

A WOMAN'S PART IN A REVOLUTION

man spoke with conviction, and I was willing to accept his proffered comfort.

In our quiet home at Park Town we had settled down to domestic routine. The guard had gone to housekeeping in a tent under the dining-room window. They had made friends with Totsey, and then with Totsey's master, little Jack. Although I never recognised them beyond a formal bow, in answer to their salute as we drove in and out of the grounds, I realised that they were kind-hearted men. They were Burghers belonging to the Volunteer Corps, and were quite a different grade altogether from the men who composed our guard at Pretoria. At first we had thirteen, then the number was diminished to nine. Each man was paid \$5.00 a day out of my good man's pocket, fed, and cab fare provided (to fetch and carry the relief squad from and to the town).

It was very like boiling a kid in its mother's milk, but I had the gratification of remarking once or twice with casual supe-

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rriority during conjugal conversation, that revolutions were expensive things, and that was *some* comfort.

My invalid's health, which at first showed a decided change for the better, began to wane again. Massage was tried, and tonics were freely administered. Dr. Murray and I thought of Cape Town and the sea; but I must own up, it was *the officer in charge* who was most influential in obtaining a permit for my husband to leave the Transvaal. The bail bond was increased to a hundred thousand dollars. Fearing *somebody* might change his mind, I insisted on Dr. Murray's starting at once with my husband for the Cape. Jacky was thrown in as a bonus. Parker and I were to follow on the mail train two days later.

The guard, who were by this time genuinely attached to their charge, begged him to be photographed in a group with themselves. To their great pride this was done. I missed my husband just before his departure, and Jacky, joining in my search

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from room to room, gave the information, 'Papa is playing with his guard outside.' Weak though he was, he had crawled out to the tent, with a big bottle of champagne, and when I stepped to the study window I saw, in the pale twilight, Mr. Hammond standing with the men about him. They lifted their glasses to him, and their hearty cheers shook me through.

The travellers were despatched, and, according to our plan, I followed with the maid. My dear husband was well enough to meet us in Cape Town at the depot, and Jacky was in high feather—he had a tin steamboat; he was inclined to swagger; and showed a personal complacency not warranted by his appearance, for some of his clothes were put on with great care, *hind-part before*.

We found lodgment at Muizenburg, near Cape Town—sun, wind, and primitive discomfort, this last mitigated by the never-failing kindness of the proprietor. His little children fell over one another in eager service

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to my invalid; they were always sure of appreciative recognition from him, and every child is sensitive to kindness.

Mr. Joseph Story Curtis, the Reformer, joined us, brought down from the Rand by his physician and sick nurse; he was suffering from partial paralysis, induced by the excitement of the revolution and preliminary trial.

Young Shumacher had come to the coast for building up, also Mr. Van Goenert, who had carried a gun on duty when Johannesburg was under arms. We were a saddened little circle at Muizenburg, and we used to watch the great ships sail out for 'home' with a lump in our throats.

The strong salt breeze buoyed us up to fresh hope. A new friend came to me: a woman with all a woman's tenderness, and the simple necessities of life had a fresh meaning when supplied by you, dear Jessie Rose Innes!

Dr. Murray was obliged to leave us.

An untimely sea-bath brought back

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most serious symptoms to my patient, and I was the prey every afternoon to a low fever which sapped my strength. Although at first this fever bore a horrible menace, it proved a disguised blessing. For two or three hours each day I was absolutely free of care, and would lie with quick pulse and mildly intoxicated brain dreaming I was with my elder boy on the border of England. I saw him in his little Eton jacket and broad turned-down collar, his sweet young face fresh as the morning. Or I would dream of the pretty home under the hill, in far-off California. The fragrance of thick beds of violets would seem to float to me over the long waste of sea, and I could see the tall roses nodding in the white summer fog. My temples beat like the winter rain on the roof, and the light before my eyes was the library fire, picking out, in its old familiar way, the gilt lettering on the books ranged about. It was sweet to go back to all this, even down the scorching path of fever.

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Our stay at Cape Town was coming to its close.

The first trial was called for April 24, and my husband insisted upon going back to meet his sentence. Drs. Thomas and Scholtz declared this most inadvisable. His heart was in such condition, any shock might prove fatal. Their reports were forwarded to the Transvaal Government, and I begged for a few days' reprieve, cabling my urgent request to Mr. Olney in Washington, Dr. Coster at Pretoria, and our faithful friend, Mr. Robert Chapin, United States Consul at Johannesburg. Mr. Olney *at once* petitioned the Boer Government in our behalf. Dr. Coster answered curtly by wiring Mr. Chapin that John Hays Hammond was summoned to appear before the High Court of the Transvaal on the morning of April 24, at 10 o'clock. To me he vouchsafed no word.

