

them. He expected authority, therefore, at 'nine to-morrow morning.' Surely, he said, Colonel Rhodes saw the need for immediate action. As for the guarantee about the flag, they could give it before Leonard arrived.

And again he telegraphed that if he could not, as he expected, communicate with the police who were cutting the wires, 'we must carry into effect original plans.'

'They have then,' he argues, 'two days for flotation. If they do not we will make our own flotation with help of letter which I will publish. Inform John Hays Hammond, Dr. Wolff, A. L. Lawley whom you may rely upon to co-operate.'

And to his brother Sam he telegraphed, also on the 27th: 'Dr. Wolff will understand that (for) distant cutting British Bechuanaland Police have already gone forward; guarantee (on flag) already given, therefore let J. H. Hammond telegraph instantly all right.' To this imperious message Hammond replied: 'Wire just received; experts decidedly adverse. I absolutely condemn further developments at present.'

Now Jameson had by this time made up his mind about the Johannesburg leaders. 'There will be no flotation,' he telegraphed to Cape Town on the morning of the 28th, 'if left to themselves. First delay was races, which did not exist; second, policies—already arranged. All mean fear. You had better go as quickly as possible and report fully, or tell the Right Hon. C. J. Rhodes to allow me. I stand to lose 50 good British South Africa Company's police—time expires next week, and so on. We can tell them nothing.'

Jameson afterwards handsomely apologised for this imputation of cowardice; but his charge of

irresolution is justified. The Reformers first invited Jameson, then arranged their plans with him, then stipulated that the High Commissioner must come up, then that the British flag must not be raised, and then before there was time to get answers on all these points put off the whole thing and decided to consult everybody afresh. In the meantime the time-expired men of the Bechuanaland Police were threatening to resign and Jameson could not stop them; the Boers he was certain were becoming aware; if he were to act at all, he must act at once.

What was Cape Town saying to all this? Rhodes sought both to moderate Jameson's impatience and screw up the courage of Johannesburg. 'It is all right if you will only wait,' Harris telegraphed to Jameson on the 28th; and to Colonel Rhodes he telegraphed, 'Keep market firm.'

But later in the day, possibly after seeing Hamilton and Leonard, Harris sent this despairing message:—

'Goold-Adams arriving Mafeking Monday, and Heany, I think, arrives to-night; after seeing him, you and we must judge regarding flotation; but all our foreign friends are now dead against it, and say public will not subscribe one penny towards it even with you as Director. Ichabod.'

And still again (on the evening of the 28th):—

'You are quite right with regard to cause of delay of flotation; but Charles Leonard [and] Hamilton of Star inform us, movement not popular in Johannesburg; when you have seen Captain Heany let us know by wire what he says: we cannot have fiasco.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The word 'fiasco' (pronounced fyasco) was a favourite with Rhodes about this time. Some years before, while waiting anxiously in Bechuanaland for news of his beloved Pioneers, he met one of them—a rough prospector—on his way down-country. 'What do you think of the North?' Rhodes asked him eagerly. 'Well, if you want my opinion,' the fellow replied, 'it's a bloody fyasco!'

The point of the flag was easily settled, Rhodes suggesting a referendum of the people of the Transvaal when the moment arrived. But the real trouble was the spirit of Johannesburg, and upon that the messengers had brought doleful news: 'Charles Leonard says flotation not popular' Harris telegraphs to Colonel Rhodes, 'and England's bunting will be resisted by public. Is it true? Consult all our friends and let me know, as Dr. Jameson is quite ready to move resolution and is only waiting for Captain Maurice Heany's arrival.' Lionel Phillips on the same day telegraphed to Beit, and the message was sent to Jameson:—

'It is absolutely necessary to delay floating; if foreign subscribers insist on floating without delay anticipate complete failure.'

It is difficult to resist the conclusion from all this that the question of the flag was merely a pretext. The Johannesburg leaders were not keyed up for insurrection: the nearer they got to it the less they liked it, and one excuse was as good as another.

But Jameson was by this time resolved to carry the thing through, by himself if necessary. His last message on the 28th ended with the fateful words: 'Unless I hear definitely to the contrary shall leave to-morrow evening . . . and it will be all right.' Fateful indeed! For to this message which was sent from Pitsani Potlugo on Saturday afternoon no answer came. Was silence consent? Jameson might have so judged, not knowing that, as will be seen later, malignant fortune had brought the telegram to a closed door.

But what of the Johannesburg Mercuries? Captain Holden arrived on the evening of the 28th, and

delivered his message ; Captain Heany, by means of a special train from Kimberley, got to Mafeking early on the morning of the 29th.

Now Captain Heany was not the most suitable man for such an errand. A man of action, a member of that famous firm of Johnson, Heany, and Borrow, which had brought the Pioneers into Rhodesia, by birth an American, he had already been nearly twenty years in South Africa, and usually on the frontiers. He had served in Carrington's Horse, and in the Bechuanaland Border Police ; he had joined his friends Johnson and Borrow to form the Northern Gold-fields Pioneer Syndicate which had got from Lobengula a concession to work the gold-fields of Mazoe. Thus he had been a Rhodesian before the Pioneers, and after the occupation he had continued his adventures. In helping to open up the East coast route he had been taken prisoner by the Portuguese, and in the Matabele War had commanded A troop of the Salisbury Horse. It was this eagle, this 'bird of freedom,' whom the Uitlanders chose to be their dove. He faithfully performed his duty. But on the way he stopped at Mafeking, and although it was then half-past four on a Sunday morning he knocked up a store-keeper, one Emanuel Isaacs, and bought a pair of field boots and a kitbag.<sup>1</sup>

The story goes that when Heany delivered the letter Jameson walked up and down for some little time, and then said, 'I'm going.'

'Thought you would,' said Heany.

'And what are you going to do ?' said Jameson.

'Going with you,' said Heany.

'Thought you would,' said Jameson.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Cape Report*, evidence of Emanuel Isaacs.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Holden, the other messenger from Johannesburg, who made his way across country, also went in with the column.

Then Jameson completed his arrangements. To Napier and Spreckley he telegraphed to call out the Rhodesia Horse; to Wolff at Johannesburg he sent the following telegram:—

‘Meet me as arranged before you left on Tuesday night, which will enable us to decide which is the best destination; <sup>1</sup> make Adv. Leonard speak, make cutting to-night without fail, have great faith in J. H. Hammond, A. L. Lawley, and miners with Lee-Metford rifles.’

And to Cape Town he sent this long message:—

‘Shall leave to-night for the Transvaal. My reason is the final arrangement with writers of letter was that, without further reference to them, in case I should hear at some future time that suspicions have been aroused among the Transvaal authorities, I was to start immediately to prevent loss of lives as letters state. Reuter only just received. Even without, my own information of meeting in the Transvaal [would] compel immediate move to fulfil promise made. We are simply going to protect everybody while they change the present dishonest Government, and take vote from the whole country as to form of government required by the whole.’ <sup>2</sup>

The Reuter’s message to which Jameson here refers was published throughout South Africa on the 28th. It ran as follows:—

‘*Johannesburg*, December 28.—The position is becoming acute, and persistent rumours are afloat of secret arming of

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* whether Pretoria or Johannesburg.

<sup>2</sup> There was some dispute in the Committee as to whether Jameson sent this message before or after his talk with Heany. Heany’s special train arrived at Mafeking at 4.30 on Sunday morning. At Mafeking he hired a Cape cart and drove out to Pitsani Potlugo, a distance of twenty-seven miles. It seems possible that with good horses the distance could have been covered before 9.5 A.M., when the telegram was despatched; but Heany (fifteen months after the event) says he arrived between 11 and 12.

miners and war-like preparations. Women and children are leaving the Rand. Americans have passed a resolution siding with the Transvaal, and the Mercantile Association considers that in case of trouble they have everything to lose, and have appointed a committee to investigate the position. The market is lifeless; no business and everything politics. The "Volklied" and "God Save the King" were loudly cheered in the theatre.

'Pretoria.—The President and General Joubert have returned. The political situation is the talk of the town, and the opinion is expressed by leading men that a *modus vivendi* will be arrived at and wiser counsels prevail in Johannesburg. Two citizens from the Rand privately interviewed the President with not wholly unsatisfactory results.'

Was there ever a more puzzling message for knight errant to receive? 'Secret arming and war-like preparations' meant the secret was out, the Government was warned, and if action were to be taken at all, it must be taken at once. Then if the women and children were leaving the Rand, that surely meant that the people meant to take action. The Americans were against them: that was bad.<sup>1</sup> And the merchants, having everything to lose from trouble, were against them also. Naturally! Kruger and his Commander-in-Chief were in Pretoria. That too suggested action. The President was receiving a deputation from the Rand. What did that mean? No, that did not sound well. But only two. No matter! Anyway it was now or never. If Jameson had been a man of less courage or more caution, he would have seen that Now was already too late. As it was, being Now or Never, he hazarded fate on Now.

