

Soudan and Nile expeditions, was at El Teb and Tamai, and at Abu Klea ; had several horses shot under him, got several clasps and mentions in despatches, and in 1891 the Distinguished Service Order. As to Civil appointments, he was with Sir Gerald Portal in Uganda, on Lord Harris's Staff in Bombay, and served a term as Acting Administrator in Mashonaland, where he was much liked. It is easy to imagine things so turning out at Johannesburg as to put him into his right *métier*, but Fate was unkind, or he was not quite equal to her. The "best of good fellows" and one of the most popular officers in the service, he is competent in his own calling—which is not that of a revolutionary.

It may be convenient to add here, though it does not appear among the signatories whom the Letter of Invitation well nigh hanged, the name of Mr. Percy Fitzpatrick, who acted as Secretary of the Reform Committee.

Percy Fitzpatrick was a Barberton miner before he came to the more placid camp at Johannesburg. He is younger than the others, or seems so by reason of his impulsiveness and enthusiasm, and less the Capitalist and more the Politician demanding his vote. He is not always discreet, a virtue cheap at Johannesburg, but he is loyal and plucky.

Such were the ringleaders in Johannesburg, and though, when their names appeared, it was murmured that there was too much flavour of Rhodes about the list, it makes, take it all round, a good representative selection.

So the plot thickened. We have seen the preparations for the troops. In the next chapter we shall see the arming of Johannesburg. Let this one conclude with the arrangements connecting the two points. For a dash across country it would be convenient to be able to dispense with commissariat. On the pretext of establishing a coach service between Mafeking and Johannesburg a line of stores at intervals of a few hours' ride were built and stocked with food and forage all the way from Mafeking to Krugersdorp. One Dr. Wolff, another old Kimberley doctor, was told off by Jameson for this work, and

figured for the purpose as the Rand Produce and Trading Syndicate. No part of the plot seems at the first blush cooler and more barefaced than this elaborate collection of stores for the baiting of men and horses along the whole line of invasion. The road, however, was becoming a frequented one. The pretext was plausible enough, and it was only certain Boers who noticed the presence of "bully beef" among the so-called produce stored in these sheds, whose suspicions began to be aroused. Under the same pretext Dr. Wolff bought up some hundreds of horses for remounts from the well-known Johannesburg coaching firm of Heys, and these horses were stationed midway on the intended line of march upon a farm which actually belongs to a member of the Transvaal Volksraad. In all, Dr. Wolff's part of the business cost over £18,500.

The best index to show the point to which Jameson brought things upon his Johannesburg visit when he obtained the Leonard letter is afforded by the following letter, in which he assures "Bobby" White that the almost certain date will be 26th December :—

"[Private.]

" JOHANNESBURG,

" Nov. 19th, 1895.

" DEAR BOBBY,—

" Hope by the time you get this you will have our men in camp—also about a hundred from Stevens and I shall get a couple from Grey when I arrive in about a fortnight or a little longer. The almost certain date will be 26th Dec. 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—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.

“Yrs.,  
“L. S. J.”

Soon after Jameson telegraphed up to Sir John Willoughby, his military adviser, whom he still kept chafing up at Bulawayo :—

“Caratulero carcaras prognare dijudicor egelatus squinanzia polyhedral Zegeling.”

Which being translated is :—

“Date fixed is 28th of December to start from here, do not want small Lee-Metford Rifles.”

## Chapter V

## THE ARMING OF JOHANNESBURG

WHILE matters on the border were thus pressed forward by Dr. Jameson and his officers, Col. Rhodes had been sent up to Johannesburg to assist in the organization at that end. Another soldier brother—Captain Ernest Rhodes—was just leaving the Rand after a term of directorship at the “Goldfields” offices. The Colonel took his place, and soon set to work to get in arms. October 20 is the date of his first draft on the B.S.A. Company for the “New Concessions Account,” *alias* “New Concessions Syndicate,” *alias* “Development Syndicate,” and later “Relief Fund,” which was drawn on as the War Chest of the Revolution. About the same date began the forwarding of arms under the Company’s auspices to Kimberley and Mafeking, and the drafts and the forwarding went on busily during the next two months.

It is curious, by the way, that with all the crises and riotous “incidents” of several years past, Johannesburg men had done so little to arm themselves.<sup>1</sup> Many of them quite expected that some day a street brawl or a row with the police would end in shooting. That, though not a set revolution, was often in their minds. And a good number of men in offices must have lived in country districts, perhaps been born in country districts, where every grown man has his rifle or his gun as a matter of course, and where the accomplishment of guiding a horse across the veld, and carrying arms at the same time, is as a thing that comes by nature. One would have expected such men to have a gun for shooting birds, if not a rifle for buck ; for even

<sup>1</sup> See passage in Phillips’ letter, Chapter IV. near beginning.

the Johannesburg stockbroker goes shooting in the country sometimes.

The outside world had never supposed there would be any difficulty about arms at Johannesburg ; it was assumed that arms would turn up all right when arms were wanted. Johannesburg leaders seemed to share the illusion. Months before the raid and revolution were being plotted, I remember talking to a couple of the leaders in what was then the constitutional movement, and their remarking in the most positive way that matters would come to an open breach with the Government eventually ; whereupon I said, " If I were in your place, I should not take another step till a store of rifles had been got in " : and they replied in a way and with an expression which made me drop the matter at once and assume copious underground arsenals.

Yet the crisis found Johannesburg without even a nucleus of men who could shoot and had weapons. How was this ? The obvious expedient for giving force to a Rand agitation for a kind of Grattan Parliament, would have seemed to be to form a kind of Grattan Volunteers. There are Volunteers (Vrywillige) in Johannesburg, but they are a Government force, recruited largely from Germans and Hollanders, armed by the Government and paid in perquisites. The nearest thing to a Uitlander force was the Rand Rifle Association, which languished under the lack of enthusiasm and the difficulties with which the Government surrounded the procuring of permits for getting in a single rifle. And it must be remembered that the Afrikanders on the Rand were largely of the town-bred kind. A Cape Town Afrikander is no more a shooter than a Cape Town Englishman, lately a Cockney.

Be all this as it may, it is clear that Johannesburg leaders did not only appeal to Mr. Rhodes to support them from without : they appealed to him to arm them within.

Probably there were few Uitlander sympathisers in the Colony who would not have been glad to help Uitlander friends on the Rand to provide themselves with arms and ammunition.

Nobody could be surprised if Cecil Rhodes, the private individual, saw to it that a brother of his on the Rand should get a rifle before incensing by a Declaration of Right the armed Government and the rifle-carrying burghers.

For Mr. Rhodes, the Premier of Cape Colony, to take sides in the same way was another matter. He had his official position ; and it is one of the propositions always assumed in this discussion that he could not have done what he did without that position.

As far as this refers to his position as Minister of the Colony, it is quite untrue. Rhodes the Premier helped Rhodes the Conspirator in no way.

Rhodes of the British South Africa Company, of De Beers, and of two large gold-mining properties at Johannesburg, was more indispensable.

But on reading the evidence of the casual, irresponsible way in which all sorts of people co-operated in forwarding arms and incurring expenses, one sees at once that what helped most of all was a certain idiosyncrasy of Cecil Rhodes the man.

The evidence shows that many conversations must have taken place something upon this model :—

“You are to go here, see this man, say that, and spend so-and-so.” “By whose orders?” “Never mind. You won’t be ‘left’”—and an expressive look. The person instructed says to himself at once “Rhodes,”—and goes ahead with confidence. He requires no written guarantee. He has perfect confidence; he knows that even if there has been some misunderstanding, the man whose plans he thought he was facilitating will “see him through.”

There are few millionaires who inspire this peculiar confidence, not only among their creatures, but in independent men of business. It has far more to do with the man than with his money. Take the case of more than one South African money-bag, much fatter than Mr. Rhodes, and try whether you can get business connections or underlings to

commit themselves for sums of money and other responsibilities without security in black and white.

Rough-and-ready, non-legal informality, has been part of Mr. Rhodes' business methods throughout his career ; it cannot be denied that the peculiarity, eccentricity almost, came in extremely handy when he turned conspirator.

Mr. F. F. Rutherford was examined by the Select Committee as to the way in which he signed cheques in Mr. Rhodes' name for the B.S.A. Company. Apparently, some years before, he had been told verbally that he could sign anything put before him by the officials of the Company, and initialled by one of them. The War Chest cheques to Colonel Rhodes he signed in this way, without asking questions.

"Do you make any inquiries as to the cheques you sign?—No, none whatever. I go over to the Company's office at two o'clock and sign the cheques put before me.

"Did you never communicate with anybody about those drafts of Colonel Francis Rhodes?—With not a soul.

"*Mr. Schreiner.*—Then Mr. Stevens, an estimable gentleman no doubt, could draw a cheque for £20,000 in his own interest and place it before you, and you, as representative of the managing director, would sign it without making any inquiry, and the next you might hear of him was that he had 'gone to Guam'?—If the cheques are initialled by Mr. Stevens or by Mr. Berry, I make no inquiries.

"Though you are the representative of the managing director?—When I see the stamp with Mr. Rhodes' names on the cheque I sign . . .

"*Mr. Jones.*—If a cheque for a hundred thousand pounds were presented to you, would you sign it without inquiry?—I signed a cheque for very nearly that amount the other day, and I did not ask any questions . . .

"Your signature purports to go through as the signature of the managing director, and you undertake a responsibility to the managing director by agreeing to give your signature to the cheques. Now what instructions did you receive relative to that from the managing director?—I have had none from the managing director.

"Who gave you the original instructions?—I was told——

"By whom?—I cannot tell you whether it was Dr. Harris, but I can tell you that it was not Mr. Rhodes ; I had no communication with him at the time.