Letters came from friends in Johannesburg begging my husband not to return, and cables from the United States to the

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same effect. The sentence was sure to be a death sentence or a term of long imprisonment.

From important sources, which for obvious reasons I cannot quote, I received private messages and letters informing of a plan on foot to lynch the leaders. The beam from which four Boers had been hung years before at Schlaagter's Nek (Oh! that poisonous suggestion in the 'Volksstem') had already been brought from the Colony for this special purpose. Mr. Manion, the Consular Agent, and Mr. R. E. Brown, an American just arrived in Cape Town from the Rand, took me aside and laid the case in all its bare brutality before me. *To allow my husband to return to Pretoria was for him to meet certain death.* If he were not lynched by the excited Boers, he was sure to get a death sentence. Mr. Brown showed feeling as he plead with me to use a wife's influence to save her husband's life. My head was swimming. I could only repeat in a dull, dogged way : ' He says his honour

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takes him back. He is the father of my sons, and I'd rather see him dead than dishonoured.'

Somehow I got to my room, and the page-boy stumbled over me at the door some time afterward, and ran for Mrs. Cavanagh. When I felt a little recovered, I put on my hat, and, not waiting for my husband's return from an appointment with Dr. Thomas, I drove to the office of Mr. Rose Innes. He was not in, and his clerk declared he did not know when he would be in. 'Very well, then; I'll wait until he does come in.'

I was given a comfortable chair, and a dictionary was dusted and placed under my feet. Mr. Rose Innes at length appeared. He was greatly astonished to find me waiting for him. I began abruptly: 'Dear Mr. Innes, I am in need of a friend; my distress is so great that I can no longer distinguish right from wrong.' I told him everything; showed him the letters which I had received, and, facing him, asked, 'What is my duty?'

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I can appeal to my husband—for my sake, to save the life of our child—and perhaps dissuade him! *My God, it is a temptation!*'

Mr. Rose Innes sat deep in thought.

'If you think his going back is a needless throwing away of a valuable life,' I began, with a timid hope beginning to grow in my heart—'I will chloroform him and have him taken to sea!'

Mr. Rose Innes leaned forward, and took my hand gently between his own: 'Mrs. Hammond, your husband is doing the right thing in going back; don't try to dissuade him. If he were my own brother I would say the same'—and I accepted his decision.

For a further strong but ineffectual effort to gain a few days' longer leave of absence for Mr. Hammond, I am indebted to this good friend. Also for many personal kindnesses which I can never forget. Miss Louisa Rhodes was a most helpful friend as

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well; the anxiety in common brought us very close together. She was a veritable fairy-godmother, bringing us wines and dainty food from Groote Schuur's well-stocked larder to tempt us to eat.

IX

At Cape Town I saw the High Commissioner—a gentle old man with delicate hands. He had lived two-thirds of his life, and passed the virile period.

The responsibility of taking my husband to Pretoria was more than I could assume alone ; my strength was nearly spent. Doctors Thomas and Scholtz assisted me in every way. Although called separately, and not in consultation, these two gentlemen were far too broad-minded and generously interested in our welfare to stand upon professional etiquette. Dr. Scholtz accepted the post of medical attendant on the journey up-country, and one of the last faces which I saw at Cape Town as our train drew out was that of Dr. Thomas,

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who had left a critical case to hurry down in order to wish us God-speed.

Jessie Rose Innes had come too, wild night though it was. Under her tweed cape she had brought from her home at Rondebosch a basket filled with food—fresh butter, chicken jelly, extract of coffee, and a home-made cake for 'Jacky boy.' Dear heart of gold! there was no need of words between us that sorrowful night.

Trotting along beside the slowly-moving train, Sir James Sivewright held my hands thrust through the open window.

'When the worst comes, you'll do all you can to help us, Sir James?' I asked.

'Indeed I will,' was the hearty response.

The trip was a wearisome one. The weather was hot, and there was much dust. Little Jack was the leaven of our heavy days, and a sweet letter, tucked away in a safe place, from the boy in England, wrung and cheered my aching heart. It bade us to 'brace up.' He had heard all about the troubles, and was glad his father was not

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idle when men were needed. His house had won the football match. There were only a few more weeks to wait, and we would all be together again! Fate carried a smile in her pocket for me so long as that boy kept well!