<sup>1</sup> It was not true,

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE RAID

'There is a fate that flies with towering spirit  
Home to the mark, and never checks at conscience.'

#### I

DR. JAMESON had a well-founded faith in his friend, Willoughby's, military talents, and he had always intended that 'Johnny' should command the column. But, for reasons we have seen, poor Willoughby was left fretting his soul out at Bulawayo. 'I can get nothing out of the Doctor as yet except vague and disappointing telegrams; in the meantime the days are slipping by and I am tired of waiting'—so he writes to his chum and Senior Staff Officer, 'Bobbie' White, on November 8. And again on the 18th Willoughby writes: 'I wish I could come down, but he will not let me move yet. Mind you and Harry drill the men inside out, out-post, advanced guards, skirmishing, etc.'

'Harry,' let us here explain, was 'Bobbie's' brother, or, to describe him more at length, the Hon. H. F. White, of the Grenadier Guards, Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the Mashonaland Mounted Police, and we may be certain that he and his second-in-command, Inspector Bodle, late of the 6th Dragoons, and his officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, worked hard and drilled their men both inside out and outside in, not only because



it is the nature of the good British officer so to do, but because in this case their lives depended on it.

They had a good foundation for their work in the four troops and artillery troop of the Mashonaland Mounted Police—good shots and good horsemen nearly all of them. But from Cape Town Jameson had sent up about a hundred recruits who had to be brought up to concert pitch in as many weeks as they should have had months; but even they for the most part were not altogether innocent of arms—have we not seen the commanding officer of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own complaining that his best men had been stolen? Still, there was a great deal to do, and what made the work harder was that horses and equipment were dribbling in after the men.

Willoughby at last gave his final instructions for the calling out of the Rhodesia Horse for 'camp of exercise' if required, and left Buluwayo 'for England' on December 9. From the time he arrived at Pitsani Potlugo we may be certain the force was trained even more zealously than before. There was a great deal to be done. The Mashonaland Force had received Lee-Metfords in exchange for Martinis before leaving Buluwayo: the Bechuanaland Border Police were still armed with Martinis; they had to make the change and be instructed in the new weapon. Horses had to be brought into shape; mule teams had to be broken in to the Maxims; the route had to be studied, the order of march thought out, and arrangements made for the provisioning of men and horses along it.

This last part of the work had already been arranged between Dr. Jameson and his old Kimberley colleague, Dr. Wolff. In 1886 Wolff, like many another old Kimberley hand, had migrated to the

gold-fields, and in 1895 was practising on the Rand. About the middle of November he began the delicate operation of laying a line of stores between Krugersdorp and the western border, and stocking them with provisions, fodder, and remounts for a force six hundred strong without exciting the suspicion of the Boers. But Dr. Wolff came of a race that has never failed through lack of cunning. And Dr. Wolff formed two companies. One was the Rand Produce and Trading Syndicate. The price of forage, mealies, corn, and so forth varied a good deal in Johannesburg from week to week. What more reasonable than that a company should be started to buy produce direct from the Boers, store it at local centres, and bring it into Johannesburg as required? As for the horses, another company intended to open a line of coaches from the Rand to Mafeking—not, by the way, a very promising speculation, but hardly less promising than many another which had beguiled money out of the bulging pockets of Johannesburg investors.

Thus all things were arranged. On the 27th two men of the Bechuanaland Border Police were sent into the Transvaal to cut the wires to Pretoria at Rustenburg. It is said that they got drunk and made a hash of the business.<sup>1</sup> On the 27th through his brother Sam, and on the morning of the 29th direct, Dr. Jameson instructed Dr. Wolff to cut the telegraph wires—as previously arranged—round Pretoria; but Dr. Wolff afterwards stated in his evidence that he did not receive the order until Monday, when it was too late. This double failure to

<sup>1</sup> See *Cape Report*, evidence of Arthur Bates, an old policeman, who was sent by Colonel Grey from Mafeking to Rustenburg on the 27th. He had got £50 for some job or other—what he declined to say—but had not done it.

cut Pretoria off the wires was, as we shall see, disastrous. On Sunday (the 29th) the wires were cut both north and south of Mafeking and Pitsani Potlugo.<sup>1</sup>

At Pitsani Potlugo everything was ready by three o'clock on Sunday afternoon. It is a desolate place—a stretch of bare, flat veld under a kopje, with nothing but a farmhouse and a store to mark its desolation. But on that Sunday afternoon there was a goodly company. Dr. Jameson was there, as in the Matabele War and with the Pioneers a civilian without formal powers, but the true leader by virtue of his power to lead. Sir John Willoughby commanded the whole force, and he had his miniature staff.<sup>2</sup>

They were keen young British officers, some drawn from the Guards and other crack regiments and others from the Company's service. One joyous young Guardsman, Major J. B. Stracey<sup>3</sup> of the Scots Guards, had gone out to South Africa on leave, and 'happening' to be there he was 'temporarily attached to Staff,' along with Major Heany, Captain Foley, and Lieutenant Harry Holden, late of the Grenadiers, who also happened to be there.

The force itself, the Mashonaland Mounted Police,

<sup>1</sup> See the evidence of Mr. (now Sir) Somerset French, the Postmaster-General of the Cape, before the Cape Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Major Robert White was his Senior Staff Officer; Major C. Hyde Villiers of the Royal Horse Guards his Staff Officer; Captain Kincaid Smith of the Royal Artillery his Artillery Staff Officer; Captain Kennedy his Quartermaster, and Captain E. Holden his Assistant Quartermaster; Surgeon Captain Farmer of the B.S.A. Company, and Surgeon Captain Heaton Hamilton, late of the 1st Life Guards, were his Medical Officers; Lieutenant Grenfell of the 1st Life Guards his Remount Officer; Lieutenant Jesser Coope was Transport Officer; and Captain Lindsell of the Royal Scots Fusiliers was in charge of the Scouts.

<sup>3</sup> Now Colonel Stracey-Clitherow.

commanded by Colonel Harry White, consisted of 4 troops and an artillery troop, 372 officers and men strong, with 480 horses, 128 mules, and 65 Cape boys as servants and grooms. Their artillery was 1 12½-pounder and 6 Maxims, and their baggage train 6 Scotch carts, 1 Cape cart, and 2 grain wagons.

Such was the Pitsani Potlugo column, which drew up on parade on Sunday afternoon to be addressed by Jameson and Willoughby.

What Jameson said to his men can be put together from the various reports of witnesses. All agree that he read the letter or part of the letter from the Reformers: the phrase about women and children stuck in every memory.<sup>1</sup> He is said to have stated also that there would be no shot fired, and this is the more credible as it is certain that he pinned his hopes upon getting through by a surprise rush: 'they would get through without any fighting at all,' but if they did fight they were prepared for fighting. They were to be joined by the Bechuanaland Border Police, and, if it came to the push, according to one witness, the Cape Mounted Rifles and the Natal Mounted Police would join in.

We know no more of Willoughby's speech than that he congratulated the men on their appearance, and hoped they would give a good account of themselves.

We know also that the men cheered, and we may believe that the cheer was hearty, for Jameson had a power over men which some have called magnetic. As one of them afterwards said, 'We would all have followed the Doctor to hell.'

At half-past six, in the gathering coolness of a

<sup>1</sup> The statement that women and children were fleeing from Johannesburg had just come through from Reuter, and Jameson may have referred to that also.

midsummer evening, the column set out in the order of march on the road to Malmani.

In the meantime what was happening at Mafeking? There the need for secrecy was greater, as not the empty wilderness but a very wide-awake little township surrounded the police. For that reason the force was only paraded at half-past seven in the evening. Most of the men had accepted the offer of transfer from the Crown to the Company, but some had refused, and when the police force drew up these men fell out and were formed into a separate troop behind the rest.

Then Captain Coventry spoke to them. 'It is no good keeping it from you any longer,' he said. 'We are going to Johannesburg; we have got to get through in fifty hours, and I want you all to come along with us.'

Nobody moved out, and presently Colonel Raleigh Grey came up. 'What is the matter with you men?' he exclaimed. 'Why won't you come with us? We are going to Johannesburg, and I want you all to come with us.'

Then one of the troop spoke up and asked whether they were going to fight for the Queen.