"Then if it was not Mr. Rhodes, who was it?—I cannot recall it.

It is some years ago. I went down to the Standard Bank and Mr. Michell told me that my signature would be recognised. I do not think I have any written authority, nor have I had any communication with Mr. Rhodes on the point."

But to the arms. The B.S.A. Company had been in the habit of importing arms freely ever since the first Matabele War.

There was nothing peculiar in cases of arms addressed to them, being cleared at Cape Town and forwarded to Mafeking, or housed in the De Beers stores *en route*, to be sent on as required.

Kimberley, therefore, was chosen as the centre from which to arm Johannesburg. During November, the hospitality of the great Diamond Company was freely drawn on by stuffing one of its store houses with rifles and ammunition, some of which came down the line from Mafeking, and some up the line from Cape Town.

The law in South Africa places restrictions on moving arms about the country. A statute, originally passed to check the forbidden but lucrative practice of supplying arms to native territories, requires a permit to be obtained before even a single rifle can be taken from one district of Cape Colony to another. With the purpose for which it was passed, this law had fallen into desuetude. Officials wink at evasion. After the raid, fines of £50 were imposed on the Manager of De Beers, and on Mr. Rutherford, a forwarding agent at Cape Town, for treating these particular arms just as they would have treated any others. It is clear, however, that no suspicion would have been aroused had permits been got for every rifle.

The trouble was only when it came to getting them into the Transvaal.

The leaders at Johannesburg put off the solution of this problem till rather late. Mr. Farrar, the last of the five leaders to be taken into the plot, was one of the largest employers of labour on the Rand, and in direct touch with the work

of importing machinery. His adhesion soon removed the difficulty.

The arms were smuggled in as mining material in bulk. Some of them were sent direct from Kimberley to Johannesburg by rail under the rather flimsy pretext of De Beers supplying the Simmer and Jack mine with coke suddenly required. Five sheep-trucks were thus got through, in which 800 rifles were thinly heaped over with coke.

Other consignments were sent in oil-drums, each with a nice little tap oozing oil. The drums were sent from Kimberley to Port Elizabeth, and thence by a forwarding agent—as if they had come over sea—up to Johannesburg. They contained 3 Maxims, 125 cases of ammunition, and 1,800 rifles.

The oil-tank forwarding went on from November 6th, and Dr. Jameson had the satisfaction of seeing some of the trucks, when he was visiting Johannesburg during that month, standing innocently on the Simmer and Jack siding. He recalled the fact when Johannesburg leaders complained of being taken unprepared; but the fact is, they left the unloading of the trucks to the last minute, because of the risk of discovery in disposing the arms. Discovery of any single batch of the arms imported would have “blown on” the whole revolutionary design. That is why the arming was left so late.

The “coke-trucks” actually only arrived at Johannesburg on the 26th December, three days before Jameson crossed the border. The balance of the guns, the Maxims, and bulk of the ammunition only arrived on the Tuesday, two days after his crossing. A few arms came a day after the fair, and were seized by Government.

The smuggling was one of the few things which were really well done. “Everything seems to be going right,” Dr. Jameson wrote from Kimberley, “especially Gardner Williams’s part of it.” “Holden” (one of the B.S.A. Company’s officers) “is here, and is doing very good work. He is a capital chap.” Captain Holden certainly knew how to hold his tongue. As an illustration of this part of the work, some

evidence of Mr. Pickering, the Port Elizabeth forwarding agent, may be quoted here. The subject is the oil-tanks :—

“ How did you become aware that the trucks were consigned to your firm ?—A gentleman, named Holden, I think, waited upon me.

“ And informed you of what ?—That trucks with tanks of oil were consigned or were to be consigned to me.

“ By De Beers ?—He did not say De Beers.

“ Did you ask him by what authority ?—I did, and he asked me to ask him as few questions as possible.

“ As a business man, did you not think it necessary to ask him where these trucks had come from ?—I did not ask him.

“ You did not know where they came from ?—I am not prepared to say what I thought.

“ But you knew that the consignment had relation to the disturbance at Johannesburg ?—There was no disturbance at the time.

“ Say the threatened movement, then ?—I knew nothing of the movement.

“ Did you not know that this consignment was going up in relation to that ?—I knew that it was a consignment going up to the mines, and I thought things were in a very unsettled state.

“ And that it might be necessary to pour oil on the troubled waters. You knew that those tanks did not contain oil ?—I had a very strong suspicion.

“ And that suspicion was awakened by what took place between you and Holden ?—Yes.

“ You had no communication, telegraphic or in writing, relative to this matter ?—No.

“ That is very unusual, is it not ?—Not necessarily. I simply forwarded the stuff as a forwarding agent.

“ Where did Holden come from when he came to you ?—I had no idea.

“ You did not inquire ?—No.

“ You had never seen him before ?—He was most extraordinary. I have never found a man so silent before. He was like an oyster.”

So the arming of Johannesburg went on apace.

## Chapter VI

## CONSPIRACY BY TELEGRAPH

“**I** THINK,” wrote a well-known Englishwoman after the publication of the famous cipher telegrams, “that our English people have no gift for conspiracy. On the whole, I think I am rather glad that they have not.” In one respect these particular conspirators did show some gift. Considering how many people were privy to the scheme, the secret was well kept. But meantime some of them were committing every detail of it to paper with the particularity of an office ledger. Was a compromising letter written? A copy was filed by the writer, and another by the recipient. Was a telegram loaded with secret meanings received? It was docketed and put away in a despatch box. Was the precaution used of writing in cipher? The cipher chosen was the Bedford McNeil Mining Code, a copy of which is to be found in every telegraph office in South Africa. Were names and other special matter confided to a more special code? Copies of the key were carefully secreted by the recipient along with his copies of the messages, as if the anxiety were far less for the secrecy of the plot than for the curiosity of the future historian or the legal exigencies of a prosecuting Government. Surely, except on the stage, where it is sometimes necessary for a situation that conspirators should walk about with their sinister designs neatly engrossed on vellum and sticking out of their pockets, never was plot plotted in the manner of this plot! It was a system of conspiracy by double entry.

Had it been merely the business men of Johannesburg who carried these admirably systematic methods from the counting-

house to the revolutionary camarilla it would seem more natural ; but it was in camp at Pitsani, not in offices at Johannesburg, that these things were done. The Johannesburgers destroyed nearly all their papers. The person whose name is dotted about the Green Books attached to almost every compromising document in the hands of Government was a more or less young Guardsman. "*Gevonden in de trommel van R. White*" is the foot-note painfully iterated through pages of discovery, "R. White" being the invariable "Bobby" of so many messages. He it was who, in an airy way, to oblige the Pretoria State Attorney signed an affidavit when in gaol after Doornkop certifying as genuine the copy (of course a copy was carefully taken to the field of battle) of the Leonard letter, which then proved the sole and the almost sufficient piece of evidence to hang its signatories. But this is anticipating. For the most part the mania exhibited by Major the Honourable R. White for keeping and filing everything, and carrying it about with him, seems to have been due simply to the conscientiousness of a not very brilliant officer, who felt that he must supplement his deficiencies by using double care in routine details. The code key which revealed to Pretoria most of the personal names used was Jameson's own. The Doctor tore up an important despatch on the field of battle so roughly that it was afterwards picked up and put together, and he supplied further finds by sending a despatch box round by train, labelled, apparently as if for the express convenience of the Government.

It would be ungrateful to complain of all this, for but for the quires of letters, telegrams, etc., which have come to light how could the Story of a Crisis be written? As it is, there is an *embarras de richesses* in the way of documents, and chief among these are the Cipher Telegrams.

As the time for action drew near, when Jameson had finished his flying visits to Johannesburg and Cape Town, and was waiting the signal at Pitsani like a dog straining at the leash, the telegraph wire became the medium of communication be-

tween the three foci of the plot. Johannesburg and Cape Town, Cape Town and Pitsani, wired to each other from day to day under the nose of the Government they were plotting against, in the thin disguise of an easily read code and a not very abstruse metaphor, in which political and military conceptions were translated into terms of company-promoting. Revolution became "flotation"; troops on the border were "foreign subscribers," and held "shareholders' meetings"; a manifesto was a "directors' circular," etc., etc. In these terms Johannesburg and Jameson corresponded, mostly *via* Cape Town through the Chartered Company's offices. More rarely Johannesburg and Jameson wired to one another direct across country. At the Cape Town end the communication was latterly in the hands of Dr. F. Rutherford Harris, Secretary in South Africa of the British South Africa Company, and like Dr. Jameson and Dr. Wolff, a Kimberley medico who had not stuck to his last, being both clever and ambitious. Dr. Harris was then a member of the Cape House of Assembly, and a whip of Mr. Rhodes' party there. As a whip he was very successful. He could generally, it is said, make a hesitating member agree with him, or believe that he agreed sufficiently for the division or the purposes of the moment. It was a defect of this quality, however, that the sanguine and persuasive diplomatist would sometimes come away convinced that the person he had talked to accepted his point of view, and that all was understood and settled between them, when nothing really was further from the case, the other man having been simply not ready enough or not determined enough to contradict. It is obvious that this was a drawback for the purposes of a go-between in delicate and important negotiations. In much of what Dr. Harris did, then and at other times, he was undoubtedly the perfect agent of his chief. But he was quite capable, at a critical period of South African history, of taking larger responsibilities and aspiring to a more commanding *role*. It was he, by the way, who negotiated with Mr. Chamberlain the Khama settlement.