At night we reached Vereenigen, on the border of the Transvaal. We were delayed there two hours (120 minutes, 7,200 seconds) while the Custom House officials examined the luggage. Faint and exhausted, my husband lay on the seat before me. I sat at the open window waiting—waiting with every nerve strained and a fearful rushing sound in my ears, for the possible attack of excited Boers or a stray shot from some fanatic's rifle. Jacky, trying to clamber over my lap, would whimper under the fierce clutch of my fingers as I dragged him down from the window.

As is usual, the passengers' names had been telegraphed ahead, and a crowd of Boers had gathered at the station to see the man who had come back to get his

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sentence. They were a wild, uncouth-looking crowd from the adjacent farms. I could hear them ask, 'Where is he?' 'In there,' another would answer, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to our compartment. In threes and fours they would shuffle into our car and gaze with dull, stupid curiosity upon the prostrate man, as sheep gaze at a dead member of the flock. Dr. Scholtz, keen-eyed and watchful, stood on guard in the doorway. Platinum would have melted under the courteous warmth of his manner to the officials.

Our train at last under way, I found some one had thrust a bunch of fresh grapes into my little boy's hand.

Nearing Johannesburg Dr. Scholtz came to me: 'Your husband is exhausted. I think it best for him to pass the night at his home, going to Pretoria on the mid-day train to-morrow.'

It was well we did this, for between Johannesburg and Pretoria this train met with one of the collisions so frequent on

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the Netherlands Railway. Only the engineer and a brakeman were killed, but the shock would certainly have been most disastrous to us.

SUNDAY, NOON, APRIL 26.—My husband with Dr. Scholtz started for Pretoria. I was unable to leave my bed, but it was agreed that Betty and I should follow on the early train of the morrow.

The Reform trial which was begun on Friday, April 24, was resumed on Monday.

Repeated wires from Mr. Hammond and Dr. Scholtz prevailed upon me to remain at my home to rest another day. 'It would probably be a long trial.'

X

My husband reached Pretoria Sunday evening, April 26. The information that we had received en route, regarding the pleas of guilty entered by the imprisoned Reformers, was confirmed by his associates : the other three leaders, Messrs. Rhodes, Farrar, and Phillips, had entered a plea of guilty under count one of the indictment for high treason, the fifty-nine Reformers entering a like plea of guilty under the count of lese-majesté. As conjectured by us when we heard of this action of the Reformers, the prisoners had received certain assurances before making such pleas :

First.—That they should not be tried under the comparatively obsolete Roman Dutch Law, which punished the crime of treason with death ; but they would be tried

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and punished under, and in accordance with, the code laws of the Transvaal Republic, which imposed penalties of fine and imprisonment for the crime charged in the indictment.

Second.—The leaders were further assured that this action on their part would measurably mitigate the sentences of the other fifty-nine Reformers.

On Monday, the 27th, the Court reconvened in the market hall, the *imported* Judge Gregorowsky occupying the bench.

Mr. Hammond took his place with the three leaders, attended by his physician, Dr. Scholtz, who remained at his side during the entire trial.

After some preliminary matters were disposed of, Mr. Hammond, actuated by the same influences that were brought to bear on his associates, entered a plea of guilty to count one of the indictment, and placed his signature to the written statement which had been previously signed by Messrs. Rhodes, Phillips, and Farrar.

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This written paper was in substance as follows :—

That for a number of years the Uitlanders had earnestly and peacefully sought relief for their grievances by the constitutional right of petition. That what they asked was only what was conceded to new-comers by every other South African Government.

That petition after petition was placed before the authorities—one bearing 40,000 signatures, asking alleviation of their burdens and wrongs ; that they could never obtain a hearing, and that the provisions of law already deemed obnoxious and unfair were being made more stringent ; and, realising that they would never be accorded the rights they were entitled to receive, it was determined to make a demonstration of force in support of their just demands.

The statement then recites the coming of Jameson against their express commands and understanding with him, and all the subsequent acts of the Transvaal Government, the High Commissioner, and De Wet,

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Her Majesty's Agent, which are now matters of history.

The paper concluded as follows :—

‘ We admit responsibility for the action taken by us. We practically avowed it at the time of the negotiations with the Government, when we were informed that the services of the High Commissioner had been accepted with a view to a peaceful settlement.

‘ We submit that we kept faith in every detail of the arrangement. We did all that was humanly possible to protect both the State and Dr. Jameson from the consequences of his action ; that we have committed no breach of the law which was not known to the Government at the time ; and that the earnest consideration of our grievances was promised.

