

called National Reform Committee, and armed men ostensibly for protection against what they are pleased to believe the danger of aggression and assault by the Boers. The mines are shut down, and workmen are pouring by the thousand into Johannesburg. Each man with his wages receives a rifle. The streets are filled with excited crowds, which listen eagerly to the "firebrands" who stir their passions by lawless appeals.

"In all some ten thousand men are armed and drilled openly, while munitions of war are being provided. Many merchants, and even miners other than the English, deprecate this appeal to force. Indeed, yesterday, a company of Americans left for the coast rather than countenance an act of brigandage. And some have sent to Natal, in hot haste, their families and valuables. All availing transportation, luggage-vans and cattle-cars are pressed into the service. The place has the aspect of a town fearing assault.

"This is not the frenzy of a mob. Behind it is the reasoned purpose of determined men. The great mine owners, through their agents, lead the dance while all the adventurous and impecunious spirits foot the measure. The natives also are restless. It is a union of plutocracy and anarchy to overthrow the Republic, in the conviction that the British Government will accept their deed. It will disapprove of violence, but possess the Transvaal under pretence of protecting life and property.

"All the fuel of a dreadful conflagration is gathered, and now—the torch is lighted. This is my message. I learned last night, and communicated to Bok a project of amazing boldness, which is known to but half a dozen of the conspirators—the inner group, the subtle and secretive brain of the movement. How I know need not, and must not be told, but it leaves me free to act, and lays on me the duty of choosing sides. I have come to give you the last move in this game of subjugation, and then to offer you the sword of an American soldier.

"The news is this: Two weeks ago a secret letter, signed by the chiefs of the Reform Committee, was sent by safe hands to Dr. Jameson, the Commissioner of the British South African Company, urging him to invade the Transvaal with as large body of border police and volunteers as he could gather, and to hasten by forced marches to Johannesburg, professing to protect life, actually to aid an insurrection which is timed to his approach.

"It is difficult to say how long it will take him to summon forces, but he moves quickly and strikes sharply, as appears from his dealings with the Matebeles. It is to be noted that he is now at Mafeking, on the border, with a large detachment, as though anticipating some crisis. Moreover, as evidence that this is not a hastily devised expedition, word has come by cable, in cipher, to the junta that the raid is subject of whisper in the clubs of London. This justifies the suspicion that the South African Company—which is Cecil Rhodes, whose brother, as you know, is active in the agitation at Johannesburg—is feeling the pulse of the British public where it beats fiercest, in the jingoism of the military clubs."

"But," interrupted Kruger, "can this be true?"

"As to the letter," replied Clendenin, "and the expectation that Jameson will answer it in person with all diligence, I am positive. That the scheme is known by certain circles in England is more than probable. The rest is warrantable inference."

"Yes," said the President, slowly, "I do not doubt, for I have expected some conspiracy. But I cannot believe that the British authorities are cognizant of such scoundrelism."

"Ah," said Jarrison, the Attorney-General, "the government is not informed officially, but Kruger, if this filibuster should succeed in thrashing us Boers, he would be the hero of the English populace, and Her Majesty's Cabinet, while protesting, and maybe punishing his unauthorised act, would not scruple to profit by its results. I know them, those Englishers; like their own lion, they will let the jackal hunt and then seize the prey."

"Tut! tut!" said Kruger, with his gentle smile. "They are not all alike. There is Gladstone, who did us justice—"

"By the great Gott," spluttered Maritz, "yaas, justice! after Majuba. Smit, you was there. Ant I would myself gif much out of my life to gimb dose heights again. Ja! the Boers must fight. It has come to that once more."

"Well," said War Secretary Joubert, "whatever the diplomatic aspects of the case—that comes after—it is apparent that the one thing now is to suppress this uprising. For my part I would muster the militia and take possession of Johannesburg, peacefully or forcibly, and proclaim martial law. As to Jameson, whether he appears or not matters little, since he can have, at best, but a few hundreds of men."

"Ah!" replied Kruger, "on the contrary, I think he is the key to the situation. Will he invade the Republic? In my mind, there is no doubt, for whether he has, or has not, any authority, or even suggestion from Rhodes, he will act on the request of the Reform Committee, assuming that the raid will be condoned and rewarded. Just so was it with his invasion of Matebeleland. He came, and saw, and conquered without orders, and the government repudiated his course, but chartered the South African Company nevertheless, with this freebooter as administrator. Yes, he will come, and thank God for it. He gives us our right and reason for decisive action. He must be defeated, and then no man will defend him. The deed will ring around the world. It will voice our case for the first time in the tribunal of humanity. The whole hope of our cause turns at this point. If Jameson succeeds, nothing can prevent the occupancy of the Transvaal by the English. If we defeat him, nothing can rally British officialism to the support of the Uitlanders; and alone these can, at worst, but raise a rebellion which we need not fear. Sirs, our practical problem is to defeat Jameson; all else will follow."