'No,' the Colonel replied, 'you are not going to fight for the Queen; but you are going to fight for the supremacy of the British flag in South Africa.'

This satisfied most of the men, and when the column rode out of the camp, it was 122 strong—officers and men, not counting Major Robert White, who represented Willoughby's Staff, and the drivers and leaders.<sup>1</sup> They had 160 horses and 30 mules;

<sup>1</sup> Several of the younger officers, as well as some of the men, refused to join. Captain Fuller, late of the Force, who had joined the Cape Mounted Police on November 15, was watching the Depot station, and at 8 o'clock on Sunday night, according to his evidence, Major White asked him to

for artillery they had 2 7-pounders and 2 Maxims ; and they had 2 Scotch carts, and two Cape carts to carry baggage and ammunition.

The column rode north out of Mafeking about nine o'clock at night. Mr. Boyes, the Magistrate, was sitting on the verandah of his house when he heard the sound of cheering from the police camp. He remarked to his wife that it was odd they should be cheering at that time of night, when Colonel Raleigh Grey rode past his front door. 'I have left my gauntlets under the chair on the verandah,' said Grey, and he picked them up and went, shouting out in the dusk to another neighbour, 'Good-bye, Sam Weil, I'm off.'

Mr. Boyes went to the club and found it in a buzz of speculation and excitement.

In the meantime the police, after riding out of the township to the north, formed to the right, then formed column of march and headed due east on the road to the Transvaal.

Captain Fuller, who was watching them, sent Sub-Inspector Brown to follow the column, and Brown returned about midnight with the news that they had crossed the Border.

The two columns rode through the night upon converging lines. The Pitsani column halted for an hour and a half 17 miles out at Jagersfontein Kop, where they picked up the two forage wagons which had been sent ahead.

Almost on the stroke of five the two columns met at Malmani. As troop after troop trotted down the use his influence to persuade these young officers to join. Captain Fuller refused on the ground that he was in the Cape Government Service, and asked where they were going. Major White did not reply, but as the column moved off he called out 'Good-bye.' 'I shall have to report the movement of these troops,' said Fuller. 'You can do as you like,' White replied.

street in the light of dawn, an English cobbler opened his shop-door, and stood in it amazed with his apron in his hand. Then realising what the brave sight meant, he waved his apron up and down, crying, ' Good on ye, lads, good on ye ! ' <sup>1</sup>

The united column was now, with the staff, 508 strong, not counting the 75 drivers and leaders. Its order of march was well suited to the work in hand. Captain Lindsell rode first with a guide and a patrol of picked men half an hour by day and a quarter of an hour by night in advance of the column. Then came the advance guard, consisting of a troop with a Maxim gun. Then a squadron marching at the head of the main body, followed by four Maxims and the 12½-pounder, the mounted gun detachments, the Cape and Scotch carts under the Transport Officer ; then a squadron and all the led horses, and lastly one troop for the rear guard with a Maxim gun.

In this marching order the column pressed on to Malmani Oog, where the first store was laid, and halted there for rest and breakfast at 6.45. At nine they were off again and trekked to Nordin's store, 16 miles farther on, which they reached at one o'clock ; Nordin's they left at 2.20 and reached Lombard's store at the Lead Mines 9 miles farther at half-past five in the evening. Progress here was slow for the road was hilly.

The Lead Mines, indeed, were the first point of danger, for here, after a steep descent of 600 feet, the road passes for 500 yards through a narrow wooded ravine with a river at the bottom. In the drift the 12½-pounder ammunition cart was upset and delayed the column an hour ; but the column got through at last in safety.

<sup>1</sup> At Malmani the telegraph line to Zeerust was out.

It was just in time: a force of 300 Boers from Lichtenburg reached the defile three hours later. The Transvaal was awake. At Macarthur's store, the very next off-saddle, they got due warning.

'Two messengers here caught us up from Joubert, wanting to know why we were breaking the law, and warning us. The Doctor wrote an answer.'<sup>1</sup>

This was on Monday night: they had been twenty-four hours or so on the road, and here was proof that the Boers knew all about them. Jameson must have realised that here was an end to his hope of getting through without fighting.

## II

How did Pretoria learn the news? We know, from the despatches sent to Berlin by Herff, the German Consul-General at Pretoria, that as early as December 24 the Transvaal Government was 'taking steps' against expected disturbances in Johannesburg. On the 26th Charles Leonard's violent manifesto—damp squib as it was—was 'looked upon by everybody as threatening the Government with violence'; and some time on Monday, the 30th, Pretoria received the news 'by telegraph'—probably from Rustenburg—that '800 men of the Chartered Company, armed with six Maxim guns and cannon of other calibre, were advancing on Johannesburg, and had already nearly reached the town of Rustenburg.' Thereupon Kruger called out his Burghers and prepared to give battle.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Willoughby's *Diary*. The printed version has it, 'received a letter'; if the *Diary* is correct these messengers must have come in from the west.

<sup>2</sup> Herff's telegrams were presented to the Reichstag on February 12, 1896, and were afterwards printed in translation as part of the Appendix to Report.

The Boers, then, were awake and the Imperial Government was awaking. Chamberlain had at least one eye open on Sunday, for on that day he telegraphed a warning to Sir Hercules Robinson. Rhodes had doubtful news some time after midday; but had sat upon it in a state of miserable uncertainty all through Sunday afternoon and evening. Then between ten and eleven o'clock at night he sent his coachman with a note 'scrawled on the back of a telegraph form' to the Imperial Secretary, Sir Graham Bower. Bower went at once and found Rhodes in his bedroom.

Now Bower had been Rhodes's confidant in the secret ever since October. Only the day before Rhodes had told him that the Revolution had 'fizzled out like a damp squib.' He now found Rhodes, as he afterwards described it, 'crushed' by the news, and he was 'rather knocked over' himself.

Bower slept on it, and slept badly, we may suppose, for at five o'clock he sent a note to the Governor to break the news, and by six o'clock he was in Cape Town. His state must have been indeed miserable, for he had kept his knowledge back from his superior since October, and now it had to come out. At eight o'clock he went to the Chartered Company's offices, but they were shut; then he went to the Prime Minister's office, but Rhodes was not there, then back to Government House to find the Governor had arrived.

More of what the Governor did that Monday we shall see later; in the meantime what is to our purpose is that he sent a telegram to Newton,<sup>1</sup> commanding him, if the rumour was true, to send 'a special messenger on a fast horse' after Jameson.

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Francis Newton, then Resident Commissioner, Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Now Newton was much in Bower's position. Jameson had let him into the secret of the Jameson plan as early as December 4. Newton had kept the guilty secret in his breast until the middle of the month, but getting more and more uncomfortable about it, had resolved to go down to Cape Town and clear things up. He went, and saw his immediate superior, who was none other than Bower. Bower said he knew and hinted that everybody else knew also. Newton then proposed to see the High Commissioner, but Bower persuaded him to go instead to Rhodes. Newton went and told Rhodes that he proposed to resign. But Rhodes's powers of persuasion had been too much for poor Newton. Rhodes was then sanguine of success. If Newton resigned it might let the cat out of the bag. What assurances the Prime Minister gave him we shall see later on.

Newton had stayed over Christmas, glad to be away from Mafeking; but not altogether happy in his mind. He had returned on the 28th, had been overtaken at Vryburg by Heany's special train, and had arrived at Mafeking on the morning of that momentous Sunday.

He had heard that the force was riding away; but he had done nothing, and now at midday on Monday this message from the High Commissioner began to arrive.

Newton was even in a worse case than Bower; but now he did what he could. By either 1.30 or 2.30—accounts differ—Orderly Sergeant White, one of the policemen who had refused to go with Grey, was mounted on a swift horse with a waterproof packet in his breast pocket containing five letters, to Dr. Jameson and his principal officers.

White's horse must have been very good. He

was stopped at the Border by an armed guard of Dutchmen, and taken to Malmani, where his despatches were opened by the local authorities. There he was kept about four hours and then went on under escort. Hot on the spoor of the Raiders they pressed on from store to store, helping themselves to food and fodder as they went. Thus they rode all Sunday night, and some time on Monday morning—again accounts differ as to the exact time—they caught up with the column. By that time White had ridden eighty miles on the same horse.<sup>1</sup>

First he went with his despatches to Colonel Grey. 'Take them to Sir John Willoughby,' said Grey. He took them to Willoughby. 'Take them to Dr. Jameson,' said Willoughby. He took them to Jameson. 'Take them back to Sir John Willoughby,' said Jameson, 'he is in military command.'

