journal, a very interesting document kindly shown to us by his daughter.

the Transvaal Government and the miners it will be fair to keep this promise in mind. So far from being unwelcome intruders, the diggers were in those early days the saviours of the State.

In the meantime the Strubens were going on with their prospecting. At Sterkfontein they sank a shaft and found gold-bearing rock, and on Paarde Kraal they found a gold-bearing conglomerate which they followed along the Rand from Vogelstruisfontein and Driefontein. They had found an outcrop of the Main Reef. It was something altogether new, for the gold was not in quartz, nor was it in nuggets in a river-bed; it was finely distributed through a curious sort of pudding-stone formation of closely-packed pebbles held together by a sandy disintegrated quartz-like matrix or cement.

The country winkels or stores were accustomed to display in those days for the regalement of youth bottles of a round, hard, variously coloured sweetmeat known as banquette, formed of sugar-coating upon a core of nuts, almonds, or cloves. As the conglomerate upon the surface was disintegrated into a mass of smooth red and white quartz pebbles, of various shapes and sizes, exactly resembling these sweets, the formation was called banquette, more commonly spelt banket.¹ This curious reef could be traced for miles along the surface of the ground, sometimes sharp and clear, at other times overlaid by drifts of red sand. It lay upon a cant, so much was to be seen upon the surface, though how far it went down was a mystery. And wherever it was tested, the cement matrix—not the pebbles themselves—yielded gold, richly distributed although in fine particles.

¹ For this and a good deal more in this chapter we are indebted to Dr. Hans Sauer's entertaining little book, *The Far East Rand*.

The difference between this banket formation and the quartz was, as we have said, the difference between the dry diggings and the river diggings. For here was not a vein or a blow, but a reef of ore that could be worked for miles like a seam of coal.

Struben, as we may suppose, was not himself expansive over this discovery ; but he had some leaky vessels among his men, and in May 1886 one of them, a South African Dutchman called Bantjes, showed some of the banket to a Mr. Sheasby of Kimberley, who happened to be in the Transvaal on a hunting trip.

When Sheasby returned to Kimberley he took Dr. Hans Sauer and one or two other friends into his confidence, and together they panned the ore. Next morning found Dr. Sauer in the stage coach for Potchefstroom, sitting opposite J. B. Robinson. They were both upon the same errand. The same coach which brought Sheasby had also brought two letters from Dr. Bird of Potchefstroom, telling Robinson and Sauer of the discovery. So hiring a Cape cart and four at Potchefstroom they set out together and were soon busily engaged exploring the wonders of the Main Reef, upon which by this time a little crowd of miners were already working. Robinson bought the farm of Langlaagte from the widow Oosthuizen for £1500—ground afterwards worth many millions. Sauer and young Oosthuizen walked ten miles to the west, where the reef had again been opened, on the site of the Durban Roodepoort, and they also looked in at the camp of Colonel Ferreira—afterwards the Ferreira Gold Mining Company. Here and there as they went along Dr. Sauer filled a bag with samples of the ore,

and with this burden of potential wealth returned to Kimberley.¹

Two mornings after Dr. Sauer returned to Kimberley Rhodes and Rudd were both comfortably seated in the two corner-seats of Gibson's coach with their backs to the driver. Sauer *ran* several stages—to avoid suspicion—before he joined them. The coach drawn by a team of ten marvellously handled horses was soon at Potchefstroom, and was diverted for the first time in its history to cross the Rand on its way to Pretoria. And so it came about that Rhodes and his party were set down beside Colonel Ferreira's wagon, a place already known as Ferreira's Camp. Already a little crowd of diggers were at work, and in the week that Sauer had been away an enterprising Englishwoman had run up a reed and mud building called Walker's Hotel. There the party stayed until they bought the little Boer farm of Klein Paardekraal, the homestead of which, a small three-roomed stone cottage with a thatched roof, became their headquarters, from which they fossicked and prospected east and west, Rhodes and Rudd directing operations.

On Wednesday afternoon, August 4, according to our *Diamond Fields* journalist, Mr. C. D. Rudd, accompanied by Messrs. Duplessis, J. B. Robinson, Dr. Sauer, Mr. Esselen, and the Landdrost of the district, chipped some pieces from the Main Reef and leaders on the farm of Turffontein. The pieces weighed about 2 lb. ' One of the proprietors (Mr. Duplessis) roughly pounded them in a mortar and took the stuff close by and washed it. After the refuse had been thrown off, the party of gentlemen

¹ On July 28, 1886, Dr. Sauer left Potchefstroom for Kimberley with a bagful of auriferous soil.—*Diamond Fields Advertiser*.

were interested to find about half a pennyweight of gold mixed with the fine black sand generally found along with it.'

The Transvaal Government were equally interested. On August 5 there was a conference between Mr. Rissik, the Vice-President of the Republic, and General J. C. Joubert, the Commandant-General, upon the one side and about two or three hundred of those chiefly interested in the Fields, among whom were Messrs. Rhodes, Rudd, Robinson, Caldicott, Dr. Hans Sauer, Mr. Wolhuter, and other well-known Kimberley gentlemen on the other.

The Conference was upon certain questions of mining law and rights. President Kruger had declared two years before—or so it was reported—in favour of big companies, because he did not want to see his country overrun by diggers; but now he appeared to be on the other side. And it was reported as the opinion of the Attorney-General that no person could hold more than one claim in the entire gold-fields, and that no sale or transfer of claims made before the Fields were thrown open was to be allowed. On August 21 Cecil Rhodes was in Pretoria, one of a deputation to interview the President on the subject. In this, the second interview between Rhodes and Kruger, Rhodes again had his way. Kruger was by nature stiff, but he was not blind to the logic of facts. The reef could only be worked in large sections, and it must be worked if the State was to be saved from bankruptcy. On September 4, 1886, it was announced that the interdict on part of the Witwatersrand property of Cecil Rhodes and C. D. Rudd had been removed.

When we come to a later part of our history we shall find Cecil Rhodes described as an outsider

intervening in the affairs of the Transvaal. It is fair, then, to remember that from the beginning of the Witwatersrand he was one of the heads of the industry, and was recognised as such by Paul Kruger himself.

Rhodes, it is true, had not done so well on the Witwatersrand as in Kimberley. There was the unfortunate affair of the death of Pickering. And again, when his friend, J. B. Taylor, had shown him the Main Reef on one of its richest sections—where it stuck out from the Downs like a shark's fin above the sea—Rhodes had hesitated and had refused the opportunity of untold millions. In those early days at least it was a gamble, and Rhodes, who was not by nature a gambler, was never altogether happy in this new enterprise.

Once when Dr. Sauer had been trying to persuade him to buy some promising ground he replied, 'It is all very well, but I cannot calculate the *power* in these claims.'

And when Sauer asked him to explain, Rhodes went on:—

'When I am in Kimberley, and I have nothing much to do, I go and sit at the edge of the De Beers Mine, and I look at the blue ground below, and I can calculate the number of loads of blue and the value of the diamonds in the blue and the power these diamonds give me. But this I cannot do with your gold reefs.'

Nevertheless those purchases which Rhodes and Rudd did make were the foundation of one of the chief mining houses on the Rand, the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa. Rhodes was a power in Johannesburg.

II

But now we are in the month of October 1894, and in those eight years Johannesburg had sprung like Aladdin's palace out of the empty desert, and like Aladdin's palace was garish, rich in gold, complete in everything save water and drains.

If the builders were not Djinns and Afrites, they were at least as outlandish a community as were ever heaped together by an accident of fortune.