Smit, who, like Maritz, belonged to the old school of Boers, untouched by European culture, here spoke for the first time.

"I think Oom Paul is right, but I do not believe we can get de militia together soon enough to stop de rait, ant as Joubert says, it matters not. Let Dr. Jim get in ant de Uitlanders will refuse to give him oop. Then we haf egsuse to attack. It will require weeks to gather our men, ant he is, maybe, ready to march now. First summon de militia."

Bok, the elder Secretary of State, who had listened quietly, now said:

"I would suggest that we send a cipher despatch, before the lines are closed against us, to our agent in Germany, Dr. Leyds, that he may understand the situation, which will be misrepresented in Europe. But there is a side of this affair which has not been mentioned. We shall be compelled, I fear, at the last, to heed the complaints of the Reform Committee. You know that petitions of thirteen thousand signers in '94, and of thirty-eight thousand in '95, asking the franchise, were refused by the Volksraad, and I voted with you all. But consider, the Uitlanders number sixty thousand, mostly men, and in a twelve month there will be a hundred thousand, for mines which yield £12,000,000 a year, from a reef that has hardly been scratched on the surface, will draw multitudes of men and millions of capital. We number, say, fifty thousand, men, women and children, and can put no more than five or six thousand militia in the field. At last we may be compelled to yield everything to force. Is it not better to resign something to appeal? Moreover, the demands for a constitution, franchise on liberal terms, removal of the so-called religious disabilities, equality of languages in the schools, free trade in South African products, and a lessening of imposts on foreign goods, will appear to the judgment of mankind reasonable and equitable, whatever we may think of them.

"And I warn you that in the long run the opinion of the world wins. I know well your objections, Smit and Maritz, old fire-eaters, but wait until you hear from Kruger and Jarrison, as brave at heart, but with calmer minds. Say, will it not be well to promise reforms in general terms? This will quiet the Rand, and we can easily deal with Jameson."

"Tut!" snarled Maritz, "tell that to

the Volksraad, and see. I will never put mine hand in the trap. When we teals with the Committee, we recognise them ant their tenants. There will be no trawing pack any more."

"Well, said Kruger, "what Bok says is not to be forgotten. With these facts we must deal some day. It seems difficult to maintain the present status, yet to grant the Uitlanders the franchise alone, would transfer the government to them—it would be an act of political suicide—it would abandon the Republic to the British Empire. We would tie ourselves by the first concession.

"My policy, which to this moment I have never uttered, is based on the fact that the English want—not the country, but the gold that is in it. This is confined, so far as we now know, to the Witwatersrand, in which is and will be the alien population. It is not a large area. I would then cede it with a strip of our southern border touching Natal and the Orange State, to England, on condition of absolute independence for the remainder of our territory, under a convention, if possible, to which Germany and other European powers might be parties. We should lose a region which we do not want, which is the source of all our difficulties, and retain "ons land" intact. We would sacrifice our revenues from the Rand, but better poor and free. This would be better than war without some assurance of support from Germany."

"However, this is not the time for diplomacy, for counsel, and concession. These Uitlanders are in arms. It is a time for free, or forced, submission to authority. Afterwards treaties.

"But the letter speaks of plans. Have you suggestions, Mr Clendenin?"

"Yes," said the American, "but will you permit first a word as to the causes of this conflict. As Mr Bok says, the demands of the manifesto are abstractly considered equitable. All these things are unquestioned rights in most countries, but the issue here cannot be settled by mere precedent, in a scholastic and dogmatic way. The practical result of grants must be anticipated. And an essential element is the fact that these miners are not only aliens, but rovers—here to-day and gone to-morrow. They have and will have no stake in the country. They will never become cordial children of an adoptive country. What care they for the Republic? Do you recall how last Fourth of July they tore down your flags in Johannesburg, flying in honour of the American nation? That was an insult not soon to be forgotten by either Boers or Yankees.

"The Englishmen are not willing to forego allegiance to the Queen, and to swear life-long citizenship in the Republic. They refused to fight in your levia a few years since, against the Kafirs, when Germans, Spaniards, Americans willingly served. They appealed to the Cape Government against your draft, and were released on payment of a war tax. Thus they repudiated the duties and dangers of citizenship, yet demand its highest privileges. If these were granted, they would overturn your institutions and depart, whenever it suited them, with their pockets full of gold.