The Stevens of the telegrams, whom the Cape Select Committee found a *non mi ricordo* witness of amazing powers of oblivion, is the confidential assistant in the Company's Cape Town Office, and acted as intermediary till Dr. Harris returned from England.

The telegrams which passed between the three points of the conspiratorial triangle for a week or two before the crisis have left a record day by day like that traced by the needle of some meteorological instrument. Their significance in some respects is still to be decided; for instance, as to the division of responsibility between Secretary and Managing Director. Their chief value for solving the evergreen enigma of immediate responsibility for the crossing of the border consists in the clear way in which they show Jameson forcing the hand alike of Rhodes and of Johannesburg.

As the date drew nearer which had been arranged on for action when Jameson was at Johannesburg the leaders there began to be sensible that the heaviest part of their work was still before them. They could not take the people into their confidence, and by mere vague phrases they could not rouse the necessary enthusiasm. Now was felt the want of the steady political work which should have been done in the past when capital was still "sitting on the fence." After years of easy-going agitation—a meeting here, a pamphlet there—you cannot rush a population to the white-heat point of revolt in a few weeks. Besides, the material organization was in arrears, and as little by little new men were taken into the plot the seeds of disunion and irresolution began to sprout.

On the 7th of December Colonel Rhodes wired from Johannesburg to Major White at Mafeking:—

"Tell Zahlbar (Jameson) the Polo Tournament here is postponed for one week, or it would clash with the race week."

"Polo tournament"—a sporting metaphor varying from the commercial one—evidently meant the same as "flotation" in subsequent messages. Major White replied next day:—

"I hope [? no] delay, do not alter unless obliged according original understanding. Considerable suspicion already, therefore any delay would be most injurious."

A few days later "Zahlbar" himself wired to Stevens, Cape Town, to :

"Tell Mr. Rhodes everything is very satisfactory, also ready here. The entire journey occupies two and a half days."

On the 11th Colonel Rhodes again strikes the note of delay to Major White :—

"Inform Dr. Jameson, do not send any more heroes before January, no room for them. I am sending Captain R. M. icyman to Graham's Town for next fourteen days."

For "heroes" some have conjectured horses. The context makes it more probable that the term was a code word for the picked men whom at that date the Doctor was recruiting in Cape Town and Kimberley—old soldiers and others—and sending up to Johannesburg, as well as to Pitsani. About 120 were so sent. The "eleven fine diamonds from De Beers" (Volunteer Corps?), whose sending Dr. Harris advised just before the crisis, were similarly metaphorical.

To which "Zahlbar" next day replies :—

"I have everything ready here. I hope your telegram received yesterday Bobby White does not imply any delay, because any delay would be most injurious. Dr. Wolff leaves to-morrow, will explain."

And at the same time Jameson sent a more urgent and plain message *via* Cape Town :—

"Send following message to Col. F. Rhodes : (begin) Grave suspicion has been aroused. Surely, in your estimation, do you consider that races is of the utmost importance compared to immense risks of discovery, daily expected, by which under these circumstances it will be necessary to act prematurely? Let J. H. Hammond inform weak partners [the] more delay [the] more danger. Dr. Wolff will explain fully reasons to anticipate rather than postpone action. Do all you can to hasten the completion of works."

What sort of suspicions those were that were aroused one

gathers from hints scattered through letters of earlier date : "So-and-so has been blabbing," "fellows have been stupidly talking," "it is more important to avoid exciting suspicion than to go on drilling," and other sentences to like effect. It is in evidence, also, that the presence of bully beef among the so-called "produce" at the stores between Mafeking and Krugersdorp had not escaped notice. But there were also other suspicions elsewhere, as we shall see. No wonder, with all this on his nerves, Jameson thought it a frivolous pretext to adjourn a revolution for a race-meeting. At Johannesburg, on the other hand, it was considered that to have the town swarming with the number and the kind of strangers always attracted by the races would be a most awkward complication. But it is incredible that any one of the various successive reasons assigned for delay would not have been brushed aside had Johannesburg been ready and united for the tremendous enterprise.

On the 13th Stevens duly passes Jameson's urgent message on, and adds :—

"The London *Times* also cables confidentially to that effect. Postponement of meeting would be a most unwise course."<sup>1</sup>

Here is a new element of mystery. What could happen in England to affect the matter? And what is the *Times* doing in that *galère*? Pressed before the Cape Select Committee Mr. Stevens could not recall knowing of any such *Times* message, and it seems likely that this particular message was dictated by Mr. Rhodes. The *Times* is evidently used loosely for somebody more or less connected with that journal, or using *Times* information. The paper itself denies having ever sent any such message; that is, presumably, the Editor denies that *he* ever sent or authorized it. Note that the thing sent is also very loosely indicated. Any news which, to the recipient in South Africa, bore on the question of delay, would satisfy

<sup>1</sup> From appearance of cipher it should be decoded "to effect that postponement," as in Dutch version.

the terms of this reference. The present writer has no doubt that the solution of this mystery, which has greatly fluttered the Fleet Street doves, is something as follows: A great paper like the *Times* has writers who make a speciality of colonial subjects, who stretch out tentacles touching Johannesburg, Cape Town, Rhodes, and on the other hand the Colonial Office, clubland, officialdom. In South Africa the gossip and guesses of the young troopers and officers at Mafeking and at Pitsani were beginning to make people talk. In London, especially in the Service clubs, letters were received in which the writers airily announced as undoubted facts that they were going to eat their Christmas dinner in Pretoria. Upon such talk Mr. Fairfield, of the Colonial Office (a Permanent Secretary whom one would enjoy seeing cross-examine some of the South Africans who talk about the "ignorance of Downing Street"), was moved to give that warning to his chief which set Mr. Chamberlain cabling anxiously to the High Commissioner just as Jameson was preparing to trot over the border. The *Times* Colonial Intelligence Bureau would soon note that people at the Colonial Office were in this frame of mind, and one or other of them, on friendly terms with Mr. Rhodes or Dr. Jameson, would send the "tip" by cable. It might be a very vague "tip," but to the conspirators in South Africa it would mean a threat of disbandment and the ruin of their schemes. The moment attention was called in England to the troops on the border, and to any rumours about their object, there was a risk of inquiries and prohibitions by cable, such as were actually sent while Jameson was, so to speak, in the act of starting. Apprised of such warnings as this (and of a similar one conveyed from a similar source to Johannesburg), Jameson quickly made up his mind that unless he soon started he would never get the chance of starting at all.

Dr. Wolff, however, found the prospect at Johannesburg better than was expected, and wired to Pitsani on the 18th, "there is not likely to be postponement," adding a request for surplus ammunition to be sent round (to Johannesburg) by

way of Gardner Williams at Kimberley. But repetitions of Jameson's warning about the danger of delay continued to be sent on from Cape Town by the Secretary of the B.S.A. Company to Col. Rhodes, and by Mr. Beit (of Wernher, Beit & Co.) to his colleague, Mr. Phillips. Messrs. Beit and Harris had just arrived together from England, and they evidently shared Jameson's fears of awkward inquiries by cable. On the 18th Hammond had wired to Mr. Rhodes at Grootte Schuur :—

“ Cannot arrange respective interests without Beit, flotation must be delayed until his arrival. How soon can he come ? ”

The phrase “ respective interests ” has been caught at, like other company-promoting metaphors of the correspondence, to show that there was some stock-jobbing “ deal ” on hand. In reality, the division in question was not one of spoils, but one of expenses. Mr. Phillips wanted further authority as regards Mr. Beit's contributions to the War Chest, then swimming in tens of thousands. Mr. Beit replied (19th) to Mr. Phillips, not in code, but using a few private code words of the firm :—

“ Cannot come at present owing to health. Wire where is the hitch. *Santrog* [= Jameson ?] very impatient, cannot *naturzug* [= give extension ?]. Our *schallhorn* [= foreign ?] supporters <sup>1</sup> urge immediate flotation.”

Next day he again wired that he was worse, was in fact laid up and ordered to the seaside. He was too ill to be of any use, but—

“ Most anxious that you should not delay flotation of new Company on my account a day longer than necessary. Immediate flotation is the thing most desired, as we never know what may hinder it, if now delayed.”

Poor “ Herr Beit ! ” as Mr. Labouchere will call him. He really was ill—at least, he looked it—and he really did recruit at Muizenberg. The cool nerve which had ruled markets and manœuvred huge financial operations was now undergoing a

<sup>1</sup> “ Foreign supporters ” elsewhere = the allies on the border, and once (to Jameson) the Johannesburgers.

new strain. But no one could suppose Mr. Beit, millionaire speculator as he is, to be devoid of the ambition to manoeuvre men, as well as markets, who saw him during the first Matabele war, following every telegram and moving little paper flags or pointers over a map in his office on the Viaduct, as the forces of "John Company" Secundus pushed across the veld. Mr. Beit may not be a soldier, may not be a statesman; but he has been fairly caught up at the chariot wheels of Mr. Rhodes, with his grand political schemes.

Mr. Beit's telegram to Mr. Phillips was followed (21st) by another from Dr. Harris to Col. Rhodes, in code, drawing attention to it, and adding:—

"Reply when you can float your opinion, so that I may advise Dr. Jameson."

At the same time Dr. Harris wired to Jameson, telling him what he and Beit had done to hurry up Johannesburg, promising to telegraph answer promptly, and adding, "Zoutpacht [Paul Kruger] is returning immediately to Pretoria."

But Colonel Rhodes was very far from being able to "name a day." The party of delay had just discovered reason for another hitch, and the Colonel had to cross Dr. Harris's request with the following:—

"Please inform C. J. Rhodes: it is stated that Chairman will not leave unless special letter inviting him. Definite assurance has been given by all of us, that on day of flotation you and he will leave; there must absolutely be no departure from this, as many subscribers have agreed to take shares on this assurance; if letter necessary, it can still be sent, but it was agreed documents left with J. A. Stevens was sufficient, and that you are responsible for Chairman's departure. It is very important to put this right; reply to Lionel Phillips."