At bottom were the black, brawny, careless, singing savages of Africa, from all parts of the teeming East between Beira and Port Elizabeth. Their blind strength was guided chiefly by Cornish miners, whose ancestors had been first taught their trade by the Carthaginians, and it is an interesting speculation that these same Carthaginians might have taught the ancestors of the Shangani boys whom the Cornishmen now directed. Above these Cornishmen and other English and Australian miners were American and British engineers, and above them again were the capitalists, some English, others German, and many Jewish, an able, voluble, humorous, cynical crowd.

And at the top of all stood the several great mining and financial houses, whose heads and chief servants were the magnates and patricians of the place.

Upon the main stem of the mining industry all manner of subsidiary activities contrived to exist—English accountants and bank clerks, German chemists and import agents, the British shopkeeper, Australian prospectors and mine-managers, and a cosmopolitan crowd of stockbrokers and land agents, liquor-sellers, illicit gold-buyers, pimps, and fried-fish shopkeepers, and the votaries of all nationalities

of a hundred and one other trades and occupations, reputable and disreputable.

This mixed community did the most amazing things. It followed the canting reef of hardening rock thousands of feet down into the bowels of the earth, blasted out the adamantine ore with drills and dynamite, pulverised it with stamps, washed it with pumped-up and impounded water, spread it over sheets of copper coated with quicksilver, soaked it in tanks, and dissolved it in cyanide of potassium until almost the last fine particle of gold was extracted from it, and heaped up the residue in high dusty pyramids—the ‘tailings’ of the Reef.

And it built a great city in which eight-storey marble-fronted, and brick-backed buildings towered above shanties of corrugated iron—a city of electric light and electric trams, gorgeous shops and gay music halls, rising suddenly out of the empty veld, hundreds of miles away from and thousands of feet above the sea.

It was a community like Kimberley, only bigger and more volatile—energetic, intent upon its own interests, elevated or depressed according as its engineers and chemists were baffled by or victorious over the problems of its industry and its financiers were secure or insecure in the wavering faith of the investing public.

In times of prosperity it was intent upon gold, the object of its existence; but in times of depression it turned savagely to the thoughts of its losses and grievances at the hands of a Government which neither understood it nor liked it, but looked upon it only as a bed of pearl-bearing molluscs, which had grown miraculously on a rocky range for the profit and sustenance of the surrounding inhabitants.

It was to diagnose this state of feeling that Jameson was now visiting Johannesburg. To that end, as he afterwards reported, he had many talks with 'the miners and working-classes,' and the result was to convince himself and to inform Rhodes that Mr. Hammond was right in the account he had given of the political feeling of Johannesburg.

The mining community, it is important to remember, was in 1894 only emerging from the effects of the Baring crisis which had nearly brought about its ruin in 1891, and was only beginning to feel the benefit of the railway which reached Johannesburg in September 1892. It was only beginning that great expansion which reached its summit three years later, and with the gloom of the slump still upon it, it had been fighting a fierce but fruitless battle for political and economic rights.

In 1893 a petition with 13,000 signatures was received by the Raad with mocking laughter. In 1894 another petition signed by 35,483 Uitlanders was rejected with contumely, and President Kruger forced through the House Law No. 3 of 1894 which so altered the fundamental law of the State as to put the ballot beyond the reach of the new population. 'The measure,' says Sir Percy FitzPatrick, 'was accepted on all hands as an ultimatum—a declaration of war to the knife. . . . When remonstrated with . . . by a prominent man whose sympathies are wholly with the Boer . . . the President . . . pointed to the Transvaal flag flying over the Government buildings, saying, ". . . If I grant the franchise I may as well pull it down."'

The political organisation of the Uitlanders was recruited from the miners and the middle-classes, the great mining magnates deeming it better to hold

aloof from politics. Of the National Union, Charles Leonard, a lawyer and politician from Cape Town, was Chairman by virtue of a fine gift for political oratory, which, as is sometimes the case, covered an unfortunate deficiency in the more robust qualities of leadership. Bettington, who was to prove himself a more courageous spirit, had already begun to threaten force and to work by means of rifle clubs and military corps for forcible conclusions. With these were many others. The rank and file—there can be no doubt at all—were in deadly earnest. For like the toad under the harrow they felt the weight and the sharpness of the Dopper dispensation. They not only suffered more than their superiors from the insolence of office, its inefficiency and corruption; but they inherited the ignominy of the Majuba settlement in the open contempt of the Transvaal Boer for the defeated Briton.

At the head of the industry, Jameson's old acquaintance of early Kimberley days, Lionel Phillips, now a member of H. Eckstein and Company, Johannesburg representatives of the chief financial power on the Rand, Wernher, Beit and Company, was President of the Chamber of Mines. Mr. Phillips, as we gather from the letters he wrote at this time, was not at all anxious to plunge into a political or revolutionary agitation or to trust to the leadership of Cecil Rhodes. He had too much upon his shoulders to relish such risks, and preferred quieter methods of accommodation; but even he was beginning to despair of a peaceful issue out of the embittered and deep-rooted quarrel. All these and many others Jameson must have interviewed before he arrived at the conviction which later was to cost him so dear, that whatever its leaders might do, the mining

community of Johannesburg was fixed upon a political revolution. Jameson reported to Rhodes that all that Mr. Hammond had said was substantially correct.

Then Rhodes, we may suppose, had a struggle with himself. His better judgment bade him stick to his own plan. But he saw also the dangers of caution. The Reformers were clamorous. If they went on without him and succeeded, on Republican lines, he might bid farewell to his dream of a British South Africa.

Then his Delagoa Bay negotiation had failed . . . it looked as if his whole plan might fail. . . . No, he could not afford to stand out. . . .

And so Rhodes decided : he would drive a bargain with the Reformers—the terms of the bargain we shall see later—and he would agree to assist them, with his purse and influence, in the overthrow of the Transvaal Government. ‘It was agreed,’ Jameson afterwards testified, ‘that the Police and Volunteers of the Chartered Company should be made as efficient as possible.’ That was to be Jameson’s part.

CHAPTER XXIII

A GAME OF CHESS

I

FROM Johannesburg Jameson followed Rhodes to Kimberley, and so on to Cape Town. The Cape was by this time ranged solidly behind Rhodes and the Rhodesian policy. For had not Rhodes spoken of Cape Town as the capital of an Africa united from the Cape to the Zambesi? No longer the Sleepy Hollow of old time; she was now a city inspired by a great ideal. Her young men and her money had helped in the conquest of the North, and she looked on the North as her heritage. And so she gave Rhodes and Jameson such a reception as Venice in her prime might have given to two of her captains returning from some fruitful and glorious conquest in the Adriatic or the Ægean. The Mayor presided at a banquet held in their honour—‘the most representative and enthusiastic gathering of the kind that has taken place here for many years.’¹

Here, for the first time in public, and in the presence of Rhodes, Dr. Jameson spoke of the new State as ‘Rhodesia.’ He thanked the Cape for its help in their progress to the North, in particular when the Boers of the Zoutpansberg threatened to stop their northern expansion. The Cape had also helped when war broke out and a massacre of whites and natives appeared to be probable, ‘and when the

¹ *The Times*, October 29, 1894. The banquet was held on Saturday, October 27.

freedom of local administration was threatened by a section of the public in England—on all these points the Cape had strengthened the hands of the High Commissioner.’

Jameson was learning the art of politics. He appealed to the cherished principle of Colonial liberty: ‘He claimed freedom for local administration because only those who knew local wants could understand the questions which arose. But they would always remember that they were under the power of the Imperial Government.’