‘ We can now only put the bare facts before the Court, and submit to the judgment that may be passed upon us.’

After the examination of several witnesses and the introduction of the celebrated cipher

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telegrams, the Court was adjourned for the day.

TUESDAY, THE 28TH.—There was a vast concourse gathered at the Market Hall on this day of the trial. The chamber was crowded to its utmost limit by anxious and interested listeners. Many ladies were present.

His Lordship (the imported Judge) was late in ascending the bench, unnecessarily prolonging the suspense of the waiting crowd.

The proceedings were commenced with every formality that could render them impressive. A large number of armed men were stationed at the entrance and about the Court-room. A prominent object in the Court-room, one which immediately struck the eye of those entering, as this was its first appearance during the trial, was a plain wooden dock, low in front, high at the back, and large enough to hold four men.

As in the preliminary examination, the Court proceedings were conducted in the

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Dutch language, an unfamiliar tongue to a majority of the accused.

After the despatch of some minor matters, Mr. Wessels, counsel for the defence, made his address to the Court, closing by reading the written statement of the four leaders, and asking the clemency of the Court.

He made no reference or protest to the tribunal as constituted—a Court presided over by a Judge *not a* citizen of the country whose sovereignty had been offended by the treasonable acts charged.

Mr. Wessels was followed by the State Attorney, Dr. Coster, in a bitter and vindictive speech.

He demanded that the prisoners at the bar should be punished under the *Roman Dutch Law*, and that the four leaders should receive the *death* penalty.

This demand of the State Attorney was apparently a surprise to Mr. Wessels, for he sprung to his feet in an excited manner and protested most vigorously against the demand of Dr. Coster; his language and

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manner were such as to impress many present that it was provoked by a breach of good faith.

At the conclusion of the speech of the State Attorney, Gregorowsky (the imported Judge) summed up the case at length, and held that the prisoners were guilty of high treason as charged in the indictment, and that the Roman Dutch Law governed in such cases; and that the sentences imposed would be in accordance therewith.

The Sheriff then with a loud voice commanded silence whilst the sentence of death was pronounced.

A deep hush fell upon the Court-room—a profound, breathless silence that became oppressive before the next official utterances disturbed it.

‘Lionel Phillips, George Farrar, Francis Rhodes, John Hays Hammond!’ called the Registrar.

In response these four were singled out from the rest of the prisoners and conducted to the new dock.

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It was the Registrar who again spoke.

‘Lionel Phillips, have you any legal reasons to urge why sentence of death should not be passed upon you, according to law?’

‘No,’ was the response.

This was followed by the sentence.

In like manner, Farrar and Rhodes were interrogated and sentenced.

Mr. Hammond was then called to his feet and the same formal question asked.

Although pale and weak from protracted illness, Mr. Hammond responded in a firm voice to the Registrar’s question.

The Judge, then addressing the prisoner, said: ‘John Hays Hammond, it is my painful duty to pass sentence of death upon you.

‘I am only applying the punishment which is meted out and laid down according to law, leaving it to his Honour the State President, and the Executive Council, to show you any mercy which may lie in their power.

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‘May the magnanimity shown by his Honour the State President, and this Government, to the whole world, during the recent painful events be also shown to you.

‘I have nothing to do with that, however.

‘I can only say, that in any other country you would not have a claim on their mercy. The sentence of the Court is, that you be taken from this place where you are now, and be conveyed to the jail at Pretoria, or any such other jail in this Republic as may be appointed by law, to be kept there till a time and place of execution shall be appointed by lawful authority, that you be taken to the place of execution to be there hanged by the neck till you are dead.

‘May Almighty God have mercy on your soul !’

Whilst the sentences were being passed upon the four leaders the auditors were wrought up to the highest pitch ; sobs were heard on every side, tears were on many cheeks, and even stolid old Boers were seen

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to weep. One man was carried from the room in a fit.

The four Reform leaders, who had borne themselves during this trying time in a brave and fearless manner, then stepped out of the dock firmly and unhesitatingly, and were taken to the Pretoria jail.

The other fifty-nine prisoners were then called to the bar and sentenced each to pay a fine of ten thousand dollars, and to suffer two years' imprisonment.

Thus ended this remarkable trial, a judicial trial unprecedented in the annals of jurisprudence.

A mockery of justice and a travesty upon civilisation.¹

¹The foregoing regarding the trial and sentence of the Reformers is from information derived from eye-witnesses and the local Press.