So Willoughby opened the packet, and produced the five envelopes. Out of one of them—addressed to Captain Gosling—the Dutchmen at Malmani had taken the letter. But they were all the same. They were in fact copies of the High Commissioner's telegram to Newton :—

'There is a rumour here that Dr. Jameson has entered the Transvaal with an armed force. Is this correct? If it is, send a special messenger on a fast horse directing him to return at once. A copy of this telegram should be sent to the officers with him, and they should be told that Her Majesty's Government repudiate their violation of the territory of a friendly State, and that they are rendering themselves liable to severe penalties.'

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<sup>1</sup> White says he came up to the column at 11 o'clock at Doorn 'kop,' by which he clearly meant Doornport, which the column had reached at 5.45 A.M. in the morning. According to Willoughby's notebook the column left Doornport at 8 A.M.

White waited half an hour while Jameson and his officers debated the matter. The substance of the debate is no doubt given in the following passage from Willoughby's notebook:—

‘Letter from H. C. here arrived ordering us to return. This was considered out of the question. We were now nearly two-thirds of the way, only 64 miles from Krugersdorp where our friends had promised to meet us in force. If we turned back we should be playing them false. Behind us we knew was Joubert probably with a large force, and we felt sure a retrograde movement would encourage the Boers to fall on us from all sides. Added to this we had food all the way in front of us but not an atom for men and horses on the road we had come. I thereupon replied to the letters that they should be attended to. The only way of safety now for our small force was to push on with the utmost speed, particularly as we had heard that the Rustenburg-Zeerust and Rustenburg-Pretoria telegraph wires had never been cut as promised by the Johannesburg people, and that Kruger knew of our advance at 2 P.M. on Monday, the 30th.’

As things had gone so far, there was in fact—and could be—no thought of turning back. White waited half an hour apart, and then Sir John Willoughby gave him the decision:—

‘Tell your commanding officer,’ he said, ‘that the despatches have been received and will be attended to.’

Then, according to White, the bugle sounded ‘Boot and saddle,’ and the force rode off in the direction of Johannesburg.<sup>1</sup> For White's part, he returned to Mafeking. But he noted on the way that all the stores were in charge of armed Boers,

<sup>1</sup> At Doornport Dr. Wolff had placed 250 remounts; but as they were mostly old coachers, the Raiders only took 40 of them, preferring their own horses.

and two or three hours after sunset he fell in with a party of 300 of them—it was the Rustenburg commando. Willoughby was right: retreat was cut off.

The Raiders, as we have seen, left Doornport at 8 A.M. They reached Vlakfontein at 10 A.M., and after a short halt went on to Soldin's store, twenty miles from Doornport, which they reached at 1 P.M. and left at 2.30. As they went they saw several Boers riding and driving, who came up, looked at them, and then went off again; the farms they passed were now deserted and there were reports of wagons full of armed Boers in front. But nothing happened until they got to Boon's store at 6.30 in the evening.

There in the gathering dusk they saw a single horseman riding up from the east. It was no other than Saul Johannes Eloff, the President's nephew, a lieutenant of the Police, from Krugersdorp. 'In consequence of information received' he had ridden out that morning with a small force of men. He had left these behind when he sighted the column and now rode boldly up to challenge the Raiders. He was arrested, disarmed, and taken to Jameson.

'I asked him,' says Eloff, 'whether he thought it was right to arrest me, and to disarm me on our own territory, there being no war.'

'You are right,' said Jameson after a pause.

Eloff, however, was not at once released. He stayed with the column at Boon's store while it rested, and when the column left he was given his horse on condition that he waited two hours before riding away.

According to Willoughby's notebook, Eloff told them that 'Johannesburg was up, and it served the

Government right for not having a standing army.' It was a comforting piece of news—delusive though it was. The column rode on through the night, their scouts reporting that the Boer scouts retreated as they advanced, and there were reports also of a force of Boers to the south. So the column went along carefully as men do who expect every moment to be ambushed in the night. Soon after 9 P.M. they passed Levi's store, five miles from Boon's. And two miles beyond they approached a rocky wooded ridge through which the road had to pass. There the scouts encountered 30 Boers who opened fire. The column was halted and two troops moved up to seize the ridge on either side of the road, and then two Maxims were moved forward so as to overlook the reverse slope. Then the advanced guard, one strong troop, was sent forward to occupy the Drift 800 yards beyond the ridge. The Boers fell back before these movements beyond the Drift, fired a few shots, and then retreated.

It was the first skirmish, and Willoughby must have felt himself well out of it, for the road over the ridge and through the defile was so narrow that the column had to form in single file. But soon the track widened out again, and the force was able to resume the formation which it kept nearly all the way from Boon's store to within ten miles of Krugersdorp, of six lines abreast—two lines of guns in the centre, a line of carts on either side of the guns, and the main body of troops on each flank, thus reducing the total length of the column from a mile to less than 300 yards.

Two hours had been lost by this check on the ridge, and Willoughby was well aware of the value of time. They were now going through a region of

hills, about a mile and a half in breadth, and when a Boer came in with a flag of truce, Willoughby refused to halt the column, suspecting that either the fellow was a spy or had been sent as a ruse to gain time. And Willoughby was probably right, for when the Boer was examined, he had nothing to say: 'I sent him about his business,' says Willoughby, 'and had him conducted well outside our line of advanced scouts.'

Then the road became indistinct and the column lost it, so that as it was now one in the morning and they had been five hours in the saddle, a halt was called. The men were dog-tired and lay down beside their horses, guarded by two or three Cossack posts on two ridges that ran east and west, and a cordon of sentries round the bivouac. Here on one of the ridges a trooper was wounded by a sniper—Willoughby not liking the position saddled up at 3.30, and the men stood to arms until daylight.

As the dawn broke the sentries reported two large bodies of Boers advancing from the south; but it was a false alarm. A troop of the advance guard went ahead to occupy a ridge that crossed the road, and then the column resumed its march, reaching Van Oudtshoorn's store, twelve miles from Boon's, at six on Wednesday morning. There, in a fair position, they off-saddled for breakfast, and halted four hours to rest men and horses.

It was New Year's morning: the men had now been riding for two days and three nights, with bivouacs too short for refreshing sleep. And now their rest was troubled by constant alarms. One party of 60 Boers was sighted two miles to their rear, a force of 200 were reported two or three miles to the south, a small party to the north, and another

party was seen retreating on Krugersdorp. They were obviously surrounded and being held under observation.

## III

At 9.30 the little force resumed its march, and after two miles, to their great relief, left the hilly region behind them and passed into fine open country. They were now dogged by a force of 100 Boers following a mile behind the rear-guard, which Willoughby therefore reinforced by half a troop and another Maxim.

As the Raiders rode along over the open plain, thus warily and wearily, at about five miles from a place called Van Oudtshoorn they espied two young men on bicycles riding towards them from the east. They were messengers from Johannesburg, and they brought good tidings. They had in all three despatches concealed in the pillars of their bicycles, and what they told Dr. Jameson was this:—

The name of one was Celliers, a Dutchman, of the other Arthur Maynard Rowland, an Englishman; they were both members of a bicycle corps which had been formed in Johannesburg, and they had come out with these letters from the Reform Committee. They had come by way of Krugersdorp, and had seen a good many armed Boers in that town. They had got through, indeed, by a ruse, for Celliers had gone to the Field Cornet, one Bodenstein, and had offered to take a message on to Commandant Potgieter who was between Krugersdorp and the Raiders. From Krugersdorp they had ridden westwards, past the Queen's Mine on the crest of the hill, and had seen more Boers there. Then they had passed some Boer police, but had shown them

the pass they had got from Bodenstein, and so had ridden on until they had come upon Commandant Potgieter twelve miles west of Krugersdorp, and retiring on that town. To Potgieter Celliers had given the despatch he had received from Bodenstein—after reading it—and had deceived Potgieter so cleverly that they had been allowed to ride on westwards, and so had met the Raiders.

They told Jameson besides that there had been no fighting in Johannesburg—which surprised him—but that the Dutch police had been withdrawn, that the town was policed by the forces of the Reform Committee, and that arms were being served out to the citizens. They also told him that there were 350 men with Potgieter, and that five Commandants—Malan, Cronje, Drieckard, Erasmus, and another—were to join Potgieter at Krugersdorp in the afternoon.