We have the speaker’s own commentary on this speech in a letter he wrote to his brother Sam on October 31, 1894, the day he left with Rhodes for England:—

‘We are off this afternoon and glad to get away. I am getting a pretty bad time of it over the speech from Bower and his section: but I don’t care a damn—on the principle of Chas. Lamb—better to be damned than not noticed at all, it won’t do me any harm. Then *qua* politics, Rhodes is a little frightened that it may be injudicious, but I am sure it is right. The Cape Dutch element is more important to satisfy than the home people at present. If it saves me some extra dinners at home I shan’t be sorry.’

The reception which Jameson and Rhodes had in England disappointed these forebodings. Labouchere and the Aborigines Protection Society had made a noise, but they had not alienated the heart of England from her adventurous sons, who revived in her breast proud memories of Clive, of Wolfe, of Baird, of Chatham. When Rhodes addressed the shareholders of the Chartered Company in the city of London, the expectation of hearing him brought such crowds as blocked the approaches to the Cannon

Street Hotel.¹ The Queen entertained Rhodes at Windsor and made Jameson Commander of the Bath. Jameson, indeed, became the lion of London—hunted with scant success by many a Diana of the social world. The political world lionised him also. The Prince of Wales presided over the banquet and meeting of the Imperial Institute held in Jameson's honour.

Jameson's address is interesting as one of the first examples we possess of his powers of exposition and debate.² His keen, dry, incisive style and his economy of words suggest his ancestry of Edinburgh—a city which has always paid due honour to logic. He described British policy in South Africa, first the calamitous treatment of the Dutch over their property in slaves, then the occupation of the Orange River Sovereignty and the retreat across the Orange, and then the annexation and the abandonment of the Transvaal. Thus England had surrendered the bulk of the interior and withdrawn to the Cape. 'But still the North was open to us.' When Rhodes fought for the North with the Transvaal he had to fight alone: 'The Little England policy was then in full force, and I don't think any Minister would have ventured to put forward as a reasonable proposal the annexation under the British flag of the territory between Mafeking and the Zambesi, about 1000 miles in extent, and certainly there was only one man who thought of adding another 1000 miles . . . to the end of Lake Tanganyika.' Rhodes had found the means to annex 'a country as large

¹ January 18, 1895. For the speech see p. 417 of the *Speeches*. In this speech Rhodes developed his policy of Imperial preference.

² *Imperial Institute Journal*, N. 1, p. 61. The address was given on January 28, 1895.

as Europe,' a country 'where white men and women can live, where children can be reared in health and vigour.' And he went on to describe Rhodesia as a land bearing not only gold but coal and iron side by side, and '100,000 fat, sleek cattle to prove its pastoral value'—'a happy combination,' as *The Times* remarked next day, 'of Canaan, Ophir, and the Black Country.'

Then Jameson passed on—logically as we have already seen—to a bigger question, 'a commercial union of the different States of South Africa.' 'There was the question of the flag . . . more a question of sentiment, but certainly the sentiment we hold in Charterland and in the Cape Colony is that at present we have the Union Jack, and we are determined never to lose it. But for the very reason we think so strongly on that point we can afford to appreciate and allow for the same feelings in others, and also we must always remember that unity of flag is not a *sine qua non* for the commercial union of which I am now speaking.' The connection between Cape Colony and Rhodesia would have an influence on the future of South Africa. And as there were now 50,000 Englishmen in the Transvaal, 'surely even the Transvaal with its 15,000 Boers and Mr. Paul Kruger will within a reasonable time see reason, and join in this much to be desired union of the South African States.' And here Jameson explained how the Cape Colony had already pushed its railways up through the Orange Free State to the banks of the Vaal. 'One State from the Cape Peninsula to the Zambesi with inter-free trade' would, he concluded, be of 'enormous benefit to South Africa and the Empire.' Also it would be an enormously valuable market for the British manufacturer. 'And

then, gentlemen, I don't think we shall hear from that Little England Party should it still exist.'

The value of this speech to the biographer of Dr. Jameson is the light it throws upon subsequent events. Jameson's mind was already active on this great question of the union of South Africa. He saw the bearing of Rhodesia on the question; he followed Rhodes in the idea that a commercial and railway union, with the Cape as 'the predominant partner,' would bring the political union about; but he saw also the obstacle in the Transvaal of Paul Kruger and his 15,000 armed Boers.

Such considerations lead to another part of Jameson's activities during this visit to London. 'When in England in 1894, I urged,' he afterwards told the Committee, 'the transfer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the Chartered Company.' Upon the question Rhodes had been in conflict with the High Commissioner ever since the Occupation: he claimed the Protectorate under the Charter, and it was part of his design to link up the territories of the Company with those of the Cape Colony. But when Jameson took a hand, was he thinking of a 'jumping-off ground' supposing he undertook the greater business already in his mind?

In the meantime Jameson enjoyed himself. He saw all the family circle, and there is a hilarious tradition of how he treated his Pringle and Jameson cousins to a champagne luncheon at the Glasgow Exhibition. There is a tradition also of his return voyage with Willoughby and other friends—the life and soul of the ship, and as keen on a game of deck quoits as if his life were staked on it. Little did he know that these joyous moments of a free and

careless mind were drawing to an end with him, as he sailed through the halcyon seas of the Southern hemisphere.

II

On his way to the North Jameson again visited Johannesburg: he was there in March 1895: and found the murmur of approaching strife growing louder. So he went on to his stronghold in the North, and there 'gave special attention to the formation of the Rhodesian Horse, a volunteer force . . . and to the general efficiency of the Matabeleland Mounted Police.'¹ We see something of these activities in a letter which he wrote to his brother Sam on May 16, 1895:—

'Everything going well and plenty of money coming in; but the inhabitants more voracious for favours than ever, and I less inclined to give now that they can stand on their own legs. Am having fair ructions with our new legal luminaries, but am getting them in fair order, and hope to get them to see common sense without an open row—a difficult thing to do with the legal mind. Otherwise the Council is working much better than I expected, and I am getting rid of detail work to the various heads, so that I shall be free to get away and travel about for the future. To-night I have to talk to the Volunteers—not easy as I hate all the idiotic military paraphernalia, yet one must appear to like it all, and induce this crowd to like it—as it is a necessity to get them together. . . . I am leaving next week to meet Willoughby and get Volunteers properly under way there and go through the usual crop of grievances. Get pretty sick of them all.'

Omens and events in the South seemed to justify these preparations. The quarrel was maturing not

¹ Evidence before Select Committee.

only between Kruger and the Reformers, but between Kruger and the Cape Colony and between Kruger and the Imperial Government.

Indeed the relations between the British Government and the Transvaal had long been on the very edge of war. The Warren Expedition of 1885 came just short of it. The High Commissioner's visit to Pretoria in 1894 was backed by a concentration of Bechuanaland police on the border. And in a despatch to Lord Ripon Sir Henry Loch warned the Imperial Government that every moment an explosion was imminent. The population of Johannesburg was on the edge of revolt; but they were unarmed and the Transvaal Government would probably put down any disturbances with great severity. Kruger had probably 15,000 men available for service; but as they were greatly scattered, it was unlikely that they could bring 6000 together. And the High Commissioner went on to point out that the extension of the railway to Mafeking in British Bechuanaland rendered the approach to Johannesburg easy of accomplishment across a country ill adapted for defence, but open for the advance of a small well-organised force. If there was a sudden outbreak in Johannesburg, he proceeded, Her Majesty's Government could not remain indifferent. Moreover the population of Johannesburg could be rapidly armed, and would only require the support of a small disciplined body of troops, which could be provided by two additional battalions and a field battery being added to the garrison of the Cape Peninsula. In the meantime the Transvaal Government should be warned that if disturbances were the result of their policy towards British residents, Her Majesty's

Government would not regard with indifference a state of affairs that would endanger the lives and property of Her Majesty's subjects.¹

How far the British Government took the advice of their High Commissioner may be judged from its trooping dispositions. Thus, for example, the troopship *Victoria* left Bombay for Southampton on October 10, 1895, with the 7th Hussars on board. Contrary to her usual custom she sailed by way of the Cape. When she touched at the Cape the crisis for the moment had abated and the regiment was not disembarked; but she repeated the manœuvre on her next voyage home, this time with a battalion of the King's Own on board. When the trouble actually came, at the end of 1895, the Imperial garrison at the Cape stood at 3500 men; but the 1st Battalion of the Leinsters was on its way from the West Indies to relieve the Black Watch, and the Black Watch, although under orders for India, did not go, and the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Lancasters was, as we have seen, in the *Victoria* going home by way of the Cape of Good Hope.