What did all this mean? Who was "Chairman"? It will be remembered, from the earliest sketch of the revolutionary plot, what stress was laid on the "breathing-space" to be secured by forcing the Imperial Government to intervene as mediator. Mr. Rhodes, as Cape Premier, was to advise Sir Hercules

Robinson to go up to the spot at once. The Johannesburg leaders were to appeal to his intervention if necessary (and eventually did); but Mr. Rhodes was relied on to see that the appeal was responded to. It was, of course, absolutely the right thing to do, and the High Commissioner eventually did it with the full approval of Mr. Hofmeyr; but his feelings may be imagined when he found long after how his action had been counted on and made capital of to assist in "floating" the revolution.

This particular reason or pretext for delay was soon cleared up, Harris telling Col. Rhodes (23rd):—

"A. Beit telegraphed L. Phillips assuring him that Chairman starts immediately flotation takes place. No invite necessary."

Readers with a turn for puzzles may like to see the message from Beit referred to; it is in the private code to which the key has not been found.

"Have seen Saufinder mitzdruse to Schaffiger bleimass absolutely that Chairman hablohner on flotation no request or letter is hobelspane as anlegespan is ausgerodet as previously angelstern."

And now comes a strange thing. We have seen Harris on the 21st asking Colonel Rhodes to name a day for "floating." We have seen him on the 23rd, so far from getting the date he asked for, having to send a message of reassurance about another hitch. On the very same day, the 23rd, without any message from Johannesburg to go upon so far as the Pretoria Detective Department and the Cape Select Committee can tell us, is sent the following telegram, as if everything were settled:—

"From  
Harris, Cape Town

"To  
Jameson, Pitsani.

"Company will be floated next Saturday, 12 (twelve) o'clock at night: they are very anxious you must not start before 8 (eight) o'clock and secure telegraph office silence. We suspect Transvaal is getting aware slightly."

It is not clear whether 8 means 8 a.m. or 8 p.m. "Telegraph office silence" probably means cutting the wire to Pretoria, rather than that to the Colony. But where is the authority for these precise arrangements?

When the liberation of Sicily was hanging in the balance, the Sicilians were ready to fly to arms if Garibaldi landed, but Garibaldi, unlike Jameson, determined not to move till they gave proof that they were in earnest. Crispi invented a despatch from Sicily which gave Garibaldi his proof and started him on his road. It was not true, at that moment, that Sicily had risen; but it rose like one man the moment Garibaldi landed. The deadlock was forced. The cause was won. Sicily was liberated. Is it conceivable that Dr. Harris sent this message "off his own bat," consciously or unconsciously emulating the *splendide mendax* Italian statesman? Or was he, or one of the others, or Mr. Rhodes himself, simply bent on quieting Jameson and gaining time? Was this message meant, as others which followed it obviously were meant, to stop the firebrand on the border from despairing of his confederates and breaking away? People in writing to an impatient correspondent are apt to speak of things as already arranged which they are only arranging. Of course it must be remembered that as long ago as the 19th of December we had Jameson writing to "Bobby" White, "almost certain date will be 26th December," and soon after telegraphing to Sir John Willoughby, "date fixed is 28th of December, to start from here,"—the 28th being the very "Saturday" now named by Harris.<sup>1</sup>

Be this as it may, next day, the 24th, Harris returns to the charge and tries to prevent Jameson going off at a tangent upon Dr. Wolff's reports of Johannesburg vacillation:—

"You must not move before Saturday night: we are feeling confident it will take place Saturday night. Since Dr. Wolff left feeling our subscribers greatly improved."

While Cape Town was thus holding back Pitsani with one

<sup>1</sup> Who says he had it by word of mouth from ———, fresh from Johannesburg.

hand, it was trying with the other to bring Johannesburg into line with Pitsani. On the morning of the 26th Colonel Rhodes received the following from "Cactus," one of Dr. Harris's code names :—

"Dr. Jameson says he cannot give extension of refusal for flotation beyond December, as Transvaal Boers opposition shareholders hold meeting on Limpopo at Pitsani Mackluka."

The effect of this message was the opposite of what was intended. Now that the fatal day was almost upon them, with the terrible Doctor on the border straining at his leash, the party of delay at Johannesburg, which had made hitches already about "races," about "Chairman," and about Beit's authority, had just seized occasion, by raising the "Flag Question," which shall be entered into in another chapter, to make the last and the greatest "hitch" of all. A secret conclave was held on Christmas Day, which could agree upon nothing except to gain time. Two messengers—Holden and Heany, both Chartered Company officers—were sent across country, one by road and one by rail, to entreat Jameson to hold his hand. Other two messengers—Messrs. Leonard and Hamilton—were sent to Cape Town to entreat Mr. Rhodes to add his voice peremptorily to theirs. Finally, as the result of "Cactus's" message just quoted, the following decisive telegrams were despatched on the 26th December. The first from "Toad," Johannesburg (Toad being one of the code names for Colonel Rhodes, dating from a schoolboy perversion of his name at Eton), to Charter, Cape Town :—

"It is absolutely necessary to postpone flotation. Charles Leonard left last night for Cape Town."

The second from Jameson's brother at Johannesburg, S. W. Jameson, to Pitsani :—

"It is absolutely necessary to postpone flotation through unforeseen circumstances here altogether unexpected, and until we have C. J. Rhodes' absolute pledge that authority of Imperial Government will not be insisted

on. Charles Leonard left last night to interview C. J. Rhodes. We will endeavour to meet your wishes as regards December, but you must not move until you have received instructions to. Please confirm."

In forwarding "Toad's" message to Jameson, Dr. Harris accepts the delay implicitly, however regretfully, adding:—

"Charles Leonard will therefore arrive Cape Town Saturday morning; so you must not move until you hear from us again. Too awful. Very sorry."

He telegraphs again next day:—

"Re Secheleland 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. Charles Leonard arrives here to-morrow morning. We must wait patiently, and will do our very utmost, but am beginning to see our shareholders in Matabeleland concession were very different to those in Secheleland matter!"

"Secheleland Concession" is evidently our old friend "flotation." The circular publicly issued is the famous manifesto, signed Charles Leonard, Chairman of the National Union, which was published on the morning of the 27th calling a meeting for the 6th January. The melancholy last sentence of the telegram seems to institute a feeling comparison between the delays and vacillations at Johannesburg and the unity and promptitude which carried the first Matabele war to victory. Meanwhile, Mr. Rhodes' anxiety was all to prevent Jameson going off at a tangent; for on the heels of these regrets Dr. Harris sends another telegram beginning with the code formula for "Mr. Rhodes says,"<sup>1</sup> the idea of the message obviously being to show Jameson that he need not be in such fear of the rumours and suspicions which had been excited, as he has a perfectly good excuse to give for keeping the troops there if necessary till the Day of Judgment:—

"Mr. Rhodes says: Do not be alarmed at our having 600 men at Pitsani Mackluka; we have the right to have them; you know we are sorting the B.S.A. Company's Police for eventual distribution, and if people are so foolish as to think you are threatening Transvaal, we cannot help that.

B.S.A. Company's Police at Mafeking will cost half what they do in Matabeleland, and horses do not die. At the same time, as you know, we must keep up a certain B.S.A. Company Police force for the country as per our agreement with Imperial Government."

Thoroughly out of patience at all this, Jameson now determined to force the hands of his confederates both at Johannesburg and at Cape Town by a little judicious "bluff." We are now, it must be remembered, at Friday, the 27th, the eve of the very date originally fixed for the inroad, or at any rate for the revolution. Jameson begins by making out that his troopers had already taken an irrevocable step, so that it was too late to turn back, and he therefore calls on Cape Town and Johannesburg both to telegraph the signal.

To Harris he telegraphs at three o'clock :—

"I am afraid of Bechuanaland Police for cutting wire. They have now all gone forward, but will endeavour to put a stop to it. Therefore expect to receive telegram from you nine to-morrow morning authorizing movements. Surely Col. F. W. Rhodes advisable to come to terms at once. Give guarantee,<sup>1</sup> or you can telegraph before Charles Leonard arrives."

And again at five o'clock :—

"If I cannot, as I expect, communicate with Bechuanaland Border Police cutting, then we must carry into effect original plans. They have then 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."

Notice the clear threat here to take matters into his own hands, binding the Johannesburg confederates to the letter of their appeal to him. It is a curious irony that Mr. Hammond, whom Jameson picks out as one who could be relied on to fall in with this expedient for "rushing" the weaker brethren, is, of all the leaders, the one who has most bitterly resented the improper, he would almost say the perfidious, use made of the letter. It is to Hammond, too, that he appeals to give the

<sup>1</sup> See above, S. Jameson's telegram.

signal in his wire of the same date to his brother at Johannesburg :—

“Dr. Wolff will understand. Distant cutting British Bechuanaland Police have already gone forward. Guarantee already given.<sup>1</sup> Therefore let J. H. Hammond telegraph instantly all right.”

Meaning, presumably, as in the telegram to Harris, that the police entrusted with cutting the Pretoria wire were beyond recall. But what J. H. Hammond in reply did telegraph, under the name of “Hays,” was this :—

“Wire just received. Experts’ reports decidedly adverse. I absolutely condemn further developments at present.”

Even more explicit was Mr. Phillips’ simultaneous wire to Mr. Beit :—

“It is absolutely necessary to delay floating. If foreign subscribers insist on floating without delay, anticipate complete failure.”