As to the despatches, it is unfortunate that accounts of what they contain differ; but by a curious chance, pieces of them, for they had been torn up, probably by Jameson, and scattered on the veld, were found by a Boer official four months later, 'having remained undisturbed during the severe rain and wind storms of the wet season.' Pieced together they give the substance of two of the letters, albeit several important words are missing. These words have been supplied both by the Reformers and the Raiders, and the two readings differ; but in the meantime we may take the version of the Reformers, as they, after all, wrote them:—

'DEAR DE.—The rumour of massacre *in* Johannesburg that started you *to* our relief was not true. We *are all* right, feeling intense. We have armed a lot of men. Shall be

very glad to see you. *We are not in possession of the town. We will send out some men to meet you. You are a fine fellow.*—Yours ever, F. R.’

‘We will all drink a glass along o’ you.—L. P.’

And the second:—

‘31st, 11.30.—Kruger has asked for *some of us* to go over and treat: armistice for *24 hours* agreed to. My view is that they are in a funk at Pretoria, and they were wrong to agree from here.—F. R.’

‘Dr. Jameson.’<sup>1</sup>

As to the third letter, it was from Dr. Wolff: it was written, according to him, on the night of the 30th, and described the defensive position which the Boers were likely to take at the Queen’s Mine on the road to Krugersdorp.

Sir Percy FitzPatrick admits that ‘the tone of this correspondence does not appear to be in accord with the attitude of the Reform Committee.’ That is a point we shall have to debate later. In the meantime it is sufficient to say that the Doctor, as Celliers afterwards reported, was ‘very glad with the news I brought him.’

It is true that he could not quite have liked that disturbing little later note about the armistice; but even that was only for twenty-four hours. The sentence, ‘We are not in possession of the town’ must have puzzled him a little. Probably he thought it meant Pretoria, for Rowland and Celliers told him

<sup>1</sup> *Transvaal from Within*, p. 180 and p. 440. The words in italics are the words supplied by Colonel Francis Rhodes and Mr. Lionel Phillips. According to a statement signed by Dr. Jameson, Sir John Willoughby, Major Robert White, and Colonel Raleigh Grey, the letter they received was: ‘The rumour of massacre that started you to our relief was not true. We are all right, feeling intense. We have armed a lot of men. I shall be very glad to see you. We (or the Boers) are not in possession of the town. I will bring at least, or about, 300 men to meet you at Krugersdorp. You are a gallant fellow.’

that the Reformers were in possession of Johannesburg. But at any rate they were 'all right,' feeling was intense, arms were being served out, and help was to be sent—whether 'some men' or 300 men does not greatly matter.

Moreover here was a letter to show that Jameson was welcome, in spite of the injunctions: indeed he was praised; he was patted on the back—'You are a fine fellow. We will all drink a glass along o' you!' A glass indeed—of wormwood and of gall!

The Doctor and his officers talked things well over with the two messengers. Rowland—a keen young fellow he must have been—made sure that if he could get back to Johannesburg he could get 2000 men to meet the Raiders. Jameson was confident he could fight his way in without them; nevertheless he would be glad to get them; 'they would make a bit of a show'; they would be useful 'because if the 2000 men came out the Boers would probably draw off' and there would be no fighting.<sup>1</sup>

Celliers asked the Doctor whether it would not be well for him to halt, until they got through and sent help.

But Jameson replied that he thought there was nothing to fear. At the same time he did not want to go to Johannesburg as a pirate, so that it would be well for them to send some men to meet him.<sup>2</sup>

Then Colonel H. F. White wrote a memorandum to Colonel Frank Rhodes, explaining their situation, and Dr. Jameson added a postscript:—

'As you may imagine we are all well pleased by your

<sup>1</sup> Trial at Bar, July 23, 1896. Rowland's evidence.

<sup>2</sup> Celliers's Report (FitzPatrick, p. 182). Celliers afterwards stated he gathered the impression that the Doctor 'had never expected help and did not want it'; but this contradicted both his own statements and Rowland's evidence.

letter. We have had some fighting, and hope to reach Johannesburg to-night ; but of course it will depend on the amount of fighting we have. Of course we shall be pleased to have 200 men meet us at Krugersdorp, as it will greatly encourage the men, who are in great heart although a bit tired. Love to Sam, Phillips, and rest.—L. S. J.'

The letter was rolled up and, as before, put in the pillar of Rowland's bicycle: these two brave messengers shook hands with Dr. Jameson, who 'wished us well,' and set out on their journey back. What happened to them we shall hear in good time: in the meanwhile let us follow the Raiders.

## IV

Presently as they rode along they found that the track began to be fenced on either side. They found also that these wire fences continued for two miles—right up to Hand's store—and 'as they practically constituted a defile'—from which in case of attack the column could not deploy, Willoughby halted the column while the wires were being cut every hundred yards or so. In the meantime scouts were sent out: they reported a force of Boers on the left; the party of 100 Boers which had been following them was still dogging their rear, and there was a force of 200 Boers in front, at Hand's store, while on their right flank the Raiders thought they could see a fourth party. They were thus surrounded by a force which moved along with them and never came to close quarters. It was not pleasant.

Colonel White sent for the guns to shell the Boers in front; but by the time the guns arrived the

Boers had galloped away, and all White could do was to fire a couple of rounds after them.<sup>1</sup>

All this delayed the column, and it was 1.30 before the Raiders reached Hand's store, some seven miles from Krugersdorp.

Here, for the first time, the commissariat failed. Most of the men, it is true, got some food, but the rear-guard and outposts had none, and most of the horses got nothing except a little grass, as there was only enough forage for the gun teams. Moreover, although the store was almost empty of provisions, it contained a cask of bad sherry, which was broached by some of the men, and although there was but little of it when shared among them, yet to men so fatigued and with empty stomachs, it was more than was good for them.

Sir John Willoughby knew from Dr. Wolff's letter and his knowledge of the place that the position in front of Krugersdorp was the crux of the enterprise. He sent Major Villiers and Lieutenant Grenfell ahead with a reconnoitring patrol to see if a flank attack from the right were possible, as he already knew that there was no chance for an attack from the left; and at the same time Willoughby sent a Boer whom he had taken at Van Oudtshoorn with a warning to the Commandant—that if his 'friendly force' met with armed resistance he might be obliged to shell the town.

Then at three on Wednesday afternoon the column resumed its march. Dr. Jameson afterwards bore witness that Willoughby's counsel was to avoid Krugersdorp altogether:—

<sup>1</sup> The advanced guard had come upon this force while it was watering its horses and could have wrought havoc upon it with its two Maxims; but Willoughby's orders were to avoid attack unless forced to action, and the Boers were allowed to ride away unharmed.

'He explained to me an objection, which I knew nothing about, of military tactics, that it was a wrong thing for him to do ; but the only reason was that I insisted upon it, and he saw that it was necessary to follow the instructions in that letter from Johannesburg.'<sup>1</sup>

As the column topped a ridge, the whole position unrolled itself before Willoughby's experienced eyes, and the more he looked at it the less he must have liked it.<sup>2</sup>

From the ridge the force was on, the ground sloped away to a stream or spruit which crossed the road at right angles, and from the spruit the road climbed a long steep bare hill, smooth and blank, like the glacis of a fortress. On the right<sup>2</sup> of the road, a little way up the hill, like the outwork of a fortress guarding the spruit, was a large stone-walled enclosure, planted with trees, and on the left of the road one house. The summit, where the road reached the crest, was guarded by a substantial building, the Battery House of the Queen's Mine, which stood a little behind the crest, a hundred yards or so to the left of the roadside. What Willoughby could not see was that the reverse of the stony ridge was hollow and so strewn with great boulders that the defenders lay perfectly secure from any artillery fire he could bring to bear upon it.

The Boers, masters as usual of defensive warfare, had chosen and manned their position with admirable judgment. The enclosure near the spruit was full of them, and there was a line of their riflemen concealed in pits on the near side of the stream to the left, parallel with the road. The higher slopes

<sup>1</sup> Committee, *Evidence*, 4518.

<sup>2</sup> We are describing the position as Willoughby saw it looking towards Krugersdorp.

of the hill both to left and right were lined with more snipers. Altogether it was about as forbidding a position as ever confronted a weary force on its line of march to a beleaguered city.

But Willoughby was buoyed up by the promise which, rightly or wrongly, he had read into Colonel Rhodes's letter.<sup>1</sup> It was obvious that if such a position were attacked in rear as well as in front, the tables were turned on the defenders.

Willoughby's plan of attack was to shell the Queen's Battery and the crest of the ridge from the rising ground where his force now was and under cover of this fire to advance a troop of 110 men with two Maxims under Harry White as a first line with a strong troop and one Maxim in echelon as a support on either flank; while Raleigh Grey with one troop and a Maxim was to work round on the right so as to attack the Boer left. Thus two troops and three Maxims remained as reserve and rear-guard.