The High Commissioner contrived to compose the acute crisis of Kruger's 'Commandeering' of British subjects. But no sooner was it settled than another crisis arose.

It was a crisis in the great game which Rhodes and Kruger had been playing for years with railways,

¹ Lord Loch in his statement in the House of Lords (May 1, 1896) said: 'The steps I took were in connection with an assembly at certain points of the British and Imperial Bechuanaland Police. My intention was that if disturbances had arisen in Johannesburg . . . it would have been my duty . . . to have informed President Kruger that he would be held responsible . . . if he failed in . . . the necessary measures . . . I should have felt myself at liberty to have taken such steps as I might have felt expedient,' etc.

customs, trade, and harbours as their cards. Broadly speaking, Rhodes's play was to encircle and interpenetrate the Transvaal; Kruger's to establish a separate and independent system of the North based upon Delagoa Bay. In the beginning, the South African Republic, upon the edge of bankruptcy with no outlet but to the South, was ready to agree to almost any terms. But the Cape Colony took a huckster's advantage and charged heavy tolls on the goods which went through its territories into the Transvaal. At the end of 1881 the Transvaal retaliated by placing a duty upon Cape brandy and other Colonial produce, and the Colony thereupon imposed an import tax on the produce of the Transvaal, then chiefly consisting of Magaliesberg tobacco.

The Republic then petitioned both for a Customs union and for the extension of the Cape railway system from Kimberley to Pretoria. The Cape Government of that day, if it had been wise, might have federated South Africa by a Railway and Customs Union on Colonial terms. In 1885 the famous 'Sammy' Marks, a sagacious Jew who often advised Paul Kruger in commercial matters, went down to Cape Town and offered to give Sprigg and Upington control of a railway to be built from Kimberley to Delagoa Bay on the sole condition that the Colony allowed the produce of the Transvaal to enter duty free. The Ministers refused.

As Rhodes was fond of saying, 'The mists of Table Mountain covered all.' Rhodes, as we may gather from the debates of those days, warned the House over and over again of the short-sightedness of its Ministers, and the golden opportunity they were missing. The speech which he made on May 20, 1886, prophesies the disasters which afterwards followed.

'What is staring the House in the face at the present moment,' he said, 'is that unless action is taken at once the Delagoa Bay railroad will be carried out. That means . . . that we shall not get a continuation of the line from Kimberley to Pretoria. Commercial people will be always inspiring or instilling into the rulers of the Transvaal hostile action against the Cape Colony. In other words, if the Delagoa Bay railway is carried out, the real union of South Africa will be indefinitely deferred.' 'Commerce,' he continued, 'should come first and union will follow by having our interests in common.'

And this pregnant speech is summed up thus in its packed and weighty conclusion :—

'I think the House should weigh the question seriously, and meet it, not in a petty spirit, but in a broad spirit ; and with the idea always before us that we (the Cape Colony) should be the dominant State of South Africa, and should carry out the union of the South African States. If that were done, the authorities of Pretoria would co-operate with us rather than turn their views towards Delagoa Bay.'

It is with governments as with men : they take the divinely appointed moment and go on to fortune, or they let the golden opportunity slip, not knowing that it is golden—and when it is gone neither tears nor eloquence avail to bring it back. The Sprigg-Upington administration refused to take the advice of Rhodes. And then that happened which he foresaw : the discovery of the Witwatersrand gave Paul Kruger the means to carry out what Rhodes called 'Oom Paul's hobby,' to build the railway from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria and so secure an outlet for the Transvaal independent of the British Colonies to the South.

Roads and railways are threads with which the

Fates spin the destinies of States. They impose its policy and make its friends and its enemies. If, for example, the Transvaal had developed her commerce by way of Cape Colony and Natal, she must have become part of the Colonial economic system. And being part of the economic system, it must have followed, by a necessity of life, that she became part also of the Colonial political system. But Delagoa Bay lay outside. It is a port in Portuguese territory on the eastern side of Africa, so that when the Transvaal built a railway to that port she became independent of her neighbours to the South in all the necessities of her oversea commerce. Nay, more than that, she obtained the power to detach the Orange Free State from the Colonial system, and to cut the Colony off from the whole trade of the interior, save as much as passed through the long and narrow gut of Bechuanaland.

When Rhodes at last became Prime Minister he tried hard to retrieve the situation. In the year 1891 he concluded an agreement with Kruger under which the Cape Government advanced £600,000 for the construction of the railway from the Vaal River to Johannesburg, receiving in exchange Netherlands Railway Company Bonds guaranteed by the Transvaal Government. Under this agreement the Cape Government fixed the traffic rates on the Transvaal Extension until the close of the year 1894, or until the completion of the railway from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria. The Cape was thus given a temporary monopoly of the Johannesburg traffic, with the result, as Rhodes anticipated, that commerce and communication drew the States together and prepared the way for a South African Union.

But in the latter part of 1894 the Delagoa Bay

line reached Pretoria, and the agreement terminated on December 31 of that year. Then Kruger's policy of separation wrought a fatal change. The Netherlands Railway Company raised the rates on the fifty-two miles between the Vaal and Johannesburg from 2·4d. to 8d. per ton per mile. The object behind this manoeuvre was to force the trade of the Transvaal out of its old Colonial channels into the new cut of the Delagoa Bay railway. It was upon this change that Rhodes and Kruger had that crucial interview briefly mentioned in our last chapter. When Rhodes failed to move his opponent, he must have realised the consequences of the failure: it was then that he accepted the fatal alternative.

A sharp conflict followed the President's move. The Cape merchants being faced by this wall of high railway tariffs appealed for help to their old friend the trek ox; the goods were transferred near the frontier to bullock wagons and were hauled to Johannesburg by road. The 'drifts' on the Vaal must have been a wonderful sight, for there were often as many as 120 wagons to be seen crossing the drift at Vereeniging in a single day.

Upon this Kruger resolved, as he said, to put a 'barbed-wire fence' along the river. By proclamation he closed the 'drifts' on the Vaal alongside the railway to oversea goods. Importers were thus given the choice either of paying the high rates from the Vaal to Johannesburg or sending their goods round by sea to Delagoa Bay.

The 'drifts' were closed in August 1895, and we find the Attorney-General of the Cape Government (W. P. Schreiner) reporting to Rhodes on September 3 following that the proclamation was *ultra vires*, and was an 'infraction of Article 13 of the London

Convention of 1884.' The Law Officers of the Crown took the same view. And Joseph Chamberlain, who was by this time Colonial Secretary, offered to support the Cape Government to all extremities.

'But,' he went on, 'Her Majesty's Government do not intend that such an expedition should, like most previous Colonial wars, be conducted at the entire cost of this country; and you should explain to your Ministers that you are therefore instructed to require from them a most explicit understanding in writing that, if it becomes necessary to send an expedition, the Cape Parliament will bear half the gross expense, and that the Local Government will furnish a fair contingent of the fighting force, as far as its resources in men may suffice, besides giving the full and free use of its railways and rolling-stock for military purposes.'¹

To this the High Commissioner replied that he had received the written assurances required, that the Cape Ministers, 'including Schreiner and Faure, the two Dutch members, were unanimous in their decision to accept your conditions,' and, 'I am assured by Mr. Rhodes that he can count on the support of the majority of the Cape Parliament.'