This wet blanket Dr. Harris duly forwarded to Jameson on Saturday.

Upon receipt of Hammond’s message, Jameson gives up Johannesburg as a bad job, roundly accuses it of “funking,” and tries one last desperate “bluff” on Cape Town. The following was sent first thing Saturday morning :—

“There will be no flotation 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 C. J. Rhodes to allow me. I stand to lose fifty good B.S.A. Company’s Police—time expires next week, and so on, as can tell them nothing.”

But Cape Town was not to be bluffed. The mad folly of a move into the Transvaal without so much as the pretext of a disturbance within its borders was one possible to Jameson’s fevered brain, as he chafed upon the frontier, but unthinkable in the cooler distance of Cape Town. Holden was pressing

<sup>1</sup> See above, S. Jameson’s telegram.

across country to Pitsani on horseback, laden with the Johannesburg arguments to show that action at the moment was hopeless. Heany was coming round by rail to the same goal. The only thing was to—

“ Stop Zahlbar till Heany sees him.”

As Colonel Rhodes put it in a telegram. So Harris ordered a special train for Heany from Kimberley to Mafeking (for to go round by rail from the Rand to Mafeking you must dip down into the Colony and then northward again along the Transvaal border), and telegraphed meanwhile to Heany himself :—

“ Lose no time, or you will be late.”

And to Jameson :—

“ It is all right if you will only wait. Captain Maurice Heany comes to you from Colonel F. W. Rhodes by special train to-day.”

And again, a few hours later, with a final bowing to the inevitable :—

“ Gould Adams arrives 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 a director. Ichabod !”

It may be well to remind those who do not know their Bible as well as the conspirators apparently did, and who, therefore, have taken “ Ichabod ” for a dark and sinister code word, that it is, being interpreted, “ the glory has departed.”

That the sender of the telegram, in spite of Jameson’s bluff, never doubted that he would now await the Rand messengers and abide by their message, is shown by the telegram, “ Cactus ” to “ Toad,” which was sent at noon on Saturday :—

“ Have arranged for Heany. Dr. Jameson awaiting Heany’s arrival. Keep market firm.”

Meanwhile, on Saturday morning, the train from Johannesburg had come in, and Messrs. Leonard and Hamilton (the

Chairman of the National Union, and the Editor of the *Star*, the *Uitlander* organ), had laid bare the utter disunion and chaos reigning at Johannesburg, the suspicions aroused upon the "Flag Question," upon which more anon, and the consequent insistence by a section that the whole question of the Government of the future should be settled before taking a step further against the Government of the present. Their account was such as to make Harris echo Jameson's theory that "all means fear." He telegraphs to Jameson at two o'clock :—

"You are quite right with regard to cause of delay of flotation, but Charles Leonard, Hamilton of *Star*, inform us movements not popular in Johannesburg; when you have seen Captain Heany, let us know by wire what he says; we cannot have fiasco."

And at the same time to Colonel Rhodes :—

"Charles Leonard says flotation not popular, 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, and is only waiting for Captain Maurice Heany's arrival."

\* \* \* \* \*

The net result of the interview which Messrs. Leonard and Hamilton had at Groote Schuur was to convince Mr. Rhodes that the whole affair was over.

Here on the very date originally fixed for the revolution, were the border supports adjourned *sine die*, and the Johannesburg revolutionaries at sixes and sevens.

Perhaps Mr. Rhodes was secretly relieved. Some time before, in the presence of another confederate, he had had a talk with Jameson in which he had wavered as to the whole design.

"I think, after all, we will give it up," he had said.

"No. I'm d—d if we do now," was the Doctor's curt reply; and the man of schemes yielded to the man of action.

It is not suggested here that the moment's vacillation was due to a moral scruple; but merely that, to adopt the words of the Cape Committee, "there is no evidence that Mr. Rhodes

ever contemplated that the force at Pitsani should at any time invade the Transvaal uninvited. It appears rather to have been intended to support a movement from within."

That movement from within Mr. Rhodes regarded as now in abeyance; and as the result of the conference one of the two Johannesburg deputies went from Groote Schuur to the Telegraph Office that Saturday afternoon and sent off a reassuring and reassuring telegram, which has, so far, escaped the various fishing inquiries, and is here made known for the first time.

He reported Mr. Rhodes' satisfactory assurances, said that it was all right about Jameson, and told the Johannesburg leaders to "go on quietly" with their movement—a "new programme" had been "agreed upon."

As for Mr. Rhodes, he drily told Government House, which was anxiously watching the apparent signs of rising storm at Johannesburg, that the Johannesburg Reform Movement had "fizzled out like a damp squib."

Such then was the situation on Saturday evening. It was on that date that Jameson had originally arranged with Johannesburg to move. He had now been stopped. Heany and Holden were due at Jameson's camp. For them he was waiting, and Cape Town now knew how absolute a veto they were carrying. Evidently nothing was further from the minds of Mr. Rhodes and those with him than the idea of Jameson accepting that veto for the date fixed only to "take the bit in his teeth" and dash in on the morrow.

The Chartered Company's office was closed as usual on a Saturday afternoon, and the confederates in Cape Town went to bed that night to sleep. Let us hope they slept well. It was some time before some of them got a night's sleep again.

## Chapter VII

## A HITCH, AND A FALSE START

WHAT had caused the sudden hitch which had thus brought the Johannesburg Revolt to a standstill? The "Flag Question." And what was the "Flag Question"? Much has been conjectured about it, and in many quarters the theory is accepted that the rock on which the Johannesburg Revolt finally struck was the discovery of the Johannesburg leaders that while they were only working for reform, Mr. Rhodes was planning to "jump the Transvaal"—to re-annex the Republic to England, or, as it is absurdly put by some, to the Chartered Company. It is this suspicion which more than anything else seems likely to damage Mr. Rhodes' career in Cape Colony.

The facts seem to be these.

The "Flag Question" had never bulked large in the previous history of the movement. Johannesburg is a cosmopolitan place, and to raise the question of the ultimate future of the country would be to court disunion. The platform of the National Union had always been that of simply reforming the existing Government. That was the only programme which could be avowed by a constitutional agitation, and the only one which could command the sympathies of enlightened Afrikaners in the Cape and the Free State. The most loyal Afrikaner in Dutch Cape Colony, however satisfied with the British flag for himself, would be up in arms the moment anybody proposed to force it on his cousins in the Transvaal by arms or by a *coup d'état*. The memories of the last "War of Independence" were too fresh.

Nevertheless, as time went on and the Transvaal contemptuously repudiated the advances of the National Union Uitlanders to cast in their lot with the Republic, the aggressively English section in the Union began to grow in strength, and the old formula, "We want nothing to do with Downing Street," became less and less confident. The writer remembers well, returning to Johannesburg in the middle of 1895, when some years had elapsed since a former visit, and talking over this very question with two of the foremost National Union leaders. I had learnt to regard the Afrikaner formula, should a Johannesburg Revolution ever come, as the *mot d'ordre*. What was my surprise to find these leaders beginning to ask each other whether their movement was not losing more strength within, than it gained without, by adopting this platform.

"What!" I said, "You think of waving the Union Jack? I thought it was an axiom that 'flag-wagging' in Johannesburg would ruin everything?"

"With the Progressive Boers, yes. But where *are* the Progressive Boers? One could wait if there were signs of progress, however slow. But look at the reactionary legislation! We go from bad to worse."

"But," I asked again, "even if you regard your friends among the Boers as no good, what about the Afrikaner section of your own followers? Surely they will be choked off at the first word of re-annexation?"

"We are not so sure. It *was* so; it would be so now if the Government had met our advances towards citizenship half-way. But as it is—you do not know how bitter feeling has become. There is a small section, but it is the keenest of all, which talks in this way:—'We aren't allowed to have a Transvaal patriotism: very well, let's fall back on our English patriotism. We are nothing to this Government. If we have got to make a revolution, let's make it under the grand old Union Jack.' And the Republican platform does not 'enthus' these men a bit."

I do not mean that this was the last word of the conversa-

tion, or that the leaders I refer to had actually made up their minds in this sense ; but the conversation showed the current of thought, and it must be remembered that it preceded the genesis of the actual plot by months.

But in the actual plot all these questions were left over. The first thing was to make the *coup*, to dispossess the present Government on a clear issue of its own misgovernment, and having done so, to submit the question of what should replace it to a plebiscite of all the inhabitants.

The actual government of the Reformed Transvaal would be a part of the great settlement which must follow the downfall of the Unreformed Transvaal, and which would be guided by many factors not calculable beforehand : such as the temper of the Uitlanders, and the completeness of their *coup* ; the temper of the Boers, of South Africa at large, of British colonists, of Great Britain and the Colonial Office.

If Mr. Rhodes had any cut-and-dried plan for forcing all these factors into acceptance of the British flag, it is the belief of the present writer that not a soul was in possession of that plan. But it is incredible that he would have risked so much but for the hope that this result would be arrived at, and arrived at without civil war, either immediately or as a proximate result of the upheaval. It was an old saying of his about the Boers : " I know what I feel about my flag—so I do not expect them to give up theirs." He would have worked with the Transvaal if the Transvaal would have worked with him towards a scheme of South African co-operation such as all really Progressive Afrikanders have been willing at some time to accept : a scheme allowing the Republics to keep their own flags and a very complete measure of State autonomy, while at the same time accepting the hegemony in South Africa of the Power which guards the coasts and owns the greatest area of territory.