While Willoughby was arranging his forces, small parties of Boers were seen hurrying along by a parallel road on the left as if to join their friends in front of Krugersdorp, and at the same time the force which had been dogging the rear-guard all day opened fire. Willoughby's reply was to shell the Krugersdorp position with his 7 and 12½-pounders. The shelling began at 4.30 at 1800 yards. The gunners made excellent practice, but the Boers, as their custom was, lay quiet. The front line then rode down the slope; but they had hardly gone 400 yards when they were met and stopped by

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jameson's evidence suggests that there was something of the sort in Dr. Wolff's letter also—'a letter of three pages in length describing what my force was to do on my arrival in Krugersdorp in order to get into Johannesburg.' (4518.)

a heavy fire from the Queen's Battery in front, as well as from the stone-wall enclosure above the spruit.

We have been told by a Dutchman who took part in the defence that this fire was premature; if it had been held until the Raiders were some way up on the other side of the spruit, the advance guard, or so the Boers calculated, would have been killed to a man. As it was they were stopped dead just short of the stream. In the meantime the left support had moved out to prolong the front line, but diverging too much to the left came under a hot fire from a farmhouse and plantation near the bed of the stream farther down the valley, and were driven back with the loss of a few men. Grey had worked round on the right, and was answering the fire of the Boers who had stopped the main advance. The whole force was at a standstill; Willoughby could plainly see that his attack on the Krugersdorp position must fail: it had been doomed to failure from the first unless helped from the other side.

But now Major Villiers rode in with the welcome news that the country to the right was open, and that they could easily move round. By this time some Boers were working up to the left of the narrow plateau on which the force stood, and had engaged the rear-guard and reserves. Not only was the frontal attack hopeless, but their own position was becoming unsafe. Willoughby could no longer hesitate, or all was lost. After a brief consultation with the Doctor, he gave orders for a flank movement of the whole force to the right, covered by the rear-guard with two Maxims under Captain Drury and by Colonel Grey with one troop, a Maxim and the 12½-pounder.

It was a clever manoeuvre ; in the gathering dusk the main force had moved a mile to the right before the Boers found out what they were doing. The rear-guard then retired, and when these had got clear, Grey followed. Thus the whole force was got out save a few skirmishers in the spruit with Lieutenant Scott and Dr. Farmer, who did not like to leave their wounded and were taken prisoners.

## v

The slope which Willoughby had attacked in vain was no other than the western escarpment of the Witwatersrand, and now Willoughby by this flanking advance on the right had contrived to get his column actually up and on the Rand itself. They were among the mines, and at Luipaard's Vlei were met by a crowd of kafirs and friendly miners, who cheered them, told them that their last shell had totally destroyed the battery house, and put them on a road that led direct to Johannesburg. Some Boers were seen on the left, but appeared to be retreating in the direction of Krugersdorp.

Willoughby now saw a chance of getting through. He had two guides who had volunteered from the friendly crowd, and forming his force once more in night march formation, he prepared for a dash through the darkness on Johannesburg.

Just, however, as they were moving off, they heard heavy firing in the direction of Krugersdorp. The noise sounded like rifles intermingled with Maxims, and Willoughby leaped to the fatal conclusion that Colonel Rhodes's force had at last arrived and was engaged with the Boers at Krugersdorp. On the instant he decided to leave the carts with one troop

as guard on the road, and forming three troops in line, with one in reserve and taking the remainder of the guns with him, he advanced rapidly across the plateau towards Krugersdorp.<sup>1</sup>

But now the firing ceased, and instead of friends they suddenly descried the enemy in strong force advancing upon them, while their flankers reported another force of Boers on their right. Willoughby, seeing that he was in danger of being cut off from his ammunition carts, ordered a retreat, and the force fell back wearily on the road they had left. It was one of those strange chances on which often hangs the fate of men with whom the gods make sport. A fresh commando of Boers had arrived in Krugersdorp and the commandos already there had saluted them by firing their rifles in the air. It was these exulting salutations that lost for Willoughby his chance of slipping through. Nothing tires and discourages a force so much as countermanded orders. It was now almost dark; in the gloom the Boers were seen closing in from north, east, and south. The way to Johannesburg was barred, and there was nothing to be done but to bivouac in the best position they could find.<sup>2</sup>

Willoughby moved his column off the road to the edge of Luipaard's Vlei, and there, on its eastern side, under cover of the slope leading down to the

<sup>1</sup> Jameson has been blamed for this change of plan; but Willoughby's notebook is before the writer, and shows that it was Willoughby's decision: 'I at once concluded that this [the sound of firing] must mean the arrival at last of Colonel Rhodes and the long-expected Johannesburg force, coming, as promised, to our assistance. . . . To leave him in the lurch was out of the question.'

<sup>2</sup> 'But for this unfortunate circumstance of the firing, which we afterwards heard was due to the delight of the Boers at the arrival of large reinforcements from Potochefstroom, we should have by that time been 4 or 5 miles further on and have had, I believe, a good chance of reaching Johannesburg without further opposition.'—Willoughby's notebook.

water, the horses were formed up in quarter column, with the carts in the rear and on both flanks. Five Maxims were placed along the front so as to sweep the plateau, of which there was a clear view for 1000 yards or more; the other three Maxims were mounted at the rear corners and the left flank with the guns in the rear. The troops lay down in the gaps between the guns on all sides, and sentries were placed on every face of the laager.

Thus embattled the dog-tired Raiders settled themselves down to sleep; but it was a restless night, for the Boers were gradually creeping up the prospecting trenches with which the plateau was intersected, and by about nine o'clock a shower of bullets swept over the bivouac. Fortunately, as the camp was below the level of the plateau the men and horses suffered little—only one man and two horses being killed—but sleep was difficult and the men lay in a troubled dose with their rifles by their sides, while Jameson, Willoughby, and Grey debated what to do upon the morrow.

Here let us leave them, while we inquire what was happening in Johannesburg and why the Reformers had not sent the help they had promised.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE RISING

'And what a noble plot was crossed  
And what a brave design was lost.'

#### I

DESPERATE men, desperate courses, and as we have already seen, the men of Johannesburg—in the latter part of 1895—were not desperate. There had been times—the desperate times surrounding the Baring crisis—when they really had meant insurrection. They were in a state for it in 1890 and again they were in a state for it in 1893. But although in the meantime their political grievances had not been lightened, although they still paid all the taxes and had no share in the government, and although the Government treated them with a hardly disguised hostility, still their economic position was vastly improved. The mining industry throve amazingly. Engineers and chemists solved the problems both of mining the ore and extracting the gold ; so that their mines, which at first had been regarded with unbelief by the wise in these matters, were now become the wonder of the world. With the means thus obtained they were creating on those high barren uplands in the centre of the African wilderness a no less wonderful city. Thus occupied, creating, amassing, enjoying, they had, almost unconsciously, come to bear their political grievances, not with indifference, but with a certain

resignation. The National Union continued to agitate, and they sympathised with the agitation; they still talked of revolution; they even planned and prepared for it; but action was another matter. They were too busy.

Yet it was true that they had planned this conspiracy and had the misfortune to engage the assistance of outside friends, who were more in earnest than themselves. Cecil Rhodes had sent them his brother Frank, probably because Cecil trusted Frank, and because Frank was a soldier of high reputation. They looked to a soldier for revolution just as they would look to an engineer to sink an adit or a chemist to find a precipitate.

But Colonel Frank Rhodes was not a revolutionary leader: he was an open, brave, honest, charming English gentleman, without any ideas in politics save that the British Empire was a cause worth fighting for, and that his younger brother was always right. He was not a schemer; he was not an intriguer; he was not a demagogue; and he was not a desperate man. And although he was chosen leader by his associates, he had neither the knowledge nor the desire to lead the populace to the barricades. As to the rest, some were too young and trusted their seniors, others had a fully matured consideration of the responsibilities they carried and the shareholders they represented.

They had tried every expedient to avoid a revolt, and for years they had been content to talk of it rather than act it. They were in earnest, as men are in earnest over many things for which they are not prepared to stake their all. They were not cowards, as after-events showed, but were not screwed up to that pitch which turns even cowards

to brave men. They felt their grievances, but not as men feel who are willing to die to get rid of them: they felt them less than the working-men and the lower classes who suffered under the insolence of the Government officials and the race hatred which inspired it, and were in a position neither to resent nor placate it.

Still from talk they had insensibly drifted towards action. They had even named a day, and in war as in love the naming of a day, however light-heartedly it may be done by one of the parties, is apt to be taken seriously by the other, and as it approaches becomes serious for both.