Thus, upon this date, November 4, 1895, both the Cape Government and the Imperial Government were determined to make war upon the Transvaal if Kruger remained obdurate on this question of the drifts. But President Kruger in 1895, as in 1885, had the wisdom to perceive that forces were too strong for him, and when he received the Rhodes-Chamberlain ultimatum he opened the drifts.

It was a clever move: by giving up a pawn Kruger kept his king. He divided his opponents.

¹ Telegram of November 1, 1895.

The Dutch of the Cape Colony would have been ready to fight for their railways and their trade, but the wrongs of Johannesburg left most of them unmoved. The Uitlanders were mainly British and Rhodes's supporters were mainly Dutch.

The Cape Colony had no further quarrel with President Kruger. Rhodes, secretly pledged to support the Reformers, stood alone in his Cabinet, and could count no longer on the support of his colleagues. But the grievances of Johannesburg remained: in that quarrel the Imperial Government was still involved; to that quarrel Rhodes was committed, in that quarrel Jameson was making his warlike preparations.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CONSPIRACY

'The framing of this circle on the ground
Brings whirlwinds, tempests, thunder, and lightening.'

I

WE are now approaching the great catastrophe in the lives of these two men ; but we must here ask the patience of our readers while we examine the intricate approaches to the plan of which it was the result.

We have seen how Rhodes has decided, with whatever initial hesitations, to assist the Reformers ' with my purse and my influence ' ; we have seen how Jameson was carrying that decision into practical effect by organising a force in the North.

But the way from Matabeleland to Johannesburg was long, difficult, and mountainous. Therefore it was the more desirable that the Bechuanaland Protectorate should belong to the Chartered Company, so that their forces might have a convenient ' jumping-off ' place. To this end part at least of Bechuanaland was required ; and as the Colonial Office looked upon the territory as an expensive nuisance, an agreement seemed easy. But the Company had some very active enemies, and they worked so industriously among the Bechuana chiefs that these worthies were persuaded to send a deputation to oppose the transfer. Hearing of this proposal, Jameson went down to Cape Town to consult with

Rhodes, and afterwards visited Khama at Palapye. These two soon came to terms, or so at least Jameson thought, and he returned to Buluwayo, taking Johannesburg on his way.

This visit to Johannesburg is important, for the Doctor had discussions with all the leading people—Charles Leonard, the eloquent Chairman of the National Union; J. W. Leonard, his brother, a Queen's Counsel, who had formerly been Attorney-General in the Cape Government; Ewald Esselen, then State Attorney in the Transvaal, but a friend of the Uitlanders; Lionel Phillips, who as President of the Chamber of Mines represented the mining industry; his fellow-mineowner, George Farrar; John Hays Hammond, and others—but without settling upon any definite plan.¹

Despite his friendly professions Khama set out for England with two other Bechuana chiefs, and they were used—very much to Rhodes's disgust—by their friends, the philanthropists, for a political campaign against the transfer. To counter this opposition Rhodes sent Dr. Rutherford Harris to England. The bearing of this mission upon our story will have to be considered later; in the meantime it is sufficient to say that Dr. Harris secured the transfer of the strip of territory necessary to the Jameson plan, and that in the course of his negotiations he led Rhodes to believe that the Imperial Government knew and approved of what was going forward.

But what was going forward? Let us see. In

¹ As it happened, one of Jameson's officers, the Hon. Robert (to his friends 'Bobbie') White, kept a diary, and from the diary we gather that in April 1895 he visited Johannesburg on his way to Rhodesia. He made notes which suggest military plans. These notes were afterwards cited as evidence; but the author is assured by General White that he made them, according to his habit as a soldier, without any thought or any knowledge of what was afterwards to happen.

October 1895 Charles Leonard and Lionel Phillips went to Cape Town to arrange matters with Rhodes. At this interview there were present not only Cecil Rhodes, Phillips, and Leonard but Hammond and Colonel Frank Rhodes. Cecil Rhodes stipulated, there is reason to believe, that Federation should follow Intervention, and that in the Federation the British Colonies should have the balance of power. The Reformers assented, and the general plan of a rising in Johannesburg, armed support upon the Border, and the intervention of the High Commissioner were there agreed upon. Rhodes promised to take the High Commissioner up with him, when the moment arrived, in order to negotiate terms between the rebels and their Government. In the meantime Leonard was to draw up a manifesto intended to justify the revolt to the people of South Africa.

Such was the arrangement, and the part of it which concerns us most was the force upon the Border. And it is just worth noting, as we pass, that this armed support was promised on the request of Johannesburg, that is to say of the President of the Chamber of Mines and the Chairman of the National Union.¹

And further we have to note that the first proposal was not that Jameson and his force should ride into Johannesburg but that he should be on the Border. Thus in his evidence Dr. Jameson says:—

‘ Their first proposal was to act alone, but my troops to be in readiness on the Border, a common-sense view in which I fully concurred. On further consideration, however, the leaders came to the conclusion that they could not hope to

¹ *Report*, Charles Leonard's evidence.

succeed without the co-operation of an armed force. . . . They therefore invited my help, stating that unless they were assured of assistance in Johannesburg the rising would not succeed. I agreed, and it was arranged that I should take my force to Johannesburg.’¹

While these preliminaries were being arranged, we get tantalisingly brief glimpses of Jameson, a stormy petrel among the troughs and crests of gathering seas, now in Buluwayo, then in Cape Town, again in Johannesburg, and presently in Kimberley, Mafeking, Pitsani Potlugo—arranging, exhorting, inspiring to action—the one man of whom it may be said that he is sure of himself and whole-hearted in the business.

On September 24 Colonel Frank Rhodes and Sir Sidney Shippard, the Resident Commissioner of Bechuanaland, were already negotiating with a Bechuana chief for the site of a camp.²

On October 13 the Hon. Robert White, who had been to Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Cape Town, returned to Buluwayo and ‘delivered message’ at Government House—the message no doubt being that certain convenient territories on the Transvaal

¹ The arrangements with Dr. Jameson, says FitzPatrick, ‘were made with him in person. During the month of September he visited Johannesburg, and it was then agreed that he should maintain a force of some 1500 mounted men fully equipped, a number of Maxims and some field artillery; that he was in addition to this to have with him 1500 spare rifles and a quantity of spare ammunition; and that about 5000 rifles, 3 Maxim guns, and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition were to be smuggled into Johannesburg. It was calculated that in the town itself there would be perhaps 1000 rifles privately owned. Thus in the event of a junction of forces being effected, Johannesburg would be able to command about 9000 armed men with a fair equipment of machine guns and cannon.’—*Transvaal from Within*, p. 123. It will be noted that FitzPatrick puts the arrangement a month earlier than Jameson. Jameson’s calculations, as will be seen, included the Rhodesian Volunteers at Buluwayo.

² Ikaneng, Chief of the Bamalite, Ramoutsa. See *Cape Report*, App. A. 9. *Vide* also Harris’s telegram of November 2: ‘Communicate the following to Dr. Jameson. I have obtained you Ikanning.’

Border had been transferred to the Company. On October 19 a proclamation to that effect was issued, and Dr. Jameson became Administrator of the territory. On October 20 the First Troop of the Mashonaland Mounted Police started for the South from Buluwayo, and the Second Troop followed next day. On October 22, White, who had been gazetted Magistrate in Bechuanaland, 'started with Holden in Mafeking coach to take over lower part of Bechuanaland Protectorate,' and on November 1—

'Dr. Jameson arrived by the coach at 5 A.M. and we drove out to look at site of camp, of which he approved very much. We drove back and reached Mafeking at 11.30. Went to see Colonel Grey with the Doctor and talked over B.B.P. (the Bechuanaland Border Police) joining in.'