But his sympathy with the Boer determination to preserve Republican forms was less a moral and sentimental one than it was the recognition by a practical man of practical factors in a

situation. For the same Republican formula on the lips of Johannesburg cosmopolites, who dreamed of swaggering themselves in the foretop of a brand new Separatist Industrial Republic, he had no sympathy at all. Had the contest between old and new come to the point at which he, with that finger in the pie which he had been so careful to secure, could have the controlling word in the settlement, nobody who knows Mr. Rhodes can doubt what that word would have been. But in that case, the Boers, led by Paul Kruger and his Hollanders, having themselves to blame for the overturn of their polity, not even Mr. Rhodes' Afrikaner supporters could have reproached him for taking advantage of the fact to solve at one blow the intricacies of South African union caused by clashing sovereignties.

After all, to submit the question to the vote of the entire white population of the Transvaal, Boer and Uitlander, was to entrust it to those who alone had a right to settle it. Supposing for a moment that the majority settled it in the English Colonial sense, and could make the minority abide by the vote (a thing most improbable), then the South African problem would be solved at one stroke. With the Cape, Natal, and the Transvaal all British Colonies, surrounded by British territory, the little Free State in the centre of South Africa would have been like a nut between the crackers. It may be that this tempting prospect lured Mr. Rhodes away for once from the saner and, as it happened, fairer-minded and more straightforward opportunism which had always hitherto guided him on this question. But it is the conviction of the present writer that whatever was in his heart Mr. Rhodes was waiting upon events, and that his only settled plan was to secure a hand in the settlement and use it for getting the Transvaal into the best relations with the British Colonies and the British Empire which might then prove feasible short of civil war.

To sum up, the *status quo* was assumed as to flag both at Groote Schuur and in Johannesburg; and oddly enough the people who first brought the matter into prominence on the

Rand were some well-meaning British Jingoës who had lately rushed back to Johannesburg determined to be in at any revolution which might be going. One of these men—and a capital fellow he is, full of pluck and pugnacity, and immovably solid in his convictions—went about the streets in the latter days of December with a little toy Union Jack, which may have come off a Christmas tree, tucked away in his waistcoat pocket as some people will wear a temperance ribbon. He would engage in conversation with anybody supposed to move in the outer revolutionary circles, and sound them on their loyalty to the flag, producing the Christmas tree emblem at an appropriate moment from his pocket to lend emphasis to his remark, "That is the only flag I'll fight under."

This sort of talk brought the matter into discussion. It gave a handle to three classes in the revolutionary councils.

A certain number of Afrikanders, old National Union men, had joined the movement, and induced friends to join, at a time when the anti-Downing Street formula was a more genuine affair than it had since become.

Then there were the Americans, who were inflamed at that moment with the anti-English sentiment raised by Mr. Cleveland's bellicose message about Venezuela. It is an odd illustration of the ramifications of our world-wide interests, this vital link between the swamps of Guiana and the Rand conglomerate; but so it was. Our American cousins were at that moment full of the sentiment of championing pseudo-Republics menaced by grasping John Bull, and Republicanism in the Transvaal was at least not more unreal and corrupt than in Venezuela. It is out of this atmosphere that Mr. Hammond, as an American citizen, eventually came to emerge as a doughty champion of the Transvaal "vier kleur." Excited compatriots accentuated his position at the time of the crisis, and made great capital of it on his behalf later when he was a captive of the Government.

A third section which caught at the handle afforded by this question, was the inevitable party of delay, which, as we have

seen, had seized several pretexts for re-opening large questions already.

In the latter days of December, one after another questioner brought the "Flag Question" to the notice of the leaders ; and on Christmas Day there took place in the house of Colonel Rhodes a secret meeting, a strange Christmas meeting enough, not of the Reform Committee (which did not then exist), but of the revolutionary junta which formed the nucleus of that Committee.

At this meeting the Colonel was asked point-blank whether there was a private plan between himself and his brother and Dr. Jameson to hoist the Union Jack ?

Colonel Rhodes had never heard of such a thing, and said so. Nothing could have been more explicit or more emphatic than his disclaimer. And whatever other deficiencies he may be charged with in the difficult part which he had to play at Johannesburg, he had one singular advantage, especially enviable in that community, and that was that not one of his associates for a moment doubted his honour and his word at any point.

However, the result of the discussion was a triumph for those who wished to delay. One or two of the leaders insisted on a distinct pledge from Mr. Cecil Rhodes. Now, it was argued, the case for adjourning everything is unanswerable ; we can do nothing till this question of principle is settled. It was necessary to send agents by train to confer with Mr. Rhodes personally, and they could not be back under four or five days.

So it came about that on the 26th, the day advertised by the National Union for a great public meeting, the manifesto which was issued by its President was accompanied by a notice of adjournment of the meeting to the 6th January. So, too, it fell that the President of the National Union and the Editor of the *Star* left Johannesburg on the eve of the time originally appointed for action and came to Cape Town. Their mission succeeded, as we have seen. Mr. Rhodes gave

“satisfactory assurances,” while Jameson’s impatient brushing aside of what he regarded as a merely factious dissension, is on record in the cipher telegrams.

Nevertheless, the raising of the discussion at this precise moment proved fatal.

It was an interesting question no doubt—with what particular sauce the Transvaal should eventually be served up at the banquet of nations. But, as Mrs. Glass began her immortal recipe, “*first catch your hare.*”

\* \* \* \* \*

We must now pass from Johannesburg and from Cape Town to Pitsani. We saw in the last chapter how on Saturday, the 28th of December, the confederates at Cape Town went to bed with easy minds under the impression that they had secured a breathing space.

At five o’clock that Saturday afternoon Jameson walked into the office at Pitsani and sent off this remarkable message :

“Received your telegram Ichabod *re* Capt. Maurice Heany. Have no further news. I require to know. Unless I hear definitely to the contrary, shall leave to-morrow evening and carry into effect my second telegram of yesterday to you, and it will be all right.”

The pretext for this new departure seemed to Jameson an excellent one. He had that day received a Reuter’s telegram representing the situation at Johannesburg as acute, and renewed remarks reached the camp of the kind reflected in one of the cipher telegrams about “Boer shareholders holding rival meeting on Limpopo.” This time rumour said that the Boers in the Zeerust and Lichtenburg districts were being assembled in view of the proposed public meeting which was to have taken place that evening at Johannesburg, and that it was intended to surround the town. Jameson did believe in hostile movements of Boers in the Zeerust district sufficiently to send a spy, one Bates, to reconnoitre. Jameson had long ago discussed the possibility of movements of this kind suddenly threatening to cut him off from his friends, and had said to

one or other of them in an off-hand way that of course it was understood in that case that he would act at once, without waiting for any signal. The writers of the letter of appeal deny that there was ever any such agreement, but to this day Jameson maintains that some kind of understanding to that effect there was.

Be that as it may, in his then mood the dubious "final arrangement" struck him as a capital piece of bluff for Cape Town, for it is evident that he had now decided in his own mind that the time had come for applying his rule of "shoving things through."

He knew that Heany could not reach him till Sunday, and he can hardly have overlooked the facts that the Chartered Company's Offices, to which the above telegram would be delivered like a bolt from the blue, would probably be shut on Saturday afternoon; while the Mafeking telegraph connection would be shut off on the Sunday.

On Sunday morning (having, of course, received no answer to a telegram which at that moment had not yet been delivered) Jameson proceeded to his next stage of action: from "I will go unless I hear," to "I must go whether I hear or not." At nine o'clock that morning he handed in a message to Cape Town and another to Johannesburg. The first was addressed to Dr. Harris, and says simply:—

"Shall leave to-night for the Transvaal. My reason is, the final arrangements with writer of letter was that, without further reference to them, in case I should hear at some future time that suspicions have been aroused as to their intentions amongst the Transvaal authorities I was to start immediately to prevent loss of lives as letters state. Reuter [telegrams] only just received, even without my own information of meeting in the Transvaal, 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."

The Johannesburg message was addressed to Dr. Wolff:—

"Meet me, as arranged before you left, on Tuesday night; which will

enable us to decide which is the best destination. Make J. W. Leonard speak. Make cutting to-night without fail. Have great faith in J. H. Hammond, A. L. Lawley, and miners with Lee-Metford rifles."

The references in the telegram to Cape Town have been explained in advance. The telegram to Dr. Wolff may be translated: "Come out to meet the column on Tuesday night, and decide whether it should march to Pretoria or Johannesburg. Start the revolution with an harangue from Advocate Leonard, Q.C. Serve out the arms, and the miners will fight, ready or no, when I set the example."

When Heany and Holden arrived, they could no more shake a determination like this than a pair of butterflies could stop a traction engine. He brushed them aside, swearing that with his lads he could kick the persons of the burghers "all round the Transvaal." We have seen what Jameson's training and experience had been, and what formula for success he had derived from it. Unluckily, the Kimberley doctor knew little of the Boer, living aloof and speaking an unknown tongue; and he had something yet to learn.

From this point forward to Doornkop, Jameson moves not like a human thing accessible to human expostulation or authority, but rather like some blind instrument in the hand of Fate.

## Chapter VIII

## THE GREAT FIASCO

ON Sunday evening the Resident Magistrate at Mafeking (lately Imperial, now Colonial) was surprised at supper by a noise like cheering from the direction of the Police barracks (the Police, lately Imperial, now Company). About the same time Inspector Fuller of the Cape Police saw that the men were being paraded in full kit, marching order; saw Colonel Grey rallying some troopers who at first declined to fall in; and proceeded to investigate. He reports:—

“I followed the column on foot and found that they were taking the main road to the Protectorate, but seeing a cart and six mules belonging to the Company move off in the direction of the Buurman’s Drift Road to the Transvaal, I took a short cut on to this road. When I got about half-way between these two roads, I heard the command given to form to the right, and then some one, I was too far off to recognise the voice, or distinguish the words, made what I thought was a short speech, after which a cheer was given, and column of route was again formed. The head of the column then wheeled to the right, left the Protectorate road just past the township, and came into the Transvaal road where I was standing. I estimated the number as they passed me in the moonlight to be about 160 men with four guns. As Major White passed me he bade me good-bye. I returned the greeting, and told him at the same time that I was reporting the whole affair. He said, ‘It’s all right, old chap, you can do what you like; the wires are cut.’”