"I predict that the Rand mines will last at their best ten years. Unless other fields are discovered, in a quarter of a century the Transvaal will be purely an agricultural and pastoral country. That is its destiny. And with the ebb of the gold flood, your aliens will float away. But, meanwhile, if you yield an inch, all will be taken. And at the best, your land will be a province in some future United States of South Africa, or at the worst, a colony of the British Empire.

"President Kruger's policy seems to me altogether wise as an alternative, for the future, but the present requires not policies, but actions—not the pleas of an advocate, but the rifles of a soldiery. As to that, you gentlemen have grasped the issues involved, except one, if you will bear with me—the supreme importance of preventing Jameson's entrance to Johannesburg. I beg to differ from you at this point, and for the reason that the malcontents of the Rand have no military leader. Their armed miners are only a mob. But give them such a commander as Jameson, and they become a formidable army.

"Moreover, any effort on your part which stops short of suppressing op-

position quickly, will invite more Englishmen from the colonies. And some competent military man will arise. The chief danger is delay. If you crush Jameson on his march, then your forces can overawe or subdue the mob at Johannesburg. If he enters that town, it will be put in a posture of defence, and send out an army threefold your utmost strength. The President is correct. Dr. Jim is the pivot of this movement, strategically, as well as diplomatically."

This impressed the Council, but Smit said:

"Ja! but how you say to stop him?" "I would submit that as many men as can be gathered, if only a hundred, should be sent out at once to watch the trail from Mafeking, to annoy, to delay, and, if necessary, to sacrifice itself in attack on Jameson's column at suitable places along the road, until a sufficient force to engage him has been mobilised. Let the latter choose its own place for battle and capture or destroy the whole body of filibusters.

"The utmost expedition must be used, as Jameson may even now be marching, and it is only a hundred and fifty miles from Mafeking. He will not have more than five hundred men, and surely you can assemble as many or more of your militia in a few days. Meantime, the advance patrol should, at all hazards, delay the enemy, until the main body is prepared."

"By the heavens!" exclaimed Joubert, "that's it exactly. That is our plan of campaign. Besides, an order must go out for a general rally, so that Johannesburg can be dealt with whether Jameson gets through or not. Let orders be sent out to-day—by couriers—to every part of the Republic, for the men to repair, all of them, with haste, to Pretoria, to repel invasion. The message must be such as will rouse our slow but steady Boers. Issue your orders, and I will proceed to execute them."

"Right," said Kruger; "so be it. There is no difference here. And the quicker the better, fighting Piet. How many men have we on hand, and who can lead them?"

"I could mount fifty to-day, and perhaps a hundred more to-morrow from the near-by country. Every Boer has his horse, arms and ammunition. They need no baggage. They can subsist on game and supplies from the farms. But a leader, that is difficult. Our young men are hunters—not soldiers. They have courage, but no strategy, and this work requires skill."

"Well!" shouted Maritz, striking Clendenin on the shoulder, "Here iss the man. He iss a soldier trained, ant haf fight the Indians in America. He haf what he sings, "Te swort of Punker Hill!"

"But," he said, with a smile, "I am called an Uitlander. Are you willing to trust me? Well, I have offered my sword, and I'll serve in any place you appoint, at the head of a column, or in the rear rank. I only ask to strike a blow against this invasion of a country which has given me a welcome, and has granted bread and gold to those who now assail her."

The result was that Clendenin rode out of Pretoria that Wednesday evening of Christmas day at the head of forty Boers, mounted burghers, seasoned frontiersmen, well-horsed and well-armed, with the promise that a hundred more should follow their trail the next day.

He did not lag until moon-setting, near midnight, and marched again at dawn. He pressed forward, hardly stopping to off-saddle, the next day and the third, until, approaching the frontier, he camped to rest and await the coming of the recruits. He was assured by his scouts that Jameson had not yet entered the Transvaal, and rejoiced at every hour of delay as great gain to Joubert and his patriots.

The camp was in a grove, at the mouth of a kloof, whence a clear view across the veldt ten miles disclosed a rough ridge over whose summit Jameson must approach, unless he made a wide detour. This was altogether unlikely, as he would not expect any opposition unless in the vicinity of Pretoria.

From the camp the burghers could retire unobserved up the kloof and choose their position to dispute the advance. Sunday they remained in laager, and the men testified their respect for the day according to their simple, earnest faith, by reading their Dutch Bibles, and slinging to quaint,