In one of their numerous sessions the conspirators had discerned the need of some means of maintaining order in the desperate days to come, and to that end had called in an individual who was, in his own peculiar way, no less a man of action than Jameson himself.

This was Andrew Trimble, of whom, as he took a notable part in those obscure events, we must now give some account. Trimble, then, was an Ulsterman and an Orangeman, one of those strong determined natures which are bred in the North of Ireland. He had arrived in South Africa with his regiment, the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, in February 1881. The corporal was the first to enter Potchefstroom with the advanced guard of the flying column, and he shared the shame and bitterness felt by the British Army over the disastrous peace that followed Majuba. In the following year he took his discharge from his regiment with the rank of sergeant, and joined the Durban Burgh Police Force as a constable. Now it happened that a certain notorious 'I.D.B.,' by the name of Jacobs, was arrested in Natal with no less

than 3 lb. 11 oz. of diamonds in his possession, and Trimble was sent to Kimberley with the prisoner. While awaiting the trial he put in his time with the Kimberley Detective Force and did such good work that he was transferred there. And so, after a brief interval of service with the Warren Expedition, he embarked upon the perilous but fascinating career of detecting and pursuing the most cunning and desperate gang of criminals that ever infested a community. In the eleven years of his service, there was hardly a crook or a cut-throat, male and female, in South Africa who did not learn to fear and respect Andrew Trimble, and by zeal, courage, and a certain cunning which outmatched the criminal, he rose to be Chief Detective of the Kimberley Force.

For these and other reasons, Kimberley went somewhat out of fashion with thief, pimp, and smuggler, who began to flock in increasing numbers to the gold-fields of the Transvaal. There, for a time, they enjoyed an almost unbounded prosperity. Illicit gold-buyers, illicit liquor-sellers, faro dens, and thieves' kitchens spread and multiplied along the Rand until the honest miners threatened to take the law into their own hands. And then at last Ewald Esselen, who was State Attorney, asked the Cape Government to lend them a good police officer, and Sir Thomas Upington sent up Andrew Trimble. There followed such a ferreting and routing through all the haunts of vice and crime and contraband that the Jews who conducted the traffic saw ruin staring them in the face, and set to work to engineer a cabal against Trimble in the Government. Kruger, to do him justice, stood by his servant; but his enemies appealed to national sentiment and raised the cry

that none but a true Transvaaler should wield such power as Trimble wielded, and the upshot was that he had to go. He returned to Kimberley in November 1895 to claim his pension, knowing up to that time nothing of the plot that was brewing; but it occurred to the plotters that he was just the man to maintain order during the critical days of 'reconstruction,' and accordingly he was invited to visit Johannesburg. There, on December 18, he was ushered into a room in the *Star* office, where he found Colonel Rhodes, George Farrar, Lionel Phillips, Hays Hammond, and a young military officer called Sandilands, who had been made Chief of the Staff, assembled together. They explained to him that their purpose was to get rid of a dishonest and corrupt Government, and asked him if he would join.

'Gentlemen,' said Trimble, 'this is a hanging matter; I must ask for a night to decide.'

The next morning he returned. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I have decided to put my neck in the same noose with yourselves. If we are hanged we shall be hanged together.'

The Committee blinked a little, but thanked honest Trimble. He then made one criticism. 'Colonel Rhodes is the wrong man for your leader, not meaning,' he added, 'any disrespect to the gentleman. But it will be said that this is a Rhodes conspiracy.'

The Committee replied that they had gone too far to change.

Then Trimble raised his hand before the Committee, which was possibly a little astonished by his dramatic earnestness, and took a solemn oath to obey Colonel Rhodes in all things until he should be released by him.

Trimble threw himself into the plot with all his

energy. He organised a body of 500 police, in which he enlisted all the crooks of the Rand ; and he placed over them sub-inspectors whom he chose himself—ex-policemen and friends of his own, good men and true whom he could trust. Never was such order kept in Johannesburg !

He enlisted besides a regiment of 500 men, and collected old soldiers of his acquaintance to knock them into shape. And through certain secret societies with which he was acquainted he organised a secret service, which penetrated even into the departments of State and kept a close watch on the Government at Pretoria. The Johannesburg gaol was a strong building—almost a fortress—commanding the town ; but certain of the officials being friends of Trimble's, it was arranged that the building, with the weapons and munitions it contained, should be handed over on demand.

But the great coup which these conspirators hoped to bring off was to capture the fort and magazine at Pretoria. And here, says Sir Percy FitzPatrick, ' circumstances favoured the plans of the Johannesburg men. The surrounding wall of the fort, a mere barrack, had been removed on one side in order to effect some additions ; there were only about 100 men stationed there, and all, except half a dozen, could be counted on as being asleep after 9 P.M. There never was a simpler sensational task to be done than that of seizing the Pretoria fort—fifty men could have done it. But there was more to be done than the mere taking. In the fort there were known to be 10,000 rifles, ten or twelve field-pieces, and 12,000,000 rounds of small-arm ammunition ; and it was designed to seize the fort and the railway on the night of the outbreak, and by means of one or

two trains, to carry off as much of the material as possible and destroy the rest.'<sup>1</sup>

## II

While Trimble and the other fiery spirits were preparing for these desperate deeds, the leaders of the conspiracy were growing more and more to dislike the whole business. And their minds unconsciously assisted their inclinations, presenting them first with one dilemma and then another. As these dilemmas arose they were discussed and debated in anxious conclave, and then sent down to Cape Town as posers for Rhodes.

What these difficulties were we have already seen: the first concerned the coming of the British High Commissioner; the second the raising of the British flag.<sup>2</sup> They must have the one and would on no account have the other. On Christmas Day Charles Leonard and Hamilton were sent to Cape Town; but it is clear that even before they started, the elder statesmen, if we might so call them, of Johannesburg had decided to abandon the enterprise. Sir Percy FitzPatrick puts the blame for this change of plan upon Dr. Jameson. The suggestion is that the Doctor was somehow or other responsible for the flag difficulty, and that even by Christmas Day his 'importunity and impatience' had so disturbed the Reformers that they 'began to discuss a complete change of plans' as soon as Leonard and Hamilton had left.

<sup>1</sup> *The Transvaal from Within*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> We have already stated our belief, founded on Mr. Little's report of Rhodes's conversation, that behind the flag question was another—the bargain made by Rhodes as to federation. This was probably a real cause of difference within the counsels of the Reformers.

But it is plain from the telegrams that Leonard brought the most doleful accounts of the position to Cape Town. And in his evidence he states quite definitely that he went to Cape Town intending 'for my part to try to obviate Dr. Jameson coming over the Border.'

The 'new arrangement' was to do without Dr. Jameson altogether except as 'moral support on the Border,' to have a meeting on January 6, then another representation to the Volksraad, and that failing, an appeal to arms and 'to England, as the Paramount Power, or to the other South African Governments to mediate and so avert civil war.'<sup>1</sup>

The Revolution being postponed, the only remaining anxiety was to stop Jameson moving 'according to plan.' To that end the Reformers, to do them justice, spared no precaution. They told Rhodes and Beit, both through Leonard and by telegram, that the whole thing was off; Sam Jameson and Hammond both sent peremptory telegrams to the Doctor at Pitsani Potlugo; and they despatched two messengers, one by train and the other across country. Captain Heany in his evidence gives a vivid little sketch of the commission: 'about half a dozen gentlemen were assembled.' They gave him the message. 'It was to tell Dr. Jameson to postpone his coming on the day appointed. That is briefly the message, and it is the whole of the message after it is all analysed. They talked for half an hour in my presence but that was the message they sent.' Heany gave it to them as his opinion that Jameson would come in whether or no. '... not only I told them that, but one member

<sup>1</sup> See C. Leonard's evidence; also FitzPatrick's *Transvaal from Within*, p. 130.

of the Committee at least, and the other messenger (Captain Holden) who was sent on the same day that I was, told them that very plainly.' The flag question, Heany said, was mentioned, but only as a side issue; it was not the reason given; the number of arms in Johannesburg was mentioned, but that was not the reason given for delay.

Of one thing there was no doubt; the Reformers besought Jameson not to come and forbade him to come in set terms. And having done so, in spite of Heany's and Holden's warning of the character of the man, they must have felt fairly secure that he would not come. It was too preposterous for belief.