XI

By a strange providence Betty and I missed the early train. I had not reckoned on the delay in dressing which sorrow and fatigue could occasion.

The paper had announced that the sentence was to be given at noon. Though I had no intention of being present in the Court-room, I wished to be within reach of my husband in case he should need me. We took the local train which left Johannesburg at 10.30.

Our journey came to an end. I saw Mr. Rose Innes and Dr. Scholtz on the platform.

‘Is it the death sentence?’

Mr. Rose Innes, with both hands on my shoulders to keep me from falling, said ‘Yes.’

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There were many other friends, I have since learned, who were there to receive me. I have a hazy recollection of Mr. Barnato, good kind-hearted 'Barney,' begging me 'not to fret'; that he had brought my husband to Africa and he meant to stand by him till he got out of Africa. Mrs. Clement and Betty remained beside me. The day was without hours to me, a dry aching stretch of time; I had no tears to shed!

At some time in the afternoon Mrs. Joel brought me a flower and a note from my husband, beseeching me to keep up a brave heart, and assuring me that he was all right and as comfortable as was possible under the circumstances.

After the death sentence had been pronounced and the Court dismissed, Mrs. Joel, with woman's thoughtfulness, put a flask of brandy in her pocket and started for the prison. In the confusion of receiving the prisoners she managed to slip in and went at once to the condemned cell. Her visit

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was a God-send to the four unhappy men, who were much worn by months of anxiety, ill-health, and this final strain of the death sentence. They were bearing up wonderfully well, she said.

One of the lawyers came and sat at the end of my sofa. He burst into tears. 'We've been played! we've been played!' he exclaimed, with vehemence. Remembering how the lawyers for the Reformers had muddled everything from the beginning of the trial, how they had conscientiously and persistently walked into every trap laid for them, I sat upright to look squarely into his face. 'My God! when haven't you been played?'

The effect of the death sentence on Johannesburg was extreme: all shops and the Stock Exchange were closed, and the flags of the town were placed at half mast.

This, from the 'Standard and Diggers' News'—a tribute from the enemy's paper—goes to my heart:—

'One respects the probity of the man,

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who, dangerously ill and totally unfit for the hardship of a prison, preferred to take his stand in the dock, rather than sacrifice his self-respect by flight from Cape Town; Mr. Hammond has worthily upheld the reputation of a nation which claims its sons as men who "never run away."'

It was decided by the Executive this same night to commute the death sentence, but this was not communicated to the condemned men until the following morning. The night of suspense passed under the eye of the death watch with a dim light burning was a needless cruelty; it made the President's subsequent magnanimity more dramatic, but with that I naturally felt no sympathy.

I have often been asked since if I did not realise that the Boers would never have *dared* execute my husband? And many dear friends who were thousands of miles away assure me now that they never had a moment's real apprehension for his safety. We however, who were in Pretoria at the

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time, a helpless handful in the power of a primitive population of narrow experience, a people inflamed by long years of racial feud and recent victory, were by no means so sure that all would end well. Two prominent men, standing high in authority, confessed to me later that they were most anxious and fearful of results, although at the time their sustaining support helped to keep my body and soul together. *The gallows was prepared, and the order was to hang the four victims simultaneously.*

The night following the sentence, Mr. Chapin, the U.S. Consul, and his wife came to me. They were then and for months afterwards as tender and faithful as people of my own kindred. Mr. Chapin was tireless in his efforts in behalf of the Americans in trouble, and the high personal regard in which he was held by the Boer, as well as Uitlander, did much subsequently to ameliorate their circumstances. Mr. Chapin at once interviewed Mr. Wessels, chief advocate for the Reformers—and he told me immediately

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after the interview the result of their meeting. Mr. Wessels distinctly said that, although it was not put in writing, it was understood between the State Attorney and himself 'as between man and man' that if the prisoners pleaded guilty he would not press for severe punishment. (Mr. Wessels has since, for reasons only known to himself, denied this both privately and publicly.)

APRIL 29.—The commutation was published. Mrs. George Farrar had come from Johannesburg, and together we went to see our husbands. Our visit was limited to five minutes. We found the four men haggard, but apparently cheerful. The condemned cell had an earthen floor. It had been newly whitewashed and reeked of antiseptics. Four canvas stretchers, a tin pail filled with water, and a dipper, furnished it. A negro murderer had been its last occupant. I sat on one of the canvas cots with an arm around my husband and holding Colonel Rhodes' hand. Mrs. Farrar was sitting on the opposite cot, locked in

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her husband's embrace. The guard came to order us out. Poor Mrs. Farrar looked so frail and white, I put my arm about her to give her support. In the courtyard we stopped to speak to one of the Reformers. The guard became furious, and, swinging his arms in a threatening manner, rushed at us with curses. We were driven violently out of the yard like depredating dogs. Surely the sun never looked upon two women in sadder case. She was just up from her confinement, and I was far advanced in pregnancy.