According to White's diary under November 1, 'Doctor left at 10.10 P.M. for Cape Town with Major Sadler.' There Jameson busied himself recruiting men and horses. Thus on November 9 the diarist notes: 'Heard from Dr. Jameson that he will probably send up 100 men by end of month, and 8 horses by each train arriving from Kimberley.'¹ On November 14 Dr. Jameson left Cape Town for Johannesburg. The pretext for the visit was the illness of his brother Sam, who indeed had been in bad health all that year; but the real reason was to complete his arrangements with the Reformers. Two days after his arrival we find him writing to White:—

¹ The men were recruited from that crack Volunteer regiment, the Duke of Edinburgh's Own. Thus Stevens, writing from Cape Town on November 19: 'I have recently sent to you a number of men from the D.E.O. Volunteer Rifles, which regiment has its headquarters in Cape Town. The Colonel came to me this morning and said that we had taken away some of his best men,' etc.

‘ JOHANNESBURG,
‘ November 19, 1895.

‘ *Private.*

‘ DEAR BOBBY,—Hope by the time you get this you will have our men in camp—also about a hundred from Stevens ¹ and I shall get a couple from Grey ² when I arrive in about a fortnight or a little longer. The almost certain date will be December 26. From Willoughby’s wire to me there ought to be 150 complete equipments on the way down—you better find out from him when they are likely to arrive ; but I have wired to Willoughby that he is not to send down any men or anything further, as those people up there have been blabbing and here they are still getting letters on the subject—therefore I wired to Willoughby to stop all drilling—give out all the horses, etc. W. himself must not come down till much later, though I know he does not like it. Now you see the force ought to be about six ³—if short of saddles after finding out all Grey has in reserve, then tell Stevens and he must get them below. I don’t see that you can want any more uniforms or horses ; but if required they would also have to come from Stevens. Of course efficiency and proper equipment are important ; but what is much more important, in fact vital, is that suspicion should not be raised in any way. I am going to the Cape on Friday and shall be a week there before coming to Mafeking, unless some unforeseen blabbing occurs, when we might have to hurry things. Wolff will tell you rest.—Yours, L. S. J. ’ ⁴

During his visit to Johannesburg Jameson made what he took to be final arrangements with the Johannesburg leaders. Who these leaders were we gather from the letter he obtained from them—the notorious letter of invitation. It was signed by Charles Leonard, Lionel Phillips, Francis Rhodes,

¹ J. A. Stevens, Assistant Secretary of the Company at Cape Town.

² *I.e.* two hundred B.B.P. men from Colonel Raleigh Grey at Mafeking.

³ *I.e.* six hundred.

⁴ Cape Report, App. A. No. 20.

and John Hays Hammond, with all of whom we have already at least a nodding acquaintance.¹

These four, then, signed a letter which we might call an open invitation. It was addressed to 'Dr. Jameson, Dear Sir,' was headed 'Johannesburg,' but was undated. It began with a recital of grievances, which need not detain us, and proceeded :—

'Not to go into details, we may say that the Government has called into existence all the elements necessary for armed conflict. The one desire of the people here is for fair play, the maintenance of their independence, and the preservation of those public liberties without which life is not worth living. The Government denies these things and violates the national sense of Englishmen at every turn.

'What we have to consider is, what will be the condition of things here in the event of a conflict? Thousands of unarmed men, women, and children of our race will be at the mercy of well-armed Boers, while property of enormous value will be in the greatest peril. We cannot contemplate the future without the gravest apprehensions. All feel that we are justified in taking any steps to prevent the shedding of blood and to ensure the protection of our rights.

'It is under these circumstances that we feel constrained to call upon you to come to our aid, should a disturbance arise here. The circumstances are so extreme that we cannot but believe that you and the men under you will not fail to come to the rescue of people who will be so situated. We guarantee any expense that may reasonably be incurred by you in helping us, and ask you to believe that nothing but the sternest necessity,' etc.

This letter was drafted by Charles Leonard, the scribe of the movement, at the suggestion of Lionel

¹ George Farrar, a large mine-owner, signed the letter some weeks later in Cape Town.

Phillips, to whom it was no doubt suggested by Jameson himself.¹

The explanation generally given by the signatories is that it was intended to justify Jameson with his Directors, and to read to his troops; but not for publication nor to be used without permission. If so, it was rather unfortunately worded, for its language is that of a public manifesto. However that may be, Jameson must have put it in his pocket with a certain sense of satisfaction. For even by that time he had gathered the impression that the resolution of the Johannesburg leaders was not quite of the native hue of his own.

As to the arrangements then made, there are some discrepancies in the evidence. Jameson says that—

‘The time selected for the rising in Johannesburg was the end of December.’² It was agreed that simultaneously with the rising I was to start. My final arrangements with Johannesburg were that this date should be adhered to as far as possible, though it was thought an earlier date might prove necessary if the Transvaal Government gave signs of massing troops on the Border, which would have made it impossible for my force to get through—a rapid march

¹ ‘The origin of the letter is this, so far as I was concerned. On my return from Cape Town in October 1895 with Mr. Phillips, he said to me: “You know, I think we will have to give Jameson a letter (evidently it had been talked about between him and somebody else) and I think you should sign the letter as Chairman of the National Union.” I objected most strenuously. . . . However, he returned to the charge repeatedly, and eventually I gave way, and said, “If you men will sign the letter I will sign it as an individual with you.” Jameson came up in November 1895, and that letter was given to him for the simple alleged reason that it would be required to justify him with the Company’s Directors afterwards, and under solemn pledge that it was not to be used for any other purpose.’—Evidence of Charles Leonard. *Report*, 7945.

² The date, as settled, was telegraphed (in cipher) by Jameson to Willoughby (at Bulawayo): ‘Date fixed is 28th of December to start from here, do not want Lee-Metford Rifles.—L. S. J.’ See Fleishack’s evidence, Trial at Bar, July 23, 1896.

without opposition being essential. Of this necessity I was, with my troops on the Border, to be the sole judge.'¹

And FitzPatrick says: '... it was therefore decided that Dr. Jameson should be notified to start from his camp on the same night as the outbreak in Johannesburg. The dates of December 28 and January 4 were in turn provisionally decided upon, but the primary condition of these arrangements was that under no circumstances should Dr. Jameson move without receiving the word from the Johannesburg party.'²

Jameson, it will be seen, puts the date at December 28 or earlier without, and FitzPatrick December 28 or later with, further reference.

And Colonel Rhodes in his evidence puts the issue even more clearly:—

'Our point is that it was never left to Dr. Jameson to choose his own time; that he was absolutely not to use this letter until he heard from us. That is my own conviction, and it is the conviction of the rest of us I think. Dr. Jameson states the other thing, and that is his conviction.'

Such misunderstandings suggest again the fatal weakness of this complicated plot, that it rested not upon the direction of a single mind, but upon the co-ordination of several. But to proceed.

Jameson left Johannesburg for Cape Town about November 21 or 22, reported to Rhodes all that had happened, and showed him the letter. What Jameson's report was is suggested by the telegram which Rhodes sent to Harris (still in London) on November 24:—

'Dr. Jameson back from Johannesburg. Everything right. My judgment is it is certainty. . . . A. Beit must

¹ *Report, Jameson's evidence*, 4513.