The after-history of the men who set forth so light-heartedly, lies buried under the successive accretions of two legends. The first is the Raider legend, which first obtained currency, and was embodied in a certain ballad by a Poet Laureate, a catch now fallen upon evil days of derision. But now there

has grown up a great Boer legend only less fearful and wonderful. This chapter is the result of a patient (if almost despairing) effort to confront, collate, and reduce the two to the ascertainable maximum.

Mafeking and the Pitsani camp are about twenty-seven miles apart. About 160 to 170 of the men had been collected at Mafeking, including two troops which were still Bechuanaland Border Police, the rest being now Company's men. At Pitsani were 373 to 380. At each place, on Sunday afternoon at Pitsani, on Sunday evening at Mafeking, there was a parade called, at which the secret was let out and some sort of speech or appeal made. At Pitsani Dr. Jameson made the speech, Colonel White and Sir John Willoughby adding a few words. At Mafeking Major Coventry and Colonel Grey did the speaking. "We cannot keep it from you any longer," said Major Coventry. "It is all bosh about fighting Linchwe." [It had been put about, to account for the drilling, that there was to be a police visit to an insubordinate petty chief in the neighbourhood.] "We are going straight to Johannesburg. We want you all to come. It will be a short trip, everything has been arranged for." The troop addressed seems to have contained a good many hangers-back. There were murmurs and questions. Several of the men wanted to know whether they were going under Queen's or Company's orders. "I cannot say that you are going under the Queen's orders," said Colonel Grey frankly, "but you are going to fight for the supremacy of the British Flag in South Africa."

At Pitsani the men seem to have been better prepared by the prevailing gossip about trouble in the Transvaal. But even there Jameson himself could not quite repress the same kind of questionings. He read the letter of appeal from the five Johannesburgers, or a snatch from it, laying special stress, of course, on the women and children in danger, and said that he was sure not a man would hang back from the rescue. Of course there were cheers, but there were also questions. Where were they going? To Johannesburg. Would there be

fighting? Probably not a shot, as everything had been carefully arranged for a surprise; but if need arose they need have no fear of being left to fight it out alone. There were two thousand armed men in Johannesburg; the Cape Mounted Rifles would rush to the rescue; to say nothing of the Imperial forces in Natal, and the Rhodesia Horse in the north. There would be a bonus for the special service, and, in short, if any one's heart was not in it let him fall out and stay behind. Jameson wanted no flinchers.

Then there were more cheers, and doubters and grumblers fell into the background. How could a lot of English lads, careless fellows with rifles and a belt full of ammunition, refuse a madcap adventure proposed by a man in authority,—and such a man as “Dr. Jim”?

And so they started, and trotted in the moonlight over the level veld, across the invisible line which separated a camp of exercise from an incredible violation of international comity.

Before the start (says the Dutch legend) the canteen was thrown open and the troopers were made free of it, to imbibe what it is a special irony under the circumstances to call “Dutch courage.” The effects of which (continues the same authority) were grotesquely visible at the start. Some of the riders fell off their horses, and rifles, saddles, and bandoliers were picked up along the first few miles of the route next day. This last statement is well witnessed. Perhaps some few men deserted during that first night. When the columns met next morning, no trooper was *minus* any of his accoutrements. And the free drinks are mere legend. The canteen was open in the usual course for the men to buy.

Here is something else, however, which is credibly attested. An essential part of the plan was the cutting of the telegraph wire—“Secure Telegraph Office silence,” as one of the cipher telegrams puts it. And one wire was cut, sure enough. The southward wire to the Colony was cut south of Pitsani, and again south of Mafeking. But the really important wire, running to Pretoria by way of Zeerust and Rustenburg, was

not cut, by reason of the trooper who was sent to cut it being, in plain words, drunk. He started on his errand carrying with him the most elaborate and detailed instructions. He was to cut the wire in two places, so many yards apart, take it so far into the veldt, and bury it so deep. He did cut certain wire, and he did make an effort, at least, to bury it in the veld. But the wire which he cut was that of the peaceful railing by which a farmer kept his cows in. Then with a good conscience he reeled back. In the whole tragi-comedy there is no grotesquer touch than this, which the writer had from a resident on the spot.

The two columns effected their junction at the village of Malmani, 39 miles from Pitsani, less from Mafeking. It was five o'clock on a Monday morning, and great was the surprise of the few folks who were stirring. The united force numbered some 512 men, all mounted, with about 30 pack horses and a posse of Kafirs leading them, with eight Scotch carts and three Cape carts drawn by horses or mules and loaded with ammunition and with a small amount of provisions, with eight M.H. Maxims, one 12½-pounder and two 7-pounders.<sup>1</sup>

Besides Dr. Jameson, the officers apparently in command were as follows (the local rank is put first, that in the Service given in brackets): Lieut.-Col. Sir John Willoughby, Bart. (Major), Royal Horse Guards (in general military command); Major Hon'ble Robert White (Captain), Royal Welsh Fusiliers; Lieut.-Col. the Hon. Henry F. White (Major), Grenadier Guards, in charge of M.M.P.; Lieut. Col. Raleigh Grey (Captain), 6th Dragoons, in charge of B.B.P.; The Hon. C. J. Coventry, a Militia Officer, added another title, and several Guardsmen were attached to the Staff. One invalid officer who happened to be staying at

<sup>1</sup> The force was under 600, counting the seventy odd native drivers, leaders, etc. Men and natives carried 50,000 rounds of ammunition, and there was the like amount in the carts. There were also some 45,000 rounds for the Maxims, and for the other guns about 120 each.

Mafeking for his health, went along in his own cart in civilian clothes "to see the fun."

Sir John Willoughby was in some ways the most seasoned of these warriors. He had acted in the vague capacity of adviser to Jameson at the time of the Matabele War, and had a hunting reputation and a Derby win to his credit. But taking the officers as a whole it cannot be said that Jameson had surrounded himself for his enterprise with the fighting flower of the British Army. Rather the Company had got a jovial lot of titled young Guardsmen "seconded," dwelling upon that fringe of civilization which parts Society from Bohemia. One of Cromwell's psalm-singing Ironsides would have loved, especially in view of the sequel of the combat, to draw an edifying contrast between these cavaliers, with their racketsy troop of young ne'er-do-weels, and the pious fathers of gross families speaking the nasal speech of modern Roundheads, who were to give them their Dunbar.

A certain number of the troopers, no doubt, perhaps a half, were fairly seasoned South African irregulars. They were spoken of at the time as "the lads who smashed Lobengula"; but this was not correct. Most of those who fought in the first Matabele War were settlers, or became settlers. The "Rhodesia Horse," up at Bulawayo, had more title to such a description. The backbone of the column was the B.B.P., or strictly, the ex-B.B.P. Of the M.M.P., the Company's force proper, a surprising proportion were very young, from 18 to 25; and of these many were recent arrivals in South Africa, some of them, indeed, quite green, but for such drilling as they had got in camp during the last few weeks. There was a sprinkling of Afrikanders, a few of them with the typical Franco-Dutch names.

The route from Malmani to Krugersdorp may be followed in the map prepared beforehand by Major "Bobby" White, who had gone over part of the ground in October, besides visiting Pretoria and making elaborate sketches of the environs with military topographical annotations; all which maps and

plans, needless to say, were duly carried along and found among his papers.

The distance to be covered must not be thought of as a stretch of trackless veld. From Malmani a plain road ran straight before them and they followed it as far as Krugersdorp. A road—that is to say, a South African cart-track of the usual kind, a strip of ruts and horse-tracks, with a little something done to make the bad places passable, pick out the drifts, etc.

On this road there is a canteen of some sort every two hours on horseback; and the Boer legend has it that the column stopped and drank at every store. Were that true the march would have been a wonderful performance indeed. Of the stores specially built for the column, as we have seen, four were passed on the journey. Here and there appear the homesteads belonging to the farms along the line of country. An ordinary South African traveller on horseback, decently mounted and in the habit of riding journeys, not one of a troop, would cover the distance from Mafeking to Krugersdorp (somewhere between 120 and 140 miles at most) in two days to two and a half days, sleeping most of the night.

The column went along with scouts, advance guard, and flanking columns, the artillery and Scotch carts in the middle. The order of the march was as clearly laid out beforehand as the route. Elaborate instructions for Quartermaster, for Transport Officer, and so forth were also among the papers, signed "J. Willoughby, Colonel, O.C. Column." Here is a memorandum marked—

*Orders for Intelligence in charge of Scouts (special party).*

1. A party of 12 picked men will be detailed for advanced patrol.
2. Captain Lindsell will be in charge, 6 men will be employed and accompany him unless more are detailed.
3. Captain Lindsell's party will always start  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour by day and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an hour by night before the column moves.
4. He will report himself to O.C. Column before moving off.
5. This party marches independent of the main body, and will regulate its pace to about 5 miles per hour.