XII

No cable of political purport could be sent from Pretoria safe from mutilation. I therefore despatched Mr. Hammond's secretary to Cape Town with a message to the American press, reporting Mr. Wessels' plea for the Reformers, the statement of the four leaders, and the sentence. I did this, believing that, if the American public fully understood the circumstances of the case, popular sympathy would allow no stone to remain unturned to protect their unfortunate countryman from so violent and unjust a sentence.

Pretoria seethed with overwrought wives. In the prison the men were suffering real hardship. The sanitary arrangements were shocking. Twenty-two Reformers were crowded into a room thirty feet by ten.

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This room had been hastily built of corrugated iron, and leaked at every seam. Draughts were strong enough to blow the hair about their temples ; the men slept on straw mattresses laid on the floor, and there was scarcely room enough for a man to get out of bed without stepping on his neighbour. Rations of mealie pap—a coarse, insipid porridge—with a hunk of hard, dark-coloured bread were given to each prisoner in tin pannikins—not particularly clean. At mid-day a little greasy soup and soup meat were added. This unsavoury fare caused many of the Reformers to go hungry rather than eat it. Others ate it, but their stomach afterwards rejected it. They were locked in the cells at 5 o'clock and without lights. Prison regulations were most strict at this period.

Mr. S., one of the Reformers, had the misfortune to have his teeth drawn a short while before the trial. A new set was completed the day after his incarceration, and although his friends used every effort

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to convince the jailers of the perfect harmlessness of these false teeth, and explained Mr. S.'s painful predicament in being without them when he had nothing but hard food to chew, they insisted upon considering them contraband, and would not allow them to pass. Poor Mr. S. lived for three days on a half-tin of condensed milk, smuggled in by the wife of a fellow-prisoner. The world has never seen such wholesale smuggling as was practised by these devoted women. Mrs. Solly Joel as she passed daily through the prison gate was a complete buttery. The crown of her hat was filled with cigars; suspended from her waist, under her dainty summer silk skirt, hung a bottle of cream. Tied to her back by way of a bustle was a brace of duck, or a roasted fowl wrapped neatly in linen. She said this gave her a slightly out-of-date appearance, but she did not mind that. Under her cape Mrs. Clement wore a good-sized Bologna sausage around her waist as a belt;

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this was in time adroitly removed by Mr. Clement. Another lady supplied the prisoners with tins of sardines and beef essence, which she carried concealed in her stockings. Occasional vagaries on the part of these affectionate wives were subsequently explained to the complete satisfaction of their captive lords. Mrs. Butters' coyness and refusal to be embraced because of the flask of coffee in her bosom is an instance of this. All this sounds very funny now, but it was desperately earnest work then. In time the stringent rules relaxed. The prisoners were allowed to buy their own food, and Mr. Advocate Sauer made the same arrangement with the Pretoria Club to supply food for the Reformers as had been done during their former imprisonment. Those were boom times for little Pretoria. Hotel-keepers and tradesmen coined money, and the cab-drivers were able to open an account with the bank.

Mrs. Lionel Phillips closed up her beau-

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tiful home in Johannesburg, sent her babies to her people at the Cape, and took permanent lodgings in Pretoria. She was most faithful in her visits to the prison, and was kind to the three room-mates of her husband in many ways.

XIII

My diary continues through May :

FIRST WEEK.—Petitions in favour of the Reformers are being signed all over the country. All feeling against the Reform Committee has veered round, and the strongest sympathy is now felt for them. Only the extreme of the Boer and Hollander factions chant the old story of their trying to subvert the Government—conniving with Jameson, and then deserting him, &c., &c.

Landdrost Schutte and Captain Shields quarrel over who shall have charge of the jail. Apparently it is an appointment of honour, or large emolument.

Gregorowski is publicly hooted on his return to Bloemfontein. I hear that as soon as Gregorowski had pronounced the

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death sentence, Judge Morice dashed from the Court-room and ran hatless through the streets of Pretoria to withdraw Gregorowski's name, which had been put up at the Club, at his request. This is a sample of the feeling among honourable men. Judge Morice is a Burgher and a prominent Judge of the Transvaal Court. The Jury of Burghers called for the final trial, which was never empanelled, were greatly surprised and affected by the fearful sentence—some of them wept like children. And they were the first to draw up a petition for commutation.