² *Transvaal from Within*, p. 126.

not consult Phillips, who is all right but anxious to do everything himself and he does not wish to play second fiddle.'¹

By November 30 Jameson was in Kimberley; a telegram of that date from Robert White addressed to him there reports that eighty of the Company's police had arrived, and that the rest were expected on the Monday and Tuesday following. They had Lee-Metford rifles and uniform; but the new men who had also arrived had none. We may suppose that Jameson made arrangements with the manager of De Beers for the arming both of Johannesburg and his own force, for on December 4, having reached Mafeking, he is telegraphing to Gardner Williams about ammunition and bandoliers.

From White's diary we know that the Doctor, accompanied by J. Stracey,² arrived at Pitsani Potlugo from down-country on Monday December 2. On the same day Dyke's troop and Bowden's troop of the Company's police arrived from Buluwayo.

The next day we have the momentous entry: 'In Mafeking, Grey told, explained things to him.'³

From that time on Jameson divided his time between Pitsani Potlugo and Mafeking, supervising arrangements, keeping everybody in heart, and spurring up the Johannesburg people by letter and telegram. On December 9 Johnny Willoughby, at Buluwayo, having discovered that he had to 'leave for England hurriedly on my Company's business,' wrote full instructions for the calling up

¹ *Report*, App. Nos. 14-29.

² Stracey, now Colonel Stracey-Clitherow, then a young Guardsman on leave. It is said that he used to go to South Africa for his leave in order to drive the coaches, there being usually eight or twelve horses or mules in a South African coach.

³ Colonel Raleigh Grey, now Sir Raleigh Grey, was in command of the Bechuanaland Border Police.

of the Rhodesia Horse 'for a camp of exercise.' 'In the event of it being deemed advisable,' Captain Napier or Captain Spreckley was to be in command, and 'should it be necessary for R.H. to move down-country, extra remuneration will be given to those going out of the country, to be settled by Dr. Jameson; but if absolutely necessary promise up to three months' extra pay (£45).'¹

These instructions put it beyond all doubt that the use of the Rhodesia Horse for an invasion of the Transvaal from the North was part of the Jameson plan. And here we have the explanation of Jameson's promise, mentioned by FitzPatrick, to 'maintain a force of some 1500 men fully equipped.' The Rhodesia Horse was about 1000 strong, and the police on the Border about 500—the total therefore was what Jameson promised.

II

In the meantime the Uitlanders were making preparations both military and political. They laid in supplies of provisions against a siege, and they began to organise various corps, of which Bettington's Horse and the Australians were the most notable. The Committee had also enlisted a worthy Police Officer called Andrew Trimble, who organised a Town Police, a regiment of foot, and a secret service; and they made beginnings with the importation of arms.

Of these military and police arrangements we shall have something to say at a later stage of our story. It is more important for the moment to consider the temper of the conspirators.

¹ *Cape Report*, App. A. Nos. 40 to 45.

During the long depression of the Baring crisis the people of Johannesburg were resolute in their agitation, and showed a spirit both in 1890 and in 1894 far nearer to the reality of revolution than they showed at the end of 1895 when the economic situation was vastly improved. This change in the atmosphere—rather than any lack of courage—may serve to explain the doubts and irresolution of the Reformers.

Whatever the explanation, the Uitlanders were more fertile in difficulties than in expedients. No sooner was one point settled than another arose. The first question was on a point of tactics. The date originally fixed for the rising was found to coincide with the Johannesburg races. Undoubtedly, if they had so desired, the Uitlanders could have postponed their races: they decided to postpone the rising.

Jameson, as will be readily understood when his situation is considered, was indignant. On December 12 he telegraphed to Colonel Rhodes: 'Grave suspicion has been aroused; . . . do you consider races of utmost importance compared with immediate risk of discovery daily expected . . . let J. H. Hammond inform weak partners, More delay, more danger.'

A little later a fresh contingency agitated the counsels of the conspirators. Doubts were set afloat—by whom history does not say—about the intervention of the High Commissioner. On December 21 they demanded from Rhodes a pledge that 'on day of flotation you and he will leave' (*i.e.* Cape Town for Johannesburg). 'There must,' the telegram continues, 'absolutely be no departure from this as many subscribers have agreed to take

shares on this assurance.' Upon this Alfred Beit, who had in the meantime arrived at the Cape, telegraphed to Lionel Phillips that 'Chairman starts immediately flotation takes place.'

As the High Commissioner¹ was then—if we are to believe the evidence—in blissful ignorance of the conspiracy, it is not the least surprising part of the story that the delivery of his person was made the subject of a bargain as precise as a shipment of goods free on rail for Johannesburg.

But the last and most formidable of these perplexities arose over a question which we must now discuss—the question of what flag was to be hoisted by the Revolution.

FitzPatrick states—or rather suggests—that this apple of discord was thrown by Jameson:—

'On or about December 19,' he says, 'Messrs. Woolls-Sampson and A. Bailey, two Johannesburg men concerned in the movement, who had been in communication with Mr. Rhodes and others in Cape Town, arrived in Johannesburg, and indicated clearly that the question as to which flag was to be raised was either deemed to be a relatively unimportant one or one concerning which some of the parties had not clearly and honestly expressed their intentions. In simple truth, it appeared to be the case that Dr. Jameson either thought that the Johannesburg Reformers were quite indifferent on the subject of the flag, or assumed that the provisions for the maintenance of the Transvaal flag was merely talk, and that the Union Jack would be hoisted at once.'

Now, 'in simple truth' there is a great deal of suggestion, but very little plain statement in this paragraph. But we have something. Abe Bailey

¹ Sir Hercules Robinson, who had returned to the Cape a short time before in succession to Sir Henry Loch as Governor and High Commissioner.

and Woolls-Sampson came up from Cape Town on or about December 19 with the apple of discord in their pockets. Now these two gentlemen had come from England by the same boat that brought Beit and Rutherford Harris. But by that time Jameson was already at Mafeking. Therefore they at least could not have heard the question raised by Jameson. Nor is there any proof that Jameson raised the question at all.

The probability is all the other way. Jameson's opinion on this subject of the flag we have already gathered from his speech at the Imperial Institute the year before. It was the opinion of Rhodes that the federation of South Africa was to be brought about by the realities of population, land, trade, and communications. If British South Africa had the balance of these solid interests, the question of the flag might be left to settle itself. As Jameson held these opinions, it is not at all probable that it was he who raised the question.

Was it Rhodes? No, it could hardly have been Rhodes. For Leonard and Phillips had already settled this point with Rhodes in their conversations at Cape Town. In FitzPatrick's own book, Leonard's account of what took place at Groote Schuur in November makes it clear that it could not have been Rhodes.

'We read to him (Rhodes),' says Leonard, 'the draft of our declaration of rights. He was leaning against the mantelpiece, smoking a cigarette, and when it came to that part of the document in which we refer to Free Trade in South African products, he turned round suddenly and said, "That is what I want. That is all I ask of you. The rest will come in time. We must have a beginning and that will be the beginning. If you people get your rights, the

Customs Union, Railway Convention, and other things will all come in time." ' ¹

Rhodes, then, could not have raised the question. Then who was it? There is a passage in the telegraphic correspondence between Rhodes and Rutherford Harris which suggests an answer. Rhodes, replying to a telegram from Harris which does not appear, says:—

‘As to the English flag, they must very much misunderstand me at home. I of course would not risk everything I am doing except for British flag.—C. J. RHODES.’ ²

Who put the question we do not know; but we do know that the answer is honest and sincere. Rhodes from the beginning to the end of his life worked for the British flag. But he worked in his own way and with the means to his hand. The ‘Imperial factor’ had failed in South Africa; therefore he substituted the ‘Colonial factor.’ If he made the Colony the dominant State in South Africa, with the railways and the balance of the land in its hands, federation must follow on Colonial terms. And Colonial terms meant the British flag. Such was Rhodes’s policy, and his assurance to the Unknown Inquirer was therefore honest.