How the news first came to the Committee-men does not greatly matter. Jameson's telegram to Dr. Wolff—Dr. Wolff being away—was opened by Sam Jameson on Monday morning and shown to his comrades. But it was only evidence of intention, albeit as late as 9.5 A.M. on Sunday morning. Then about noon Abe Bailey had a cryptic telegram from 'Godolphin,' Cape Town, which in racing language obscurely shadowed the truth. It was Dr. Rutherford Harris's warning. About the same time the zealous Trimble brought in a telegram intercepted by his secret service, giving Kruger the news from Zeerust. It was a smart piece of work, for the conspirators had the news before the Government. But they remained in a horrid suspense of doubt until about half-past four in the afternoon when A. L. Lawley burst into the room, crying, 'It is all up, boys. Read this!' And he showed them a telegram from Cape Town: 'The contractor has started on the earthworks with seven hundred boys; hopes to reach terminus on Wednesday.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Transvaal from Within*, p. 138.

Then, indeed, were hurryings to and fro, debates, deliberations, orders, and counter-orders, as one expedient after another flashed through the minds of the conspirators.

If a single man had been faced by such a situation, he would probably have seen that there were two courses possible to him—either to repudiate Jameson at once; make it known that he had come in contrary to instructions; offer support to the Government and use all means to get Jameson to return: or, contrariwise, throw all his energies into the insurrection, and pluck the flower of safety from the nettle of danger.

But the Committee—possibly because it was a committee—drifted hopelessly between these two courses. They distributed such arms as had come in; they enrolled every citizen who offered himself upon their Committee; they sent a cordial letter to Dr. Jameson; and at the same time they opened negotiations with President Kruger.

Sir Percy FitzPatrick says that from the first the conspirators realised the 'desperate' position in which Jameson had placed them.<sup>1</sup> But we can hardly think this correct, for on the next page he tells us that 'Those who had already taken part in the movement formed themselves into a Committee, and many other prominent men joined immediately.' Now it is obvious that if the conspirators had thought the position desperate, they would never have allowed their friends to share in their responsibility. On the contrary, as honourable men, they would have kept the burden upon their own shoulders.

No, the Committee must have still thought there

<sup>1</sup> P. 139: 'The position then [on the Monday afternoon] seemed fairly desperate.'

was a very good chance of success. And there is evidence also that the President and his Government were not at all confident of victory. They had bad consciences. They had treated Johannesburg, as they knew in their hearts, abominably. And they had heard exaggerated reports of the arms and resources of the Uitlanders—that, for example, there were twenty thousand rifles in Johannesburg. Yet Kruger himself could have had no thought of compromise. He knew that for him it was neck or nothing.

His first thought must have been <sup>1</sup>—and was—to prevent the junction of his enemies. But he must have known—and did know—that he could hardly hope to stop Jameson and his Raiders at any point nearer the Border than Krugersdorp. And strong as that position was, it had one fundamental weakness: it could be attacked in the rear.

So Kruger's second thought must have been—and was—how to disarm Johannesburg. And clearly there was only one way—by negotiation.

Now those liberal-minded Dutchmen who sympathised with the Uitlanders were the obvious instruments to use, and of these Mr. Eugene Marais, the Editor of *Land en Volk*, offered himself as by a divine accident. He had just been to Johannesburg; he was impressed by the danger of civil war; he reported the position to General Joubert, and the General brought him before the Executive Council. The first move, therefore, was to send Marais and Malan, Joubert's son-in-law, to negotiate. They reached Johannesburg on Tuesday

<sup>1</sup> Possibly not quite his first thought, as there is reason to believe that Kruger had his old horse saddled up, ready for departure. He had to fear not only Johannesburg but a considerable section of his own people.

night, and negotiated so well that an armistice for twenty-four hours was arranged, and a deputation of Reformers returned the visit on Wednesday morning.

This deputation consisted of Mr. Lionel Phillips, Mr. J. G. Auret, Mr. Abe Bailey, and Mr. Langermann. They were among the cutest men on the Rand. If they had met President Kruger on the Stock Exchange over a point of business, it is probable that they would not have left a hair on the old gentleman's body; but in Pretoria on the business of statecraft they had no more chance with President Kruger and General Joubert than had the young oysters, 'who left their oyster-bed,' with the Walrus and the Carpenter.

Neither the President nor the Commander-in-Chief appeared in person: the negotiations were handled by two judges and a member of the Executive Council, and were skilfully protracted over the whole of Wednesday. Mr. Lionel Phillips recited the grievances of the Uitlanders in a speech which would have been effective if speeches had been of any service in such a situation. As to Dr. Jameson, it was true that he 'had remained on the Border with an armed force by a written arrangement with certain of the leaders'; but the Committee were in ignorance of his reason for starting, and had tried to stop him.

While this debate was going on in Pretoria, the Committee in Johannesburg were considering the position in another debate, occasioned by a telegram which they had received from the British Agent with the Transvaal Government, Sir Jacobus de Wet, denouncing Dr. Jameson. And not being without decent instincts of Englishmen, they

decided upon the following message, which they sent to their deputation at Pretoria :—

‘ Meeting has been held since you started to consider telegram from British Agent, and it was unanimously resolved to authorise you to make following offer to Government. Begin : “ In order to avert bloodshed on grounds of Dr. Jameson’s action, if Government will allow Dr. Jameson to come in unmolested, the Committee will guarantee with their persons if necessary that he shall leave again peacefully with[in] as little delay as possible.” ’

This offer the deputation presented to the Commission ; but the Chief Justice had taken up the position that Dr. Jameson was a foreign invader about whom it was impossible to treat, and the offer was rejected.

Furthermore, the Commission asked the deputation for evidence that it spoke for Johannesburg ; the deputation thereupon telegraphed for a full list of the Reform Committee, which was handed over to the Government. So innocent were these wary business men.

And, finally, the Commission presented the deputation with the decision of the Executive, which, they said, was contained in the following resolution :—

‘ The High Commissioner has offered his services with a view to a peaceful settlement. The Government of the South African Republic have accepted his offer. Pending his arrival no hostile step will be taken against Johannesburg provided Johannesburg takes no hostile step against the Government. In terms of a certain proclamation recently issued by the State President the grievances will be earnestly considered.’ <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Transvaal from Within*, p. 158.

Like Jack when he exchanged his mother's cow for a bag of beans, or Moses Primrose when he sold his father's horse for a gross of copper-rimmed spectacles in shagreen cases, the deputation returned with this precious formula, believing that it had done an excellent day's work.

### III

In the meantime, what was happening in Johannesburg? The Government had withdrawn its police and the town was now in the hands of Trimble's men. Never had there been such good order, such sobriety, so entire an absence of crime. The women and children in the outlying camps were brought in and given shelter within the town; volunteer corps sprang up like mushrooms—cyclists, Scottish, Irish, Australian, and so forth; no less than 20,000 men were enrolled, and clamoured for arms. But of arms there were all too few. Certain wagons of coke and drums of oil had arrived from Kimberley and were now unpacked. The oil-drums were a triumph of Mr. Gardner Williams' ingenuity. From the tap right through the drum was a tube of oil, so that if they were drawn oil was found and nothing else, yet the drums were full not of oil but of rifles, even the weight of rifles against oil having been calculated. These were brought into Farrar's yard and broken open, and George Farrar himself, with his sleeves rolled up, worked like a man, opening the drums and distributing the rifles. Over 10,000 men were enrolled in the various corps, and double that number were eager to join; but there were only 3000 rifles to share among them all. It is calculated that there were at least a thousand rifles in Johannesburg besides; but these disappeared

like magic when it was heard that free rifles were being handed out. Several Maxims were also unpacked and distributed. All this being done without any attempt at concealment, the news spread over the town and over the country that the Uitlanders had 20,000 rifles. And as it happened that a great iron pipe was taken through the streets about that time swung under a trolley-frame, rumour added a great gun to this terrific armament. What with these stories, and the belief that the place was mined about with dynamite, it was doubtful if the Boers would have summoned up courage to take Johannesburg by assault, and the town was provisioned for six weeks.

The town for the time being was fairly secure. But there was at least one man in Johannesburg who saw that the key of the position was Krugersdorp. It was Andrew Trimble, once Corporal of the Inniskilling Dragoons, now a full-blown Lieutenant-Colonel in command of a foot regiment 500 strong. His secret service kept him well informed of the position, and his military instinct told him that the thing to do was to strike at the back of the Boers. So he went to Colonel Rhodes and asked leave to take out his 500 men and bring Jameson in. Now Colonel Rhodes was a man of honour. He had, as we have seen from his letter to Jameson, disapproved of the armistice and the deputation, but he had been overborne and his hands were tied—or so he thought—by the decision of his Committee. Therefore he had to refuse.

Trimble besought him. ‘Let me take 250 men,’ he said. ‘No,’ said Colonel Rhodes.

Then Trimble said, ‘Let me take 25 men to guide him in.’ And again Rhodes said ‘No.’