Prisoners are still wearing their own clothes, although it is said that enough jumpers of prison sacking are waiting to breech the lot. They suffer severely from cold and dampness, the prison accommodations offering little or no protection from the weather. Many of them are ill. There is talk of separating the Reformers and sending them to jail in various districts—Barberton, Rustenburg, and Lydenburg.

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This threat causes much apprehension, for their one solace is being together.

Rumour of English troops gathering on the Border.

President Kruger and the High Commissioner exchanging opinion over the uneasiness. Kruger calls out, 'I see Bugaboos in your front yard,' and Sir Hercules responds, 'Oh no ; that's our tame cat.'‡

Petitions come in from the country districts of the Transvaal. From Durban and Pietermaritzburg, with over a thousand signatures, from Lorenzo Marques, a second from Durban, and one from the Orange Free State, expressing sympathy and the hopes of President Steyn.

Natal sends a petition signed by 4,000 Burghers.

The sentences are commuted, but nobody knows to what.

General Joubert is sent off with a ten days' leave of absence to take his annual bath.

Messrs. Rose Innes and Solomon visit the jail daily.

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SECOND WEEK.—In spite of hardships my dear husband's health improves. He vows the death sentence has cured him. From day to day we are promised a final decision from the Executive, but matters are still drifting. Nothing will probably be done in this direction until General Joubert returns to Pretoria, as he is one of the members of the Executive Council. It is suggested to me by one of the Government circle that a visit from me to Mr. Kruger would be timely. All which I wished to say I would not be allowed to say, and just to pay an aimless visit seemed a foolish thing to do, and, being outspoken, I said so. A friend in whom I had implicit confidence advised me to go by all means. I was possibly being used as a political pivot. After some delay I did go, spluttering through the mud in a wheezy old cab behind a splayfooted white horse driven by a hunchbacked negro boy. The interview lasted five minutes, and was perfectly meaningless. I suppose it was meant to be that. Ten fathoms down under many other

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things I could see that Kruger had strong heart qualities. Educated and morally matured, he would be one of those grand characters who make epochs in the world's history. We shook hands at parting and went out of each other's lives for ever.

Mr. G. told me, as he helped me into the cab at the door, that Mr. Kruger had received a cable from America in my husband's behalf, signed by the Vice-President and a large number of the Senate and House of Representatives. This information opened my eyes. I now saw why a visit from me would be 'timely.'

Within an hour news was cabled by *some one* to all parts of the civilised world that the wife of the American prisoner, John Hays Hammond, had received audience of the President of the Transvaal. 'The interview was of long duration. What transpired was of a private character, but it is believed to be very hopeful and satisfactory.'

THIRD WEEK.—Delays, shiftings, postponements, delays with excuses, and delays

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without excuses. Each day strong petitions sent in to the Executive. A continual stream of disheartened wives and friends on their way to the Presidency, many going in the early dawn, as the President—an early riser and of simple habit—was known then to be easy of access. A pitiful picture lingers in my mind of a dozen Reformers' wives in the deep golden yellow of an African sunrise sitting on the edge of the broad side-walk with their feet in the dust waiting for the President to return from burying a Landdrost's wife. I cannot remember that Mr. Kruger made any specific promises. 'All shall come right,' he said frequently. 'Wait; don't hurry me. I must go slow, or my Burghers will get out of hand.' We waited, and the men inside of the prison walls one after another sickened and lost heart.

On May 12, Dr. Messum sent the following report in to the Landdrost:—

Dear Sir,—I have, on the 29th and 30th April, written to the Inspector of Jails about the state of the jail. I do not know if I am

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to report to you or to the Inspector of Jails ; in any case, I have the honour again to report that as yet no alteration has been made in the sheds in which the political prisoners are kept. I must repeat again that they are too small and unhealthy for the number of prisoners placed in them. I find now, on account of their immediate vicinity to the native section, that vermin is beginning to trouble the political prisoners. There are amongst the political prisoners very old and sickly men, whose lives, on account of the insufficient accommodation, are placed in danger. There is not yet any proper hospital room for the sick, who are thus obliged to remain amongst the others. I find that the accommodation is very insanitary and unhealthy.

About the prisoner F. Gray I wish to make special mention, because he is showing signs of developing melancholia (lunacy), caused by the uncertainty of the future and what he has gone through during the last few months.