Now we do not know for whom this assurance was intended. But we do know that the telegram was addressed to Harris in London. And as Harris returned to the Cape in the same boat as Abe Bailey and Woolls-Sampson, is it not possible that he showed them the telegram, and that they all—

¹ *Transvaal from Within*, p. 122.

² *Report*, App. No. 14 (iii. 9). The telegram is dated November 6, 1895.

having no understanding of Rhodes's policy—misunderstood it? ¹

However that may be, the point was raised in Johannesburg, and a new debate began, the upshot of which was that Charles Leonard and Hamilton, the editor of the *Star*, were sent to Cape Town to get fresh assurances from Cecil Rhodes.

The deputation left Johannesburg on Christmas Day, but before it even got as far as Cape Town the Reformers had made up their minds to abandon the Jameson plan. For this change of mind FitzPatrick lays the blame upon Jameson.

'To this feeling of doubt,' he says, 'was added a sense of distrust when Dr. Jameson's importunity and impatience became known; and when the question of the flag was raised there were few, if any, among those concerned in the movement who did not feel that the tail was trying to wag the dog.'

We have seen that Jameson did not raise the issue of the flag; yet it is true that he was importunate. But we must remember his situation. He had agreed upon a settled plan, at the request of the Johannesburg people themselves. He had organised, and was with difficulty holding together, his force of 500 men upon the Border. 'The more delay, the more danger,' was obviously true. As early as December 12 he warned Johannesburg that 'grave suspicion had been aroused.' He knew that people had been, as he said, 'blabbing.' He also knew that Rhodes had 'risked everything,' not only in maintaining the force—which might be explained away—

¹ Rhodes, talking over the Raid after the event, told Mr. Little, Sir George Farrar's representative in Rhodesia, that the real point of difference between him and the Reformers was not the flag, but his terms for the federation of South Africa, particularly the condition that the Transvaal was to be in a minority in the federal representation.

but in smuggling arms into Johannesburg, which, if it were discovered, meant ruin.

It is clear from all the correspondence that Jameson depended for success on the element of surprise: we see it for example in the letter he wrote to 'dear Bobby' from the Kimberley Club on November 5: 'I am writing you that Foley leaves to-morrow to join you at camp; use him and keep him there. Not intentionally but idiotically he has been talking too much.' We see it in his refusal to let Willoughby come down from Buluwayo before December 9, lest people should talk. We see it even more clearly in his letter to 'dear Bobby' of November 19 from Johannesburg: 'What is much more important, in fact vital, is that suspicion should not be raised in any way.'

Retreat was difficult, delay was dangerous: as the thing had gone so far the best chance of safety lay in resolution. 'I was satisfied,' says Jameson, 'that not only those who assumed the leadership but the Uitlander population generally had, not hurriedly, but after grave and prolonged deliberation, come to the conclusion that their grievances would never be redressed by the Transvaal Government . . . and that there must inevitably be a rising.'¹

'Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel: but being in,
Bear 't, that the opposed may beware of thee.'

And it was not only Jameson that was importunate. Rhodes had been warned of the necessity of speedy action from London, and on December 21 Alfred Beit, who was then staying with Rhodes,

¹ *Report, Minutes of Evidence* 4513.

telegraphed to Lionel Phillips urging 'immediate flotation.' On December 23 Harris telegraphed to Jameson, 'We suspect Transvaal is getting aware slightly.' And in the same telegram Harris definitely informed Jameson that the Revolution was to take place ('Company' to be 'floated') next Saturday (the 28th) at 12 o'clock at night, and that 'they are very anxious you must not start before 8 o'clock.'

On December 24 Jameson accepted this arrangement. Although the Boers were already astir—'meeting held Zeerust¹ and southerly town'—yet 'will endeavour to delay till Saturday.' Nevertheless, 'if you can only cable, do all you can to hasten it,' because 'every day is of the utmost importance.' On receipt of telegram he was prepared to start as originally arranged 'to move on date of delivery,' and he added, 'Colonel F. W. Rhodes etcetera intolerable.' On the 25th Harris telegraphed to Johannesburg that they could not 'give extension of refusal' beyond December as the 'Transvaal Boer opposition shareholders' were holding 'meeting' both on the Limpopo and 'at Pitsani.'

Nevertheless on the 26th Colonel Rhodes telegraphed to Cape Town that it was 'absolutely necessary' to 'delay flotation,' and that Leonard had left for Cape Town to explain, and on the same day Sam Jameson telegraphed to his brother at Pitsani Potlugo to the same effect. After explaining that the postponement was 'through unforeseen circumstances altogether unexpected,' and 'until we have C. J. Rhodes's absolute pledge that authority of Imperial Government will not be insisted on,' Sam added, 'we will endeavour to meet your wishes as

¹ Zeerust lay between the Bechuanaland border and Johannesburg.

regards December, but you must not move until you have received instructions to. Please confirm.'

Rutherford Harris, after re-telegraphing Colonel Rhodes's message to Jameson, gave him the same injunction; 'So you must not move until you hear from us again. Too awful; very sorry.'

Then on the 27th came another telegram from Dr. Harris with the news that while the Christmas deputation was on its way the Reformers had changed their plans:—

'Sicheliland concession shareholders' meeting postponed until 6th day of January; meanwhile circular has been publicly issued, and opinion of all interested will then be taken and then action decided upon.' Harris advises patience, promises to 'do our utmost'; but is doleful as to the Reformers—'am beginning to see our shareholders in Matabeleland concession were very different to those in Sicheliland matter.'

It is plain that Rhodes was solicitous to soothe Jameson's impatience, for on the same day he telegraphs at length not to be 'alarmed at our having 600 men at Pitsani Potlugo' as 'we have the right to have them.' And then he gives a series of explanations which might be used to disarm suspicion. They were 'sorting out' the Company's police for 'eventual distribution; the cost at Mafeking was only half what it was in Matabeleland; it was healthier for horses; they were under obligation to the Imperial Government to keep up a certain police force'—in short, 'if people are so foolish as to think you are threatening Transvaal, we cannot help that.'

In the meantime the Reformers were becoming more and more alarmed lest Jameson should move

as he threatened according to plan. They consulted with Major Heany, one of Jameson's own officers and friends, whom he had sent to Johannesburg to help to organise the forces there.

Heany was introduced to half a dozen gentlemen who 'talked for half an hour in my presence.' They were talking about the best way of getting Jameson to understand that he was not to come. Heany did not comfort them:—

'They asked me my opinion as to what Jameson would do, and I said, "He will come in as sure as Fate."' ¹

This remark must have put the Reformers in a fever of apprehension, and they resolved to send not one messenger, but two. Holden, another of Jameson's officers, was sent across country, and Heany by rail.

Holden arrived first—on the evening of the 28th—and delivered his message. Heany had to make the long detour by way of Bloemfontein and De Aar junction, and calculating that he would miss the Kimberley connection he telegraphed in code to Cape Town: 'Stop Jameson until I come.' In the meantime Phillips had telegraphed to Beit: 'It is absolutely necessary to delay floating. If foreign subscribers insist on floating, anticipate complete failure.'

III

Just as Jameson in 1893, at the end of the telegraph at Victoria, hammered away on the one point of immediate action, so now. On the 27th he telegraphed that his police had gone forward to cut the wire, and feared lest he might not be able to stop

¹ See Major Heany's evidence before the Committee: 'I know Dr. Jameson very intimately, and I know that when he once makes up his mind to do a thing, he usually does it.' (5864 *et seq.*)