6. The party will halt at places named by O.C. Column.
7. One man of the party will march about 100 yards ahead of the remainder and one man 100 yards in rear.
8. A guide will accompany the party.
9. The officer in charge will endeavour to obtain all the information he can of the road ahead, and will warn all stores of the approach of the column, so that forage and food may be prepared ready for issue on the arrival of the column. He will inform all persons he may meet, that if they keep quiet they will not be molested in any way, and that the column has no hostile intentions against the inhabitants of the country. In case of any hostile demonstration, he is to fall back, sending back a message with the fullest information as to nature of such; and any important information, as to any movements of armed bodies, should also be sent back at once to O.C. Column, stating whether the information be hearsay or otherwise and from whom obtained.

The message should state exact time, place of its despatch, if possible, in writing.

This party is not to scout to the flanks, as this will be done by the advanced guard, but caution must be exercised in approaching a village, defile, or any awkward piece of country.

Ascertain about water, how far and how many horses can be watered at same time. See that water is boiled for coffee, etc.

Everything, however, was not done quite so much "according to Cocker" as all this. In particular, the halts made at the stores were not long enough to allow the men to eat the bully beef and biscuits provided. It was a case of off-saddling, standing about, sitting, or lying to rest for a while without sleeping, and off again. Two hours was about the longest halt, save once in the dark when the road was lost.

So the column jogged along, walking, cantering, and trotting by turns. From Malmani the column pushed on in order to pass a defile, noted as dangerous by the topographical "Bobby," at the Lead Mines. This was achieved at a scamper, soon after five p.m. Otherwise, the only incident of Monday was the first official challenge. A quaintly formal communication came to hand from the Commandant of the Marico district<sup>1</sup> to the Head Officer of the expedition of armed

<sup>1</sup> Under the old South African Burgher Law, each district has a Commandant, a permanent official, who "Commandeers" in any emergency a

troops at Malmani Eye, warning him to retire with his force over the frontier and not conflict with the law of the land, with the Convention, and with international laws. A characteristic Jamesonian composition was the reply: "Sir,—I am in receipt of your protest of above date, and have to inform you that I intend proceeding with my original plans, which have no hostile intentions against people of Transvaal, but we are here in reply to an invitation from the principal residents of the Rand to assist them in their demands for justice and the ordinary rights of every citizen of a civilized State.—(Signed) JAMESON."

On Tuesday morning the column reached the farm of Mr. Malan, a Volksraad member and near connection of General Joubert, where the remount horses were in readiness, as before described, and the worthy raadslid himself came out to express his astonishment and anger at the apparition. He did so quaintly enough. Approaching Jameson, he exclaimed in an aggrieved tone, "Jameson! what do you come bothering me like this for?" He might well resent the service which, all unwittingly, he had been made to render the column; but, as it turned out, it was no service at all. The horses, as we have seen, were a job lot bought up from a coaching company. Many of them were probably quite unused to the saddle; and either because they proved intractable, or because they could not be caught, or because it was not thought worth while to stop long enough for the exchange, little advantage was taken of their presence, and the column rode on mostly with the same horses.

That morning the column was caught up by a mounted messenger, one of the troopers who had declined to join, riding post haste with the first word from the High Commissioner, telegraphed up to Mafeking on Monday to the Resident Commissioner. He had ridden after them for eighty miles, all night, and would have caught them some hours sooner, but certain proportion of men from his district, sending round from farm to farm,



that he himself was caught by a party of Boers on the border—a party which at first meant to follow Jameson, but received orders from Pretoria by telegraph to await some imaginary supports which were expected to pour into the country in Jameson's wake. A Landdrost had opened his despatches and read them, with the natural result that he was forthwith allowed to proceed.

The column was halted when the messenger came up with it. He carried a separate despatch for each officer, as well as one for Dr. Jameson. In these Mr. Newton, the Resident Commissioner at Mafeking, simply repeated the High Commissioner's brief message, directing Dr. Jameson to return immediately, saying that the violation of the territory of a friendly State was repudiated by Her Majesty's Government, and adding, for the benefit of each several officer, that they were rendering themselves liable to severe penalties. There was no eagerness to peruse these billets. The messenger found his way to one of the officers, who said, "Take them to Sir John Willoughby." Willoughby said, "Take them to Dr. Jameson." Dr. Jameson said, "Take them back to Sir John Willoughby; he is in military command." After half an hour the messenger got his answer that "The despatches would be attended to"—and the column moved off.

A more picturesque meeting was that about three o'clock on Tuesday afternoon with a grandson of President Kruger, a lieutenant (*Anglice*, inspector) of police at Krugersdorp. This young man, formerly a Government clerk, has military ambitions, and once went spying to Mafeking with absurd results. He is a favourable specimen of the young Transvaaler of the new generation, and was quite lionised by the interviewers lately in England. Hearing a rumour of the advancing force, young Eloff rode out burning to distinguish himself, coolly went up to the column when at Mrs. Boon's farm, and was passed through to the officers, whom he asked by what right were they entering the Transvaal with an armed force. The question was somewhat difficult to answer, and it was evaded

by putting the young gentleman under arrest and taking away his arms, with the remark that they would be returned to him at Johannesburg. Eventually he was treated with all due courtesy, his arms were returned to him, and he was left behind on parole to remain rooted to the spot for an hour after the column left. His next appearance was after Jameson had fought and lost, when he led a detachment of burghers into the streets of Johannesburg, where they let off their feelings and a quantity of blank cartridges.

New Year is a great visiting-time for the Boers, who make up parties and go round to friendly homesteads. One or two parties of this kind were descried, and at first taken for a hostile force. Only at midnight on Tuesday (New Year's Eve) came the first sign of hostility from the Boers who were hanging about the column. A few score men were keeping it in view and retiring before it as it advanced. As the column reached a place where the road mounts some rising ground, a few Boers shot in among them from over the brow. It was a brief and dropping fire, and only one man was wounded. The reply in the midnight darkness was rather a matter of form, though the guns were got into play in one minute.

Early on Wednesday morning the column received despatches both from the British Agent at Pretoria and from the leaders at Johannesburg. A messenger with a safe conduct brought from Sir Jacobus de Wet a more peremptory veto telegraphed up by the High Commissioner :—

“Her Majesty's Government entirely disapprove your conduct in invading Transvaal with armed force ; your action has been repudiated. You are ordered to retire at once from country, and will be held personally responsible for the consequences of your unauthorized and most improper proceeding.”

This time Jameson wrote his reply, and a very characteristic one it was :—

“DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of the message you sent from His Excellency the High Commissioner, and beg to reply, for His Excellency's information, that I should, of course, desire to obey his instructions, but,

as I have a very large force of both men and horses to feed, and having finished all my supplies in the rear, must perforce proceed to Krugersdorp or Johannesburg this morning for this purpose. At the same time I must acknowledge I am anxious to fulfil my promise on the petition of the principal residents on the Rand to come to the aid of my fellow-men in their extremity. I have molested no one, and have explained to all Dutchmen met that the above is my sole object, and that I shall desire at once to return to the Protectorate.—I am, etc., JAMESON.”

The Johannesburg despatches were brought in soon after by a couple of cyclists, who met the column about ten o'clock with a scribbled note from Colonel Rhodes, and a scribbled postscript by Mr. Phillips, which will appear in another chapter.

This scrap of paper told Jameson, reading between the lines, that he was taking the Johannesburg leaders by surprise, that they had not yet made any overt move against the Government, but that they had armed a number of men, and were prepared to applaud his audacity, and to suggest explanations of his action. The note ended by asking whether they should send him out men to show him a suitable place to pitch his camp at the outskirts of Johannesburg, where he was expected to arrive that evening. He was not offered any military help; evidently there was not the barest idea of his requiring any.

In reply to this note Jameson at first said in an off-hand way, “No. It didn't matter.”

Then, after consulting with Willoughby or one of the others, he added, as a kind of after-thought, “Tell Colonel Rhodes we are all right. The only thing is, it might be as well, perhaps, to send out an escort, say a couple of hundred men, to conduct me in, just to show that I am not coming as a pirate.”

On their way back with this message the cyclists were captured in the Boer lines, then closing upon the column, and the message was not received at Johannesburg till four days afterwards.

To return to the column.

The exact tenour of the cyclists' despatches was not communicated, but it went round that Johannesburg had sent welcoming messages, and there was some cheering.

About midday the column came in sight of Krugersdorp, the western terminus of a railway line which runs along the "reef" through Johannesburg, Johannesburg itself being fifteen to twenty miles away.

The gold reefs on which Johannesburg is built are generally described as running along for fifty miles from east to west. The village of Krugersdorp (about 1,500 to 2,000 souls) is a kind of western outpost of that line of reef. As the column sighted Krugersdorp it would also sight in the neighbourhood the signs of mining : headgear, heaps of tailings, etc., and would feel as if it were now really at the beginning of Johannesburg.

But if Krugersdorp had rousing associations for the raiders, so it had for the Boers, who were now cantering up from district after district on their sturdy little ponies to this appointed meeting-place. For, by a dramatic coincidence, which must have inspired the farmers with patriotic memories, within gunshot of the Krugersdorp market-square rises the stone obelisk of Paardekraal, commemorating the struggle and triumph of their "War of Independence" against British troops in 1881.

The cyclists had warned the column that some few hundred Boers were waiting for it at Krugersdorp, and as small parties were also seen hanging upon its skirts, and as the formation was hampered at this point by a quantity of wire railing, the approach to the little town was made warily. Four or five miles off was the last store that the column was destined to touch at—Hind's store ; and here it enjoyed, for an hour and a half, its last quiet rest. For some reasons, however, the arrangements for feeding men and horses were a failure here. Neither got much to eat.

Close to the store the column surprised a party of Boers watering horses. These were not fired on with rifles or Maxims, and had made off long before the field guns, now pushed forward, reached the advance guard. A few rounds were fired after the retreating party. The column learnt at the store that the Boers before them were now nearer 800 than 300.