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I also fear that he later on will develop suicidal tendencies. I would recommend that his sentence should be taken into immediate consideration, and to discharge him at once from the jail.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

GORDON MESSUM, M.D.,

District Surgeon.

Unfortunately this report was not considered, and on the 16th day of May poor Gray, distraught by his sufferings, cut his throat.

Mr. Fred Gray was a man of high business standing. He was married, and the father of six children. His tragic death was a shock to every one. Johannesburg turned out in a body ten thousand strong to carry his remains to the burial-place. Inside the jail, his fellow prisoners had formed in procession and with uncovered heads followed the body as far as the prison gates, the limit of their freedom, not a man with dry eyes.

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The first prisoner was liberated.

FOURTH WEEK.—The decision still withheld. President Kruger excuses this by saying it is due to the fact that only half the captive Randites have signed the petition for commuting the banishment and imprisonment clauses to fines.

The suspense is heartbreaking, and night brings no forgetfulness. Those long voiceless nights of South Africa! Not a bird's call, nor a chirp from the tiny creatures which hide in the grass. A white moon, a wide heaven filled with strange stars, and the tall moon-flowers at the gate lifting up their mute white trumpets to the night wind.

The little boy beside me rouses from his sleep to ask:—'Mother dear, why do you laugh and shake the bed so?'

Fearing an illness, I yearned for a last interview with my husband. It was a Saturday that I went to Pretoria, and although the prison was supposed to be closed on that day to visitors, I had several

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times gained admittance through the kindness of those in authority. I went to the Landdrost who had the dispensing of permits.

‘Will you please make an exception in my favour and allow me to see my husband? I am ill, and must return to my home in Johannesburg at once.’

‘What does she say?’ roared the Landdrost, who for some reason was in a furious temper. He turned to a Boer in the room. ‘Tell her she may whine as much as she pleases, she can’t see her husband on Saturday. *Nobody* can go in the prison on Saturday. If she wants to see her husband she must wait until next Monday!’ The man turned fiercely towards me, but seeing my patient face, or perhaps for the sake of some Boer woman on a distant farm, his voice broke, and became quite gentle as he delivered the message.

With one exception this was the only time I ever received harsh treatment from a Boer official. Of course I sometimes met

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with a *strictness of manner* which was to be expected, and which I was quite prepared to submit to. Brutal unkindness I never experienced but twice.

Reaching the jail, whither I had directed the cabman to drive me, I found Advocate Sauer and Mr. Du Plessis standing at the gate. They almost dropped at sight of my face. Dignity had deserted me. I was actually howling in my distress,

‘ Please, *please* let me in to my husband ! ’

Du Plessis, rough and violent as he was to most people, was always kind to me. He opened the wicket and pushed me gently through. That was his answer. My sudden entrance, a ball of a woman with the tears dripping down on to her breast, surprised the warders. They regarded me with stricken faces. One at last rallied. With his eyes still fastened upon me, he called,

‘ Mister H-a-m-mond, Mister H-a-m-mond, your missis is here ! ’ and my husband came rapidly across the yard.

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I went home to my bed. Dr. Murray came in charge.

‘Poor little woman! There is nothing to prescribe but oblivion in a case like this.’ He ordered narcotics. Two weeks later I was told that I had been dangerously ill. In that darkened room I had suspected my jeopardy. Surely there is a special place in heaven for mothers who die unwillingly.

From distant parts of the world kind letters came to me—and from Johannesburg messages, sweet, with full-hearted sympathy—many of these from people whom I had never seen, nor ever shall in this life. I found friends in the days of my trouble, as precious as rare jewels, whom I shall wear on my heart until it stops its beating.

The Government most generously allowed my husband to come to my bedside. He was accompanied by the chief jailer, Du Plessis. He wore some violets in his button-hole, I remember, which the jailer’s child had given him. Mr. Du Plessis asked to see me. He had news to tell me which would

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cheer me up, he said. Brought to my bedside, all he could say, and he said it over and over again in his embarrassment, was :

‘ Don’t be unhappy ; your husband won’t be many years in prison.’

This did not bring the cheer intended. Playing the part of guest was irksome to Du Plessis. He went home to Pretoria the second day—leaving Mr. Hammond, who was not on parole, or even under bail, entirely free. No point in my husband’s career has ever given me so entire a sense of gratification as the confidence in his honour thus manifested by the Boer Government. In my convalescence he returned to Pretoria and gave himself up at the prison.

‘ You might have waited another day,’ said the warder in charge ; ‘ we don’t need you yet.’